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Date: 25th February 2010

Dear Resident,

Re - The results of the short notice inspection at Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association (ISHA)

A team from the Audit Commission has recently inspected some of the housing services provided by your landlord. This letter tells you what we found.

We looked at how ISHA maintains tenants' homes and concentrated on the following three areas:-

- responding to repairs reported by tenants ;
- resident involvement; and
- the servicing of gas appliances.

We also asked the following questions:-

- how easy it is for tenants to access these services;
- what tenants think of ISHA's customer care;
- how ISHA caters for different peoples' needs; and
- whether it provides value for your money.

Overall we found that the ISHA did most things well, with strengths outweighing weaknesses in all three of the inspected services. (See note on page 2 for an explanation of our judgements). In particular we found the following:

1. Maintaining tenants' homes

There are high levels of customer satisfaction with all the services we inspected. We found that strengths outweigh weaknesses in both the way ISHA delivers the repairs service to you and how it makes sure that boilers are safe. Appointments are available at times to suit residents. Repairs are completed quickly to a good standard. Gas servicing is up to date, with all properties having had a recent gas safety check.

2. Being responsive to tenants

We also found that strengths outweighed weaknesses in the experience of residents contacting ISHA and its approach to resident involvement. We found that residents are satisfied with the choices available to contact ISHA and are happy with the response they receive. Residents have also been taking advantage of the events organised by the association and the opportunities to shape the services that ISHA provides. However, we identified some weaknesses in the way that ISHA responds to the needs of some individual tenants, with limited information known or routinely used to help tailor services, or to make sure that services do not discriminate. We also found the Association does not collect enough information to be certain that it is providing value for money in the services we inspected.

To help your landlord improve its service to all residents, we have made the following recommendations:

- it should continue to collect and use resident profile information to tailor services, making sure that all residents are able to access services;
- it should involve residents in monitoring the performance of contractors, which will help to improve the repairs services; and
- it should use cost, performance and satisfaction information to assess whether its services provide value for money.

The report will shortly be available on our website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing. You can also find further information about housing inspections there. Alternatively the association will be able to let you have a copy of the report.

3. Next steps

We have asked ISHA to work with its residents over the next few weeks to develop an action plan showing how it intends to implement our recommendations. Once we have their finished action plan we will consider the likelihood of ISHA improving the inspected services. We will then publish our final report. We hope to publish this by 23 April 2010.

The Association's regulator, the Tenant Services Authority, will work with them to make sure that the recommendations in the inspection report are acted upon and improvements to your service are delivered.

I hope this letter has been of interest to you.

Yours faithfully

David Flindall
Principal Inspector
Audit Commission

c.c: Tenant Services Authority regulator
Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association - Board members

The Audit Commission uses a four point scale for judging the quality of services, as follows:
Strengths considerably outweigh weaknesses;
Strengths outweigh weaknesses;
A balance of strengths and weaknesses; and
Weaknesses outweigh strengths.