



# Tenants' Newsletter



March 2014

## Odu-Dua Housing Association



### 0% Rent increase

On 7th April 2014, annual rent and service charges increases will be implemented for all tenants. This year, however, there will be no increase to the rent element of your gross accommodation charges.

"We need to develop an explicit rent plan based on the investment needs of the properties we own," says Neil Ayre, Interim Chief

Executive, "This will ensure our properties are well-maintained in respect of day-to-day repairs and that we know where the money is coming from in the future when we need to replace central heating systems, kitchens, bathrooms, and other structural components." Our second largest expense is the cost of staff salaries and clearly this must provide the greatest value for money to

tenants."

To this purpose, we are carrying out a Satisfaction Survey in 2014 particularly focusing on rent and value for money. All your opinions and ideas are welcomed. The information you provide will help us to shape our services in accordance with your priorities.

Service charges will increase by a maximum of 3.7% this year but individual tenancies may vary.

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### Is your home safe?

#### Take gas safety seriously

Badly fitted or maintained gas appliances can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide is a highly poisonous gas. You can't see it, taste it or smell it, but it can kill quickly with no warning.

By law, Odu-Dua as your landlord must carry out Gas Safety Check once a year. You should have received letters informing you of this. APM, the appointed contractor, will contact you directly in the following weeks to arrange an appointment. When a Gas Safe registered engineer attends your property, they will check all your gas appliances are safe for use. Following the check, Odu-Dua will provide you a copy of the Gas Safety Check Record.

It is important that you provide access for the Gas Safety Check to be carried out. When an appointment is arranged, you must keep it and be available at home.



### Is this yours?



A payment of £30.00 was made into Lloyds TSB Walthamstow branch on Wednesday, 19th Feb. The bank have been unable to identify this payment as it

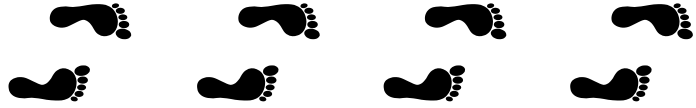
was made over the counter in a paperless transaction. The payment is now left unallocated.

If this is your payment, please bring the proof of your payment to Odu-Dua office. We will then allocate it into your account.

#### What to do when you pay over the counter?

When you pay your rent over the counter in a bank, please always remember to include a reference on the slips. It should be your name or address. A simpler way is to use the paying in book which can be provided upon request. If you require one, contact the office on 0207 625 1799. We will send one to you by post.

# Odu-Dua moves on



Odu-Dua can announce that former CEO, Lara Oyedele is no longer employed by the company following a protracted court case which ended in February. Neil Ayre, the interim Chief Executive, will continue in post for the next few months pending the Board's recruitment of a permanent Chief Executive later in the year.

In the short term, the organisation is embarking on an extensive programme of improvement and renewal and in the coming weeks the Association will modernise its governance arrangements, re-focus on services to tenants and tenant involvement and embed a culture of transparency and openness.

## Governance changes

We will be upgrading our company rules to the National Housing Federation (NHF) Model Rules 2011 as soon as possible and at the same time adopt the NHF Code, Excellence in Governance. The Board intends to build-up and refresh its membership in a planned way following a Board appraisal process as longer serving Board Members retire in accordance with the NHF's recommended nine-year limit.

Three new Board Members, Mr Hugh Boatswain,

Ms Ayoola Onatade and Mr Sal Ishmael, have already joined the association. Mr Boatswain has over 30 years experience in the social housing sector. He currently works as an independent interim management consultant. Ms Onatade comes with a wealth of experience within the Civil Service working mainly with senior members of the Judiciary. With in-depth business insight, Mr Ishmael has a wide experience in various industries. He is currently a owner of a local business.

## Tenant Services

The renewed focus on tenants includes a comprehensive review of customer facing services and the establishment of a customer panel and tenants' forum to ensure a wide range of tenant voices are heard.

*"We are now re-focussing our attention on our tenants and on the urgent task of ensuring the governance of Oda-Dua and the services we provide are of the highest quality."* said Odu-Dua Chair and tenant Board Member Sandra Brown.

In March we also welcomed Jyotika Patel as Temporary Operations Manager. Jyotika previously worked in similar roles with Apna Ghar Housing Association, Brent Council and Capital Housing amongst others. Her initial focus will be on reviewing service delivery and working with frontline staff.

## Employment fair for Camden residents

**Date: Wednesday 19 March 2014**

**Time: 9am to 11.30am**

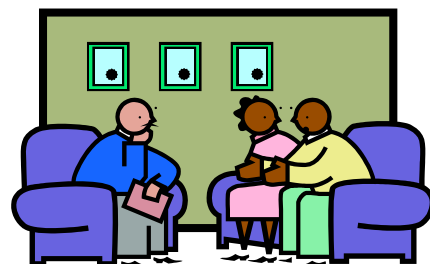
**Place: Working Men's College (Richard Cobden Learning Centre)  
44 Crowndale Road, NW1 1TR**

There will be information about the opportunities available in Camden, which include jobs across a range of sectors, including administration, hospitality, retail, facilities management, and health and social care.

No appointment is required. Just come along and Get information and advice from local colleges, the National Careers Service and Job Centre Plus.



## Free debt advice



Mary ward legal centre is an independent charity based in Holborn offering free, confidential and independent advice.

To access this free service, call **020 7269 0292** 5 days a week between 10am to 1pm. You can also drop in to the Centre on Thursdays between 2-4pm and Fridays between 10am - 1pm or 2-4pm.

Their address is **10 Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7JU (off High Holborn).**

For more information, visit their website: [www.marywardlegal.org.uk](http://www.marywardlegal.org.uk).