

Heygatewashome

Resident 1996-2014 Mojisola Ojeikere

My husband and I brought up three children in our home on the Heygate estate.

We liked our flat because it was spacious and quiet with friendly neighbours.

It was also convenient for me because I used to work in Westminster and convenient for my husband because he works for London Underground.

We had both worked full time to get a mortgage so that we could buy the lease.

We were initially told we would be able to buy new homes in the replacement development with the help of a 'shared equity' option. But this never happened. Instead the council said we just had to accept its £150k compensation offer and find somewhere else to live.

We instructed a surveyor to do an independent survey and she estimated the value of our home at £200k - well above the Council's offer, but the Council refused to negotiate with her. She said we could wait and appeal to a Lands Tribunal, but this would incur considerable costs and was risky because the Council would be sure to instruct top barristers to fight us.

In the meantime we were left all alone in our block with no neighbours and no estate cleaning or maintenance. At the beginning of 2010 they switched off the lifts and the estate district heating.

We were given an electric hotwater heater and a couple of electric fan heaters and urged to reconsider the council's offer as it could no longer guarantee our safety on the estate.

I wrote to the council asking for permission to install a central heating system out of my own pocket, but my request was refused.



In the end we forced to accept the £150k or face the bailiffs. After scraping together as much as we could we were able to buy somewhere in Romford.

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The move has been very difficult for the whole family, especially my children who miss their friends. Their schooling has been disrupted and they have had difficulty integrating here. My

husband now spends less time at home and is constantly tired because of all the commuting.

This whole regeneration has been a sham. We have been harassed and intimidated out of our homes in a scheme that was supposed to make our lives better.