

“Before the sell off, residents asked me what could possibly

The privatisers say that “stock transfer works.” They say Councils can’t manage homes well. It’s time to face the facts - does stock transfer work? Can Housing Associations do the job? Hackney, in East London has had the most successful transfer ballots in the country.

Each flat of the 7,000 so far privatised has had a massive central government subsidy - averaging at over **10/12/98** Council sells 50 street properties to increase subsidy for Clapton transfer [led by Guinness trust] by £3.6 million

14/1/99 Council propaganda team wins ‘Best Communication with Tenants Award’
The selling of another 50 homes for the South Hackney [owned by Sanctuary] group criticised

15/4/99 Council propaganda video wins the ‘the corporate video world ... equivalent of a BAFTA’
* Hundreds of copies found waterlogged under leak in abandoned council building

22/4/99 CEI scheme criticised as having run out of money - with only 33% of budget available for the south east corner of Clapton Park estate

20/1/00 12 year old Martin Williams dies falling off scaffolding on Kingsmead estate [owned by Shaftesbury]

10/2/00 Council response to death is “The council has no input on that estate either in terms of its housing management functions or its health and safety responsibilities”

24/2/00 Tenants in Upper Clapton left without water by Newlon HA. [n.b - not ex council tenants]
* Tenant rep sacked from board of Clapton transfer, for housing benefit rental arrears

2/3/00 Tenants of South Hackney group take landlord to court over wheel clamping

9/3/00 New Islington and Hackney [NIHA] HA tenants accuse landlord of ignoring drug dealing, leading to murder of tenant’s partner [n.b - not ex council tenants]

23/3/00 NIHA says “death was not our fault”

13/7/00 Coroner’s inquest into the death of Martin Williams [also known as Karshak] says: ‘The risk of children climbing on to the scaffolding had not been identified by the new landlords.’ “The precautions that were in place were not adequate. The chicken wire was not effective, indeed it wasn’t intended to be.” Site manager said “there was no security” but the coroner did not consider that there was enough evidence for a verdict of unlawful killing

22/7/00 30 flats left with out power on Peabody’s Pembury estate for 9 days - torches were distributed by the caring landlord

24/8/00 Children still playing on ‘Mead building site. Kingsmead Homes remove playground on estate and move to evict some tenants because of alleged anti social behaviour by their children

24/8/00 Pembury estate tenants [transferred to Peabody] say that their landlord is ignoring drug dealing on the estate - “... they won’t do anything until they have half a dozen murders”

7/9/00 Rat plague reported in Clapton estate run by Newlon + 4 other HAs - HAs and the Council blame each other [n.b - not ex council tenants]

14/9/00 Council targets supported accommodation as next up for privatisation

21/9/00 Tenants march on office of Sanctuary in South Hackney and dump rotten food - the landlord had

be worse than the council?”

£10,000 per home. As well Housing Associations have developed new estates through the heavily subsidised [Hesseltine era] Comprehensive Estates Initiative e.g Holly Street - where some homes have had £100,000 spent on them!

[All reports from [Hackney Gazette](#) except where marked *]

waited 24 hours to restore power after a storm - they had no one on duty

26/10/00 Broken sewers send Gascoyne residents to hospital - tenants comment that “the heirarchy of Sanctuary disappear at 5pm of an evening and forget about their tenants”

2/11/00 William Hague pays his respects to Martin Karshak - the only politician to do so

15/2/01 * Tenants in Shoreditch Court [Haggerston] have agreement changed on them then given to a blind tenant rep to sign [from [Housing Today](#)] [n.b - not ex council tenants]

12/4/01 * Tenants in Hindle House [Dalston] find out that the renovation they were promised have been changed - while the works are being done by Southern Homes [from [Housing Today](#)]

28/6/01 12 year old falls through bath onto cooker below in Ujima owned flat in Shoreditch - she stops herself with her elbows [n.b - not ex council tenants]

19/7/01 Tenants in Hindle House criticise Southern Homes for failure to control prostitution and crack dens

Summer 2001

* The Council has postponed again a meeting for residents on privatised estates.

* Tenants of the 480 homes on Haggerston West and Kingsland, taken out of the Canalside ballot in 1998 are still waiting for the promised vote on the future of their estates

* Wages of estate cleaners cut by up to 45% to £4.50 an hour - Managers are on £40,000 +

* Empty flats being short life let at rents of up to 80% higher than Council rents

* Costs of refurbishment now running at 50% above budget ... cuts being discussed and most building programmes well behind schedule

“I can now tell them with confidence there is something worse than the Council ... and it’s called our new landlord” Hackney tenant, parent of 2, after being left with no hot water for over 4 months'

It can get worse! ... and with privatisation it will!

Tenants in Shoreditch, Hoxton and Haggerston will know all too well how bad Hackney Council and the private alternatives Pinnacle [management] and Canalside [ownership and management] are. **Can it be any worse ? ...**

Over 30 tenants from Hillside Estate in Stamford Hill met on November 8th. Hillside was sold to Southern Housing in March and is now being emptied of residents to make way for rebuilding.
What's happening now?

- the post office refuse to deliver post because their post man doesn't feel safe. Southern says they'll pay for post redirection but they won't make the estate safe for people who live there!
- 17 flats occupied by homeless people are being evicted ... but the crack den is being left! and lights are not being promptly replaced in stairwells so that people are using drugs there too.
- tenants have waited up to 8 months without hot water for boiler repairs
- payments for losing spare rooms are only 10% of that being received by some other privatised tenants - only £100 per room
- the community flat had its locks changed last year and is still not being made available to tenants to meet despite a promise made in March - again 'safety' is being used as the excuse but the estate is 'safe' enough to live in!
- tenants have no representation on the Southern Board, and no right even to make a delegation or see decisions about their homes being made
- a new proposal for increasing the density of the rebuilt Hillside by 75% has been made without consultation, and without a guaranteed right of return for residents

The director from Southern said she was [still!] a 'union person' and was concerned about the Human Rights Act. But her concern for the right of Hillside tenants to organise or for the human rights of tenants wasn't very apparent.

The safeguards promised by the council before the vote were a laugh - officials refused to come and Councillor Sils from the Labour-Tory alliance running Hackney fell asleep!

To sum up, one tenant said:

"When I voted yes to transfer I was never told any of this. I don't feel safe in my home.

I feel betrayed."

To support Hillside page 'Defend Council Housing in Hackney' on **07623 758 782**

Or if you want a job with "never a dull moment" selling flats for Southern Housing Group on a wage of £33,000 call 01403 892 291

- "whilst a marketing qualification would be an advantage, more important will be your effective influencing and negotiating skills."
[taken from a job advert for Southern Homes October 2000]