Surfing the web
Customers go digital

Plus: Your chance to win one of two iPad minis on page 4
Jenny Danson’s message

Welcome to @Metropolitan.

I started my message in the last edition focusing on change and that theme continues in the first half of this year.

We’ve said before that one of our biggest priorities is improving our repairs service and we’ve made some significant changes recently in order to do just that. In some cases we’ve changed the contractor who delivers the service on our behalf and in other cases we are doing a full review to see what needs to change. You can read more about this on page 3.

One of the other important changes we’re making is to make it easier to contact us. Later this year we will be extending our Customer Service Centre opening times from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday. We’re also improving our website to provide a new secure area where you’ll be able to look at your account details, pay your rent and log repairs at a time when it’s convenient for you. Keep an eye on the website for the launch of this new service in the coming months.

Finally, we get a lot of feedback about the way we communicate and in this edition we’ve included a survey with some questions on things like our website, this newsletter and the other ways we keep in touch with you.

Please take a few minutes to fill it in – your opinions will be invaluable to us as we look at ways to improve.

As always, if you need to discuss your rent please get in touch with us on 020 3535 3535 or by emailing contactus@metropolitan.org.uk

Jenny Danson
Executive Director, Housing

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Our thanks go to Metropolitan customer Patrick Merchant for allowing us to use his photo on the cover.

Snap happy

We’re looking for customers to take part in a photo shoot. We’ll use the pictures in promotional material to show the type of work Metropolitan does. For more information or if you want to take part, email lois.baily@metropolitan.org.uk
Do you have a question you’d like to ask our Chief Executive?

To tie in with his second anniversary, Brian Johnson, Metropolitan’s Chief Executive, will answer a selection of your questions in the next edition of @Metropolitan.

Perhaps you’d like to know what his plans are for tackling anti-social behaviour? Maybe you’d like to know what he thinks about welfare reform? Send your question, with details of your name and address, to Lois Baily either by email to lois.baily@metropolitan.org.uk or by post to Metropolitan, The Grange 100. High Street, Southgate, London N14 6PW.

We will publish as many questions as we can, along with your name, home town and Brian’s response.

Metropolitan gets an upgrade

Metropolitan reached a key milestone in its two-year turnaround period when the Homes and Communities Agency upgraded its governance rating from G3 to G2. This reflects improvements to the way the organisation is run.

Metropolitan’s Chief Executive Brian Johnson commented: “This is testament to the improvements that we have made in a short period of time. Our focus now is on continuing the turnaround of the business to improve customer service and ultimately play an even greater role in meeting housing need.”
The Nottingham YOUth Space project welcomed a very famous guest of honour in April – the Barclays Premier League trophy! The trophy dropped in to the Thursday activity session, run by Metropolitan and Epic Partners, as part of a regional tour of Barclays Spaces for Sports sites.

Premier visitor at Hill View Community Centre

Back row: YOUth Space participants Cruz McDonald, Caleb Bird, Reanne Wiley-Denning, Kasey Wiley-Denning, Cienna Morrison, Ella Morrison. Front row: Shai Hodlein, Ricky Clarke

YOUth Space participants Charlotte Welford (left) and Amelia Sobarosua (right)

Complete our survey

We’re conducting a survey to find out what you think about:

- the way we communicate with you (e.g. by email, the website and printed publications)
- a new scheme that could change the way we work with you in the future.

We’ll use your feedback on these subjects to help shape our services in the future. As a thank you for your time, we’ll enter you into a prize draw to win one of two brand new iPad minis!

To be in with a chance of winning, all you have to do is complete the survey enclosed in this magazine (or do it online) and return it to us, Freepost, by 15 August 2014.

(Terms and conditions apply)
Japanese knotweed is a large green weed that has been found in some of our customers’ gardens. It needs to be treated as soon as possible because it grows very quickly and can damage buildings.

What does Japanese knotweed look like?

- lush green in colour with shovel-shaped leaves
- a stem that’s bamboo-like in appearance with purple speckles
- produces white flowers around September or October
- can grow 10cm a day

If you think Japanese knotweed is growing in your garden don’t try to remove it by yourself. Please report it to the Customer Service Centre on 020 3535 3535 or at www.metropolitan.org.uk. Alternatively you could try using the free Japanese Knotweed Control app available to download.
Get online

The internet is a gold mine of information and opportunity. It can save you money, increase your career prospects and widen your horizons. Plus, with the benefit claims system moving online in the future (through Universal Credit), there’s never been a better time to connect to the internet and learn how to surf the web. Find out how here.

Contact us

We provide computer facilities and IT training free of charge in some areas. To find out if we offer this service where you live, contact the Customer Service Centre on 020 3535 3535. Our plan is to expand this service over the next two years through Metropolitan Access Points – computer access at convenient locations for you.

Visit your local library

Many libraries offer their members internet access, often for free. To use this, you usually need to book a slot first. You may also be able to sign up for computer courses there.

Find a UK Online Centre

UK Online Centres provide free or low cost digital skills courses across the country. For details of courses in your area call the helpline on 0800 771 234 or text “online” and your postcode to 80809 (charges may apply).

Ask a friend or relative

It might sound obvious, but asking a patient friend or a relative to help teach you the basics could be a good option if you’re not very confident using a computer.

Find an internet café

Internet cafés offer computer and internet access for a small fee (usually starting at around £1 for half an hour).

They might be handy once you are familiar with the basics of how to use a computer and are able to browse the internet. They’re usually open in the evening too – handy if you work during the day.

Cafés and restaurants

Many cafés and restaurants now offer their customers free access to the internet via wi-fi if you bring your own laptop or smart phone.
Discounts for households

Buying a computer can be expensive but there are big discounts available for those receiving certain benefits or living in rural areas of the country. GetOnline@Home and the Arthur Rank Centre are examples of organisations offering refurbished machines to people who meet their criteria.

Useful links

If you already have access to the internet visit the following websites to find out more.

www.ukonlinecentres.com
www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/communities-and-farming/computers-for-rural-people
www.getonlineathome.org
www.ageuk.org.uk
www.go-on.co.uk
www.digitalskills.com
www.digitalunite.com

What our customers have to say

Residents from St Ann’s, Nottingham, learned how to use a computer and the internet on a popular five week IT training course run in partnership with Nottingham Community Housing Association.

The course received excellent feedback from attendees. Here’s what they said:

“I am now able to look for jobs on my laptop, go on Facebook and access emails.”
Patricia Franks

“I feel more confident in taking on tasks to do with online applications.”
Patrick Merchant

“I knew absolutely nothing when I began. The course has definitely improved my knowledge of IT.”
Ellen Burford

If you are interested in attending a similar course contact 020 3535 3535.

We’re looking for volunteers

If you’re already comfortable using a computer, we’ll train you to help others in your community become more confident using the internet. For more information contact Louise Chance on 07738 714 070 or email louise.chance@metropolitan.org.uk
Hands up for an apprenticeship

Are you aged between 16 and 24? Would you like to boost your future employment prospects and get work experience on the job?

If so, why not consider an apprenticeship? Metropolitan’s apprenticeship programme gives young people the opportunity to get a foot on the career ladder and vocational qualifications for a range of occupations.

Catt Stannard tells us about her experience as an apprentice mental health Care and Support worker in Cambridge.

CATT’S STORY

“Before my apprenticeship I was at college and had an evening job.

I went for an interview for another job and the interviewer noticed I’d studied psychology at college. She asked if I’d be interested in doing a ‘Shadow Day’ at a mental health project in Cambridge. It sounded interesting so I followed it up. This experience made me want a career in the mental health profession.

After the Shadow Day, Metropolitan put me in touch with a recruiter who asked if I would be interested in the apprenticeship. Shortly afterwards an interview was set up and I was offered the position!

My days as an apprentice were varied. I supported customers with activities such as shopping and cleaning, and helped them to write letters and complete forms. I was paid £520 per month, but I won’t lie; the money side of things isn’t easy.

I lived with my Dad while I was an apprentice – I’m very fortunate that he’s always been very supportive.

I applied for a permanent position at Metropolitan and am now a Senior Care and Support worker!

If I could give one piece of advice to other young people considering an apprenticeship, I would say go for it! Not only are you developing skills that you wouldn’t necessarily study at college, you’re also put into challenging situations that you have to deal with on the spot. Being there to see what the job involves on a daily basis has enabled me to be where I am now.”

For more information about the opportunities available, contact Philip Brooks-Stephenson on 020 3535 3348 or at philip.brooks-stephenson@metropolitan.org.uk. You can also visit our website at www.metropolitan.org.uk/apprenticeships.
Material girl
Finding a future in fashion

Metropolitan customer, Shiona Edwards, launched her career when she attended a fashion course in summer 2013.

Shiona said: "On my last day of school I was handed a leaflet from Metropolitan about a free fashion course called ‘Upcycle’. I’ve always been interested in fashion and wanted to learn more about the industry, so I decided to apply.

“The course took place at the Victoria and Albert museum in London, and prepared me for making and selling my own t-shirts which I sold at the end of the course at Brixton Market. It taught me sewing and design skills, and opened my eyes to how the industry works.

“After the course, Metropolitan put me in touch with Kelly from Olmec, a social enterprise and employment organisation. By then I’d decided that a career in fashion was definitely something I wanted to pursue, so Kelly told me about a four-week course at the clothing chain TK Maxx. I applied and was accepted onto the programme which taught me all about what it’s like to work in retail. I finished the course and a few days later the manager from the Brixton branch offered me a full-time job!"

We organise a range of activities to help you have fun, get active and learn new skills. We also work closely with other organisations that can arrange activities and employment in your area. Keep an eye on our website for further details.

Creative connections at the V&A

Our relationship with the Victoria and Albert (V&A) museum continues to flourish. A donation from luxury fashion brand Hermès opened up several places exclusively to Metropolitan residents on the museum’s spring programme of events for aspiring fashionistas.

In summer we’re also organising two more free courses for our customers:

• ‘Out of the Dark’: You’ll give a used piece of furniture a new lease of life, visit a furniture workshop and work with designers at the V&A to recreate a piece of furniture of your choice.

• Bag making course: You’ll visit a well-known bag manufacturer for inspiration and work with V&A designers to create your own handbag, satchel or rucksack.

To register your interest in either one of these courses, please contact Jennifer Fraser on 020 3535 3175, 07738 714 243 or email jennifer.fraser@metropolitan.org.uk
Following the success of the YUSport1 Programme which came to an end in December, we have received additional funding for a new youth sports project, YUSport2.

The project began in February and will run for two years, providing sporting, volunteering and training opportunities for young people aged 14 to 25 in locations around London.

Are you aged 14 to 25 and live in London? Would you like to gain a qualification in sports coaching or become a volunteer?

If so, please contact Jennifer Fraser on 020 3535 3175 or email her at jennifer.fraser@metropolitan.org.uk

The Eat Wise, Eat Well scheme teaches young people how to cook healthy meals. The project, based in London, also offers residents the opportunity to volunteer at the workshops and gain a food-related accreditation.

Are you interested in gaining work experience in catering? Would you like to become a volunteer? Or perhaps you have children who’d like to take part in the workshops.

If so, please contact Jennifer Fraser for more information on 020 3535 3175 or at jennifer.fraser@metropolitan.org.uk

Left: Young chefs and their supervisor, Christine Johnson, with their healthy take on burgers

Right: Master chefs: Relaxing after a long day in the kitchen
Community spaces for hire

Are you organising an event and looking for an affordable venue?

Metropolitan’s community centres provide great facilities at affordable prices in a range of locations. Whether you’re organising a one-off event, such as a party, a conference or a meeting, or are looking to hire a space for regular activities, our centres can offer you a good deal on function and meeting rooms, sports halls, IT suites and training rooms. If you’re looking to organise catering, our centres have fully equipped kitchens. Most of our centres also provide audio visual equipment.

Prices start from as little as £6 per hour in Nottingham, £5 per hour in Derby and £10 per hour in London.

For more information or to book a room, visit www.metropolitan.org.uk/about-us/services/community-spaces-for-hire/ or call 020 3535 3535.

Calling all social entrepreneurs!

Do you run a social enterprise for young people? Are you passionate about improving your community? Do you live in Nottingham or Derby?

In partnership with The Young Foundation, Metropolitan has secured £3 million of funding to support budding entrepreneurs to grow their existing enterprises. We’re looking for people in Nottingham and Derby who have an interest in tackling inequality in education and the drive to turn their ideas into reality.

In return you’ll receive training from sector experts, the chance to receive office space and up to £150,000 in funding to get your enterprise off the ground.

For more information contact Margaret Ogebule on 020 8980 6263 or 07940 254 679.
Why not make a difference?

Would you like to give something back to your community and help improve others’ lives? Or perhaps you’d like to develop your skills and experience, and feel part of a team that gives others a voice?

Our customers define what we do. To improve our service to you, we need to hear what you think about the things we do and our plans for the future.

Whatever your background, our customer groups would love to hear from you. There are three national groups that work hard to get customers’ voices heard, and they’re all looking for new members. To find out which group you could join, take part in the quiz below.

Which statement most closely describes you from each of the following sets?

SET 1
I like making plans for the future
I see when something’s wrong and want to fix it
I enjoy discussing important issues

SET 2
I work well with others
I have an eye for detail
I’m able to see the bigger picture

SET 3
I enjoy meeting and talking to new people
I am good at noticing things

SET 4
I would like to help develop new services
I would like to improve existing services
I would like to improve both new and existing services

SET 5
I like to ask about others’ views
I enjoy writing reviews
I enjoy attending meetings
Mostly As? You might like to join the National Customer Group (NCG).
Mostly Bs? You might be interested joining a scrutiny committee.
Mostly Cs? Consider applying for a job at the Customer Quality Service Committee.

If you found it hard to choose the answer that suits you best, or if you scored a mixture of As Bs and Cs, read the messages below from each group to find out where your skills fit best. Remember, you can always contact us to find out more about each group.

Mostly As: National Customer Group
When Metropolitan makes plans for the future, the NCG wants to know what you think of them. The NCG listens carefully to your opinions and ensures they are heard by the decision makers at the organisation before the plans are put into action.

They’d like to hear from anyone who:
- works well with others
- listens carefully to and respect others’ opinions
- has the confidence to stand up for what they believe in
- is diplomatic and tactful
- believes in the importance of customers’ voices.

Mostly Bs: Scrutiny committees
Scrutiny committees audit and evaluate how parts of the organisation are run. They ask the questions “is it working?” and “is it being properly run?” from a customer’s perspective. Their members help to review performance information and make recommendations on how to improve existing services.

They’re looking for people who:
- have an eye for detail
- are inquisitive and methodical
- are a good listeners.

Mostly Cs: Customer Quality Service Committee (CQSC)
The CQSC meets once every four months. The group consists of both customers and members of Metropolitan’s board, including the Chief Executive. They come together to discuss any issues that could affect our customers and analyse research done by other customer groups.

They’re looking for customers from a range of backgrounds, and you’ll need to be comfortable discussing issues at a board level.

What’s in it for me?
Everyone enjoys different things about volunteering. Perhaps you’d like to meet new people, improve your employment prospects or simply just try something new.

We’ll provide the training you need to get started. We’ll also pay up front for any travel and childcare expenses you incur as a result of being involved, so financial worries needn’t stop you from taking part.

Sign me up!
If you’d like to get involved, contact the Customer Service Centre on 020 3535 3535.
Our service to you

Metropolitan’s new self service hub – services when you want them

If you are a housing tenant or leaseholder, you will start to see a number of changes taking place to our website as we launch our new web ‘self service’ area at www.metropolitan.org.uk.

This new area has been designed with your security in mind. It provides a secure place where you will be able to look at your rent account details, pay your rent and log repairs online – at a time when it’s convenient for you.

Keep an eye on the website and in your rent statement for details of how you can access the hub and the launch of the service.

Reward scheme proposal

Metropolitan is currently putting together a plan for a new reward scheme for customers, which could be introduced as early as next year.

Under the scheme, customers who meet all of their tenancy obligations, such as paying rent on time and by direct debit, allowing access for essential repairs and gas services, and giving us regular and up-to-date information, would be rewarded with additional benefits, such as priority appointments, reductions in rent and access to regular prize draws.

Customers who don’t meet the terms of their tenancy agreements would not be eligible for these additional benefits and services.

We’ll keep you informed as we draw up the detailed plans. We would also like to hear your views on the idea. To tell us what you think please complete the enclosed survey and return it to us Freepost or complete it online at www.metropolitan.org.uk.
Thanks to all of you who contributed to our online consultation on Metropolitan’s new anti-social behaviour strategy.

We took your feedback into consideration while developing our plan.

We hope our new strategy will help to improve your experience of case handling. We want anyone experiencing anti-social behaviour to feel fully supported until the case is resolved.

For more information about our new anti-social behaviour strategy, visit our website at www.metropolitan.org.uk/asb. We’ll update the website with more information soon.

What you can do

You can report all breaches of tenancy or lease agreements to us. This includes unreasonable and persistent noise, threats of violence, harassment, hate-related anti-social behaviour and domestic violence. However, there are other organisations you can contact, depending on the problem:

Q Are you experiencing disturbance due to every-day activities such as children playing, loud voices or cooking smells?

A Talk to your neighbours. Although these activities are intrusive and sometimes annoying, these are not usually classified as anti-social behaviour. You should try to take steps to resolve these issues privately with your neighbours.

Q Are you having problems relating to noise nuisance (such as car alarms, parties or loud music), fly tipping, dog fouling, dog barking, graffiti, smoking in communal areas or abandoned vehicles?

A You can report all of these to your local council. They work with organisations who can take steps to resolve these issues with you.

Q Are you experiencing domestic abuse, racial and other hate-related harassment, or witnessing suspected criminal activity, drug use or serious damage to property?

A Talk to the police by calling 101 if the matter is not causing anyone immediate danger. If the matter is causing immediate danger, call the police on 999.
Many people find that a direct debit is the quickest and most reliable way to pay their rent.

To set one up all you have to do is agree with us the amount to be taken from your account and the date it will be collected. Once it has been organised, your rent is paid automatically from then onwards.

Direct debits can usually be set up to pay your rent on any day of the month. You can also choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, every four weeks or monthly.

**Clear your diary**

Once it’s set up, you no longer need to make Paypoint payments or write out cheques. An agreed amount is transferred to us electronically come rain or shine, saving you time and the hassle of queuing at the bank or post office.

**Clear your account**

Whether you pay your rent on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis, a direct debit ensures this is done automatically, keeping you up-to-date with your rent payments. This is particularly handy if you sometimes forget your rent due date. So long as there are funds available in your bank account, you don’t have to worry about getting into arrears – your rent has already been paid for you.

**Clear your mind**

We will only take the amount from your account that you’ve agreed and if we want to change this amount, or the date of collection, we’ll contact you about it first. What’s more, the Direct Debit Guarantee means that you will get an immediate refund of any accidental payments in the unlikely event of a mistake. Budgeting is made easier as you know exactly how much will leave your account and when.

**How to set up a direct debit**

To change to a direct debit, call us on 020 3535 3535 (with your bank account details to hand) and choose option three at the automated greeting.
There are credit unions across the country. If you feel you need support managing your money, or are worried about how changes to the benefits system will affect you, contact us to see whether a credit union rent account could help.

What is a credit union rent account?
If you can’t open a regular bank account of your own, have a low income, or are worried about budgeting and paying your rent, setting up a credit union rent account could help.

Credit unions are financial organisations that are run by their members. Just like at a bank, members can set up an account with them and pay into it regularly to help save money. Accounts are often free, with no minimum balance requirements.

Some credit unions, such as East Midlands Credit Union (EMCU), allow you to have your benefits and wages paid into the account and organise for your rent to be paid from it directly to your landlord on a regular basis. This way you don’t have to worry about paying your rent – it’s already done for you by direct debit.

If you need a loan, credit unions are a better option than loan sharks or payday lenders. They are generally cheaper than loans from most other providers and they don’t incur many of the charges.

What is a loan shark?
A loan shark is someone who lends money without a licence issued by the Office of Fair Trading. Loan sharks often use intimidation and violence to get money from their “clients” if payments are missed.

What should I do?
If you, or anyone you know, is experiencing any of the problems above, the Illegal Money Lending Team can help. They can be contacted in confidence 24 hours a day on 0300 555 2222, by email at reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk, and by text to 60003 with the title: loan shark plus your message.

You can also find out more about their work at www.facebook.com/stoploansharksproject.
Changes to the benefits system came in just over one year ago. They’ve had a big impact on many of our customers: some are in debt for the first time, and some are unable to keep up rent payments.

But there are steps you can take to help if you’re struggling to manage your money:

- **Did you know about the loophole?** Some tenants’ claims have been wrongly assessed against old Housing Benefit regulations. If you have been paying for a spare room, lived at the same address since 1 January 1996 and you have received housing benefit continuously (with less than a four-week break) you may have been incorrectly assessed. Contact your council if they have not already been in touch with you.

- **The benefit cap.** Did you know that if you receive a disability benefit, the support component of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Working Tax Credits you are exempt?

- **Local authorities are running a number of council tax reduction schemes** but they vary. The schemes offer discounts for single occupiers, live-in carers and people who are severely mentally disabled, to name a few. Contact your council if you are unsure if the correct discount has been applied for you.

- **Universal Credit** will be rolled out by 2017. It will replace income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Tax Credits and Housing Benefit. This means you will be responsible for paying your rent to Metropolitan every month. Speak to us for advice.

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### What other steps can you take?

- **Attend our advice and employment sessions.** We have specialists in place to help with benefit, debt and employment issues.

- **Get prepared for Universal Credit by opening a bank or credit union account.** Do you have internet access at home or do you know where else to get it?

- **Try to pay rent in advance even if you’re receiving Housing Benefit.**

- **Sign up for our IT and budgeting courses.**

- **Get involved by participating in our initiatives, benefits pilots, surveys and focus groups or by becoming a mentor.**

- **If you want to downsize your property, register with a mutual exchange service provider and attend their events – details of these are available on our website. Contact the Financial Inclusion Team for more information (see page 19).**
Take control of your finances

If you’re struggling to pay your rent or are worried about money, Metropolitan’s Financial Inclusion Team is here to help you:

• use your money more effectively
• access financial services, e.g. set up bank accounts
• deal with financial problems and distress

Here are just some examples of how we’ve helped our customers take control of their finances. (All names in the stories below have been changed.)

"C. McDonagh, London
After my housing benefit, ESA and child benefit were stopped, I found it very hard to pay my rent. When I met James from the Financial Inclusion Team I was extremely worried and anxious as I owed over £2,000 in rent.

James was very reassuring and helped me put together the documentation I needed to support my financial situation. James kept in touch with me regularly until I had received my payments which were also backdated to the suspension start date. I am now receiving all my eligible benefits and I was able to pay off all the rent I owed."

"P. Masawi, Cambridge
After suffering a stroke I was unable to look after myself, and as a result my finances suffered. I’d stopped receiving benefits and my bank account was overdrawn. I was cut off from my water supply and on top of that I owed over £4,000 in rent.

Amy from the Financial Inclusion Team helped me put together an appeal and made sure my benefits were reinstated and backdated. She explained my situation to the bank and they agreed to cancel the overdraft along with the charges accumulated during this period. She also told me I was eligible for other benefits too and helped me apply for them. Now I’ve managed to pay back £1,000 of what I owed in rent and continue to pay the rest in manageable instalments."

"G. Gopang, Derby
My husband used to deal with the finances and I spoke little English, so when our marriage broke down I was left in a vulnerable position. As a single parent, Ushma from the Financial Inclusion Team told me I’d be eligible for Income Support and helped me apply for it. She also showed me how to budget and introduced me to a local community centre where I could practise my English with other parents. With her help I’ve managed to reduce the amount of rent I owed by half and I’m planning to attend an English language course."

Contact the Financial Inclusion Team on 020 3535 3535, press 5 at the options and ask to speak to the Financial Inclusion Officer for your area.
Our service to you

How are we doing?

Our performance

We collate and publish regular information about our performance to show us, and you, how we’re doing across all areas of the business.

From now on you’ll be able to see an update every quarter by visiting www.metropolitan.org.uk/performance.

At the time of going to press we were collating the figures for the financial year 2013-14. This information will be summarised and published in the next edition of @Metropolitan later this year, together with a full report which will be published on our website at www.metropolitan.org.uk/annual-reports.

Thank you

We’d like to thank everyone who took part in December’s customer satisfaction survey and to congratulate the prize winners, including Louise Mc Grath-Lone and Linda Maccorin (pictured right). Each of the winners received Love2shop vouchers.

**Winners**


**Repairs: What you think**

We’ll soon be asking you for your ideas on how we can improve our repairs service. Keep an eye on the website for further details.

Darren Pinnock, Customer Service Adviser
Find your calling at Metropolitan

We’re joining forces with Jobcentre Plus to create a work academy for unemployed residents.

If you’ve been out of work for less than a year, you’ll be able to apply for comprehensive training, mentoring and on the job experience at our friendly Customer Service Centre in Nottingham. After a six-week programme you’ll also be given a guaranteed job interview.

A selection day for the first academies will be held on Wednesday 11 June, but we’d be delighted to hear from interested customers after that date. The academies are part of an ongoing commitment to help people into work.

To kickstart your career and register your interest in Metropolitan work academies contact Phil Rees on 020 3535 4734 or at phil.rees@metropolitan.org.uk

Good to know

Alongside the launch of the new self service portal, we’ll soon be extending the opening hours of our Customer Service Centre from 8am until 8pm, Monday to Friday. This will make it easier for you to contact us, especially if you usually work or study during the day.

Remember you can contact the Customer Service Centre on 020 3535 3535 to:

- report a new or existing repair
- make a payment
- discuss your account
- make a payment
- apply for a property
- report anti-social behaviour.

You can also get in touch online through the website’s Contact Us page.

Mario Roberts, Customer Service Adviser

Judyta Skawina, Customer Service Centre Apprentice
Home ownership

Property in the palm of your hand – get the app!

Metropolitan has launched a free app to help potential home buyers find out more about homes for sale and rent.

The app enables you to search for a home, save your favourite properties and contact our sales team direct from your mobile. You can download the Metropolitan app from both the App Store and at Google Play.

Louise Moore, Marketing Projects Manager from Metropolitan’s Home Ownership Team, explains: “As we have more developments becoming available in the near future, we wanted to develop a way to improve our service for home hunters on the move!”

Use the app to discover where available properties are located

Shared ownership, Bermondsey style

Roseberry Street, an attractive new development in Bermondsey, South London, offers a range of fourteen new homes to buy affordably through shared ownership – from stylish one-bedroom apartments to family-sized, four-bedroom houses.

The development will be ready in July and priority to buy goes to those living and working in Southwark, however applications are welcome from home seekers across south-east London.

An artist’s impression of the development

Contact our sales team on 020 3535 2555, by email at mhosales@metropolitan.org.uk or visit www.mho.co.uk to find out more.
This year Metropolitan is looking to enter into new long-term agreements with contractors to provide services to our buildings and estates. Our existing contracts are coming to an end, and due to the cost of these services being likely to exceed £100 per year for any one leaseholder, we must formally consult.

The consultations are carried out under Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Acts 1985 & 1987, as amended by the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.

The first of these consultations will be in relation to the estates services contracts including cleaning and gardening. Later in the year we will be looking to consult on repairs and major works, and mechanical and electrical contracts.

**What happens next**

For each consultation we will send you two separate consultation letters, each giving you a 30 day period throughout which you can comment on the proposals. These stages are called the Notice of Intention (NOI) and the Notice of Proposal (NOP). The NOI lets you know what type of works and contracts we are looking into, whilst the NOP will give you details of the tenders and costs.

These contracts are of a value at which we are required to advertise the work within the European Union. You will be unable to nominate a contractor but if you know of a contractor you’d like to submit a bid, let them know to look for the notices on the Official Journal of the European Union.

If you currently receive these services, you will continue to pay for them through your service charges. It is possible that the new contracts may either increase or decrease your existing service charge.
We want all of our customers to be able to understand the information we provide. The contents of this magazine can be made available in a number of other languages and alternative formats including large print.

How to contact us

✉ PO Box 10262, Nottingham NG8 9LE
📞 020 3535 3535*
✉ contactus@metropolitan.org.uk
🌐 www.metropolitan.org.uk
☎ @MetropolitanOrg

*Calls cost on average between 1p and 9p per minute. Please check with your call provider.

Help us to help you

Please let us know if you change your contact information.

Metropolitan is a leading provider of integrated housing services, care and support and community regeneration.

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Information correct at time of going to press.
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