

... SPOTLIGHT ON  
  
**DRUGS POLICY**

In July, the Stonewall Housing Management Committee approved the new Drugs Policy. Every Service User now has to sign that they have read and understood a summary of the policy, which will be issued over the next few weeks by Supported Housing Officers. Here's an even briefer summary of the policy:

Stonewall Housing does not tolerate the use, possession or supply of drugs in any of the schemes which it manages. However, we do recognise that some service users may use drugs occasionally, recreationally or habitually and rather than exclude them from services we aim to promote well-being and reduce harm.

The policy outlines staff's legal responsibilities, i.e. not to allow drug-related activities on our premises, and offers guidelines on how to manage when there is a suspicion or proof of drug misuse, which will include contacting the police.

The policy covers a wide range of drugs:

- illegal drugs - e.g. cannabis which was recently reclassified from a Class B to a Class C drug but it is still a criminal offence to possess it.
- prescribed drugs (e.g. methadone, insulin) and non-prescription medicines (e.g. aspirin, paracetamol) - Stonewall Housing staff should not store any medication for clients but you should inform staff if you are taking any.
- Alcohol and tobacco - information should be available to clients about the dangers involved in their use and all offices are to be smoke-free areas.

If you use injecting equipment then let staff know so that they can arrange for its safe disposal.

If you would like a full copy of the policy then just ask your Supported Housing Officer.

**next issue**

The spotlight will be on the Complaints Policy.



COMING UP

<p><b>Soho pride</b>—Sunday 31 August 2005</p> <p><b>Street league</b>—The women's team are looking for players. Training is at the Fondale Centre, Brixton, 4.30pm every Wednesday.</p>	<p><b>Staying Out</b>—summer programme for 11-25 year olds is starting. You can get involved in a wide range of activities—e.g. art, photography, drama, canoeing, bowling among others. It's free! Call 020 8533 2174 for more details.</p>
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stonewallhousing

# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2005

## WELCOME BACK...

### ... TO THE STONEWALL HOUSING NEWSLETTER

This is only a taster of what it will become. We want it to get bigger and better, but we need your ideas, articles, stories, pictures etc...

The aim is to produce a newsletter every 3 months initially, perhaps becoming more often if interest is shown. Some things will be in every issue:

- News from the schemes
- News of upcoming events
- Spotlight on policies
- Discussions on Hot Topics.

In the next issue the Hot Topic will be MOVE-ON. Let your Supported Housing Officer know your thoughts on the move-on opportunities available and if you have any questions about resettlement and we will try to address them in the Autumn issue.

Let us know if you want to submit a story, poem, article, drawing or photograph, or maybe you want to share your experiences of the support offered by Stonewall Housing - all sincere submissions will be considered.

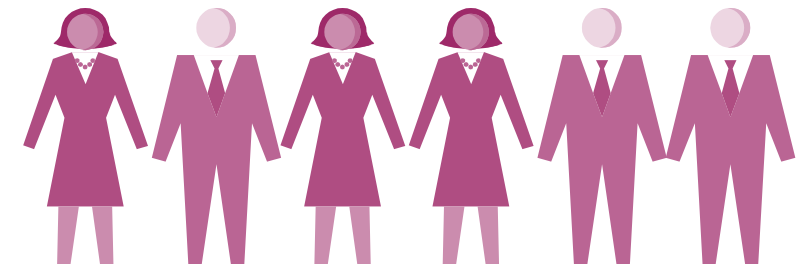
Finally, maybe you have a suggestion for a title for this newsletter. Let us know.

New staff have started over the last 3 months:

### ... NEW FACES

Bob Green - Housing Services Manager  
 Debbie Gold - Advice Services Manager  
 Maria Sookias - Housing Advice Worker

Six new clients moved into Stonewall Housing's supported accommodation over the last 3 months. Welcome! We hope your stay with us will be beneficial and the support offered to you will help you achieve your goals.



### Spare a thought...

The dreadful events of 7 July 2005 will be hard to forget. Our thoughts go out to all those affected by the bombs.

If you would like help in dealing with the tragedy then contact your Supported Housing Officer.

### Inside:

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... DOWN TO BUSINESS

Stonewall Housing provides support to 41 young lesbian and gay men. They live in 6 different houses, which accommodate between 5 and 9 people, across 4 London boroughs. Stonewall Housing does not own any properties itself, rather it works with various landlords to provide supported accommodation.

In each issue we will be updating you with information that we keep about the schemes. If there is other information you are interested in finding out then just ask...

During the three months between April and June 2005, in all 6 houses:

- There were 21 fire alarm tests
- There were 4 fire drills
- There were 3 incidents which included police being called twice to a scheme following a disturbance.
- There was 1 formal complaint which came from a neighbour of one of the houses and concerned noise.
- There were 5 informal complaints and concerned people sharing the same house (e.g. regarding noise, visitors and untidiness).

Formal complaints are usually in writing and are responded to in writing. Informal complaints are usually mentioned in passing and dealt with quickly by staff.



Supported Housing Officers are also keen to hear your positive comments when things work well and suggestions on how things could improve. If you do not want to approach them you can always approach Bob Green, the Housing Services Manager.

what do you think?

Bob is planning to visit every scheme at least once every 3 months to carry out his 'surgeries', which is an opportunity for you to talk directly to him.

In June he carried out surgeries at 4 of the 6 schemes and saw 3 people individually, discussing a range of issues, such as, the support offered by staff, conversion of communal areas and Welfare Fund applications. More surgeries are being planned in these schemes and in the schemes where there is no office base. Keep an eye out for the **invite** delivered through your door.

**Tenant Meetings** were held at two schemes in May and June 2005. Issues discussed included the relationship between Stonewall Housing and landlords, activities, maintenance, noise and visitors. The minutes are sent to the tenants of the relevant house.

Would you like a Tenant Meeting at your scheme? If so, let us know and we can help you arrange one - even combine it with a barbecue while the sun is still shining. We can invite landlord representatives to the meeting if necessary.

The results of this year's Service Users' Satisfaction Survey were published in June 2005. If you did not receive a copy, or want a colour version then just ask your Supported Housing Officer.

what is it?

It is the biggest ever reform of supported housing.

From April 2003, the way the Government funded the support charges in supported accommodation changed. Previously support was funded from Housing Benefit and various grants but now it comes from Local Authorities, which also carry out a new system of monitoring and regulation of support services.

Housing Benefit now only pays for narrowly defined housing costs.

All services are continuing under 'Interim Contracts' with Local Authorities to ensure no services offered to vulnerable people collapse due to loss of income until the more secure contracts are issued by April 2006.

what will it mean for Stonewall Housing?

Before any organisation can receive the local authority contract to provide support to vulnerable people, they must go through an assessment of its quality of support, value for money, strategic relevance and financial viability.

In the summer of 2004, our service in Newham was reviewed with positive initial conclusions. Between now and the end of 2005, all other services will be reviewed, to help the four local authorities with whom we work (Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Newham) decide if they want to issue contracts for us to continue to provide support to young, vulnerable lesbians and gay men.

how will it affect me?

After their reviews, Local Authorities can decide to continue to pay for the support services we provide or they may ask us to change the way we provide the support in order to continue to receive funding or, the worst case scenario, they may decide to withdraw their funding and arrange for another organisation to provide the support or close the scheme altogether.

Ultimately, the changes made will ensure the support that clients receive is of the highest quality, by putting in place a system of accreditation for providers and regular reviews of the support provided.

Those carrying out the reviews for the Local Authorities may want to speak to Service Users and staff as part of their review - through questionnaires (which some people have already done) or face-to-face. You should get prior warning if this is to take place.

If you would like more information on Supporting People then contact your Supported Housing Officer, but we will keep you updated through the newsletter.



next issue

Pass any questions and views about **MOVE-ON** options to your Supported Housing Officer by Friday 30 September 2005 and we will try to answer them in the next issue.

... HOT TOPIC

