Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue of Leaseholder News. This issue includes information on:

- Buy Back policy
- Communal cleaning
- Become an Estate Ambassador
- Leaseholders forum
- Handyperson scheme
- Leaks
- Alterations and improvements
- Certified summaries
- Paying your service charge
- Gas servicing
- Contents insurance
- Sub-letting your home

If you have any suggestions for future issues, please feel free to contact me on 01509 634830 or email leaseholders@cnh.org.uk

Best regards
Sarah Taylor, Leasehold Tenant Support Officer
Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing (CNH)

Helen appointed new Chair for Leaseholders Forum

Dear fellow leaseholders,
Thank you for agreeing that I should take on the role of chairman of your forum. The New Year brings fresh challenges and opportunities for us all, and my aim is to improve services and drive delivery forward on your behalf.

As your spokesman, I would encourage you to get involved, 'have your say' and take part in decisions that affect you! The forum meets once every two months and new faces are always welcome. The next meeting is on 22nd March between 2pm and 4pm at Council Offices, Southfields Road, Loughborough.

If you are unable to attend, please do not hesitate to contact me or Sarah Taylor with items for the agenda together with any issues, thoughts or comments you may have. We will be happy to take them forward. How about sending an article for the Leaseholder News?

Many thanks for your support, I look forward to meeting and hearing from you.

Best wishes

Helen
Email: leaseholders@cnh.org.uk
The current situation regarding the Buy Back policy for Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) is that they are not in a position to consider buying back properties because of the lack of resources. If the resources do become available the Council will consider family dwellings in high demand areas first. I will keep you informed if there are any changes.

Communal cleaning and cleanliness

At present the cleaning of communal areas is your responsibility under the terms of your lease/tenancy. However, we are looking into this in order to improve the standard of cleanliness in some of our communal areas.

A group has been brought together consisting of CNH tenants and leaseholders. Their first meeting was held in November to explore some of the issues, potential options, financial limitations, solutions and next steps. In December they inspected several communal areas in the borough. We'll keep you updated with any changes to the communal cleaning procedures.

Become an Estate Ambassador

We know that our leaseholders care about the areas in which they live and we often receive calls or letters about issues that concern them, such as litter or graffiti.

To help us monitor the level of service we deliver and identify areas that need improving we’re inviting you to become an Estate Ambassador. As an ambassador, you will rate the standards of service provided, such as grounds maintenance, by completing a questionnaire each month and sending the questionnaires back to us.

Anyone can be an Ambassador. It can be done from home and you can choose the area you want to report, whether it is the street where you live or the area around your block of flats. If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador, or would like more information, please contact us on 01509 634931 or involvement@cnh.org.uk
Get involved – Leaseholders Forum

All leaseholders have the opportunity to get involved in shaping the services provided to you by attending the leaseholder forum which meets every other month. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 22nd March, 2.00pm – 4.00pm so why not come along and tell us your views on the services we provide and how we could improve them.

Over the next six months we aim to improve our services in a number of ways including:

- reviewing the handbook
- understanding who our leaseholders are and tailoring our services to meet your needs
- having input into the tenant conference
- involving more leaseholders in making decisions which affect them
- anti-social behaviour procedures.

We need you tell us what you want and how you want us to do it. If you’d like to find out more about how to get involved please contact Sarah Taylor on 01509 634830 or email leaseholders@cnh.org.uk.

HandyVan service for over 60s

The HandyVan scheme, run by Age UK, aims to help people in later life feel safer in their homes. It is delivered by fully qualified, police-vetted HandyVan fitters who have been trained to support older people. Services available include:

- free home security measures such as installing door and window locks, fitting door chains
- small repairs such as putting up a shelves or tiling small areas and
- free safety measures such as fitting smoke alarms, fixing loose carpet and replacing light bulbs

For some services, a charge may have to be made for the cost of materials, but all labour charges are free, if you are eligible.

To qualify for the service you must be:

- 60 years or over
- Have £20,000 or less in savings

You can contact Age UK to find out more on 0845 026 1055 or visit ageuk.org.uk
Leaks

A common complaint from residents is leaks in another property damaging their home. A common cause is overflow pipes. To reduce the damage and disruption that leaks cause, we ask all leaseholders to follow these guidelines:

- make regular checks to all pipework and appliances that use water (such as washing machines) to make sure there are no leaks
- give the Leasehold Tenant Officer an emergency contact number so we can contact you immediately if there is a leak
- make sure that you repair any leak from your property quickly and then tell the Leasehold Tenant Officer, so that we can repair the damage caused by the leak in the neighbouring homes
- if the leak is not sorted out within the given time, we may do the work ourselves and recharge you if it has caused damage to another property.

Any water damage caused to your own property may be covered by your household contents insurance and you should contact them to make a claim.

Permissions for alterations and improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of improvements/alterations</th>
<th>Permission required</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Installing a new kitchen</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installing a new bathroom</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal redecoration</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change carpets and floor covering</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacing window frames</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacing glass in windows</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>No, if using a like for like replacement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alterations to the structure or layout of the flat</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Permissions for alterations and improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of improvements/alterations</th>
<th>Permission required</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Removing walls or chimney breasts</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alterations to form new or existing doorways and frames (but excludes fittings and door furniture)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating new doorways</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition or changes to the heating system</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>No, as long as the correct insulation to reduce noise is used on laminate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition or changes to existing pipe work</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoration to the outside of your home</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>No, if using a like for like replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerials or satellite antenna receivers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building extensions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement of your front door</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>No, if using a like for like replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loft conversion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>These wouldn’t normally be allowed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Certified Summaries queries – revised service standards

As from 1 April 2011 you will have 28 days from the date of the letter to raise any queries you have about your Certified Summary. Once the 28 days have passed all charges within the Certified Summary will stand. This is a new Service Standard which was agreed at the Leaseholders Forum on 18 November 2010.

The reason for introducing this new service standard is due to leaseholders raising issues on their Certified Summary when they receive their Estimate the following year. Revising the Certified Summaries and Estimates at this late stage creates extra administration work and also delays the Estimates within the block concerned.
What is the easiest way to pay my Service Charges?

If you have a bank account which allows you to set up Direct Debits, this is the easiest way to pay your service charges. Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) now offers the following dates for payments:

Quarterly on 1 or 15 April, July, October and January OR Annually on 1 or 15 April

To pay by Direct Debit please call the Income Section at CBC on 01509 634817 to request a Direct Debit mandate. You can also contact them if you currently pay on the 15th of the month and would like to change the payment date to the 1st.

Getting Hold of You

Emergency contact numbers
We have noticed an increasing number of cases recently where we need to contact you in an emergency and we don’t always have the right number.

Almost half of you have provided us with landlines and mobile numbers – but we require contact details from all of you.

Could you please get in touch as soon as possible to make sure we have your current contact details and forwarding addresses, in case of an emergency. We also need to know if you have changed your numbers recently. If you have an email address that would be helpful as well. Please contact us on 01509 634830 or email leaseholders@cnh.org.uk

Gas Servicing

Under the terms of your lease you are required to repair, maintain and replace your heating and domestic hot water systems (without interruption to the use of the shared services within the block) as and when necessary and in a proper and competent manner and such systems shall not without the previous consent of CNH be altered or interfered with in any way.

Home Contents Insurance – are you paying too much?

If you answered yes, why not sign up for CNH’s Home Contents Insurance and insure your possessions against fire, flood, theft and accidental damage for as little as £13.65 per quarter. This can be paid quarterly with your service charges (based on up to £9,000 worth or cover, lower cover rates are available for pensioners). For more information, please contact the Housing Income Team free from most landlines on 0800 633 5548 or email us at housing.income@cnh.org.uk
Sub-letting Your Home

If you plan to sub-let your property, you must tell the Leasehold Tenant Officer 28 days before. If you have not told us, you will be breaking the conditions of your lease and we can take legal action.

You must also give us your contact address and phone number in writing. Your tenants must keep to the conditions of your lease. If they cause any nuisance or break any conditions of the lease, you will be held responsible. In other words, even though you are not living in the property, you are still responsible for making sure that the leaseholder’s duties are carried out. If you are letting your home, you should tell your mortgage company and get legal advice on your rights and duties as a landlord of your property.

Please remember that as leaseholders you are still liable to pay your service charges. This responsibility does not pass to your tenant.

Leaseholders Inbox - leaseholders@cnh.org.uk

Leaseholders now have a dedicated email address to use to contact us and we ask that you now use this instead of emailing Sarah Taylor direct. For general enquiries please use the leaseholders@cnh.org.uk address as this is checked by other officers as well as Sarah to provide you with a better service.

Useful contacts:

Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing
Leasehold Officer: 01509 634830
Email: Leaseholders@cnh.org.uk
Reporting a repair: 01509 634666
Paying you invoice: 01509 634817

The Leasehold Valuation Tribunal (LVT)
The LVT is part of the Residential Property Tribunal Service.
Address: Residential Property Tribunal Service, 2nd Floor, Louisa House, 92-93 Edward Street, Birmingham, B1 2RA
Tel: 0845 100 2615 or 0121 2367837
Fax: 0121 236 9337
Email: midland.rap@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE)
The Leasehold Advisory Service website provides free advice on all aspects of the law which have an effect on leasehold property. This also contains a lot of information on applying to a leasehold valuation tribunal.
Address: 31 Worship Street, London, EC2A 2DX
Tel: 0845 345 1993
Website: www.lease-advice.org
How to Contact Us

In Person
We are located in the Charnwood Borough Council Offices on Southfields Road, Loughborough.

Opening Hours
8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday.
Please note that no tickets to see a Customer Advisor will be issued after 4.45pm (4.15pm on Fridays)

Online
There is an online contact form for you to send us enquiries, comments, compliments, complaints or suggestions at:
www.cnh.org.uk

By Phone, Fax or Email
Tel: 01509 634666
Fax: 01509 634518
Email: info@cnh.org.uk

By Post
All letters should be addressed to:
Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing Ltd, PO Box 8749,
Council Offices, Loughborough, Leics LE11 9EF