

Isle of Wight Council Adult and Community Services

Issue 2

October 2004

HOUSING NEWSLETTER



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This is the second newsletter that we have created, the first edition was aimed at clients who had been accepted as homeless on the Island. We are now extending this newsletter to people who are also on the Island Housing Register to keep everyone

Reception at Housing Services

We will shortly be refurbishing the reception area at Housing Services to improve our access.

The new reception will be more welcoming and create additional workspace in the back office to allow for more members of staff.

The building work is being undertaken between 13 September—25 October our reception will be closed at 7 High Street, Newport; although a reception service will be provided at County Hall.

As mentioned in the last newsletter all initial homeless enquiries and housing problems should now be directed in the first instance to the Law Centre, Exchange House, St Cross Lane, Newport on 524715 so that they can try to prevent homelessness, signpost people to correct departments and give people their housing options.

Wise Up Event

Would you like to find out about all your housing opportunities but afraid to ask?

Do you want to know more about buying your own home? Renting privately or from a Housing Association? What about shared ownership? Or repairing your existing home? How will you pay for your accommodation? What benefits are you entitled to? What about childcare if you want to go back to work?

You can find about all of this and more in one place on one day - FREE

WISE UP

**Newport Parish Centre, Town Lane, Newport
On Monday 18th October 2004, From 10.30am – 3pm**

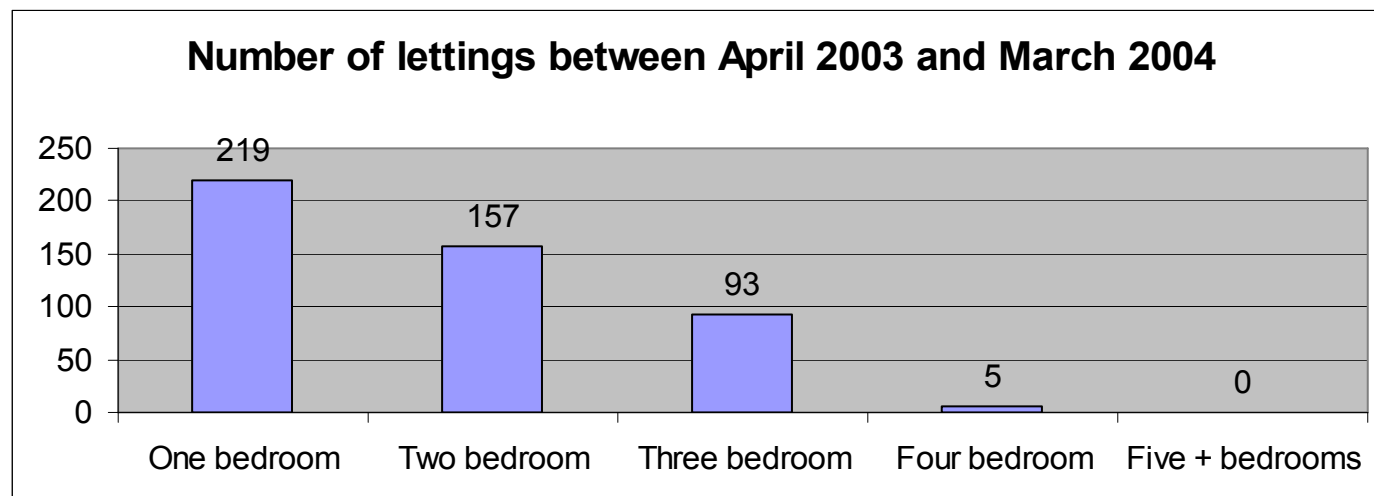
With stands from Estate Agents, Mortgage Advisors, IW Council, South Wight Housing Association, Family Information Zone, Health Promotion and more...

For more information contact Sara Ellis at the IW Rural Community Council on 524058

Please find below a list of social housing properties on the Island through the four main housing associations, most of the family sized units are two and three bedroom, there are less than 100 four bedroom properties, 4 five bedroom properties and 1 six bedroom property; most of the sheltered housing are one bedroom.

Apse Heath	86 properties	83 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Arreton	11 properties	8 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Bembridge	104 properties	68 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Binstead	214 properties in total	171 family sized units	23 sheltered units
Bouldnor	25 properties in total	25 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Brading	139 properties in total	112 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Brighstone	28 properties in total	24 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Calbourne	6 properties in total	4 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Chale	76 properties in total	57 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Chillerton	22 properties in total	20 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Cowes	422 properties in total	288 family sized units	72 sheltered housing
East Cowes	483 properties in total	362 family sized units	70 sheltered housing
Freshwater	345 properties in total	229 family sized units	41 sheltered housing
Godshell	72 properties in total	47 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Gurnard	21 properties in total	0 family units	21 sheltered units
Havenstreet	8 properties in total	1 family unit	No sheltered housing
Lake	323 properties in total	147 family sized units	54 sheltered units
Merstone	7 properties in total	7 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Mottistone	2 properties in total	2 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Nettlestone	3 properties in total	3 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Newbridge	21 properties in total	16 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Newchurch	16 properties in total	16 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Newport	1,393 properties in total	931 family sized units	149 sheltered housing
Niton	33 properties in total	20 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Rookley	11 properties in total	11 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Ryde	984 properties in total	569 family sized units	84 sheltered units
Sandown	372 properties in total	247 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Shalfleet	18 properties in total	15 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Shanklin	369 properties in total	255 family sized units	31 sheltered units
Shorwell	19 properties in total	13 family sized units	No sheltered housing
St Helens	34 properties in total	10 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Thorley	15 properties in total	15 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Totland	115 properties in total	83 family sized units	No sheltered housing
Ventnor	393 properties in total	205 family sized units	64 sheltered units
Wootton	41 properties in total	30 family sized units	10 sheltered units
Wroxall	120 properties in total	90 family sized units	17 sheltered units
Yarmouth	35 properties in total	26 family sized units	No sheltered housing

Lettings of social housing properties on the Island through the four main housing associations



Of the 474 lettings last year:

133 were to sheltered or warden assisted accommodation.

128 were to transfers within or between Housing Associations

This means that there were 213 lettings to general applicants last year.

As at 1st October 2004 there are approximately 3,520 applicants on the housing register

Permanent Accommodation

Following the change with the Isle of Wight Housing Register last year, every applicant that was recorded on the Register was issued with a new application form last summer in order to make sure their details were up to date.

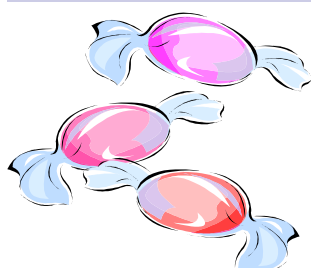
A process of regularly reviewing and renewing every application has now started and everybody with a current application on the Isle of Wight Housing Register will receive a renewal questionnaire sometime in the next few months.

Any application whose renewal has not been returned to Housing Services within 28 days of the date sent out, will be archived on the Housing Register.

This means that unless an application has been recorded as reviewed and renewed, it may not be considered for shortlisting for any vacancies.

It is therefore vital that if you still wish to be considered for an offer of housing from the Register, you

Competition at the Garlic Festival



Housing Services held a stall at the Garlic Festival in August this year with a variety of leaflets and material that people could take away or discuss.

We also had a competition of guessing the number of sweets in a jar, there were 312 and there were two winners, Alice age 7 and Marley, age 7; they each won a bag of sweets and a £25 game voucher.

Housing Benefit

Verification for new claims

Benefit cannot be paid until claimants have supplied the necessary evidence and proofs to support of their application. Evidence and proofs must be supplied for all of the areas requested in the application form and notes included with the form detail what is required. All proofs must be in the form of original documents and be relevant to the period of the application.

The five key areas where evidence and proof are required are:

- Identity and national insurance number
- Evidence of liability
- Proof of income
- Proof of capital
- Household evidence

There are local offices that accept and verify applications, all claimants are given a checklist detailing information received and highlighting information still required. This checklist is also a receipt for the application form, please ensure that this is kept in a safe place in case it is required at a later date for proof that a claim has been submitted.

Occasionally it will be necessary to request further information once detailed scrutiny of the claim has been made. Where further information is needed claimants are asked to supply this within seven days or to contact the council if they cannot meet this deadline. **Payment of benefit cannot be made until all required information is provided.**

If a claimant provides all of the required evidence and proofs at the time they hand in the application form Housing Benefit aim to process the claim and notify them of any entitlement within a maximum 21 days.

Change of circumstance

All changes in circumstances must be reported in writing as soon as they occur. This is the responsibility of the claimant or the person who is receiving the payment if they are aware of a change in circumstance that could effect the amount of benefit paid. Any change in circumstance must be verified so the necessary proof will be required.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The budget for discretionary payments is a cash limited budget and aims to meet the needs of claimants with exceptional circumstances for a short period of time only. It enables the award of an additional payment where the housing benefit is not sufficient to cover the liability.

Applicants are required to complete an income and expenditure form and to give detailed reasons for requesting a discretionary payment. Any award will only be for a short period of time to enable the claimant to make suitable alternative arrangements to meet their rental liability.



Tough on Rent Arrears

As part of your agreement you are required to pay your rent for your accommodation. It is also your responsibility to provide all the information needed by Housing Benefit to complete your claim.

If Housing Benefit cannot complete your claim you are responsible for the whole rent.

If you get into rent arrears, then your home is in danger as you may be evicted and loose your accommodation.

Consultation with Homeless Persons

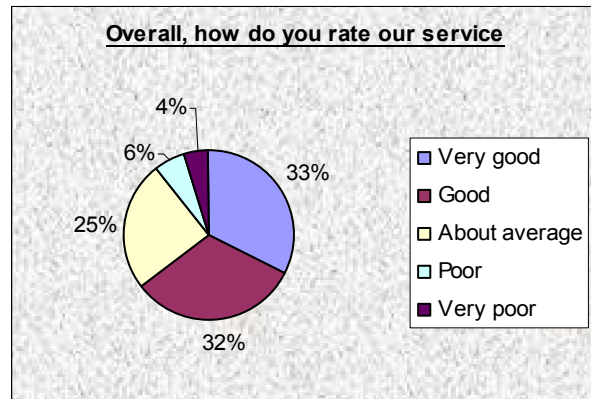
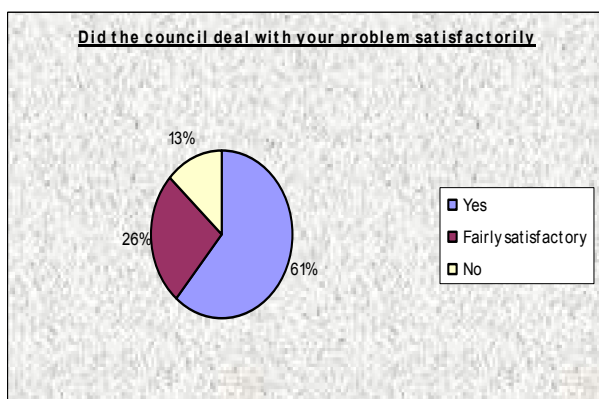
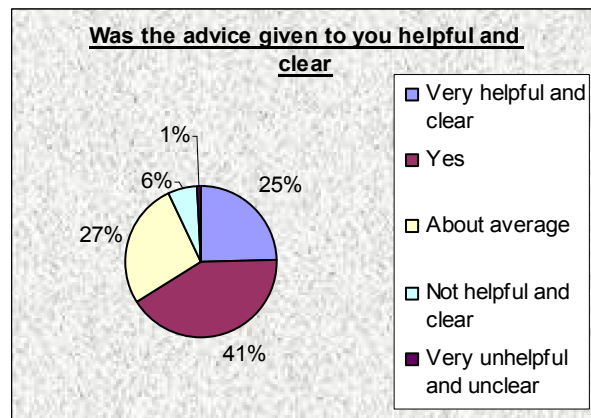
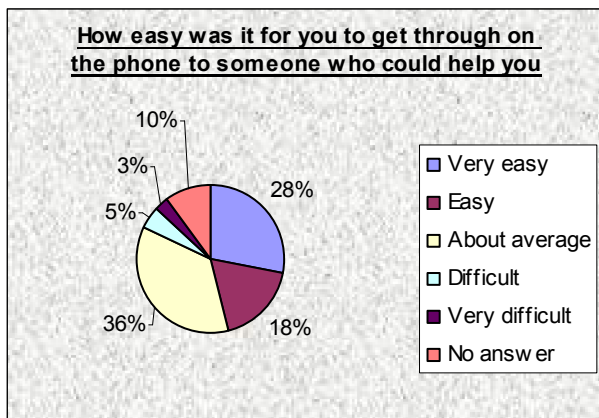
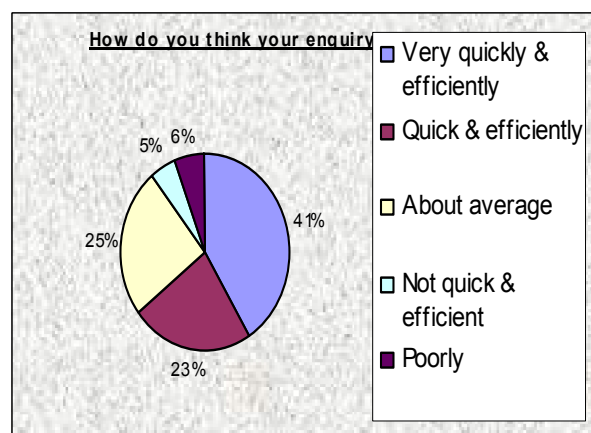
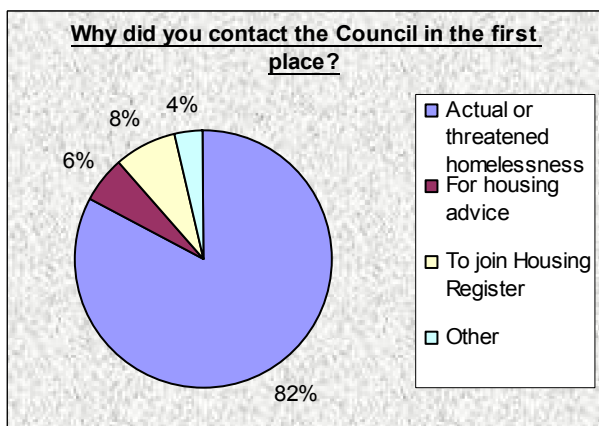
We annually undertake two surveys of all people who have been accepted as homeless.

The first questionnaire is based around temporary accommodation, and the second is on experiences of homelessness.

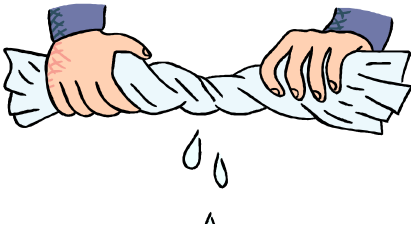
The last survey was undertaken on March 2004 and we offer a £25 voucher of the customers choice to one random person who returns the questionnaires, the winner of the last survey was from Carnforth House, Newport.

Below is a brief example of the responses from the experiences of homelessness questionnaire.

If you have any further questions, or would like to see the responses in full, please contact Hannah Field on (01983) 823065.



Dealing with condensation



Condensation is a problem for many households and occurs in most properties to some degree. It happens when warm moist air meets a cold surface. The air then “condenses” and changes into water droplets. It is this moisture which creates the problems of mould and wet-rot.

Useful tips for dealing with condensation:

1 Produce less water vapour or steam in your home, and don't let it spread around your home

- * Tumble dryers should always have a vent to the outside property.
- * Don't dry clothes on radiators, this places extra water vapour into the air. Where possible put washing outdoors to dry, if this cannot be avoided put it in the bathroom with the door closed and window open.
- * Don't overfill kettles or pans and allow them to boil longer than necessary. Keep lids on pans.

2 Keep your home ventilated

- * Keep rooms well aired, try to have a window open regularly in each room, even if it is for a short time.
- * If you have a mechanical vent, use it
- * When you are using the kitchen and bathroom, keep the doors closed and leave the window ajar so the steam can escape to the outside air and not into the rest of your home.
- * Wardrobes and other large items of furniture should not be placed directly against external walls, leave at least an inch space to allow air to circulate.

3 Keep your home warm - this will prevent cold surfaces forming

- * A low background heat in an aired room will help and in winter you may need to turn the heat up slightly.
- * Try not to use paraffin or Liquified Petroleum Gas heaters as they give off large amounts of water vapour that makes matters worse.
- * Keep your home well insulated and use energy efficient appliances—for advice phone Solent Energy Advice Centre on 0800 512012,

What to do if you find condensation

- * Condensation often forms on windows, use a window scraper (a car type is good) then mop up the moisture below.
- * In other areas, such as painted walls, wipe down and mop up the moisture. Wring out the cloth rather than let it dry out. Shut the door, open the window and heat the room.
- * Remove mould by wiping down the surfaces affected with fungicidal mould remover by following the manufacturers instructions.
- * Serious mould growth may not be completely removed and may require “sealing” before being painted over, or the affected materials may have to be replaced—which will need the advice of a builder or damp proofing contractor.

Homeless Statistics— During April 2003 and March 2004, 760 people applied as homeless, of these 390 were accepted

Categories of people who were accepted as homeless between April 2003 – March 2004

Family with one child	93
Family with two children	58
Elderly	58
Mental Illness	49
Pregnant, no children	42
Family with three or more children	34
Physical Disability	30
16/17 year old	7
Special—Domestic Violence	5
Having been in care	4
Households homeless in emergency	2
Formerly in care, aged 18-21	2
Special—Other	2
Fleeing home due to violence	2
Having served in HM Forces	1
Having been in custody/on remand	1
Drug or alcohol dependency	0
Former Refugee	0
TOTAL	390

Reasons for homelessness in people who were accepted as homeless between April 2003 – March 2004

Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	79
Parents not willing to accommodate	73
Reason for loss of rented accommodation—other	55
Relationship breakdown—Non Violent	46
Relationship breakdown—Violent	39
Friends not willing to accommodate	37
Other—homeless in emergency/abroad etc	23
In institution/care	13
Other forms of harassment	8
Other forms of violence	7
Private sector rent arrears	5
Violent breakdown—associated persons	2
Mortgage arrears	2
Registered Social Landlord rent arrears	1
Racially motivated violence/harassment	0
Local Authority rent arrears	0
Required to leave NASS accommodation	0
TOTAL	390

Discounts on fridge or fridge-freezers



If you receive a qualifying benefit or tax credit and own a damaged, inefficient fridge or fridge-freezer, you may be entitled to a brand new energy efficient appliance.

Powergen has launched a FridgeSavers scheme in association with Currys to offer energy-saving fridges for £50 and fridge-freezers for £75.

You have to agree to have your current appliance disabled when you receive your new fridge or fridge-freezer and Currys will deliver the new product to your home and can arrange the removal of your current appliance for environmentally friendly disposal for £15.

Application forms are available from Housing Services or you can contact the Fridgesavers scheme on 0845 604 0045.



*Isle of Wight Council Adult and
Community Services*

Housing Services Section
7 High Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1SS

Telephone 01983 823040
Fax 01983 823050
Email Housing@iow.gov.uk
Web: www.iwight.com

Changes within the Homelessness Team

Martyn Pearl, Head of Housing will be leaving at the end of November to become the Managing Director of Medina Housing Association.

We have recently appointed a new Housing Needs Manager. Phil Taylor starts on the 1st October, he previously was the Area Director for Raglan Housing Association in Bristol.

The post of an additional Housing Officer is due to be advertised in October, and the new person will join three other officers who will be changing their area of specialisms.

Staff within the Homeless Team

Management

Martyn Pearl Head of Housing Via 01983 823061

Officers

Martyn Stanley	Senior Housing Officer	01983 823041	Martyn.Stanley@iow.gov.uk
Di Palmer	Housing Officer—Special Needs	01983 823042	Di.Palmer@iow.gov.uk
Caroline Fleming	Housing Officer—West side of the Island	01983 823043	Caroline.Fleming@iow.gov.uk
Wendy Salter	Housing Officer—East side of the Island	01983 823044	Wendy.Salter@iow.gov.uk

Homeless Prevention

Hannah Field Homeless Prevention Officer 01983 823065 Hannah.field@iow.gov.uk

Housing Register

Mary Snow Housing Registration Officer 01983 823045 Mary.Snow@iow.gov.uk

Administration

Tim Bateman	Housing Support Officer	01983 823048	Tim.Bateman@iow.gov.uk
Jem Seaward	Housing Support Officer	01983 823047	Jem.Seaward@iow.gov.uk
Jacqui Foster	Housing Support Officer	01983 823063	Jacqueline.Foster@iow.gov.uk
Debbie Townsend	Housing Support Assistant	01983 823062	Debbie.Townsend@iow.gov.uk