

The Leasehold Excellence Network

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The story so far...

Take a look at some of the activities that members have taken part in, and benefited from, so far:

- Benchmarking
- Performance indicator benchmarking pilot report 2006/7
- Performance indicator benchmarking reporting 2007/8
- Performance indicator benchmarking reporting 2008/9
- Fees chargeable benchmarking 2007/8.
- Network briefings.

Exclusive briefings have been commissioned on:

- Service charges
- Sinking funds
- Assisting leaseholders facing large bills for major works
- Excellence in leasehold management
- Creating efficiencies
- "Ask the expert!" ...your problems solved.

Positive practice

Good practice information and good ideas from the experience of our members include:

- Cleaning costs
- VAT
- Fuel re-charge
- Condensation
- Managing arrears
- Management charges
- Qualifications in leasehold management
- Amending and surrendering leases
- Interest charges
- Repayment for major works
- Service standards
- Buy back
- Sub-letting.
- Workshops
- Sold-out member workshops in York and London during 2009, with a series of workshops planned for 2010.

For more information on the benefits of membership, please get in touch with Richard Waft, Business Manager, Leasehold Excellence Network, on direct dial 01904 557165, or email richard.waft@hqnetwork.co.uk

Driving up service quality and leaseholder satisfaction

Designed to help drive up service quality and leaseholder satisfaction, the Leasehold Excellence Network is a resource for anyone working with leaseholders in social housing who wants to improve service delivery AND increase leaseholder satisfaction.

Useful for local authorities, ALMOs and housing associations it aims to help providers compare policy and practice, measure and evaluate performance through benchmarking, and identify innovations in the sector – to apply these where appropriate to deliver effective services that demonstrate real value for money. Support is provided through emails, good practice and briefings, workshops and seminars, and an annual benchmarking exercise, supplemented by other member surveys of specific aspects of service.

LEN is supported by a team of experienced Associates and practitioners, providing you with access to current leasehold service knowledge and practice from across the country.

"A leasehold benchmarking group is a welcome and invaluable tool in establishing PIs for leasehold management, measuring and comparing performance and sharing best practice to improve expertise in leasehold management."

Zoe Bryan, Leasehold Practice Advisor, Metropolitan Housing Trust Midlands

"Access to benchmarking information in leasehold services is an area which can always be developed and used to improve service delivery. As a founder member, this group is what we've been waiting for!"

Andy Patchitt, Business Development Manager, Longhurst Housing Association

"I thought the members-only workshop was very good; very helpful and informative to hear the views and issues of other players in the field."

Rino Sapia, Home Ownership Manager, Aldwyck Housing Association

Why LEN?

Why you should become a member of LEN

The network will:

- Carry out benchmarking of performance and other statistics for members
- Take the hard work out of keeping up to date with good practice through our briefing papers and regular email updates
- Provide you with policy support by analysing and translating emerging policy into practical steps that can be taken at the local level
- Put the knowledge and skills of our team of experts at your disposal – only a phone call away

- Put you in touch with like-minded peer colleagues who have similar interests
- Provide cross-reference help and information from our other specialist networks such as the Rent Income Excellence Network (RIEN) and the Housing Finance Excellence Network (hf:expert) where policies, good practice or other issues also relate to leasehold management.

You will get personal contact from a dedicated network manager who will help to shape the network's activities to meet the needs of members, co-ordinate good practice and help to resolve your issues and problems.

Again, all members get to take part and receive their copy of the full report.

Other benchmarking and surveys: we carry out benchmarking on other hot topics: the latest was a fees chargeable survey, carried out in April 2009. More surveys are carried out when a key issue arises.

Good practice: we summarise the good practice from all of our members on key issues, and also from Audit Commission inspections, and circulate regularly.

'Ask the members': if you have an issue with which you need the help or ideas of other members, we ask them for you and then co-ordinate their replies.

Briefings and updates: we provide specially commissioned briefings and updates written by leasehold specialists on the key issues within leasehold management at the moment.

Policy and practice: we take the strife out of searching for up-to-date information on leasehold management policy and practice by providing summaries and information on 'hot topics'.

Access to LVT news and tribunal decisions: we have secured exclusive access to the LVT Bulletin and can enable LEN members to access the site – all as part of your subscription.

Member workshops: we have started to run workshops for sharing good practice, discussing key themes, reviewing the benchmarking survey findings and creating an effective network of members.

What we provide exclusively for members

Annual performance indicator benchmarking survey: we carry out a major benchmarking survey of our members every year on an ongoing basis, covering KLOEs 12 and 14 and other key performance statistics.

This year-on-year benchmarking reporting provides a bank of data and information on issues such as:

- **Stock:** numbers of leasehold stock, breakdown, and dedicated staff managing the portfolios
- **Satisfaction:** overall, breakdown by categories and ethnicity, involvement opportunities, repairs, repairs response rates
- **Financial performance:** arrears and collection performance
- **Other benchmarks:** such as LVT, repossessions and forfeitures.

All members get to take part and receive their copy of the full report, with the statistics available for their use.

Value for money benchmarking survey: we have developed new value for money benchmarking which will now become a mainstay of the network too.

This survey covers:

- Value for money approach and strategy
- Value for money from fees chargeable
- Management fee components and calculations
- Other fees; Decent Homes work, repairs, miscellaneous admin fees.

And there's more...

- Discounted rates for HQN's annual leasehold conference and regional seminars and events
- 'Early warning' for any leasehold seminars to ensure that you jump the booking queue

And if you need more support?

HQN's performance improvement, finance and asset management consultancy teams offer bespoke consultancy support in relation to policy making and service implementation.

Examples of recent and current work include:

The LEN team – at your service

Jeff Platt has extensive experience of leasehold property management and sales in both the public and private sectors.

As a consultant and HQN Associate specialising in leasehold management, recent assignments have included Best Value reviews, procedure reviews and mock inspections for local authority and housing association clients, advising on lease terms and management structures for new developments, assisting the Audit Commission on redrafting their KLOEs on leasehold management, compliance checks for the Association of Retirement Housing Managers, business assessment assignments and disposal of surplus residential properties.

As immediate past chairman of the Institute of Residential Property Management (IRPM), Jeff is also heavily involved in developing professional qualifications and training in residential property management.

Jackie Dickins has been an HQN Associate since 2001. Prior to this she held positions at the London Borough of Harrow, Orbit HA and the Network Group, where she was responsible for leasehold management and promoting the Association's work in the field of low cost home ownership initiatives. With HQN Jackie has worked on a variety of projects including Best Value reviews and numerous mock inspections of leaseholder services for ALMOs, local authorities and housing associations, including subsequent support work leading up to inspection by the Audit Commission.

Our members

Our network has expanded rapidly over the first two years. We now have members from local authorities, ALMOs, housing groups and individual housing associations. There is a wide range of members by size, type, and geographic location.

- As a LEN member you will be able to influence our programme of national seminars and events as **we will ask you** about the issues that you would want us to cover.

- Health checks of leasehold services in preparation for inspection
- Preparation and updates for leaseholder services manuals
- Reviews of leaseholder management charges.

Aileen Hamilton-Farey has over 25 years' experience of commercial and residential property management for both the private sector and housing associations. She has specialist knowledge of shared ownership and Right to Buy/Acquire leases, with particular interest in service charges and leasehold management for housing associations and local authorities.

She is a member of the RICS Residential Faculty Working Party on the Residential Service Charge Code of Practice; a member of the RICS working party on the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act; a founder member of the PSNTO/RICS working party for open learning courses, and the Low Cost Home Ownership Group of the NHF; and a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. She is Vice-President of the Residential Property Tribunal Service in London and sits on various tribunals as part of that appointment.

Richard Waft is the Leasehold Excellence Network Manager. Richard joined HQN as a Business Manager in April 2007 and was responsible for implementing our pilot leasehold benchmarking exercise. Prior to joining HQN Richard held a consultation and research role in a local authority, which involved him in managing research, surveys and benchmarking. Our administration team ensures that the service runs smoothly and members receive the information they need.

Members receive personal contact and attention from Richard as the network manager.

Membership fees

Details of LEN fees for 12 months' subscription can be found in the enclosed joining form. Discounts are available for organisations that are already members of other HQN networks. If you would like further details please email: len@hqnetwork.co.uk or call us on **0845 4747 004**.