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Rent statements – we hope to mail out your rent statements and Home Matters together later this year – watch this space...

## Gas servicing and performance at an all time high

Circle 33 is delighted to announce that its gas repair performance is at its highest ever levels as a result of its effective partnership with repairs and servicing contractor – Village Heating Ltd.

Village Heating Ltd (VHL) have had responsibility for gas repairs and servicing for all Circle 33 managed homes since May 2009. By the end of 2009, through a lot of hard work, they completed 98% of all its boiler repairs on time with 88% of customers satisfied with the service.

Even more importantly, we achieved a best ever gas servicing compliance rate of 99.86% in December 2009 against a target of 100%. This success has been the result of dedication to improving customer service and satisfaction by both Circle 33 and VHL staff.

MD of Circle 33, Carol Carter said, "These results are excellent and we are delighted that such a relatively new partnership is yielding such impressive results. We must also say a

big thank you to all of our customers who kept their gas service appointments, allowing VHL in to their homes to carry out this important safety check that is a legal requirement.

Gas servicing is incredibly important. A service will make sure your boiler is working safely and economically. We are obliged to ensure that boilers are serviced each year by an engineer registered with the 'Gas Safety Register'. When you receive the appointment letter please either keep the appointment or call immediately to rearrange. We can offer evening and weekend appointments if needed. A service usually takes up to an hour depending on the type of boiler. Read more about gas servicing on page two.



For more information about gas servicing please call 0800 073 0417 or visit

[www.circleanglia.org/circle-33/resident-info/gas](http://www.circleanglia.org/circle-33/resident-info/gas).

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### Contents Insurance – are your valuables protected?

### Peace of mind at affordable cost



- Did you know that your landlord is not responsible for insuring the belongings in your home?
- Could you afford to replace your possessions if the worst was to happen?
- Did you know that you can protect the valuables in your home from just £3.69 per month for £9,000 cover and that if you are 60 or over you may qualify for an even lower monthly amount?

Circle Anglia offers low cost contents insurance to its residents through Aviva.

The policy includes;

- protection for your clothes, furniture and electrical goods
- covers insurance for carpets and decorations
- accidental damage
- theft of your keys and lock changes
- contents in your freezer

- the contents of outbuildings
- contents whilst household members are at university
- documents insurance

Against damage caused by:

- fire
- water
- theft
- vandalism

For more information on Circle Anglia's Home Contents Insurance, please call Wessex Administration Services on 01962 844454 or email [resident.communications@circleanglia.org](mailto:resident.communications@circleanglia.org). A full guide to our low cost insurance policy and application form is also available at [www.circleanglia.org/insurance.html](http://www.circleanglia.org/insurance.html)



Customer contact centre 0800 073 0417 or 0207 447 3100

[repairs@circleanglia.org](mailto:repairs@circleanglia.org) (for all repairs enquiries) – [circle33info@circleanglia.org](mailto:circle33info@circleanglia.org) (for all other enquiries)

## Welcome from Carol Carter

As I write the country is still in the grip of very cold weather so it's appropriate that in this issue of Home Matters we focus in on gas servicing and repairs. I am pleased to say that the hard work of staff and our partnership with Village Heating is providing improved services and helping to keep residents warm and safe. If you are experiencing problems however please call our freephone number 0800 073 0417.

Also in this edition, as well as advice on saving energy and beating condensation (page three), we highlight new jobs being created for those who are unemployed (this page) and give examples of how we are helping tenants through the new Housing Options and Advice Service (page three). On page four we bring you news of funding to bring



communities together.

I hope you enjoy our Winter Home Matters. If there are any other issues you'd like to see featured please contact the editorial team by emailing [resident.communications@circleanglia.org](mailto:resident.communications@circleanglia.org).

Very best wishes

**Carol Carter**

Managing Director,  
Circle 33 Housing Trust ■

## Gas safety in your home



Every year in the UK around 30 people are killed and many others are affected by carbon monoxide poisoning from faulty gas installations such as fires and boilers in their homes. Carbon monoxide is a particularly dangerous gas because you cannot smell it. The symptoms of poisoning are tiredness, drowsiness, headaches and pains in the chest and stomach.

People suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning often fall asleep not knowing why they feel tired. Faulty gas appliances in bedrooms

are particularly dangerous because a sleeping person does not raise suspicion in others. It is essential therefore to have all gas appliances checked annually.

Circle 33 are legally required to ensure that any gas appliances, fittings and flues provided for tenants use are safe. In particular we must have your gas appliances checked annually by a Gas Safe Register engineer who will issue a 'Landlord Gas Safety Certificate.' (CP12)

If you smell gas or are worried about gas safety, you can call the National Grid Gas Emergency Freephone Number – **0800 111 999** at any time, day or night. Your call will not cost you anything.

### Safety tips

- Never use a gas appliance if you think it is not working properly

- Poor combustion is characterised by a yellow or orange flame, soot or stains around the appliance and a pilot light that keeps going out
- Never cover an appliance or block air vents or outside flues
- Never fit draught excluders or double-glazing to rooms containing a gas appliance without providing suitable alternative ventilation

For more information on gas safety you can contact the Health and Safety Executive.

Do you have a valid gas safety certificate? If your gas appliances have not been serviced in the last 12 months or if you are unsure please contact our Customer Contact Centre on **0800 073 0417**, our advisors will be happy to advise and book a Gas Service if needed. ■

## A Step Up The Ladder



Circle 33 is helping young people who may currently be out of work, with the creation of 20 new jobs.

Following a successful bid to the government's Future Jobs Fund, we are working with the charity Groundwork and National Housing Federation, as well as Council's and other organisations to create the new jobs.

We want to help break the 'no experience, no work' cycle. The support we're able to provide will help young people achieve a wide range of qualifications, while securing the personal support they need to succeed. This will improve the skills, confidence and employability of jobseekers and improve the quality of life of local communities.

There will be a range of opportunities available. The initial one's include; Resident Involvement Officer, Decent Homes Assistant, Income Assistant, Housing Assistant and more!

Each job will last at least six months and employees will be paid the Living Wage for a 25-hour week, as well as support in finding longer term employment.

**If you're under 25, have been out of work for around ten months or you know someone who could be eligible, drop into your local Job Centre and ask for further information, or contact Bina Omare on 0207 447 3128 email: [bina.omare@circleanglia.org](mailto:bina.omare@circleanglia.org) ■**

## Stop Press!

### No more payments at Corsica Street

Following a value for money review of our rent payment methods, we found that the costs and risks associated with accepting cash payments at our office have risen significantly in recent years and was of limited benefit to residents. So we are stopping cash and cheque payments at the office. The savings we make will be used to help us deliver better services for you like dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Don't worry you can still pay your rent by cash, but you will need to visit a local post office or paypoint outlet of which there are a large number across London.

The two payment outlets that are closest to our office at Corsica Street are:

1. Highbury Post Office, 5 Highbury Corner, London, N5 1RF
2. Retail 24, 249 Upper Street, London, N1 1RU

If you would like information on the range of other payment methods available to you, you can contact the contact centre on **0800 073 0417** or visit [www.circleanglia.org/circle-33/resident-info/rent/paying-your-rent,268,LA.html](http://www.circleanglia.org/circle-33/resident-info/rent/paying-your-rent,268,LA.html) for details. ■



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## Housing Option successes

The Housing Options and Advice service aims to assist severely overcrowded households, those who need to move due to serious health/disability issues and those who want a smaller home. There are about 1,250 Circle 33 tenants currently registered for transfer to another more suitable home, of which around 550 are overcrowded.

The Housing Options and Advice service scheme is a new approach to identifying the best options to help individual families and is backed by a flexible fund. The aim is to offer advice and support to fifty families per year. So far 41 families

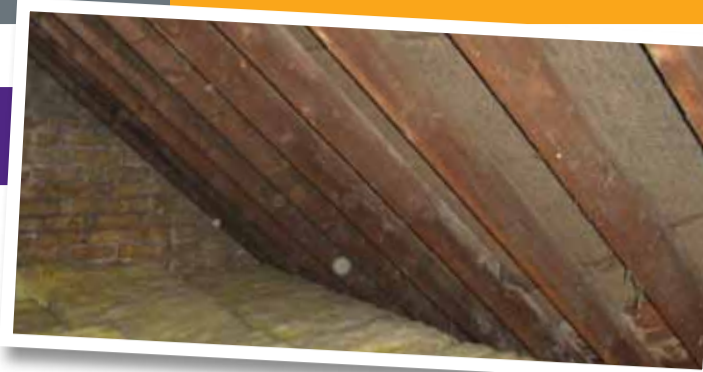
have benefited. In addition to advising residents on how to register on other waiting lists and/or find another household to swap homes with we have used the flexible fund to assist families in a range of ways, for example:

- A loft conversion to create an extra bedroom
- Knock through from a hallway into a garage to create an extra bedroom using the space
- The creation of a third storey to create an additional bedroom and shower room
- Extension into the roof space of a maisonette to

- create two extra bedrooms
- Conversion of a living room into a bedroom and the addition of a conservatory to serve as a living area
- The de-conversion of a property of 1 bedroom flats into a four bedroom six person house
- The re-housing of adult non-dependant children into market rented homes
- A Rent Deposit Scheme for tenants wishing to move to the private rented sector.
- Space saving furniture such as wardrobes with storage or sofa beds
- A payment of £1500 per room, to encourage downsizing

Housing Options and Advice is an area we want to continue to develop as feedback from tenants has been extremely positive.

For more information contact The Housing Options and Advice Team on 0800 073 0417 (press for option 3). ■



## How do I deal with condensation in my home?

Every home gets condensation from time to time – it's caused by water in the air collecting on cold surfaces. You can reduce it by doing a few simple things;

- Cover pans when cooking and hang washing outside to dry if you can
- Avoid using paraffin or portable gas heaters – one of the main causes of condensation
- Keep bathroom and kitchen doors shut when you are using them and ventilate these rooms afterwards
- Don't completely draught-proof rooms with condensation as this could make it worse
- If rooms are cold and are not being used, keep the doors shut
- Keep a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open in each occupied room whilst you are at home
- Heating can help but only if it's used in addition to the other suggestions
- It's best to heat your home at a consistent level rather than an hour here and there

### Dealing with mildew

Mildew may first appear in corners or behind cupboards, but it can spread across entire walls and on to furnishings.

It can be removed with detergents or mould removers. It can be washed out of fabrics, but may leave stains or spoil colours. ■

## ▶▶ Helping you to keep warm this winter ▶▶

The price of energy continues to go up. Circle Anglia and its partners are dedicated to offering residents advice on keeping energy costs down and are investing millions of pounds in making homes more energy efficient.

If you have any further questions, speak to your neighbourhood officer or when you call us, ask if we can help. Visit our website [www.circleanglia.org/circle-33/resident-info/energy-advice](http://www.circleanglia.org/circle-33/resident-info/energy-advice) for useful videos and links to other further information.

### Answering your questions

#### What is fuel poverty?

If you spend more than 10% of your income on energy you are in fuel poverty. It is estimated that 4.6 million UK households are in fuel poverty.

#### How can I save money on my energy bills?



- Don't leave TVs and monitors on standby. **SAVE** up to £40 a year
- Buy smaller LCD TV screens rather than large plasma screens. **SAVE** up to £25 a year



- Put silver foil behind your radiators to reflect heat back into the room. **SAVE** up to £20 a year
- Turn your thermostat down by one degree. **SAVE** up to £60 a year
- Have shower instead of a bath. **SAVE** up to £40 a year
- Buy energy efficient appliances. **SAVE** up to £30 a year
- Wash your clothes at 40 degrees. **SAVE** up to £10. Dry them outside instead of in a tumble. **SAVE** up to £25
- Use energy efficient bulbs. **SAVE** up to £40 a year
- Switch off lights when you leave a room. **SAVE** up to £10
- Making a cup of tea? Only use the water you need. **SAVE** up to £10

That's a saving of up to **£360**. It all adds up!!

## Getting the best deal on energy

### What are social energy tariffs?

Energy deals for people that are classed as fuel poor. Many companies offer these tariffs:

#### EDF Energy – Energy Assist

Call the EDF Energy Priority Services Team on 0800 269 450

#### npower – Spreading Warmth Tariff

Call 0800 9751373

#### E.ON – Staywarm

Go to [www.eonenergy.com/At-Home/Going-Green/Energy-Saving-Advice/Guidance-And-Caring-Energy.htm](http://www.eonenergy.com/At-Home/Going-Green/Energy-Saving-Advice/Guidance-And-Caring-Energy.htm)

#### Scottish Power – Carefree Plus

Call 0845 2700 700

#### Scottish and Southern Energy – Energyplus Care

Call Careline on 0800 622 838

#### British Gas – Essentials

Call Essentials Tariff on 0845 850 2207

### For free, impartial advice on energy bills, contact any of the following:

- Home Heat Helpline on 0800 33 66 99 (freephone)
- Energy Saving Trust advice centre on 0800 512 012 (freephone)
- Age Concern on 0800 00 99 66 (freephone)

If you are struggling to pay your bills, don't ignore it. Get advice. Call us on 01306 505 555 or;

- Consumer Credit Counselling Service 0800 138 1111 (freephone)
- National Debtline 0808 808 4000 (freephone)

Customer contact centre 0800 073 0417 or 0207 447 3100

repairs@circleanglia.org (for all repairs enquiries) – circle33info@circleanglia.org (for all other enquiries)

## How are we doing?

We have 'performance indicators' in place to ensure that we are delivering quality services and providing value for money. The table provides a flavour of how we are performing against some key indicators to 31st December 2009, compared to the previous. Although we may not have met all our own challenging targets, we are working hard to ensure we can meet as many of them as possible throughout the year, and aiming to improve both satisfaction and performance all the time.

Performance Indicator	2008/09 Performance	2009/10 Performance	2009/10 Target	Have we improved?	Did we meet our target?
% customers satisfied with overall service	73.4%	73.8%	81%	↔	☹
% of emergency repairs completed within target	90.4%	98.2%	97.5%	↑	☺
% of urgent repairs completed within target	92.1%	97.7%	93.0%	↑	☺
% routine repairs completed within target	88.4%	89.5%	95.0%	↑	☹
% properties with valid gas safety certificate	98.5%	99.8%	100%	↑	☹
% telephone calls to the contact centre answered within 30 seconds	67.5%	74.2%	70%	↑	☺
Current tenants arrears as a % of annual rent due	4.8%	4.7%	4.9%	↑	☺
Days to relet vacant properties	35.0 days	31.7 days	28 days	↑	☹

## Introducing the Circle 33 Community Chest



### What is Community Chest?

Community Chest is a fund which offers grants to Circle 33 residents to fund community-based projects.

### Who can apply?

- Recognised Circle 33 Tenants' and Residents' Associations
- Recognised Tenants' and Residents' Associations that include Circle 33 residents as members
- Individual Circle 33 residents or non Circle 33 residents (who can demonstrate clear benefits to Circle 33 residents) who have a project idea that will benefit their local community

Circle 33 can't fund the same project more than once through the Community Chest. However, Team for Communities can help support those projects.

### What projects are eligible?

They must benefit Circle 33 residents and have a longer term benefit for the local community.

Examples could include: setting up parent and toddler groups; gardening projects; youth activities; small food co-ops; training; community business start up and special interest classes.

### How much can be applied for?

You can apply for funding ranging from £100 to a maximum of £1,500.

Please remember: You must demonstrate value for money and be able to match fund the grant you are applying for. This may include your time spent on the project or funds from other external sources. Be realistic in costing the project and start the process as early as possible if you are going to need to raise additional funding from other sources.

### How to apply

Fill in a Circle 33 Community Chest Application Form which can be obtained by contacting the Community Development Team via:

### Post:

Freepost RLXE-LHAR-JBAR  
Circle Anglia Ltd  
1-7 Corsica Street  
London N5 1JG  
Tel: 0207 447 3070  
Email our Community Development Officer on: [m.rogers@circleanglia.org](mailto:m.rogers@circleanglia.org)

If you need support with your application, arrange to meet Team for Communities at the Corsica Street office where we will explain the process and assist you with completing your application form. We can also provide the application form in your own language if necessary.

You could also contact your Customer Service Manager who will meet with you and assist you in completing the application process.

### When to apply

Applications can be made at any time, but decisions are made three times a year. There are therefore three closing dates:

March 1st, June 30th and Sept 30th 2010

We will aim to have a decision made about your application within four weeks of these closing dates. ■

## Get ready for Neighbours Day 2010 Friday 28th May

Circle 33 will once again be participating in Neighbours' Day this year and encouraging people to get to know other people in the community.

Launched ten years ago with the vision of creating better conditions for living together and promoting community cohesion, the main aim of Neighbours' Day is to get local residents to take on lead roles and organise a neighbours' party themselves.

So get thinking about what you and your community might want to do to celebrate Neighbours' Day this year. Circle 33 residents can apply for up to £200 grant to support an event.

For more information, please contact Mark Rogers, Community Development Officer, on 020 7447 3070 or email [m.rogers@circleanglia.org](mailto:m.rogers@circleanglia.org). Look out for updates in the next issue of Home Matters in April. ■

## See Your Data

Did you know that you can see your rent account and repairs history on line via the Circle 33 resident website. Rather than needing to call the contact centre for an account balance or check a recent payment, why don't you just log-in and take a look for yourself. You will need to register to create an account log-in, but once that's done, your information is at your fingertips.

Please visit [www.circleanglia.org/circle-33](http://www.circleanglia.org/circle-33) and click on 'My Account' to register and log-in.

