



Residents' Annual Report 2007/8



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Introduction from Residents' Forum



Welcome to Gateway's annual report for residents for 2007-8. The Residents' Forum is a group of residents who meets regularly with Gateway staff to discuss issues that matter to residents.

Gateway has homes for single people, for families bringing up their children and for older people enjoying their later years, all in a peaceful, friendly and secure neighbourhood. As well as providing you with good quality housing and responsive housing maintenance, Gateway is also proud of its community focus.

We, The Residents' Forum, are committed to continuing this work. We would like to encourage you to join in the various involvement opportunities that Gateway offers so as residents, we can shape the service Gateway provides. As residents, we are in the best position to say where improvements need to be made.

You can be appointed to the new Residents' Panel (starting in October 2008) which will give us as residents a much greater role and influence over the strategic matters of the association. Or you could join the Residents' Forum which looks at the more day-to-day issues that affect residents, and looks after the community chest and environmental improvement grants.

We are looking forward to these changes and the higher levels of influence they bring to us. We hope that the new opportunities will encourage more residents to get involved.

We also have many other groups and ways to be involved, including the disabled residents' panel, the 100 Club consumer group, mystery shoppers or the sheltered forum and tenant involvement groups.

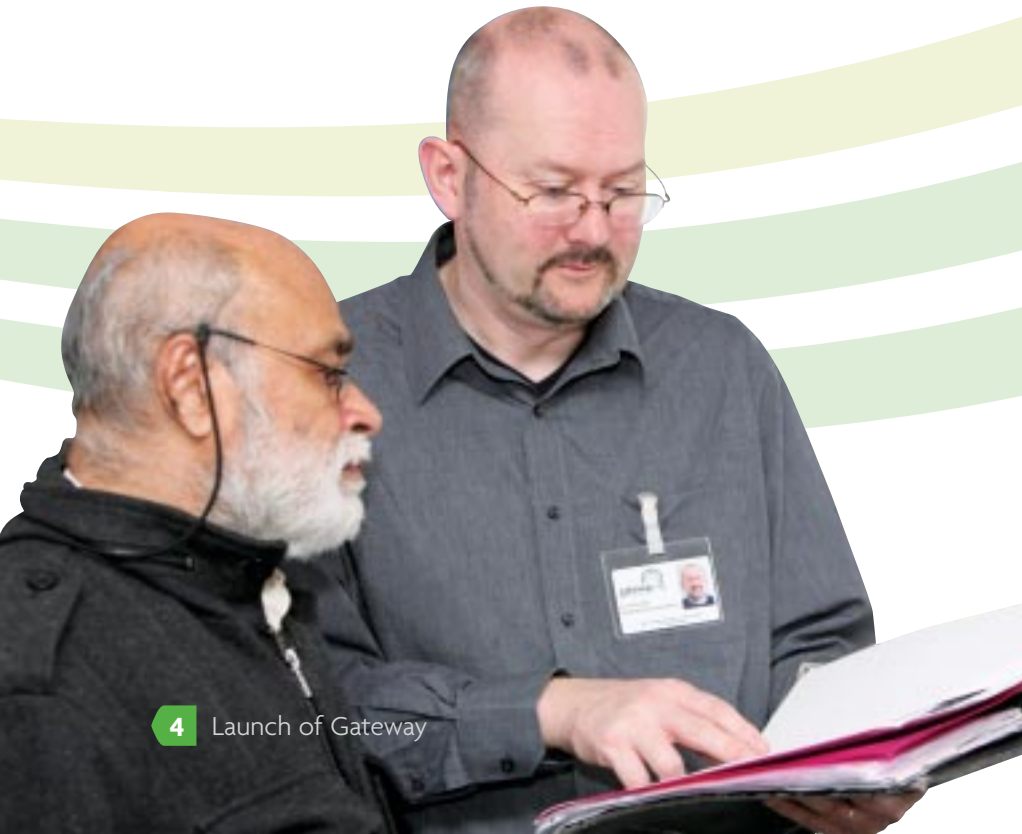
**So come along and get involved.
We look forward to meeting you!**

Launch of Gateway

gateway
housing association

Gateway is the new organisation formed by the merger of Bethnal Green and Victoria Park Housing Association (BGVPHA) and Labo Housing Association on 31 March 2008.

Having worked together in Tower Hamlets for over 20 years, we decided to join forces as we felt we would be able to achieve more for you, our residents, together than separately.



Why Gateway?

We chose the name Gateway, for three reasons:

- 1 Tower Hamlets was the traditional **gateway** for migrant communities entering the UK.
- 2 The area we work in is part of the **Thames Gateway**.
- 3 We believe that decent, affordable housing is a **gateway** for a better quality of life for those on low incomes.

A new start in a new office

To launch Gateway, we moved to new offices, with all of our office-based staff under one roof. This gives you access to all of our services in one central place. It also helps our staff work more efficiently and effectively as they work side by side with other teams.

Resident involvement officer, Shazna Khatun, says:

“it’s great we’re all in one place now. If I want to see the housing officer about a specific issue, I just walk to their desk, rather than having to schedule a meeting in a week’s time in another office. It’s much more friendly and saves us all a lot of time.”

New staff structure at Gateway

As two well-established organisations were merging, a new structure was put in place. This was achieved with no permanent staff losing their jobs. The new structure includes a permanent antisocial behaviour officer and a new post of policy and quality assurance manager.

Gateway's customer focus

We have set up a new customer service team, which we are developing during the year so that it is fully operational by March 2009. This is the 'first contact' point, so when you phone or visit the office, you will speak to someone who should be able to deal with your query. Only if the call is more detailed or about something specific then will you be put through to someone else.

We have also created three new income recovery officer posts, who are responsible for dealing with rent arrears and money difficulties. This means that the housing officers, who previously did this work, can now spend more time out and about on our estates.

2008 is an exciting time for Gateway.



The year in brief



Community chest

The community chest is a grant available for residents' groups and activities. A maximum of £500 per group is available each year towards events such as a fun day or exercise classes.

Residents at Constant and Holmsdale Houses took full advantage of this grant. Adding it to grants from other organisations, plus money collected from residents, they organised a successful festive party in January and a fun day in August.



Customer service team

We launched a new customer services team in April 2008. When you call our residents-only number (020 8709 4300), or the maintenance freephone number (0800 052 9922), the aim is that you get straight through to the customer services team.

The person who answers the phone should be able to deal with most of your queries, from your rent account balance to reporting a repair.

This team is available from 8am-6pm, Monday to Friday. If you have an emergency outside of office hours, please phone 0800 085 6064.



Environmental improvement grants

Do you know of an area in your estate or scheme that could do with some improvement? It might attract antisocial behaviour (ASB) or be a communal garden that needs some TLC.

Last year, the residents' forum approved 16 applications for grants, including:

- lighting improvements and a girder gate in Parfett Street;
- sensors in the lights at Huddleston and Edinburgh Closes;
- works to the bin areas in St Leonard's Street, Maroon Street and Duckett Street;
- a security gate at Constant House.

To find out more about how to apply for a grant, contact Shazna Khatun on 020 8709 4360.

Living the high life

Warning - living in one of our sheltered schemes could lead to a hectic social life!

This year our schemes have had many social activities, including; a boat trip and fish supper, parties to celebrate Easter and St George's Day, summer BBQs, joint events with other schemes, a Caribbean event at Appian Court, exercise classes, computer classes, the list goes on and on. And this doesn't even include every-day activities such as bingo and regular 'scheme-meals'!

Plus... now we have two additional schemes at Mosque Tower and Bustaan Radaa so the opportunities for more activities are even greater!



Sheltered major works at the transferred schemes

Works on the transferred sheltered schemes are coming along, with three schemes (Hugh Platt, Mandela and John Tucker Houses), now finished. Residents are enjoying their newly refurbished flats with new kitchens and bathrooms.

Marie Higginson of Hugh Platt House says

“I love my new kitchen. It was inconvenient while it was being done as I had to move to another flat, but the wait was worth it! I am very happy with the work.”



Residents' conference

In October 2007, your feedback from the residents' open day helped us to develop a new style 'Residents' Conference' for 2008.



Members of our Residents' Forum worked very hard on organising the day, held in August 2008. They suggested topics for workshops and said what they would like to hear talks on and who by. They also selected St Paul's Church, Bow, as the most suitable venue and decided that they needed a variety of activities to entertain the kids whilst their parents were busy.

The day was very successful (despite the pouring rain) and 94% of people who attended said they found the day 'interesting' or 'very interesting'. We have learned a lot and hope for an even better day next year.



Satisfaction survey

BGVPHA's 2007 satisfaction survey showed a slight increase in your satisfaction levels, from 70% to 71%. You were more satisfied with the condition of your home, with getting involved with the association and with Open Door, our residents' newsletter than in previous years.

Residents were most concerned about contacting the association and our repairs and maintenance service. We wrote an action plan to put in place recommendations based on the results of the survey.

We are making good progress with this which we report to the Residents' Forum.

What we are proud of

The National Housing Federation annual neighbourhood awards had a new category this year. Residents and staff nominated their association for 'What we are proud of' if they felt their project was especially beneficial to residents or the local community. Judges who were tenants of various London housing associations shortlisted the entries.

Sue Izzet, a member of our Residents' Forum, was one of the judges. *"The entries were all really good but three stood out. They were all really inspirational"*. Amicus Horizon eventually won the London heat - we hope to put in an entry next year.

Lift works

Major works have also taken place at Betty May Gray House on the Isle of Dogs.

The lift in this 1950s block was replaced for the first time with the most up-to-date state-of-the-art digital CCTV security system within time and budget.



Getting involved; staying involved



Over the past year, Gateway's resident involvement has moved from strength to strength.

New resident involvement manager

When recruiting for our new resident involvement manager, we felt it was important that our residents had a say in this important role.

Gateway residents Muna Mohamad, Ivy Healey and David Bayat sat on the interview panel with our HR manager, Marie Dowsett, and Madeleine Glaisher, Director of Central Services. They unanimously selected Mo Ali, who joined us in June.

All three residents had never interviewed anyone before, but soon got the hang of it and were pleased they had volunteered.



Muna says:

"I was so nervous before the interviews, I was shaking! But Madeleine and Marie were really supportive and I quickly got more confident. I have gained new skills that I can use in the future."



Residents' Panel

The new Residents' Panel will be part of our formal management structure and will make strategic decisions about the business. We will also nominate two Panel members to sit on the Board.

The first meeting of the Panel will take place in October 2008.

The search is now on for residents who are able to commit to regular meetings and show they can understand the way we work. This could be a leaseholder, sheltered or general needs tenant, but the panel needs to reflect the diversity of all our residents. We provide training to increase the knowledge of residents who are already involved, many of whom already attend the Residents' Forum.

Residents' Forum

The Residents' Forum has become a more representative and dynamic group in the past year and has increased its knowledge and capacity, all under the chair of Brian Lafferty. Brian says: *"I am very proud of the work the Forum has done recently."*

The Forum is open to all residents. The only thing that is asked of them is that personal issues and grievances are not raised at the meeting and they conduct

themselves in a business-like manner. Over the past year, the Forum has approved £8,000 in community chest grants, and £41,000 for environmental improvement works, both of which have benefited entire communities.

We are keen to involve more leaseholders, so if you are interested, get in touch!

One size doesn't fit all

We know that 'one size doesn't fit all' so we offer a wide range of involvement as well as the Panel and Forum.

- one-off focus groups
- consumer panel questionnaire (100 Club)
- Tenants' and Residents' Associations
- Sheltered Housing Forum
- Tenant Involvement Groups (sheltered housing)
- working groups for specific projects (for example, the residents' conference)
- residents' open days and conferences
- training
- mystery shopping
- leaseholder consultative group

If you are interested in finding out more about any of the above opportunities, please contact Mo Ali on 020 8709 4381.



Facts and figures



Homes we manage (as at 31/03/08)

	BGVPHA	Labo	Total
General needs	1440	373	1813
Housing for older people	431	48	479
Supported housing	123	35	158
Staff accommodation	6	0	6
Shared ownership	210	22	232
Commercial	0	2	2
Total	2210	480	2690

Re-lets

The average time taken to re-let one of our homes in 2007/8 was:

	General needs	Sheltered	2006
BGVPHA	37.6 days	38 days	41.22 days
Labo	41.5 days	65 days	34 days

Development

During 2007/8, we completed the following number of new homes:

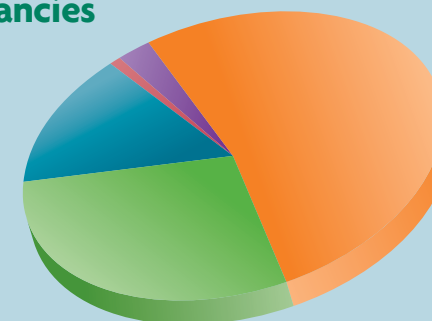
	BGVPHA	Labo	Total	2006 (BGVPHA only)
Shared ownership	0	22	22	52
Rented	39	6	45	16
Total	39	28	67	68

Lettings activity

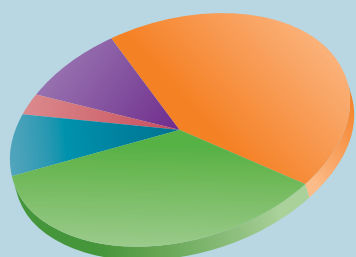
Where new tenants came from	General needs housing		Sheltered housing	
	BGVPHA	Labo	BGVPHA	Labo
Homeless households	24	8	1	3
Transfers from Choice Based Lettings	19	12	37	2
Nominations from other local authorities	1	n/a	2	n/a
Transfers (within BGVPHA/Labo)	n/a	n/a	14	n/a
Total	44	20	54	5

Total ethnic origin of new tenancies

- 52.5% White
- 30.3% Asian
- 13.9% Black
- 0.8% Mixed
- 2.5% Other



New tenants' satisfaction with lettings services (%)



pie chart showing results for 2007



	BGVPHA 2007	2006
Very satisfied	43.5	34
Satisfied	35.9	50
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	8.4	11
Fairly poor	2.9	2.5
Poor	9.3	2.5

BGVPHA
2007 2006






43.5% of new tenants are very satisfied with our lettings service – compared to 34% in 2006.



Overall tenant satisfaction (%)

	2007	Previously
BGVPHA	71	70 (2005)
Labo	49	59 (2004)

We still have some work to do.



Formal complaints

	BGVPHA	Labo	Total	2006 (BGVPHA only)
Maintenance	24	17	41	17
Cleaning	4	0	4	-
Rent and service charge	6	3	9	5
Lettings	1	4	5	-
Major repairs	4	1	5	5
Antisocial behaviour	7	8	15	17
Housing management	-	-	-	7
Staff	-	-	-	3
Other	12	13	25	8
Total	58	46	104	59

During 2007/8, BGVPHA and Labo received 104 formal complaints. We dealt with almost all of the complaints at stage 1 of our procedure. Only six complaints proceeded to stage 2 and two went onto stage 3. The Independent Housing Ombudsman dealt with two complaints. The average number of days taken to respond to a complaint was 13.5 days (the target is 10 days).

The complaints panel meets quarterly to make sure that we deal with complaints properly. We send a follow-up questionnaire to everyone who makes a formal complaint.

The complaints policy and procedure is available on request from our office.

Information on repairs (%)

	2007/08		2006/07	
	BGVPHA	Labo	BGVPHA	Labo
Emergency repairs completed on target	97.8	96.0	98.2	95.0
Urgent repairs completed on target	96.6	89.0	97.5	88.0
Routine repairs completed on target	98.1	94.0	98.8	96.0

Management and investment (£)

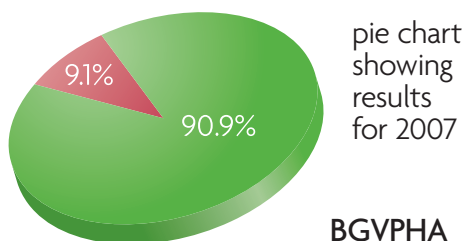
	BGVPHA 2007/8		BGVPHA 2006	
	General needs	Sheltered	General needs	Labo
Weekly operating cost	75.36	90.41	63.43	n/a
Weekly investment per unit	38.94	78.53	35.68	109.84

How your rent is spent (per £1)

- 28p Managing your home
- 27p Service costs
- 32p Routine repairs
- 2p Depreciation
- 11p Planned maintenance/major repairs



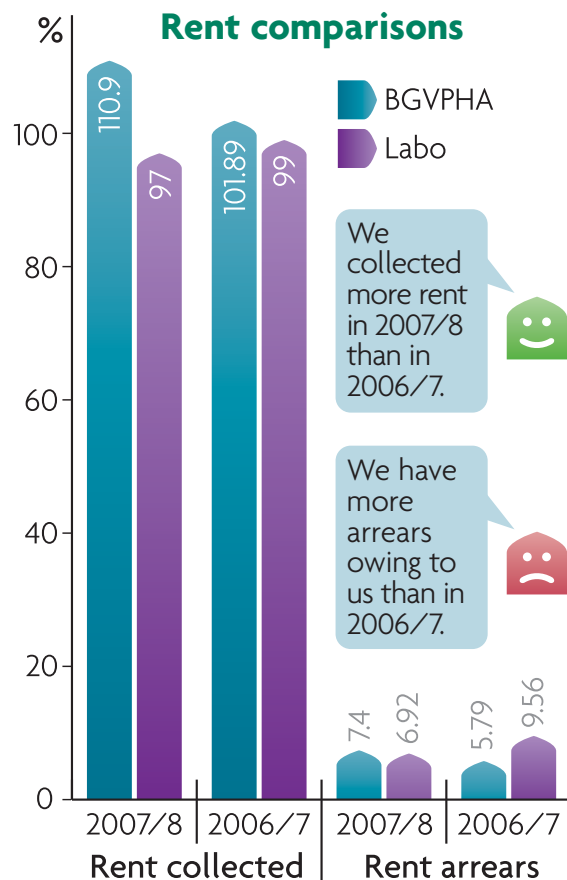
Maintenance satisfaction (%)



	BGVPHA	
	2007	2006
Satisfied	90.9	84.2
Not satisfied	9.1	13.4
No answer	-	2.5

90.9% of people who returned their repair satisfaction survey were satisfied, compared with 84.2% in 2006.

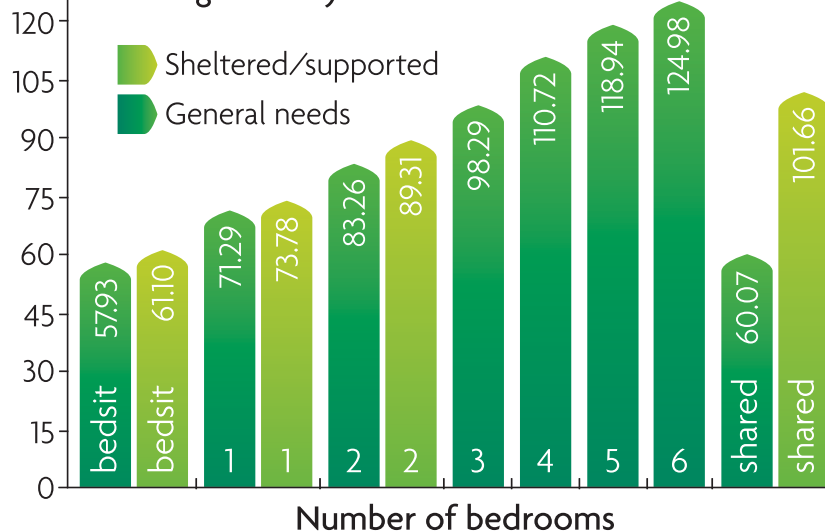
Rent comparisons



Average weekly net rents (£)

Number of bedrooms	BGVPHA General needs	BGVPHA Sheltered	Labo General needs	Labo Sheltered
Bedsit	57.93	61.10	0	0
1 bed	70.32	71.66	79.24	87.72
2 bed	80.96	86.30	96.59	94.12
3 bed	94.57	-	109.45	-
4 bed	108.56	-	117.36	-
5 bed	116.55	-	123.64	-
6 bed	120.67	-	130.28	-
Shared	60.07	75.94	0	123.32

BGVPHA and Labo combined average weekly net rents



Financial Statements

summary accounts at 31st March 2008



Income and expenditure account

	BGVPHA		Labo HA	
	2007/08	2006 (restated)	2007/08	2006/07
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Income				
Rents	10,367	7,645	2,314	1,957
Service charges	1,667	1,207	173	122
Supporting people charges	509	463	591	584
Other	251	214	108	189
	12,794	9,529	3,186	2,852
Expenditure				
Services	-2,687	-1,833	-150	-146
Management	-2,814	-1,782	-809	-772
Maintenance	-3,202	-2,369	-256	-285
Major repairs	-1,078	-724	-44	-11
Other	-1,059	-1,148	-1,024	-905
	-10,840	-7,856	-2,283	-2,119
What we have left	1,954	1,673	903	733
Surplus on sale of properties	2,830	1,280	0	0
Interest receivable	273	163	27	10
Interest payable and similar charges	-1,814	-1,101	-821	-600
Surplus for the year	3,243	2,015	109	143
Net transfer from designated reserves	2,573	2,353	0	0
Revenue reserves brought forward	13,713	9,345	2,724	2,581
Revenue reserves carried forward	19,529	13,713	2,833	2,724

Balance sheet

	BGVPHA	
	2007/08	2006 (restated)
	£'000s	£'000s
Fixed Assets		
Housing properties at depreciated cost	159,046	120,992
Grants	-105,068	-83,112
	53,978	37,880
Other fixed assets	3,131	1,909
Current assets/liabilities		
Properties developed for resale	1,588	639
Debtors	3,095	911
Cash at bank and in hand	5,599	2,507
Current liabilities	-6,198	-3,741
	61,193	40,105
Capital and reserves		
Long term creditors	37,342	22,370
Share capital	0	0
Negative goodwill	2,907	0
Revenue reserves	19,529	13,713
Designated reserves	1,415	4,022
	61,193	40,105

Note that the 2007/08 BGVPHA figures relate to the 15-month period to 31 March 2008. During 2007/08 the Boards of both BGVPHA and Labo agreed to a merger. Following the merger on 31 March 2008 and the Transfer of Engagements from Labo to Bethnal Green and Victoria Park Housing Association a new name was adopted, Gateway Housing Association, on 1 April 2008. The BGVPHA balance sheet for 2007/08 incorporates the balances transferred from Labo HA on 31 March 2008.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BETHNAL GREEN AND VICTORIA PARK HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED & LABO HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

We have audited the financial statements of Bethnal Green & Victoria Park Housing Association Limited and Labo Housing Association Limited for the period ended 31 March 2008 from which the summarised financial statements were derived, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. In our report dated 23 July 2008 we expressed an unqualified opinion on the financial statements from which the summarised financial statements were derived.

In our opinion, the accompanying summarised financial statements are consistent, in all material aspects, with the financial statements from which they were derived.

For a better understanding of the Association's financial position and the results of its operations for the period and the scope of our audit, the summarised financial statements should be read in conjunction with the financial statements from which summarised financial statements were derived and our audit report thereon.

Beever and Struthers, Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, Wembley, Middlesex. Date: 23 July 2008
A full copy of our financial statements are available from Gateway's head office.

Who to contact if...

you need a repair:

Freephone customer services on 0800 052 9922 or 020 8709 4300 (8am-6pm, Monday to Friday)

you need an emergency repair and the office is shut:

Emergency repairs service on 0800 085 6064

you want to find out how to move home:

Lettings on 020 8709 4300 or www.homeswapper.co.uk

you want to make a complaint:

Ask customer services on 020 8709 4300 to send you a form, or complete one online at www.gatewayhousing.org.uk

you want to speak to the council (for Council Tax or Housing Benefit enquiries or for a bulk rubbish collection):

LB Tower Hamlets on 020 7364 5000

LB Hackney on 020 8356 3000

LB Newham on 020 8430 2000

you want to find out more about home ownership options:

Marketing on 020 8709 4352



you want to check your rent account:

Customer services on 020 8709 4300

you want to report antisocial behaviour:

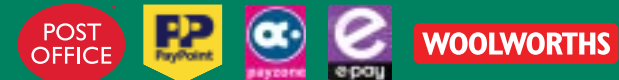
Customer services on 020 8709 4300

you want to pay your rent:

Pay online at www.allpayments.net or call 0870 243 6040 with your rent payment card ready.

You can also pay at any post office, Woolworths or shop displaying the PayPoint, PAYZone or e-pay logo or by direct debit.

Where you can use your rent card to pay



Where?	By debit card	By cheque	In cash
Any post office	No	Yes	Yes
Anywhere that displays the PayPoint sign	No	Some	Yes
Anywhere that displays the PAYzone sign	Some	Some	Yes
Anywhere that displays the e-pay logo	Some	Some	Yes
Any branch of Woolworths	Yes	Yes	Yes

If Housing Benefit only pays some of your rent, you will need to pay the rest using one of the methods above.



Awarded for excellence



North River Alliance



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Gateway Housing Association, 409-413 Mile End Road, London E3 4PB

Phone Residents: 020 8709 4300 | General enquiries: 020 8909 4409 Fax 020 8709 4400

Repairs Freephone: 0800 052 9922 | Out of hours emergency repairs: 0800 085 6064

Email enquiries@gatewayhousing.org.uk Website www.gatewayhousing.org.uk

Diverse communities – one vision



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