

# The Informed

The newsletter for the residents of  
Irish Centre Housing

Issue 16

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## Resident Panels

ICH is forming two resident panels: one that covers the majority of our Supported Housing Schemes and a second that covers our General Needs residents (plus St Eugene Court.)

The first Supported Housing Resident Panel meeting took place at ICH Head Office on 20 March, 2009 with a follow up meeting on the 17 April. The initial meetings involved residents from our three largest hostels; however resident reps are being recruited from all of our locations. (Read on for more details!)

Mary Cribbin, ICH Head of Operations who chaired both meetings, said, "In order for ICH to actively involve residents in its decision making and how the organisation is run, resident panels are being instituted. This is so we can increase resident engagement at all levels in the organisation with the panels being a voice for ICH residents to engage with us as well as acting as a forum and platform for resident involvement. We view the panels as a valuable asset for service management being that ICH is an organisation focused on customer service."

Members of the Supported Housing Resident Panel so far are Paul Wheeler of Conway House, Rochelle Hutt-Belfon and Kathleen Fleming of Bethany House, Muna Barasab and Portia Addo of St. Louise. At our other supported housing sites local initiatives are underway to recruit new reps.

The issues of our Supported Housing and our General Needs residents are quite different, so it is our intention to organise a separate General Needs panel. Letters are being sent out informing General Needs residents of the process to become a resident representative.



Supported Housing Resident Panel

The resident panel meetings are to be held every quarter with the Head of Operations and once a year with the Chief Executive. The objective is to ultimately appoint one or two resident panel members to sit on the ICH Management Board.

Interested residents can speak to their housing officer or key worker for more details on becoming a rep.

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## Customer Satisfaction Improvement

In October 2008, Irish Centre Housing conducted its fourth periodic Customer Satisfaction Survey. Every resident from all of our schemes were invited to participate, and the surveys were completed anonymously.

The results of this survey are a significant improvement on our survey in 2006. Almost all questions indicate an improvement in satisfaction and additionally there are no questions which demonstrate any significant reduction in satisfaction.

### Some key points:

- The number of responses has almost doubled to 160

## Customer Satisfaction continued ...

- The overall level of satisfaction with the service increased by over 15 points to 84.7%
- Resident dissatisfaction has almost halved at 9.3%
- 25 out of 35 comparable questions achieved an increase of 10 percentage points or more in levels of satisfaction
- Our male residents are marginally more satisfied than our female residents
- Our residents prefer traditional forms of communication such as a letter or a meeting with their keyworker over new technologies such as text messaging or email.

### Next Steps

ICH's Business Support Manager, Steve Webb, has been meeting with residents from all of our housing schemes to follow-up on some specific areas to improve the service. The focus has been on the aspects of the service that our residents told us were the most important to them and some additional areas where our residents were less satisfied. Specific reports for each site will be produced and sent to all residents concerned.

ICH would like to thank all residents who completed the survey and attended the follow-up meetings. Your opinions are valuable and your contributions are very much appreciated.

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## ICH Restructure

ICH has recently undergone an organisational restructure to ensure it has the right structure in place to best deliver future services. One of the important things for our residents to know is that the majority of the changes have been to the "back office" and management and very little change to front line staffing.

Chief Executive, Tricia Durkan says, "The aims of the new structure are to ensure we retain a clear focus on local services, increase resident involvement and strengthen the support given to front line staff to enable them to concentrate on providing the best possible support and service to residents across all our supported housing and general needs schemes. We want to ensure residents have a voice in influencing the design and quality of our services going forward, as part of our commitment to continuous improvement."

## Anti-Social Behaviour

We all know summer is a wonderful time of year for dancing, partying, drinking, eating and being outside. The images of little children eating their ice-creams, picnics in the park, are glorious.

But did you know that this is the time of year that Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOS) get issued the most? According to the Home Office, "There is a dramatic increase in crime and nuisance behaviour during the summer months."

ICH takes seriously its responsibility to be a good landlord and a good neighbour. Residents should understand that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated in any ICH hostel or general needs schemes. This includes playing loud music (especially with the windows open), being noisy inside and outside your home, street drinking, loitering etc.

Anti social behaviour is very serious because disputes between residents and our neighbours can be distressing for our residents and it also damages our reputation as we work closely with neighbourhood groups and local authorities to maintain good relationships.

Although we do our best to be supportive of each of our residents, when anti social behaviour is having a negative effect on others this could ultimately lead to evictions or notices to quit.

To maintain good relationships between all of our residents and our neighbours, it is important that everyone cooperates. *The Informed* has put together a number of tips:

- Keep all noise down – inside and outside.
- No littering, loitering or consumption of alcohol in the locality outside of your home.
- Turn music down when windows are open and minimise noise.
- Be particularly mindful of noise during the evening, night-time and early morning.

The tips on the list are not exhaustive and ICH expects all residents to use discretion and exercise good faith and respect towards your immediate neighbours and those in the local area.

Enjoy the summer but do so responsibly!

# Forde House Re-opens

October 28<sup>th</sup> 2008 was another historic day for Irish Centre Housing as it re-opened Forde House following a major refurbishment. Located in Queens Crescent, Kentish Town, the building was originally named after former Chair of ICH, Michael Forde and for many years housed 9 residents in a “shared house” environment. The renovation has transformed the building into four new 1 bedroom flats.

Here’s what the residents think of their new home. “It’s a beautiful building, very well maintained, it’s like stepping back in time. When I first came to Forde House as a disabled person, I was treated really nicely. I felt like a human being again and I can’t believe how lucky I am to have a wonderful place like this,” said Lisa who occupies one of the flats.

Krystle, another resident added, “I was amazed to move into such a nice flat, it was immaculate with no works needing to be done. I waited for six and a half years to be housed and this was awesome. Irish Centre Housing has been very friendly and accommodating. I couldn’t ask for anything more.”



Forde House

# Community Success



Townsend House residents have fun gardening

Five **Townsend House** residents joined ten other volunteers who took part in an environmental skills training project, run by Groundworks Hertfordshire, to create an outdoor classroom for students at Cowley Hill Primary School in Borehamwood. After six weeks of hard work, the project was completed in March.

For the official opening the Hertsmeire Mayor was present along with many locals. Head Teacher for the school Terry Willis said, “It has to be said the transformation is remarkable and we appreciate what the young volunteers have done. They have worked very hard for which the entire community is grateful.”

Natalie of Townsend House commented, “Whilst on this course, I experienced a lot of teamwork and was able to familiarise myself with my own interpersonal skills. I volunteered to give something back to the community. This was fun, exciting and a very big challenge.”

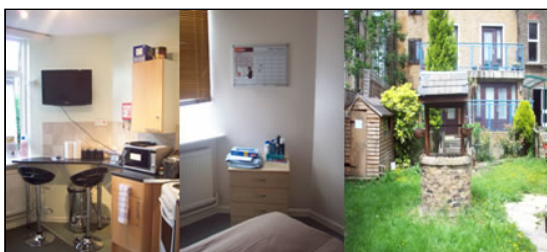
Other Townsend House volunteers shared their thoughts: “Being on the green skills project I learnt how to use tools that I’d never even think of using. Also, we all got on very well and had a laugh, we all helped each other when needed and all supported each other,” said Laura.

“I had a good time and learnt how to do a number of things. I gained more confidence and met new people who I had a laugh with. I really enjoyed myself and I would recommend others to take part in it,” added Jackie.

ICH is proud of the time and effort the residents gave to the project.

# Mutrix Project

**Conway House** had an Open Day on 22 May to celebrate the opening of the new Mutrix Project. The project is a secure independent unit within Conway House consisting of 5 single bed rooms with access to a shared kitchen/lounge, bathroom and garden facilities. The project aims to provide a safe and secure environment to enable clients to reduce and stabilise substance misuse issues whilst providing proactive engagement with clients who have lapsed / relapsed around substance misuse.



The Mutrix Project

The open day was a great success. The residents prepared a BBQ, music played in the garden and games were played both indoors and outside. Visitors were given guided tours of the Mutrix Project and there was a very positive mood.



Conway House Open Day

There was TB screening at Conway House on 12 June, with another resident BBQ held during the day and vouchers were provided by Hungerford to encourage participation.

Archery lessons and a visit to the Lea Valley Country Park are coming soon.

## St Louise

26<sup>th</sup> January 2009 Anne Jones from DePaul Trust hosted a workshop on building confidence, self esteem and developing a positive mental attitude.

St Patrick's Day was celebrated in style on 17 March. Residents transformed the lounge area with eye catching décor, foot moving music and the traditional Irish stew went down well with soda bread and Irish Cheese. The event came to

a climax when one resident stood up and gave a heart warming talk about what St Patrick's day meant to her and her ancestors and another spoke of her Irish descent and gave a brief talk about the meaning of St Patrick's Day and what it meant to her and how the day is traditionally celebrated by her family.

On 24 April, Eritrean residents celebrated Easter (in the Pentecostal faith, the Easter period was 17 – 19 March). Residents cooked traditional dishes of stews, injera and rice.

Chlamydia screening was held in May by Brook Advisory Clinic.

TB screening was held 5 June. Vouchers were provided by Hungerford to encourage participation.

Personal Best Programme starts soon by City of Westminster College. The course is for 3 days a week for 10 weeks. Participants who successfully complete the course will get an interview to be steward at the 2012 Olympic Games and opportunities for volunteering.

Outing planned for 19 June to see Cardboard Citizens production, "Mincemeat".

## Bethany House

Since February there have been Cooking Classes delivered by City of Westminster College, Budgeting Workshops By Community Money and Made of Money, a Body Image and Self Esteem Workshop by Brook London Education and a Women's Health Workshops by PALS and NAZ Project.

Coming up there's 3 workshops on Presentation/Telephone Skills, Get Motivated, and CVs & Covering letters by Alone in London; an Interior Design Taster at Kings Cross Connections and on 29<sup>th</sup> June TB Screening unit will be on-site.

## St Eugene Court

Mass will be held on 19 June. The Mayor and Mayoress of Brent and local councillors will attend.

BBQs and Cream Teas are planned over the summer.

## Townsend House

A resident BBQ was held on 3 June. A guest speaker from Herts Supporting People attended a resident meeting on 15 June.