



What's NEW!

Spring 2008

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WELCOME!

Welcome to the spring 2008 edition of Whats New. We hope you enjoy this edition and if you have any comments please get in touch via the Resident Involvement Team on **0151 224 0204** or email getinvolved@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk

What's been going on...?

Halton Youth Get Creative!

Half term holidays can be a bit of a drag but for 9 young people in Halton it gave them the chance to expand their creative flare when Cosmopolitan arranged for them to spend a day at 'Creative Space' based in Liverpool City Centre.

The Creative Space Team are a non profit making community based organisation specialising in the use of music, drama and multi media as a medium to bring about positive change in communities.

The young people were given the opportunity to explore their own potential by having access to the latest technological equipment both in multi media and music. They were also given the chance to explore some of Liverpool's most famous and diverse landmarks from St George's Hall to The Cavern Club and were given the use of digital camera's to capture a visual diary of their day.



Julie McNally Resident Involvement Officer said *"This was a great opportunity for these young people to move away from their normal environment and explore their creative talents I'm sure their experience will have a long lasting and positive effect on them. Many thanks to everyone at Creative Space who's friendly and relaxed approach helped make it an excellent day"* If you would like to find out more about Creative Space, please contact Julie McNally on **0151 224 0379** or email jmcnally@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk

CAMELOT...

Residents in Liverpool 8 and staff organised an event to build community spirit and pride in their area. A trip to Camelot helped encourage residents to meet, mix and talk to each other in a social setting.

This project has been successful with the promotion of community spirit for residents in Liverpool 8 and if you would like to help organise an event to promote community harmony and spirit contact the Resident Involvement Team on 0151 224 0204 or email: getinvolved@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk



WARNING

Scalding Safety ALERT

In January 2008 the Health and Safety Executive issued a safety alert with regards to the risks of severe scalding arising from hot water inflow to cold water storage tanks.

The risk arises from domestic hot water systems which include a fixed all-electric or part electric immersion heater in conjunction with a plastic cold water storage cistern or tank located in the loft area.

In such set ups, if the immersion heater raises the water temperature higher than would normally be the case (possibly due to a faulty thermostat) then the immersion heater safety water escape system directs the hot water into the cold water tank.

If this is the case, the hot water, which was directed in this way into the cold water tank, softens and melts the plastic of the tank, releasing the water.

An overheating immersion cylinder will normally show warning signs, so serious incidents are likely to be extremely rare. The **WARNING SIGNS** are:-

- Excessive Noises
- Hot Water coming from the Cold Taps

If you experience any of these signs then the heater system must be **SWITCHED OFF**. Tenants should contact the Repairs Service on **0808 100 2578**.

CONDENSATION

... is a common problem which is caused by a lot of moisture in the air that cannot escape from a building. You can find it on cold surfaces and in places with little airflow, for example, in corners, behind furniture, in cupboards, or on or around windows.

A typical cause of condensation in your home might be warm, moist air being produced in your kitchen or bathroom and then being allowed to circulate around the house to unheated rooms. If you don't get rid of condensation, it can turn into mould. Mould is fungi, which are simple plants that will grow wherever there are damp surfaces in properties. The first sign that condensation in your home will be black pinpricks of mould on walls, ceilings and even furnishings. If this happens:-

- Keep outside vents and trickle vents open and clear.
- Open a window and use an extractor fan after you've taken a bath, to release the moisture in the air.
- Dry clothing outdoors or in a well-ventilated room (open windows).
- Open windows when you are at home.
- Keep a lid on saucepans as you cook and don't let the kettle boil over to reduce steam.
- Open a window or use an extractor fan if you can when cooking, so steam can escape.
- Make sure all your rooms have suitable heating. In cold weather it is better to provide a low level of heating all day rather than short high bursts.

A BIG THANK YOU to all residents who completed the Questionnaire asking if you thought the Residents Day was value for money and if you thought the newsletters kept you informed.

Residents Day

Value For Money ???

The outcome of the questionnaire was you thought that the Resident's Day is not value for money and you would rather have a local event within your Borough where residents can speak to staff informally. You thought that the events were too long, not interesting enough, contained too much jargon and too formal.

Here are some of the alternatives residents would like to see at a local level:

- **Informal Discussions to Raise Concerns**
- **Refreshments**
- **Community Centre Events**
- **Focus on Information and not Entertainment**
- **Have individual service stands and external agencies**
- **Light**
- **Provide Childrens Entertainment**
- **Staff and Residents one to one**

If you would like to get involved in organising a local event in your Borough then please contact Ria Simon on **0151 224 0315** or alternatively email rsimon@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk.



Newsletters

Are you informed enough ???

The majority of residents feel that the newsletters keep them informed enough and that they would like to receive them altogether twice a year, instead of separately.

Some residents felt that the newsletters were irrelevant to certain communities and that there was nothing relating to their own area. As a result we will be adding an insert to with information about your area which may be of interest.

If you have any articles, ideas or wish to be on the editorial panel, then please contact Ria Simon on **0151 224 0315** or alternatively email rsimon@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk.

All questionnaires were entered into a prize draw, and the winner was Mrs O'Brien of Halton Lodge who won £50 worth of shopping vouchers.





Every year thousands of woman, children and men on Merseyside are living in fear of domestic violence, with many not knowing where to access help.

'Worst Kept Secret' is a Merseyside project established to reduce domestic violence and enhance support for survivors.

'Worst Kept Secret' facilitates the development of a co-ordinated approach to tackle domestic violence, as well as carrying out direct work with survivors through a freephone helpline .

'Worst Kept Secret' provides a listening ear to those who are affected by domestic violence. Anybody who is subjected to domestic violence or any family or friends who are worried about an individual can call the free phone confidential helpline 0800 028 3398. The phone call will not show up on land line bills.

The staff are here to help those who are experiencing domestic violence by working through their options, giving advice and mostly importantly of all, by offering support. Pick up the phone and call, we are here to help.

MYTHS

There are many myths that surround the issue of domestic violence. Common beliefs are:

- Domestic violence only affects women;
- Domestic violence only happens in heterosexual relationships;
- Domestic violence only affects individuals from disadvantaged, marginalised and deprived areas of society;
- Domestic violence is a cultural matter;
- Domestic violence should be solved within the four walls of the home;
- The family should stay together for the sake of the children.

FACTS

- It applies to women and men of any age, race and social class.
- It occurs in different cultures
- People affected by domestic violence are often unaware of the resources available.
- Research shows that children grow up happier with one balanced parent rather than with two parents who are in conflict.
- Research shows that in most cases violence comes from people they know or members of the family.
- Further information can be obtained by telephoning 0800 028 3398 or look on the worst kept secret web page www.worstkeptsecret.co.uk

Who's Who? IN HOUSING SERVICES...



Alec Gaston, Operations Director of Housing Services oversees the planning, organising and management of the Housing Services Department.

The Housing Services department is split into five teams as follows:

The Tenancy Management Team is led by Colin Croxton and their work is focussed on preventing Anti Social Behaviour and Sustaining Tenancies. The team also carries out estate inspections, deal with abandoned tenancies and attend estate surgeries.



Colin Croxton
Tenancy Management
Co-ordinator

Telephone:
0151 224 0358

Email: **ccroxton@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Peter Bond
Tenancy Management
Officer

Telephone:
0151 224 0378

Email: **pbond@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Andrew Wiggins
Temporary Tenancy
Management Officer

Telephone:
0151 224 0306

Email: **awiggins@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Enid Ammon
Tenancy Management
Assistant

Telephone:
0151 224 0313

Email: **eammon@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**

Rhona Caveney is the Co-ordinator for the Allocations and Support team who are responsible for allocating the Associations properties and managing Supported Housing projects. The team also deals with housing transfers, requests for adaptations and support vulnerable residents who are: older, physically disabled, suffering with mental health or addiction.



Rhona Caveney
Allocations and Support
Co-ordinator

Telephone:
0151 224 0317

Email: **rcaveney@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Vicky Jemson
Allocations Officer

Telephone:
0151 224 0319

Email: **vjemson@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Andrea Scott
Supported Officer

Telephone:
0151 224 0304

Email: **ascott@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Kelly Harris
Allocations and Support
Assistant

Telephone:
0151 224 0354

Email: **kharris@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**

Steve Loftus heads the Resident Involvement Team who ensures the interests and influence of residents are taken into account in the decision making process.

The Team promotes a wide range of opportunities for residents and leaseholders to get involved.



Stephen Loftus Resident Involvement Co-ordinator

Telephone: **0151 224 0316**

Email: **sloftus@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Julie McNally Resident Involvement Officer

Telephone: **0151 224 0379**

Email: **jmcnally@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Ria Simon Resident Involvement Officer

Telephone: **0151 224 0315**

Email: **rsimon@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Sasha Buckley Resident Involvement Assistant

Telephone: **0151 224 0368**

Email: **sbuckley@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**

The Rent Income Team is led by Karen Cheung and the team help residents to maximise their entitlement to benefits, provide advice on welfare benefits, support the completion of Housing Benefit forms, and help with Housing Benefit appeals.



Karen Cheung Rent Income Co-ordinator

Telephone: **0151 224 0326**

Email: **kcheung@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Linda Beck Rent Income Officer

Telephone: **0151 224 0324**

Email: **lbeck@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



Steve Taylor Rent Income Assistant

Telephone: **0151 224 0339**

Email: **staylor@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**

The Asset Management and Responsive Repair Team are led by Carl Harnwell. The team manage the maintenance service partnership contract with KHT Services. In addition they are responsible for producing and delivering the Associations planned maintenance programmes.



Karl Harnwell Asset Manager (with effect June 6th 2008)

Telephone: **0151 227 3716**

Email: **kharnwell@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**



To Be Appointed Repairs Contract Co-ordinator



Jennie Mainwaring Repairs and Asset Management Assistant

Telephone: **0151 224 0360**

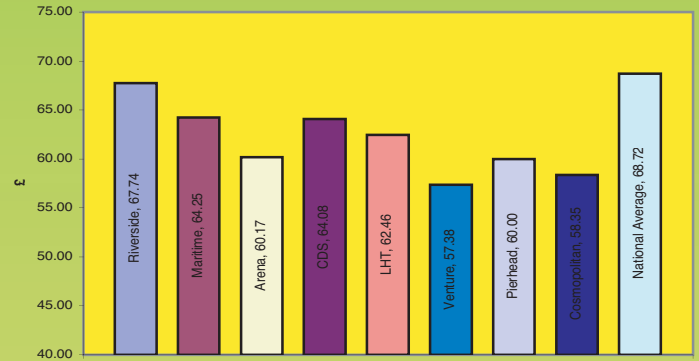
Email: **jmainwaring@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk**

How are WE performing?

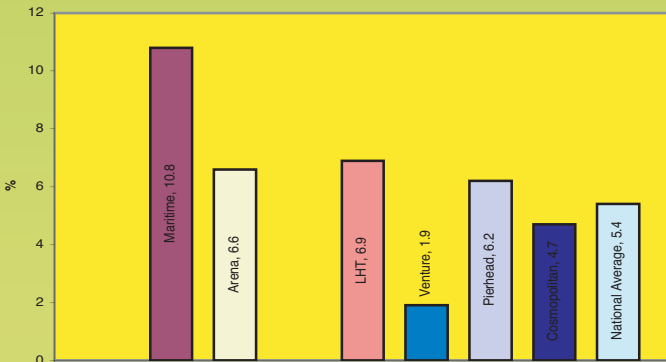
The information below shows a set of key performance indicators relating to Cosmopolitan Housing Association's performance during the financial year 2007/2008.

The key performance indicators contained in the report include both external measures as laid down by our regulators and internal measures which we have chosen as an Association to provide indicators on business activities and services delivered.

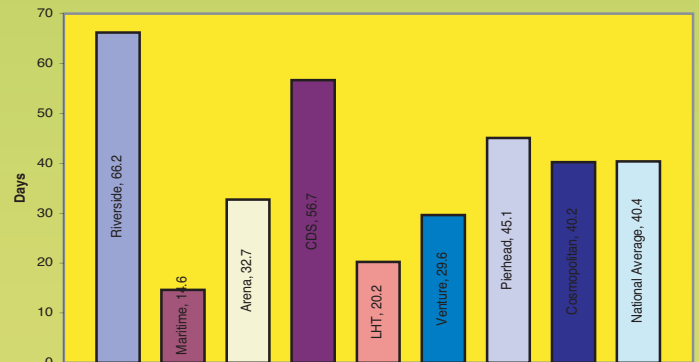
Average weekly gross rent



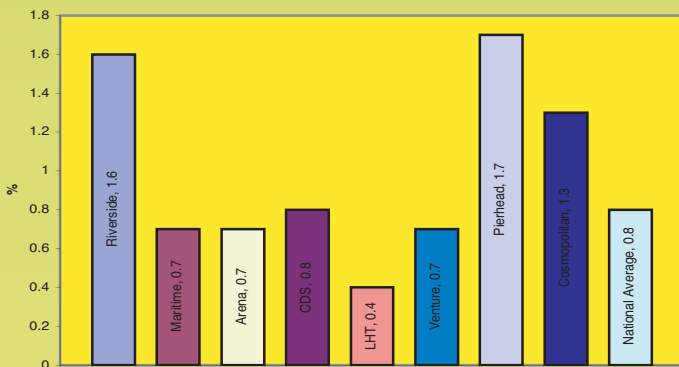
Rent arrears at year end (%)



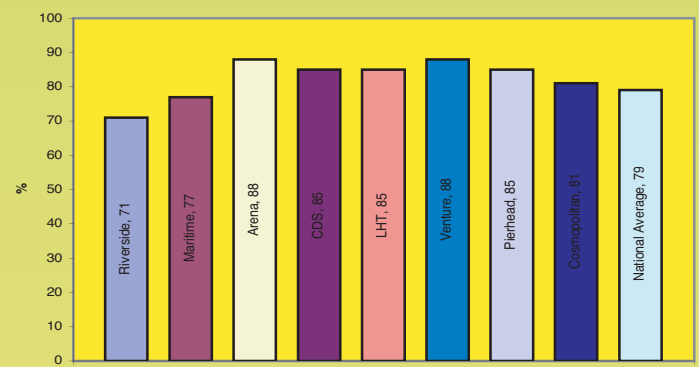
Re-let times (days)



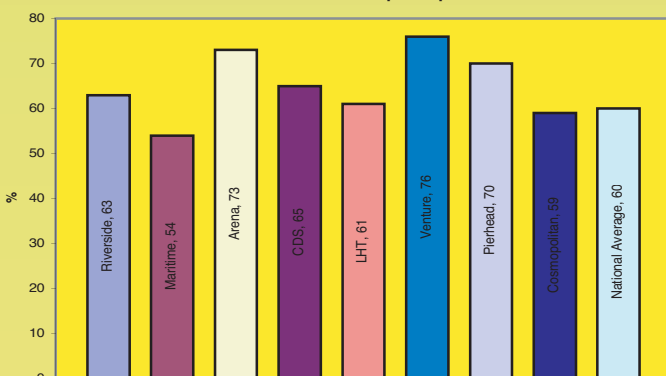
Dwellings vacant and available to let (%)



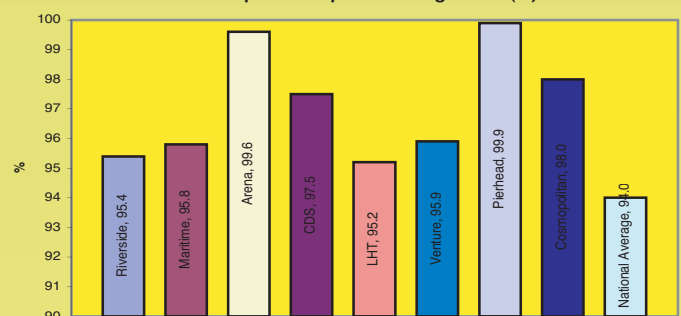
Tenant Satisfaction Overall



Tenant Satisfaction with participation



Routine Repairs completed in target time (%)



Cosmopolitan's First Annual Volunteer Awards 2008

The Association held its first annual volunteer awards in February 2008. The event was to recognise all volunteers who have given their time and effort for the Association. This has helped us move forward and continually improve the services that we provide to our residents and the communities in which the Association works.

The event was a huge success, with guest speaker Roger Phillips from Radio Merseyside speaking on the advantages of having volunteers. Awards were presented for the Volunteer of the Year, Mike Maginness Award, Good Neighbour Award and Garden Competition.

We are hoping to hold this event every year and are looking to expand the categories for the awards so look out for October's What's New for more information on 2009's event.

Below are the 2008 winners:



Volunteer Of The Year

Irene Hanratty - Marybone Community Leader

Mike Maginness Award

The Lodge Community Group - Halton Lodge

Good Neighbour Award

Martin Muscattelli - Liverpool 8

Garden Competition

Winner Best Front Garden

Maria Dennord - Liverpool

Runner Up Best Front Garden

Shirley Anne Rounds - Wirral

Winner Best Back Garden

Winner Best Back Garden

Mr & Mrs Houghton - Ormskirk

Runner Up Best Back Garden

Mrs T Savage - Scarisbrick

Winner Best Container

Mr & Mrs Abbott - Wirral

Runner Up Best Container

Ms Lister - Liverpool

Joint Winners Best Young Persons Garden

Kyle Lewis Darlington - Runcorn

Bruno Vines - Liverpool

Winner Herbert Taylor Award

Mr & Mrs Houghton Scarisbrick.

Look out for information in the near future about the 2008 Garden Competition or if you would like to gain further information contact Julie McNally on **0151 224 0379** or email: jmcnally@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk

CALLING ALL... TENANTS

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT OWNING YOUR OWN PROPERTY?

Homelife Estates on behalf of Cosmopolitan Housing Association can advise you on the options that maybe available to you.

SOCIAL HOMEBUY SCHEME

DO YOU WANT TO BUY YOUR HOME OUTRIGHT OR ON A SHARED OWNERSHIP BASIS THROUGH THE GOVERNMENTS SOCIAL HOMEBUY SCHEME?



The Government introduced the Social HomeBuy Scheme in April 2006 to provide more choice for tenants who want to buy their own home.

The Social HomeBuy Scheme allows Housing Associations to provide an opportunity for secure and assured tenants to buy their rented house at a discount, either by part owning and part renting or buying outright.



Cosmopolitan Housing Association has been allocated a small number of Social HomeBuy units.

Tenants are given the opportunity to buy their current home which may have previously been excluded from the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire schemes.

Tenants have the option to either buy their home outright or purchase an initial share of their home, which can be between 25-75%. Where an initial share is purchased by the tenant, a rent of 3% will be charged on the remaining share - which will be held by the Housing Association.



Benefit from a discount of £9,000 pro rata

Tenants will be required to meet certain eligibility criteria. For instance, applicants need to have been a public sector tenant (Housing Association / Local Authority) for a minimum of 2 years.

For more information contact Homelife on

0151 727 4375

Chartered Institute of Housing

The Association joined together with three other Housing Associations and Blackburne House, Hope Street (a local education provider) to deliver a nationally recognised housing qualification for residents - *"The Chartered Institute of Housing Level 2 Introduction to Housing"*.

The course was run over 16 weeks and enabled residents to take their interest in housing further. They developed their housing knowledge, and received a nationally recognised qualification and the potential to pursue a career within this field.



Unlocking the potential



The Association joined forces with other housing association staff and TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) to develop a community initiative that helps local ethnic minority residents to obtain interpreting skills that can lead to supporting the more vulnerable minority tenants in their areas.



The project has also been used as a spring - board for residents attending the training to be able to assist them in seeking employment with their newly developed skills. The course explained how they can look to volunteer for roles within their own local area, such as tenants and residents groups; mystery shopping, involvement with their landlord in services, right up to being a resident Board member.

If you are interested in any training opportunities the Association has to offer or would like to get involved, then please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 0151 224 0204 or email: getinvolved@cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk.

The Association now has an expense guideline in place to contribute towards childcare, travel expenses or carer expenses.

Choice Based Lettings

Why Have Choice Based Lettings?

The extension of choice is high on the Government's agenda, it has set a target for 100% of Local Authorities to introduce Choice Based Lettings by 2010, and this approach is endorsed by the relevant Housing Legislation (Homelessness Act 2002 and the Code of Guidance which came into force in February 2003).

The Association is committed to maximising the ability of its applicants to exercise housing choice. Where a Choice Based Letting scheme is in operation in a particular Local Authority area the Association has committed to adopting this approach. For the Association, this means that 100% of all new allocations are made through Choice Based Letting Scheme and no separate waiting lists are operated in Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral.

Which Choice Based Lettings Schemes Does the Association Participate In?

Local Authority	Scheme Name	Contact Details
Liverpool 	Propertypool	www.propertypool.org.uk 0151 233 3000
Sefton 	Homesearch One Vision Housing	www.ovh.org.uk/page/getting-a-home 08451401234
St Helens 	Under One Roof Helena Housing	www.under-one-roof.org.uk 01744636363
Wirral 	Wirral Homes	www.wirralhomes.net 0151 691 8040

If you require any further information about the above Choice Based Lettings Schemes please visit the appropriate web site or phone the enquiry line telephone number.

If you require any further information regarding the Association's Allocation Policy please contact the Allocation and Supported Housing Team on **0151 224 0202**

COMPETITION



European Neighbour Day 27th May 2008

European Neighbours Day has become the first neighbours meeting with the constant participation of new cities and new countries with 7.5 million participants across 28 countries.

We would like you to draw a picture of yourself and friends whether it be outside your home, in school or at the park...its your choice!!!

All entrants must be under 18 years old.

All winning artworks will be produced and displayed throughout Cosmopolitan Offices and you will be able to see your artwork produced. This is an excellent opportunity for all of you budding artists. **All entries to be in by the 6th of June 2008.**



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