

PULLING Together



TOWER HAMLETS

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Budgeting for the future

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Issue 120 March 2009

The magazine for Tower Hamlets Council's staff



Welcome

General news

New budget adds up

The public sector's duty to spend taxpayers' money wisely and provide the best possible services is even more important during economic recession.

As you can see from the budget coverage elsewhere on this page, the council has approved an impressive range of counter recession measures for the year ahead. Each and every one of us in some way or another has an important part to play in delivering them and ensuring that together we provide the maximum local benefit for every pound the council spends.

Elsewhere in this edition you'll see that the council has again been declared a 4-star top performing council by the Audit Commission. In fact for the very first time every single service judged by the inspectors has been rated as performing strongly or performing well. This is the last year of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment so it's good to leave it on something of a high.

But as I've said before, the best and ultimate judges of our performance are our residents, and it is our focus on them that has driven many of the continuing improvements we have achieved.

In more challenging economic circumstances the very best organisations will succeed by focussing on their customers and offering great value for money.

That won't come as a surprise to anyone, and we start from a good position. But we now need to accelerate both pace and scope in order to match our ambition for Tower Hamlets.

Martin Smith, Chief Executive

Easing the financial burden, helping people into jobs and making the borough safer are the main priorities of this year's budget.

And thanks to careful planning by finance officers we will be able to provide even better services to residents without the need for cuts to services.

At a Full Council meeting in March councillors approved a range of measures that will help local people.

Residents will pay just 1.69 per cent more Council Tax which is well below inflation, keeping it amongst the lowest in London.

It was also agreed that local people can spread their Council Tax payments over twelve months rather than ten, making the monthly payments 20 per cent smaller on average and easier to manage.

Alan Finch, Head of Finance said: "We want to make it really

clear that there won't be any reduction in existing services. We're determined to strike a balance between ensuring services meet local needs and setting a Council Tax that is affordable."

The council plans to support local people in training to enable them to access local jobs, with a £20million training and jobs programme, as well as developing 200 apprenticeships at the council and PCT in the next few years.

And whilst crime is falling, there is money identified for an extra 17 police officers for the borough's streets, plus £500,000 for additional CCTV cameras and £200,000 for better street lighting.

Parking charges will be frozen and weekend parking around shopping areas, like the borough's weekend markets, will be made free of charge.

Award for Tower Hamlets' HR!

We have been recognised for our excellent staff and member training.

The Corporate Learning and Development team, part of the council's Human Resources service, was recognised at this year's National IT Training Awards.

The team beat off competition from the Houses of Parliament, Belfast City Council and the University of Southampton to take silver in the public sector



Training Department of the Year category. They came second to Cheshire ICT.

The Corporate Learning and Development team leads on training for staff and councillors, including regular Member development sessions, a council wide learning and development programme and tailored support for individual directorates.

General news

Are you an energy champion?

Do you value the world we live in? Are you committed to tackling climate change and making a real difference to the environment and to the council?

If so then we need you! Tower Hamlets Council is looking for Energy Champions to help us tackle climate change and save money.

As a council we have signed up to the Local Authority Carbon Management programme and have set ourselves the ambitious target of a 30 per cent reduction in our carbon emissions by 2012. Not only does this have an impact on the environment, it will save over £3.6million a year in wasted energy.

But to achieve this we need you. If every member of staff simply turned off their PCs at the end of the working day, as well as the office printers and photocopiers we could save 340 tonnes of CO₂ every year.

Such a simple act can make a real difference and as part of our campaign against climate change we are looking for volunteers to ensure their colleagues remember

to switch their machines off.

Energy Champions will receive training will make a real difference to the day-to-day running of the council and the environment.

If you are passionate about saving the planet email Rachel Carless, Rachel.carless@towerhamlets.gov.uk to sign up.

What else is happening?

Across the council all departments are committed to reducing their carbon footprint.

Here are just some of the projects saving energy:

- Liquid pool covers- by controlling the temperature in our swimming pools we use less electric heating, while cooling our leisure centres and can save 184 tonnes of CO₂
- Street lighting- by replacing the bulbs in our street lighting with low energy versions we are saving 37 tonnes of CO₂ and £36,000 annually
- By making boiler houses more efficient in our ALMO estates we are saving 647 tonnes of CO₂.



Women are on the ball



Calling all female employees, can you bend it like Beckham? If so then the new women's staff football team wants to hear from you.

After watching the men competing against each other admin support officer Rupna Khanam and her friends have decided to start a women's football team for the council and are looking for members.

She told Pulling Together: "Basically some of the girls started to think after witnessing the boys of 6th Floor Mulberry Place going out to play football against 2nd floor Mulberry Place boys.

"And I started thinking that it would be a good idea to get more interaction going within the council and engage the women by playing football. Maybe even taking on the boys one day, you never know!"

In fact, Rupna even has plans for a Tower Hamlets Council Cup if the game takes off.

So far she has 15 players but wants every woman who wants to play to be able to.

If you would like to join in email her at rupna.khanam@towerhamlets.gov.uk

General news

What is ContactPoint?

Children's Services is gearing up for the launch of ContactPoint, a new database that will include information on every child living in England.

It will allow practitioners to quickly find out who else is working with the same child - making it easier to deliver more co-ordinated support.

ContactPoint will hold basic information - name, address, gender and date of birth of all children aged 0 to 18. Contact details for the child's parents, school, GP and other services working with the child will be available for authorised staff to access.

It will help practitioners access the information they need quickly and

easily – and will play a significant part in helping to protect children from any risk of harm.

The security of ContactPoint is vital, and will be reviewed throughout its development. Individuals whose circumstances may mean that they are at risk of significant harm may be able to have some of their details hidden. This is called 'shielding'.

The database is managed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and

will be available to 19 "early adopter" organisations this month and to Tower Hamlets staff from Autumn this year. Staff will be given training for the database over the coming months.

More information on ContactPoint will be available at the briefings below.

Please call 0207 3647399 or email ContactPoint@towerhamlets.gov.uk to book a place at one of these sessions. Places will be allocated on a first come basis.

24 March 2009	10.00am to 11.00am	Room 1 and 2, 8th Floor Anchorage House
28 April 2009	12.30pm to 1.30pm	Room 1 and 2, 8th Floor Anchorage House

You can call me buddy

Anyone who works, studies or lives in the borough can take advantage of the borough's new and improved free adult cycle training scheme.

Organised by the council and the Primary Care Trust through Bikeworks, the scheme offers one-on-one sessions with a qualified cycle instructor.

Whether a total beginner or a more competent cyclist, people are now guaranteed more time with the instructor.

The scheme has been altered so that sessions are flexible and available within normal Monday-Saturday working hours. For those



who would prefer a female cycling instructor this can be arranged upon request.

There is also now cycle buddying training where a professional instructor will 'buddy' people on a useful journey for example from home to work, helping you to understand and cycle the safest and most convenient route. Each participant is entitled to one such

hourly session.

For further information on these schemes visit www.bikeworks.org.uk/ or to book a cycle training/cycle buddying session email cycletraining@bikeworks.org.uk or call 020 8980 7998.

For any further enquiries please contact Sam Margolis, Tower Hamlets Council Travel Awareness Officer, on 020 7364 6707 or sam.margolis@towerhamlets.gov.uk

General news



Tracy's land of soap and glory

For most people, the thought of doing 200 washes a week would fill them with horror, but employee of the year Tracy Harpin loves her job so much her children call it her "second home"

Tracy runs our Laundry Service, a vital service helps incontinence sufferers to continue leading independent lives.

Not only does she do their laundry, but she also provides a lifeline for some of the pensioners by running small errands and even getting them shopping.

She told Pulling Together: "A lot of my clients know me personally as I do the delivery as well as the laundry. They really appreciate the service as sometimes I am the only person they see in a week."

And how does she deal with people who may find the service embarrassing?

"I am a trained nurse so it's nothing to me. It's just another way of caring for people. One lady is very embarrassed about needing the service so whenever I visit her I always say 'it's Tracy' rather than 'it's laundry'."

"And people are often surprised when I tell them what I do for a living and ask 'how could you do that?' or 'I could never do that' but I always say to them that all people

need to be cared for. I always think 'that could be my mum or my nan' and so I treat them how I would want them to be treated.

"When I explain that to people they usually change their mind and realise that it is a great job after all."

Tracy was awarded Employee of the Year not only for her dedication to her clients, but also her honesty - she once found £900 in one client's washing bag and immediately returned it.

"It was from a lady who was new to the service and she lived around the corner so I took it straight back. She was looking after the money for her daughter and had put it in the pillowcase for safe keeping."

And that's not all she finds: "We often find watches, wallets and purses, and false teeth are common too," she adds.

When she's not at work Tracy likes to plan her next holiday, spend time with her two children or visit her sister who lives in Switzerland.

But even when she's off she still thinks of work - even working extra unpaid hours in the evening to make sure clients get their belongings back in time.

"My two kids tease me all the time. All they ever say is 'off to your second home mum?'"

Training

March 2009

- 5th** Developing Disability Confidence
- 6th** Risk Management for Managers
- 9th** Procurement Module 3 – Managing Contracts
- 10th** Working with the Third Sector
- 10th** Advanced Presentation Skills
- 11th & 12th** Handling People and Difficult Situations
- 13th** Information Governance
- 16th** Finance for Managers
- 17th** Managing Employee Performance
- 18th** Dealing Effectively with Complaints
- 18th** Leadership Skills
- 19th** Time Management
- 19th** Data Quality Workshop
- 20th** Speed Reading
- 23rd** Deaf Awareness
- 23rd** Effectively Using Performance Data
- 24th** Introduction to Programme and Project Management
- 24th** Supporting Disabled Staff
- 25th & 26th** Career Development Programme
- 27th** Job Interview Skills
- 30th** Effectively Using Performance Data
- 31st** Advanced Programme and Project Management

April 2009

- 1st** New Managers' Programme
- 2nd** Team Planning
- 3rd** Recognising and Dealing with Stress
- 9th** Report Writing

News in brief



> Toni's new arrival

Admin officer Toni Hayes is celebrating the birth of her first child - a baby boy called Jaimie.

Named after his father, baby Jaimie was born on January 29 and weighed 6lb 14.

Apart from the lack of sleep Toni is well and her colleagues in Facilities Management would like to wish her every happiness.

> Spa's a star

Spa London, the first public sector spa in the country, has been nominated for a prestigious beauty award.

The York Hall spa, created by the council and GLL is in the running to win Day Spa of the Year at the Professional Beauty Awards that takes place at the Excel Centre on March 2.

The spa, which offers a hamman, steam rooms, monsoon showers and a plunge pool is up against world famous spas including The Sanctuary.

General news

IFRS are coming!

International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) is a set of accounting standards, developed by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), that is becoming the global standard for the preparation of public company financial statements.

Local authorities will all move to IFRS accounting, by 2010/11.

IFRS is not only a technical accounting issue for the finance team but the impact of the changes will expand and affect many financial processes in the organisation (such as the setting and measurement of performance targets, budgeting and forecasting - as well as financial reporting).

For instance, one 'minor' change in IFRS is the need to accrue an amount in the balance sheet for paid holiday leave which had yet to be taken at the year-end. Input from HR staff is needed before the finance team can interpret the data to go into the accounts. On top of this, consideration needs to be given to adapting and utilising systems to collect this data automatically rather than relying on the leave card system we currently use.

This one example illustrates the need to involve three disciplines in the Council (finance, HR and IT).

A project board and team have been set up to manage transition to IFRS, with project groups to deal with each of the identified work streams. Over the coming weeks the project groups will have a detailed look at the implications of specific IFRS, agreeing project plans and establishing contact with key personnel across the council with a view to achieving agreed milestones.

Chris Naylor, Corporate Director, Resources, and the IFRS Project Sponsor said: "IFRS is a massive change affecting the whole organisation in the coming months, and it is imperative that everyone involved contributes to achievement of our agreed targets."

The project team will be looking at further awareness raising initiatives, including a dedicated Intranet page and presentations to senior management. We will also be looking at training for key personnel.

For further information contact: Gary Moss – Project Manager, Ext 4223, or Radwan Ahmed – Project Accountant, Ext 0507

What's love got to do with it?

Staff from the council's domestic violence team reached out to local women who are victims of domestic violence with special stalls across the borough that spread the message: "Domestic Abuse – No Excuse"

Launched over Valentine's Day, the stalls carried a variety of information about the services in Tower Hamlets that can help victims as well as people who think they may know a victim of

domestic violence.

And trained staff were on hand to talk to anyone who wanted to come forward there and then to report any issue of domestic violence that was concerning them.

The team was joined by representatives from local support agencies including Victims' Support Tower Hamlets, the Police Community Safety Unit and the Primary Care Trust.

General news

The IT Crowd



You are probably aware that there have been a few changes to ICT recently.

A major review of services means the department now offers staff a service that is in line with government practices and will lead to the council being awarded the ISO 20000 accreditation.

So what does this mean for staff? As well a new set of processes dealing with everything from taking on new work and dealing with queries to securing data, the main difference is the creation of a Customer Services function within ICT.

The staff in this area provide a range of business oriented services including Business Relationship Management, which provides a properly focussed interface between ICT and its customers; Business Analysts who can help with specifying the business solution and Project Managers who provide implementation skills.

The overall drive in ICT is to put its customers first and to help them maintain the excellent services for which Tower Hamlets is renowned.

The senior management team within ICT consists of six people:

Jim Roberts: Service Head, ICT. Responsible for all matters relating to ICT within the council, Jim has 37 years of IT experience, the last four of which have been at Tower Hamlets.

Chris Tee: Head of Service Delivery. Responsible to the day-to-day delivery of the service, making sure systems are available when needed. Chris, who has 30 years experience in IT, mostly in the

Financial Service industry, joined us in January.

Bogusia Webb: Head of Service Development. Responsible for development of new services, support of existing systems, Information Security and the technical and applications architecture. Bogusia, who joined us in January, has worked for a wide range of organisations, most recently in the pharmaceutical sector.

Nadira Hussain: Head of Customer Services. Responsible for customer facing services from Business Relationship Management to Project Management, Nadira has been with Tower Hamlets for two years and has 10 years IT experience in the Public Sector as well as experience in front line service provision.

Khaled Hussein: Head of Business Support. Responsible for all matters relating to Finance, Contract Management and Administration within the service. Khaled has been with Tower Hamlets for 19 years, 10 of which have been spent in various senior roles within ICT.

Judith Pittaway: Performance and Improvements Manager. Responsible for securing better service performance for our customers, Judith has over 20 years experience in the IT industry, joined Tower Hamlets 18 years ago and has previously managed the ICT Training Service.

Full details of the structure, the various roles and the people carrying them out, will be published on the ICT intranet pages.

Plans to re-invent the hamlets

The council's Strategic Planning team are currently consulting on the new development phase of the Core Strategy during February and March.

The Core Strategy is part of the Local Development Framework and suggests ideas, options and alternatives for the different areas of the borough.

This Core Strategy consultation focuses on the different places of Tower Hamlets. It includes a series of emerging 'place plans' which set out visions and objectives for each place in Tower Hamlets.

The consultation document also provides new information on the borough-wide spatial themes that were consulted on in summer 2008. These look at a wide variety of issues including housing, infrastructure, transport, parks, health facilities, heritage and tackling climate change.

Anyone who would like more information about the Core Strategy can find it on the planning policy section of the council's website and by contacting the Local Development Framework helpline on 020 7364 5367 or by emailing ldf@towerhamlets.gov.uk. The consultation closes on 19 March 2009.

Quarterly Research Bulletin



The Strategy and Performance team have just launched a new publication to help keep staff up to date on research in their areas.

The Quarterly Research Bulletin is an e-bulletin that presents a round up of recently published research relevant to policy and practice across the Community Plan themes.

The bulletin also aims to highlight research going on in-house and offers a platform for sharing and promoting research going on across the Partnership.

You can obtain a copy of the latest bulletin on the intranet at: http://towernet/Intranet/staff_services/business_planning/corporate_policy/research_briefings.aspx

If you are involved in research that you would like to share with others, please let us know. This might be the results of surveys, commissioned research, data analysis, focus group findings - basically anything you think others may be interested in, or could learn from. The next bulletin is due out in April and contributions gratefully received by the end of March. Please forward to Lorna Spence by email lorna.spence@towerhamlets.gov.uk or ring to discuss on 020 7364 4014.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment Tower Hamlets Council passes final test with flying colours

Tower Hamlets Council has again been declared a top performing council by the independent watchdog for local services in the Audit Commission's final tranche of Corporate Performance Assessments.

The Audit Commission has judged Tower Hamlets Council as being a 4 star council - the highest category; and "improving well".

The Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) is being succeeded this year by Corporate Area Assessments (CAA). Tower Hamlets will receive its first CAA assessment in spring 2010.

During the seven years of the CPA, Tower Hamlets Council's performance has steadily improved, rising from a 3 star council in 2002 to 4 star in 2008, together with improved ratings for Value for Money, environment and cultural services, and its benefits service.

Tower Hamlets became a 4 star council following an inspection last year that looked specifically at how well the council was run.

In its most recent report the Audit Commission said services such as education, children's and adult social care and housing benefit administration have continued to maintain their excellent ratings.

The Audit Commission also singled out the council's work with its partners for praise, saying:

"Highly effective partnership working continues to significantly reduce crime and the fear of crime, support local businesses, and improve local employment and access to health services."

Chief Executive Martin Smith said: "What I'm most pleased about is being in the fortunate position of seeing the targets that we set ourselves when the CPA was first introduced now being met and in many cases, exceeded.

"These targets were challenging and it's taken a lot of hard work by a lot of our staff for which I'm not only grateful, I'm deeply impressed. It's a real privilege to work with so many committed and talented people.

"It's fantastic to be leaving the CPA on a high. There are many new challenges ahead, especially in these harder economic times, but I know we are ideally placed to meet them head on.

"The framework for assessing councils' performance next focuses more on local partnerships and local outcomes as well as national standards, which can only be a good thing for the residents of Tower Hamlets. I look forward to setting new targets and working together with members and staff to meet them again."

The council's recent efforts to improve its recycling rate were also acknowledged by the Audit Commission. The We Can Recycle More campaign was launched last year. Latest figures show that residents are now recycling over 10 per cent more than they did a year ago. The Audit Commission noted that:

"Performance in recycling and cleanliness has compared unfavourably until quite recently, but efforts are starting to have an impact."

Performance page

Data Quality strong and getting better

For the second year running, the Audit Commission has given us a clean bill of health for the way we manage our data.

The Audit Commission says: "The council's overall management arrangements for ensuring data quality are robust and have continued to be strengthened during the year."

Last year the council signed up to a Data Quality Policy that commits us to making sure that all our data, whether produced internally or externally, is accurate, reliable and timely.

At this time of the year when you may be finalising your year-end data it's even more important that the data you rely on is robust. More and more information comes from partners and contractors and it's important that you're sure that the data is

as reliable as if you'd collected it yourself. If you're not sure it can help to draw up a protocol to show a joint commitment to data quality, and agree what each party will do. Policy and Performance can help you do this.

Things that you can do to help improve data quality include: taking care when you input information into spreadsheets or databases; looking closely at a sample of data during the year to check for any discrepancies; following a consistent definition every time you calculate it; and keeping evidence to show where the data has come from, and labelling this clearly.

Don't forget, the deadline to enter all year-end performance data and plan monitoring onto Excelsis is Friday 24 April. If you need any help, please contact Vicky Allen on ext. 4320 or Kael Long on ext. 4710.

To view the auditors' report and our Data Quality Policy go to <http://tinyurl.com/cqt8gh>

The Council's Strategic Priorities

One Tower Hamlets

1. To reduce inequalities, foster strong community cohesion and provide strong leadership and inclusive services
2. Working efficiently and effectively as One Council

A Great Place to Live

3. Provide affordable housing and strong neighbourhoods
4. Strengthen and Connect Communities
5. Support vibrant town centres, and a cleaner, safer public realm
6. Improve the environment and tackle climate change

A Prosperous Community

7. Support lifelong learning opportunities for all
8. Reduce worklessness
9. Foster enterprise

A Safe and Supportive Community

10. Empower vulnerable people and support families
11. Tackle and Prevent Crime
12. Focus on Early Intervention

A Healthy Community

13. Improve health and reducing differences in people's health by promoting healthy lifestyles
14. Support mental health services to improve mental health
15. Improve access to, and experience of, health services



Thank you



Sometimes it can feel like your hard work goes unnoticed, but this is often not the case. Without the tireless hard work and dedication of staff we could not have been named as a four star authority.

Your efforts really do make a difference, both to your colleagues and to members of the public.

On this page you can thank a colleague for the extra work or excellence they have demonstrated that makes a difference.

So if you want to say thank you to a colleague simply pick up a Thank You card from Human Resources, fill in the details and return it to Steve Wiggett, 6th floor Anchorage House, c/o Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, E14 2BG. All entries will be entered in to a prize draw with one member of staff being selected at random for a £25 gift voucher.

It's now even easier to nominate colleagues that you think deserve a special thank you.

The thank you card is now available to download from Towneret, the council's intranet, making it quicker and easier for you to let colleagues know that you appreciate the work they do.

To nominate someone visit http://towneret/Intranet/staff_services/learning_development/staff_recognition_strategy/staff_thank_you_scheme.aspx

Name: **Marlon Patten**
Job Title: Day Care Officer
Thanked for: Giving up his own time to decorate the centre and ensuring service users had a great Christmas

Name: **Carlton Anderson**
Job Title: IT helpdesk officer
Thanked for: Being incredibly patient and helpful

Name: **Russell Schofield**
Job Title: Driver
Thanked for: Being really helpful and giving directions

Name: **Suhel Ahmed**
Job Title: Admin officer
Thanked for: Providing help and support

Name: **Mark Dell**
Job Title: Senior building attendant
Thanked for: Prompt, efficient collection and disposal of computer equipment which was heavy and hard to handle.

Name: **Davina Smalling**
Job Title: Admin officer
Thanked for: Being willing to help out at short notice

Name: **Allan Meachim**
Job Title: Interim Information Manager
Thanked for: Volunteering to assist

Name: **Nick Harvey**
Job Title: ICT Trainer
Thanked for: Invaluable help and support with a powerpoint presentation

Name: **Moynul Islam**
Job Title: ICT Trainer
Thanked for: Invaluable help and support with a powerpoint presentation

Name: **Phil Dillon-Thiselton**
Job Title: OD officer
Thanked for: Finalising the Powerpoint and saving the day

Name: **Sue Noys**
Job Title: Policy and Victims administrator
Thanked for: Undivided care, attention and hard work

Name: **Robert Mills**
Job Title: Out of Hours Deputy Manager
Thanked for: Support and hard work on some difficult jobs

Name: **Regina Drungilas**
Job Title: Brady Centre Administrator
Thanked for: Continued research and sourcing of best value equipment and furniture often in her own time

Name: **Hafsa Jalil**
Job Title: Revenues Assistant
Thanked for: Providing information on a debtor at short notice

Name: **Kim Wenham**
Job Title: Day Care Officer
Thanked for: Giving up his own time to decorate the centre and ensuring service users had a great Christmas

Occupational health

Do you need help to commit to quit?

Do you want to stop smoking? From money to health worries there are more and more reason to quit, and the occupational health team are here to help you.

From March 9 to 13 the council's Smoke Free team will be running a number of activities in Mulberry Place and Anchorage House to give you support and advice.

Taking place over National No Smoking Day on March 11, the events will help motivate you to give up.

Events include:

- Advice and support for staff who are thinking about stopping smoking
- Meet your in-house LBTH specialist stop smoking advisors
- Specialist advice on shisha use and paan with tobacco chewing
- Find out more details about the preventative work the team does to counter illegal tobacco imports now widely available within all London Boroughs.

Did you know that Tower Hamlets is at the forefront of action on tobacco control in partnership with the Primary Care Trust and one of the leading London boroughs in helping people who live and work in the area stop smoking.

For more information call Steve Henry on ext. 4469.



Nuffield Health

Engine Room Fitness Centre

30 minutes is all it takes
fitness activities for older people



The current recommendation for physical activity is:
30 minutes of fitness activities twice or three times a week is all it takes to feel a difference
it can:

Make you feel good and give you more energy.
Help reduce stress level and help you sleep better.
Keep your heart strong.
Reduce blood pressure.
Help to manage your weight.

At the Engine Room Fitness Centre we offer a range of group activities and fitness programmes aimed specifically at the mature adult and those who require sessions tailored to meet their specific needs.
contact the Fitness Team on 0207 538 9423 or email engineroomgym@live.co.uk

Offers

Win a pair of tickets for Grand Designs Live London



Grand Designs Live, returns to ExCeL London from 25 April to 4 May 2009. Based on the hugely successful Channel 4 TV series - presented by design guru Kevin McCloud - It's the perfect place to come for design and inspiration for your home.

Grand Designs Live is a fantastic day out and a great chance to explore innovative and stylish ideas to update your home and get free expert advice. So

whether you're renovating or simply redecorating, Grand Designs Live will provide you with plenty of amazing tips to turn your dream home into a reality.

We have 5 pairs of tickets to give away. All you have to do to stand a chance of winning is answer this simple question:

Q: Where is Grand Designs Live taking place?

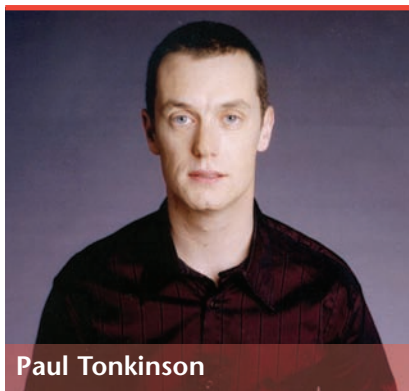
Please e-mail your answer, along with your name, address and phone number, to lucymerritt@excel-london.co.uk - please quote your company name & Grand Designs Live in the subject line of your e-mail.

Competition closes at midnight on 28th February 2009.



Special ticket offer

If you are not one of the lucky winners, you can still come along to the show for a great rate. We have a fantastic early bird offer: 3 tickets for the price of 2. To book this offer visit www.granddesingslive.com or call the hotline 0871 230 5577 quote WHARF when booking. Offer valid on advanced bookings until 20th March 2009.



Paul Tonkinson

2 for 1 Jongleurs Comedy Club tickets for every Pulling Together reader!

Pulling Together has joined forces with Jongleurs, the world's largest comedy chain, to guarantee every reader a great night out.

This fantastic ticket offer is valid from today until 31st March 2009.

With a world class comedy line-up, a fantastic range of food and drink and friendly table service, Jongleurs has it all under one roof. And with entry to the after show party included in the ticket price you can round off the evening on the dance-floor without having to scramble for a taxi or queue up for a club!

So, whether it's a special celebration or a night out with friends, make the most of this offer and head down to Jongleurs for a guaranteed laugh (see www.jongleurs.com for a full list of UK venues).

To book your 2 for 1 tickets, simply log on to www.jongleurs.com or call the Jongleurs box office on 0844 844 0044 and quote code **PT24109**.

Offer subject to availability; booking fee applies, over 18s only. See the website for terms and conditions and full comedy listings.



We'd like to hear from you

If you've got a story to tell in Pulling Together please contact your directorate lead or editor Claire Rudd.

Chief Executive's Kevin Kewin ext. 4075

Development and Renewal
Lee Lixenberg x4754

Children's Services
Sukhjinder Nunwa x4149

Communities, Localities and Culture
Sarah McLaughlin ext. 2860

Adult Services Lorna Bayford ext. 2189
Or email claire.rudd@towerhamlets.gov.uk

A large print version is available by contacting
020 7364 7791



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