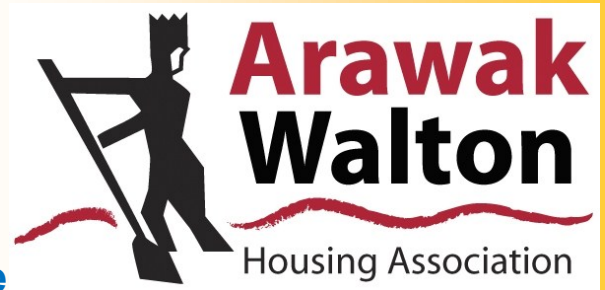


June 2015

# Arawak Walton News

Passionate about People



## Customer Service Excellence - We Passed with Flying Colours!



Arawak Walton is delighted to announce that once again we have passed our Customer Service Excellence assessment with flying colours!

The association has held the Charter Mark standard since 2000, changing to the Customer Service Excellence

Standard (CSES) in 2009. Our ongoing commitment to achieving this standard enables us to demonstrate to key stakeholders including tenants and Board Members, that we consistently deliver the highest standards of customer service.

Subjecting our service to external review also provides all key stakeholder with the confidence provided in larger organisations by Regulatory Inspection, something we have not been subjected to although this will change once we grow to over 1000 homes in ownership.

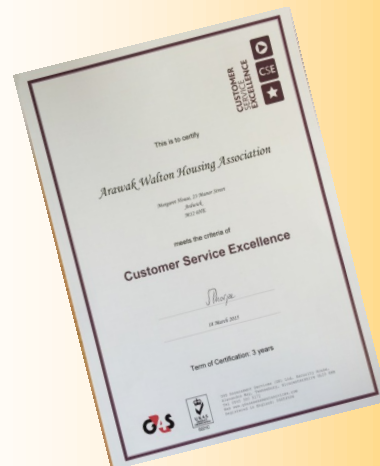
The assessor visited the association in March. He confirmed we still had one partial compliance as per last year but he was really impressed with all of the evidence received and the people he spoke to. He loved seeing

Sycamore Court and the Heaton's and was very impressed with the new replacement kitchen specification at 383 Cheetham Hill Road. He recognised that we provide excellent customer service and congratulated us on another great year!

The Customer Service Excellence Standard was established by the government to encourage organisations to meet the highest standards to deliver customer satisfaction with their services.

The Board thanks, as always, must go to the staff, tenants and our partners who all played their part to show Arawak Walton's many special qualities when it comes to excellent customer service.

A big well done to everyone!



## INSIDE:

- ◆ Specialised rent team
- ◆ Homes for Britain Rally
- ◆ Girls Thai Boxing
- ◆ Saving money tips



[www.arawakwalton.com](http://www.arawakwalton.com)

## Summer Edition

## Staff News...

The Association is happy to announce the successful recruitment of Tara Horner. Tara will be covering a 12-month post while Jo Moon is on maternity leave as a Customer Services Manager.



Tara joins us from Mobica Limited where she was Head of Business Development and Customer Relationship Manager. Tara has settled in well into her role and the association as it's a brand new sector for her.

Here are a few words from Tara "the housing sector is a brand new area for me and has been a steep learning curve, but I am enjoying every minute of it. I am

particularly enjoying the interaction with tenants and being able to make a difference in peoples lives. The staff have made me feel very welcome and gone out of their way to help me settle in - its like a little family".

We are sad to announce that Yemi Babalola, Finance/IT Officer left the association to move onto new pastures. Yemi secured a new role at the Guinness Partnership as an Applications Officer.

On behalf of all the Staff and Board at Arawak Walton, we wish Yemi the best of luck for the future.



## Rent Payments

We are delighted to be able to tell you that we have created a Rents Team to assist with your rent related queries.

Now your first point of call for all information and advice about your rents is the Rents Team who consist of Joan and Vicky. Your Housing Officer will still be available to help you when you need extra support but you can get all the information and advice you need from the rents team either in person in our office, over the phone through text message or email.

This will mean that getting the information you need is easier and quicker.

Some of the help Joan and Vicky can give you is:

- Take payments
- Give rent balances and rent statements
- Set up or amend Direct debits
- General rent enquiries

Because by far the easiest and quickest way to pay your rent is by direct debit, Joan and Vicky are also now able to set this up for you. They can discuss with you the best direct debit date for you, and process the entire request, leaving you with nothing to worry about.

As an added bonus, switch to direct debit in the month of **July** and we will enter you in a free prize draw with a chance to win £20!!!





# Homes for Britain Rally

The Homes for Britain campaign brings together all those who believe everyone has a right to a decent affordable home to call their own. Support comes from people across the country and we've joined forces with organisations from very corner of the housing world.



Arawak Walton participated in the biggest housing rally in a generation which took place on 17th March 2015. Organised by the National Housing Federation, the Homes for Britain campaign united the voice for housing, the event brought together over 2,500 people in the heart of Westminster, London, to call for 'an end to the housing crisis within a generation'.



This rally brought together every part of the housing world - from private developers to homelessness campaigners, from social housing providers to private landlords and it stands as the biggest attended rally as far as housing is concerned.

Here are a few pictures of our Staff in support of the campaign...



We also attended the Manchester Housing Festival where we won the best drawing competition for houses!



# Saving you money!

We all like to watch our pennies, that's why we thought it may help to provide you with some money saving tips and ideas from websites we have come across to help you save money!

## Budgeting your money

If you want to get on top of your finances, a budget is a really good way to start. It's just a record of money you have coming in (from things like your salary or wages, pensions or benefits) and payments that you make (such as your rent, insurance and Council Tax as well as living expenses and regular and irregular spending).

A great way to work out your budget is with an online budget planner. This allows you to record all of your incomings and outgoings. It then analyses and adds up your figures and gives a breakdown of where your spending goes each month.

The following website has a helpful budget Planner template:

[www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner](http://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner)

## Keep a spending diary

Keeping a spending diary is an effective way of seeing exactly what you spend your money on. Try making a note of what you spend for at least a month (including even small purchases). If you can do it for even longer, you'll get a fuller picture of what you spend your money on.



## Set a savings goal

The easiest way to get your savings working for you is to set things up so that you automatically add a little bit each month to your savings. That way you won't have to remember to make the payment and you won't be tempted to skip a month.

Before you know it, you'll have built up a solid chunk of savings!

**Top Tip!** If you have a tendency to buy things on impulse, try giving yourself a cooling off period of at least two days. You may find you're not so keen to buy it.

## Paying off loans and credit cards

If you have loans or owe money on credit cards it usually makes sense to pay off the debt that charges the highest rate of interest first - it's the fastest way to clear your debts. Knowing this is useful if you have several different debts charging different rates of interest, such as: Store cards, which normally charge the highest rates of interest and Credit cards

A Debt Management Plan is one way to help you manage your debts and pay them off at a more affordable rate.

Step change have more information on this on their website:

[www.stepchange.org/Howwecanhelpyou/DMPdebtmanagementplan.a](http://www.stepchange.org/Howwecanhelpyou/DMPdebtmanagementplan.a)

There are many websites that provide advice and guidance on how to be more money savvy!

These include: Money advice Service, Step Change, Citizens Advice Bureau, Money Saving Expert and many more.



# Girls Thai Whizz Boxing

"A great big thank you to Arawak Walton Housing Association for providing Whiz Youth Project in Whalley Range with funding to start up our girls group again.

For some time now we have been waiting for the opportunity to deliver Thai boxing sessions to girls, as we have recognised that although our already well established Thai boxing sessions have been running for many years, it is very much male dominated.

Taking part in Thai Boxing has many benefits; including increased flexibility, improved concentration, focus, co-ordination and posture. It can be adapted for all, including those who have lower levels of fitness. And, because it is suitable for all, it makes for a great workout - especially for girls! The training includes a circuit style training, including core strengthening exercises, shadow boxing, and the use of kickboxing pads. There is also a self-defence element to this training which can be empowering to young women, knowing they have skills that could help them if they were to find themselves in a situation that is potentially dangerous.

Being physically active also has a huge effect on self-confidence and self-esteem, thus maintaining good mental health; helping to reduce stress, anxiety and even depression, which is becoming increasingly common among young people." **Alison Chisholm, Project Manager of Whizz Youth Project**



"I decided to start Thai Boxing because I was interested in improving my fitness. Whiz offers Thai boxing/ fitness sessions on other nights that are very popular with males, which I found a bit off putting... so, an all girls night was very appealing to me. The group has come together very well, especially when supporting each other in sessions. The class is very well structured and allows everyone to work at their own pace. It's nice that the group can have a laugh and still get a lot done. I'll definitely be attending all future sessions. It's a fun and comfortable space to be in and everyone always enjoys themselves".  
Olivia, 21



## Manchester South Central Foodbank

The Manchester South Central Foodbank gets vital food to people in need.

Your gift of tinned or dried food (within sell-by date and in good condition) will help get those in need over the worst. If you would like to donate please drop off on a Saturday at the Wesley Centre Royce Road/ Old York St, Hulme M15 5BP between 12 -1pm or please get in touch for other arrangements:

Phone: 0161 226 3413

Email: [info@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk)



If you would like to discuss volunteering opportunities, please contact:

[volunteers@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk)

Tel: 0161 226 3413

## Available flats at Sycamore Court

**Sycamore Court: 144 Sandal St,  
Miles Platting, Manchester M40 7BS**

**Housing Accommodation for those aged  
55+**

Arawak Walton is proud to offer you a home at Sycamore Court. We currently have the following properties available to let:

Flat 15 : Ground Floor 1 bed studio flat:  
Weekly rent: £111.87 (including services)

Flat 34: First floor 1 bed studio flat:  
Weekly rent: £111.87 (including services)

The rent includes payment towards your heating and water which the Association will pay on your behalf.

Sycamore Court has been refurbished to a high standard. All flats have :

- Walk in showers
- Built in wardrobe
- Single robe
- Bed side cabinet.

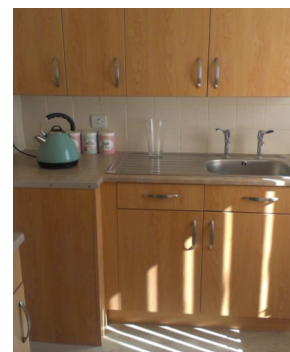


The flats on the ground floor have patio doors allowing easy access to the gardens.



There's also a large lounge with kitchen facilities for functions and other activities together with an on-site laundry and guest room for your visitors to come and spend time with you.

Please contact us at our Head Office on 0161 272 6094 and we will let you know how you can apply for one of our properties. If you wish to visit Sycamore Court please ring 0161 205 1467 and speak to Julie Clifford, Scheme Manager.





## Cym in the top 50 in Country

24Housing's Power Players list top 50 features some of the key figures in housing who play a vital role in raising the issues that face the sector.



We are proud to announce that Ms Cym D'Souza, Chief Executive of Arawak Walton is number 28 in the top 50 list.

The list starts with David Orr and includes both Iain Duncan Smith and the

shadow secretary of state for housing Emma Reynolds.

We would all agree that Cym is in very distinguished company and her listing can only help raise the profile both of the BME housing sector and the role Arawak Walton plays in addressing the needs of its customers.



In addition, the housing 24 magazine also compiled a list of the top housing chief executives from the votes cast in the Power Players list. Cym was rated number 10 in the top 30 Chief Executives alongside other inspirational leaders.



## Community Housing Associations (North West) 2015 Tenants Conference Wednesday 8th July 2015.

Each year, The Community Housing Associations (North West) hold a Tenants Conference. This year's conference will be held on **Wednesday 8th July** at the Village Hotel, Warrington.

The subject for the day is all focused on Tenant Scrutiny, and it is being facilitated by Yvonne Davies.

If you are interested in attending the conference, please contact the office on 0161 272 6094 or email [satta@arawakwalton.com](mailto:satta@arawakwalton.com) who will also arrange transport for the conference.

Please ensure you let us know by **Thursday 24th June** at the very latest if you would like to attend.

## School Holidays!

The School Holidays will soon be upon us and this is quite often a stressful time for parents to keep the children occupied and at a low cost!

Manchester City Council have a list of things to do for the whole family and regularly update these so keep an eye out for things to do with your children this summer.

[www.manchester.gov.uk/allsortstodo](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/allsortstodo)

Also, check out Z arts, a charity based organisation who provide creative opportunities for young people based in Manchester. These are often at a low cost or even free!

[www.z-arts.org](http://www.z-arts.org)

We are on Twitter and Facebook!

You will find lots of useful information about what Arawak

Walton are doing and information that may be of interest to you and your Family.

[www.arawakwalton.com](http://www.arawakwalton.com)



## How Are We Performing

Arawak Walton Performance	Feb	Mar	Apr	Target
Voids % (number of empty properties)	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	1.1%
Rent Arrears– the amount of unpaid rent (as % of weekly rent)	5.4%	5.4%	5.6%	5.2%
Number of days to re-let a property	24	23	22	25
Average number of seconds taken to answer calls	4.2	4.1	4.5	4.0
Overall Satisfaction with the repairs service	98%	95%	96%	97%
Repairs completion statistics	Feb	Mar	Apr	Target
Emergency – completed within 24 hours	99%	100%	100%	99%
Urgent – completed within 7 days	98%	99%	99%	99%
Routine – completed within 21 days	99%	99%	100%	99%

We appreciate any feedback on our newsletter. You can give feedback via email to [satta@arawakwalton.com](mailto:satta@arawakwalton.com)