

Annual Tenants Report 2010/11





Homes for Islington

improving housing through partnership



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Welcome to our annual report

As Islington Council’s Executive Member for Housing, I am pleased to introduce the second annual report for council housing in Islington.



James Murray
Executive Member
for Housing

Last year, the council agreed a set of housing standards with residents by which our performance can be judged. This is known as the ‘local offer’. We are committed to giving residents feedback on our performance against this offer.

I want the council to be open both about successes and areas where we need to improve. Only in this way can we work with residents to deliver better services year after year.

We carried out a consultation over the summer on whether the standards we have agreed with residents still reflect their views about our service. We have also used information gained from over 600 residents interviewed as a part of the independent survey of our services. We will use this information to suggest changes to our standards for next year.

For the ‘local offer’ to work, we are reliant on your input to make sure that the standards meet your needs. I would therefore be grateful for any views you may have by Wednesday 30 November so these can be taken into account before next year’s ‘offer’ is agreed by the council in April 2012.

This report outlines the performance of our housing management agents, Homes for Islington, Partners for Islington and Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) during 2010/11, which I hope you will find interesting.

As the Executive Member for Housing, I place the highest priority on listening and acting upon the views of our residents. It is my intention that we use this annual report process to continually improve the services we deliver to our residents.

Background

This annual report provides information on how Islington Council performed against the following service standards agreed with tenants during 2009/10:

- Tenant and Empowerment
- Homes
- Neighbourhood and Community
- Customer Care
- Community Support
- Value for Money

In general we have performed well against these standards, but we hope that you will use the information in this report to challenge us to continue to improve next year.

For the purpose of this report, information collected between April 2010 and March 2011 has been used.

Further information on our performance and customer feedback can be found at www.homesforislington.org.uk.

Housing services in Islington

Islington Council work with three different types of organisation that manage homes on our behalf.



Homes for Islington

Homes for Islington (HFI) is an arms length management organisation (ALMO) which was set up by the council in 2004.

In addition to managing 30,000 properties, it is responsible for monitoring the council's other two types of housing management providers: Partners and tenant-led organisations.

HFI is managed by a resident-led board with a resident appointed Chair.

Partners for Improvement

Partners for Improvement (Partners) are a company set up especially to manage most of the council's street properties in Islington.

Partners carry out housing management, planned maintenance and repairs to council homes under two long-term agreements, and will complete the current Decent Homes improvement programme in 2011.

HFI is responsible for managing these contracts and monitoring the performance of Partners.

Tenant Management Organisations and Tenant Management Co-operatives

Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) and Tenant Management Co-operatives (TMCs) are groups of residents who have taken on responsibility for some of the housing management services on their estate or in their blocks.

TMOs and TMCs can be set up after a ballot of residents and receive an allowance from the council to deliver the housing services they have chosen to manage.

With 26 TMOs and TMCs, Islington has amongst the highest number of these organisations in the country. HFI works with and monitors TMOs and TMCs, on behalf of the council.

Hearing from you

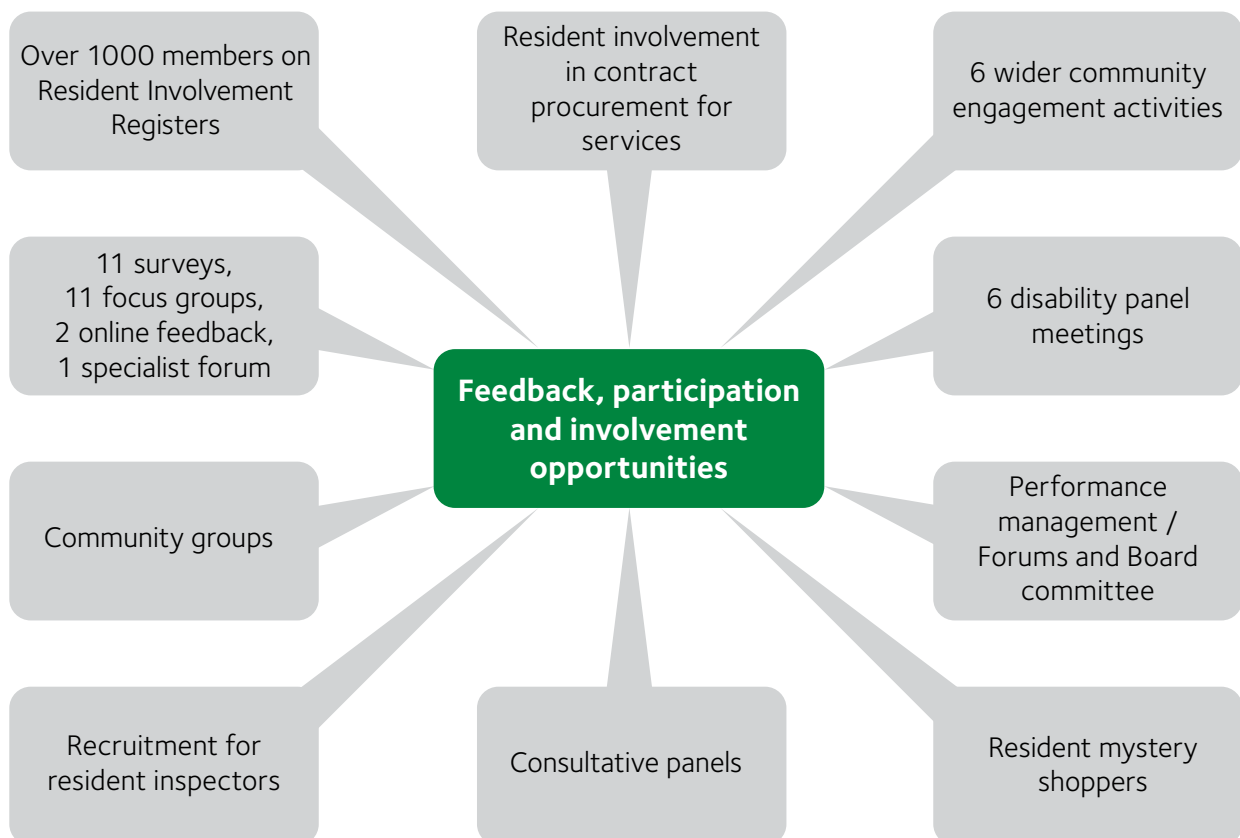
To help continually improve we need to know what you think about the services HFI, Partners, TMOs and TMCs provide to you.

Our consultation framework enables residents to actively participate, challenge or contribute to the development of services, in a way that suits them.

Listening to your feedback

During 2010/11 HFI and Partners carried out a number of engagement activities to ensure that standards were being met. We also provided opportunities for you to feedback to us in a way, at a time, and in a format that suited you.

We used this feedback to help develop standards for 2011/12 that continue to reflect residents' needs.



Learning from your feedback

You said	So we did
Our contractor was working outside agreed hours and causing noise and disturbance to residents.	All breaches of the Contractors' Promise are now referred in writing to the company's senior management.
You reported a roof leak but when our contractor arrived he did not have keys for the roof hatch to access the roof.	We agreed this was poor service and worked with our contractor and HFI Direct to streamline this process.
You did not like the letter we sent when we wanted to talk to you about a complaint of anti-social behaviour.	Following your feedback we improved the tone and information in our letters.
We didn't involve residents enough when deciding on environmental improvements on your estate.	We improved our consultation process to involve residents in the early stages of design.
You told us that our complaints policy was bureaucratic, long winded and we didn't always address the complaint fully.	HFI and Partners adopted the council's two stage complaints process from 1 July 2010. Each stage is independent and we aim to resolve complaints at stage one.
Partners received a complaint regarding the need to communicate about the use of scaffolding.	We modified our computerised repairs system to ensure notifications about the erection of scaffolding are sent out to residents affected. A second letter is sent out if the scaffolding remains up after 14 days.

Our formal involvement structures

We are committed to holding conventions which give all social housing residents the opportunity to comment on the service they are receiving and to tell us about changes they would like to see in the future.



The HFI Board, which includes several residents, is responsible for the performance of HFI. The Board also ensures that the services run by Partners, TMOs and TMCs are working effectively.

Every two years, elections take place to choose the tenants and leaseholders who will become directors on HFI's Board. Locally nominated tenants are also made Associate Directors and sit on HFI committees with Board Directors to scrutinise and monitor areas of the service.

There are six consultative panels made up of residents nominated from tenant and resident associations. Five of these represent different areas of the borough that HFI manages. The other is made up of residents who represent the views of those living in street properties managed by Partners. Their purpose is to allow residents to have a direct input into the way we provide our services.

There are around 60 tenants and resident associations in the borough who receive grant funding and training from the council to support their activities.

Getting more residents involved

Although the formal resident involvement structure described above is very useful, you have also

told us that not all residents have the time to, or wish to, attend meetings. For this reason, both HFI and Partners have developed a resident involvement register that allows residents to comment on our services in any way they choose.

The combined membership of the resident involvement registers is now more than 1,000 and together they provide an excellent source of feedback, in addition to the formal consultation structures.

In the last year we have also extended our use of resident mystery shoppers and have recruited tenant and leaseholder inspectors to help improve our services.

HFI and Partners also have a programme of community events and hold meetings with local community organisations. During 2010/11 they held over 20 events either in partnership or on estates. These events allowed us to access the views of communities who do not normally attend residents' meetings.

HFI runs a disability panel of 12 HFI and Partners residents with disabilities who meet six times a year. Through the panel the disabled community report back on their experiences and comment on the impact of our policies on their everyday lives.

Our performance against Service Standards 2010/11






Tenant and Empowerment Standard

“Come and tell us what you think. We are interested in your views.”

Residents have told us that they want to be provided with a range of ways in which they can give feedback or be engaged in commenting on the services that Homes for Islington and Partners provide.

The table below shows how we are performing in this area against the measures we agreed with residents last year.



Tenant and Empowerment Standard Performance			
Measure	Target	Performance 10/11	 Met  Not met  No target
HFI will continue to support and encourage the development of our tenant and resident associations.	Assist in developing 5 new associations.	8 new TRAs set up.	
HFI and Partners will consult regularly with members of the resident involvement registers run by HFI and Partners.	Increase the membership of the register to 1,000.	Over 1,000 members registered.	
HFI and Partners will work with other landlords in the borough to provide regular opportunities for residents to review services and to tell us how they would like to see them improved.	Provide a joint forum at least once a year.	HFI and Partners worked in partnership to provide a Residents Convention in November 2010.	
The council, HFI, Partners, TMOs and TMCs will run a programme of community events for our residents and invite local businesses and private residents to be involved.	HFI and Partners will hold at least 8 community events.	HFI and Partners ran over 20 community events for residents. Funding support was sought from local businesses to support events.	
We will continue to train resident inspectors who will scrutinise areas of HFI's and Partners' performance.	We will test 2 service areas next year.	During 2010, HFI and Partners residents were invited to train as resident inspectors.	
HFI and Partners will try to increase the number of younger people involved in activities and seek their views on the services they need.	Deliver a number of engagement opportunities specifically for young residents each year.	Developments made with key partners to engage young residents in HFI business. Included youth focus groups in summer 2011.	

Home standard

‘Work on your home will be of good quality and completed quickly, wherever possible on the first visit’

We know that an effective repairs service is a priority for our tenants.

During 2010, residents worked with HFI and council staff to find new repairs and maintenance contractors. The table below outlines how we have performed on repairs, maintenance and improvements as well as feedback on the caretaking service.



Home Standard Performance			
Measure	Target	Performance 10/11	✓ Met ✗ Not met — No target
Urgent repairs will be completed within 24 hours.	HFI - 97%. Partners target – 95%.	HFI – 94% completed in 24 hours. Partners – 98.7% completed in 24 hours.	✓
Percentage of repairs completed ‘right first time’.	90%.	94.5% of repairs were completed first time.	✓
Number of days to complete non-urgent repairs.	20 days.	On average it took 7 days to complete non-urgent repairs.	✓
All tenants will receive a gas safety inspection every year.	100% for HFI and Partners.	HFI – 99.5%. Partners – 99.5%.	✗
Percent of estates meeting our cleanliness standards.	90%.	95% of estates met A or B cleanliness standard.	✓
All homes to meet the decent homes standard.	100% for HFI. Partners target for 31 Mar 2011 – 90.5%.	This target was met at the end of 2010. 4,071 Decent Homes of 4,585 rented dwellings (88.8% compliance).	✓
All new lets have gas, water and electricity working when they move in.	Targets not set for element until 2011.		—

Neighbourhood and Community Standard









‘A quick response, a fair assessment and action taken when required’

Residents have told us that they want a firm response to incidents of anti-social behaviour. The need for more housing is a key priority in Islington to help tackle homelessness and overcrowding.

Speedy re-letting of empty properties and taking action against those who have obtained tenancies

on a fraudulent basis helps to get families off the housing register and into a suitable home more quickly.

The table below sets out how we have performed in these areas.

Neighbourhood and Community Standard Performance			
Measure	Target	Performance 10/11	 Met  Not met  No target
We will add new conditions of tenancy this year so that in future all residents who want to keep a dog must seek our permission.	April 2011.	We added this into the tenancy conditions in 2010.	
When other methods are exhausted HFI and Partners will evict those causing anti-social behaviour.	No target.	7 evictions were carried where tenants had carried out anti-social behaviour.	
Percent of those who make a report of anti-social behaviour who are happy with the way their case is handled.	85%.	Survey responses during 2010/11 showed 64% of HFI residents and 61% of Partners residents were satisfied.	
The number of days taken to re-let empty properties.	21 days for HFI and 27 for Partners.	Average re-let time was 20 days for HFI and Partners.	
All new tenants will be offered a welfare benefit check and will be visited in their homes after 4 weeks to ensure they have settled in.	All new tenants are offered a 4 week visit.	There were 960 new-lets with 900 new tenant visits carried out.	
HFI and Partners will take action against people who are unauthorised occupants of council housing.	100 homes available for re-allocation.	123 homes were made available for re-allocation.	

Customer Care Standard

‘Knowing and listening to our customers and meeting their needs’

Providing excellent customer care is very important to us. HFI and Partners regularly test their staff against our standards and recognise that continual training is key to maintaining and improving customer satisfaction in this area.

The table below outlines our performance against some key customer care standards.



Customer Care Standard Performance			
Measure	Target	Performance 10/11	✓ Met ✗ Not met — No target
HFI and Partners customers will be treated well, regardless of sexual orientation, race, gender, disability, religion, age or socio-economic status.	No target set.	All induction programmes for new staff have included compulsory diversity and customer care training.	✓
Phone calls will be answered within 6 rings.	HFI target – 96%. Partners target – 80%.	HFI and Partners answered 95% of calls within agreed timescale.	✗
Complaints will be answered within 21 calendar days and we will learn from them how to improve our services.	HFI target – 97%. Partners target – 96%.	HFI – 88%. Partners – 97.6%.	✗
All correspondence will be responded to within 10 working days.	98% of correspondence answered within 10 days. Partners target – 96%.	HFI and Partners responded to 99% of correspondence within agreed timescales.	✓
HFI and Partners will involve residents in mystery shopping exercises to test the responses of our staff.	We will test services twice a year.	We have carried out 2 mystery shops during the period. Improvements have been made resulting from the customer feedback.	✓
HFI and Partners will arrange annually for an external test of their customer care standards against the nationally recognised Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation.	Annual review against standards.	HFI and Partners are still meeting the CSE standards following reviews in December 2010 and February 2011.	✓

Community Support Standard

‘Advocating for and providing support for those in most need’

Our surveys and meetings with residents tell us that there is a real concern that the most vulnerable in society are properly cared for. Significant numbers of residents consider themselves vulnerable and we need to do more to tell our residents about the support we offer.

In 2010 we created a protocol with Camden and Islington Foundation Trust, Partners and HFI designed to improve services for residents with mental health issues.

Last year we set a number of targets that centred upon providing support for vulnerable people and the table below outlines what we have delivered.











Community Support Standard Performance			
Measure	Target	Performance 10/11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not met <input type="checkbox"/> No target
HFI and Partners will visit vulnerable single households to see if they need extra support.	300 visits to be carried out.	1,265 residents were visited who were identified as vulnerable.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HFI and Partners will make sure that residents who require support with their housing are referred into appropriate housing support services.	Target to be set.	An advocacy project within Homes for Islington was set up early 2011. This will enable easier referral and access to appropriate services for those recognised as vulnerable or to have special needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
HFI and Partners will provide a range of welfare advice to tenants and offer all new tenants a welfare benefits check.	All new tenants offered a welfare check within 20 days.	All tenants have been offered a welfare check when they sign up for their new tenancy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HFI, Partners, TMOs, TMCs will ensure their staff are trained in disability awareness.	Target to be set.	As part of the staff induction, staff are trained in general disability awareness. Some staff are then offered further specialist training in deaf impairment awareness.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HFI will hold disability panel meetings as a forum for gathering the views of the disabled community.	6 meetings a year.	HFI have held regular meetings with the disability panel.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Value for Money Standard

‘Spending less but delivering more’

In a time when the living standards of many of our residents are falling as a result of rising unemployment, reduced public expenditure and benefit cuts, we recognise the need to demonstrate value for money and to retain key services for those most in need.

The table below demonstrates how we have tried to get the best out of our resources and where possible give residents choice over the level of service they receive.

Value for Money Standard Performance			
Measure	Target	Performance 10/11	 Met  Not met  No target
HFI will reduce the cost of the service they provide every year.	3% efficiencies for the year 2010/11.	Achieved.	
HFI and Partners will maximise the collection of rental income to ensure that all residents are paying a fair rent.	HFI - 98% of rent collected. Partners - 97% of rent collected.	98% of rent collected during the period.	
HFI will involve residents when they bring in outside providers to deliver services to ensure they provide value for money.	All major contracts will involve residents.	The re-letting of the repairs contract in October 2010 involved residents.	
Whenever possible the council will allow residents to determine the level of service they want to pay.	Consultation to take place where service provision changes affect level of charges.	In 2010 consultation took place on changes to communal heating systems.	
The council and HFI will be open about the salaries of senior managers in our organisations and will publish any costs of any item over £500.	Details are published.	Details have been provided and published on the HFI website.	

Review of current service standards and standards setting for 2012/13

We consulted residents during the summer of 2011 to review the current standards, and set new standards and targets.

Consultative panels are reviewing their feedback and will recommend any changes.

The new service standards will be placed on the HFI website during October 2011.





**Homes
Islington**

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If you would like this document in large print or Braille, audiotape or in another language, please contact 020 7527 2000.

Greek

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Italian

Se desidera queste informazioni nella sua lingua, è pregato di contattare 020 7527 2000

Somali

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Spanish

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Turkish

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Arabic

إذا أردتم الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغتكم الرجاء الاتصال ب 02075272000.

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই তথ্য গুলো আপনার নিজ ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে 020 7527 2000 নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Persian

در صورتیکه مایل به دریافت این اطلاعات به زبان خود هستید، خواهشمند است با تلفن ۰۲۰ ۷۵۲۷ ۲۰۰۰ تماس حاصل فرمائید.

Kurdish Sorani

بیتو نه م ناگاداریه تان به زبانی خوتان پیویست بیت تکایه پیوه ندی بکه نه نه م ره فه مه: ۰۲۰ ۷۵۲۷ ۲۰۰۰

Urdu

اگر آپ یہ معلومات اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی اس نمبر پر فون کیجئے: 020 7527 2000

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