

Press release

19 January 2007

Record numbers of Hackney Homes residents sign up to pay rent by direct debit

With more and more people paying their household bills by direct debit, Hackney Homes launched a year long campaign to encourage residents to use this as a simple and easy way to pay their rent.

By the end of 2006, over 600 residents signed up, earning a £10 shopping voucher at the same time. With the campaign continuing in the New Year, even more residents are showing an interest in direct debit to free up time spent in payment.

Clive Taber from Hackney Homes says: "Rent really is the most important bill to pay each month and it's essential that it is paid on time. Most of our residents lead busy lives and direct debit allow residents to pay rent automatically without hassle each month.

And there are even greater rewards on offer for residents who pay their rent promptly and adhere to the terms of their tenancy agreement.

Since mid-2006, Hackney Homes has been running the Pride of Place campaign to reward residents who pay their rent on time and keep to the conditions of their tenancy agreement. Residents who do this are automatically entered into a quarterly prize draw and have the chance to win £500 of home improvement vouchers and £100 of shopping vouchers. Many residents have benefited from these prizes since the scheme was launched this year. Some residents have improved their bathrooms, kitchens and garden spaces.

Clive points out that while residents should be encouraged and potentially rewarded for paying their rent, there can be very serious consequences if rent is not paid.

"We will initially contact residents by phone, letters and visits to try and resolve the problem by working together to get payments up to date. If these are ignored, we can obtain court permission to remove goods such as cars and furniture, take bankruptcy proceedings, get a court order to deduct money from earnings and in the worst case scenario you could lose your home completely.

Residents can sign up to direct by phoning 020 8356 2162, downloading the forms from the website (www.hackneyhomes.org.uk) or visiting their local neighbourhood office.

Ends

Press queries to Olaide Oyekanmi on 0208 356 3522 or email housingeditor@hackneyhomes.org.uk