

Press release

24th October 2006

Hackney Homes scoops national award

Hackney Homes has received a major national award for its gas servicing programme.

Hackney Homes scooped the CORGI award for the second year running and was praised for its innovative customer-focused programme that reaches more than 20,000 residents.

Programme Manager Harvey Virdee said winning the CORGI Contribution to Gas Safety Award two years in a row is a tremendous achievement.

“Our annual servicing programme ensures the gas appliances such as boilers, heaters and cookers in our residents’ homes are safe and working,” Harvey said.

“Gas servicing is a serious matter. While it’s uncommon, gas explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning are two potential consequences of faulty appliances and it’s our job to make sure our residents have a safe home to live in.”

The judges were especially impressed that Hackney Homes had managed to gain access to 100% of resident properties – a success rate virtually unheard of for local government or housing associations.

A number of initiatives implemented over the past three years have led to this success. Road shows on estates, in supermarkets and local hospitals has increased awareness of gas servicing and highlighted the potential risks if these appliances are not serviced correctly. Residents are also offered appointments outside of normal working hours.

But another key to success has been the teams’ determination to tackle missed appointments and no-access properties head-on.

Harvey says: “For many years we found it difficult to gain access to about 15% of our resident’s homes. It was a major drain on our resources to gain entry to these homes and we were concerned that lives were at risk.”

In addition to offering residents more flexibility with appointment times, the team also carried out gas servicing during break down visits and will phone or visit tenants in the evening.

In some cases there has been a need to force entry to the property to service the appliance. Working in conjunction with the Estate Safety Team, this approach has solved many other tenancy issues.

“We find that a small percentage of residents don’t let us in for gas servicing because they have something to hide. Working with our Estate Safety Team we’ve uncovered illegal sub-letting, squatting, drug laboratories and other illegal activities.”

“By uncovering these activities we’ve been able to take action and ensure more homes are available for residents on the housing waiting list.”

The award was presented to Hackney Homes at the CORGI Installer Live Awards in Coventry on Thursday 19th October.

The Hackney Homes Gas Servicing Team consists of 25 certified CORGI engineers. They are an accredited member of the Certification for CORGI Registered Gas Installers.

Ends

Press queries to Chloe Goddard on 0208 356 3528 or email housingeditor@hackneyhomes.org.uk