

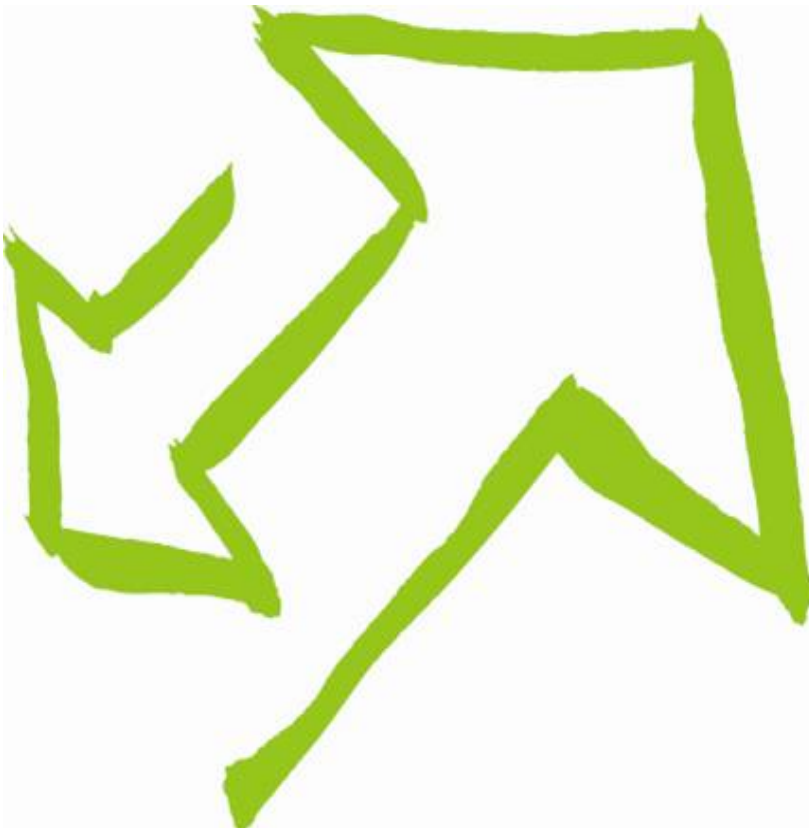
Short Notice

Inspection

Short notice inspection of responsive repairs, gas servicing and resident involvement

Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association

May 2010



Contents

Housing Association Inspections	3
Summary of our findings	5
How good is the service?	6
Recommendations	13
Prospects for improvement	15
Appendix 1 – Positive practice	20

Housing Association Inspections

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively and delivers high quality local services for the public.

The Audit Commission inspects and monitors the performance of a number of bodies and services. These include local authority housing departments, local authorities administering Supporting People programmes, arms length management organisations and housing associations. Our key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) set out the main issues which we consider when forming our judgements on the quality of services. The KLOEs can be found on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing.

For housing associations our current inspection role and remit is set out in sections 41A and 41B of the Audit Commission Act 1998 (as amended by section 109 of the Local Government Act 2003). Provisions contained in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 will amend our role and remit in due course, but are not yet in force. Our role is in line with the Audit Commission's strategic regulation principles. In broad terms, these principles look to minimise the burden of regulation while maximising its impact.

Short notice inspections (SNIs) have been developed to encourage improvements in the performance of housing associations (HAs) at delivering services to their residents. They focus on the outcomes for residents and work on the basis that associations will concentrate on improving services rather than preparing for an inspection, which could happen at any time.

The scope of each inspection of a housing association, undertaken by the Audit Commission has been agreed in consultation with the Tenant Services Authority. The Tenant Services Authority is the statutory body which regulates housing associations to ensure that they are well governed, well managed and financially viable as set out in its Regulatory Code.

The Association

- 1 Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association (ISHA) is a registered charity which was founded in 1934 and registered with the Housing Corporation in 1975. ISHA owns or manages 1,567 homes, mainly in Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest but also in Camden. It is a general needs housing association with some supported housing for residents with learning difficulties. ISHA works in areas of high demand and around 34 per cent of the population in the three core boroughs are from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. Its mission statement states that it 'is a community and neighbourhood-based Housing organisation managing & developing quality affordable housing for people in North London'.

The scope of the inspection

- 2 The scope of this inspection focused on the following areas, which have been identified in consultation with the Tenants Services Authority.
 - Responsive repairs.
 - Gas servicing.
 - Resident involvement.
- 3 The inspection also included an assessment of how Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association are addressing three cross-cutting themes: access and customer care, diversity and value for money within the services included in the inspection's scope.
- 4 We would like to thank the staff of Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association who made us welcome and met our requests efficiently and courteously.

Dates of inspection:

12 to 14 January 2010

Summary of our findings

- 5 We have assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the service areas included in the scope of the inspection. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

Table 1 Assessment

How good is the service?	Assessment
• Access and customer care ¹	Strengths outweigh weaknesses
• Diversity	Weaknesses outweigh strengths
• Value for money	Weaknesses outweigh strengths
• Responsive repairs	Strengths outweigh weaknesses
• Gas servicing	Strengths outweigh weaknesses
• Resident involvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses

- 6 We asked Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association to consult with its customers on the findings of our original report on the strengths and weaknesses of the service areas we inspected; and on the preparation of an action plan to implement our recommendations. Following receipt of that action plan this final report has been published to include our assessment of the Association's prospects for improvement.
- 7 We have assessed Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association as having 'promising prospects for improvement' for the service areas included in the scope of the inspection. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and the short notice inspection action plan agreed with customers. These are summarised below.

Table 2 Assessment of prospects for improvement

• Track record of improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses
• How well is performance managed	Balance of strengths and weaknesses
• Is there capacity to improve?	Strengths outweigh weaknesses

¹ Access and customer care, diversity and value for money are assessed in relation to the service areas inspected only.

How good is the service?

Access and customer care in the service areas inspected

8 We found the strengths outweigh weaknesses in this area.

9 There are a number of strengths.

- Customer satisfaction compares well with other associations working in the same areas. Satisfaction with landlord services was 82 per cent in 2008. Using the Tenant Services Authority's comparison figures, this is the fourth highest figure for housing associations operating in Islington and third highest in Hackney.
- Customer service standards and performance information, although limited in scope, are clear and state how underperformance is being dealt with. Residents are able to assess the services being reported on.
- Letters, including complaints responses, and customer facing documents are written in a clear, accessible style within target times. Residents receive timely responses that answer their queries, admitting fault where appropriate.
- The proportion of abandoned resident calls is a low. Residents find it easy to report repairs and receive a timely response to their contact.
- The out-of-hours service is polite and helpful. Residents find it easy to contact the repairs service out of its standard hours.
- Newsletters use plain English in a reader friendly, attractive style and contain interesting information. Residents were involved in designing newsletters which are sent to all residents and are available on the ISHA website. Tenants are positive about the newsletter and feel that it is a good source of information.
- ISHA provides useful information in an attractive manner on estate notice boards. Notice boards enable ISHA to target information to residents.
- All staff, including the contractor's, have had customer care training. Tenants are positive about the good customer care and positive attitude this has led to. Residents feel staff listen to them, are helpful and responsive to their needs.
- Enquiries to both ISHA, and its contractor, are dealt with quickly, politely and effectively. This gives residents confidence when they contact ISHA that the problem will be resolved.
- It is easy to make complaints and this encourages residents to do so. This has expanded the ways the association learns from contact with residents and means that all service problems are treated as complaints and responded to promptly.
- The reception area is bright, welcoming and comfortable. It provides a welcoming environment for residents and is popular with them.

How good is the service?

10 There are a number of weaknesses.

- The website is under-developed. Information about services is very limited or hard to find.
- There are a limited number of customer care standards and residents are not aware of them. This makes it difficult for residents to know what standards to expect from ISHA and to hold the association to account.
- Although information is set out in the tenancy agreement and handbook, there are few leaflets providing information on specific services.
- The approach to compensation is confused and poorly publicised. This means that some residents who should be receiving compensation are not, for example some tenants received compensation for failed heating while others did not.
- Written responses to complaints are not comprehensive. This affects monitoring as in some cases partially resolved complaints have been marked as resolved. However there is no indication that complainants have not accepted the resolution they have been offered.

Diversity in the service areas inspected

11 We found weaknesses outweighed strengths in this area.

12 There are a number of weaknesses.

- There has been limited use of the profiling information collected during the tenancy audit to target or improve services. Although there are some examples of using this work to develop targeted services there were no outcomes from this when we inspected the services.
- No general profiling information is being collected for sexuality and faith and there is limited recognition of these diversity strands in strategies. ISHA is missing the opportunity to reach out to all its residents.
- There is no structured process for providing enhanced services to vulnerable tenants. In some cases vulnerable tenants do receive enhanced services, however, this relies on the personal knowledge of staff and means that others may be missing out.
- Vulnerability information is not comprehensive, difficult to access and not always passed on to the contractor. The lack of alerts and specific disability information could lead to some works orders not receiving the correct prioritisation and residents receiving a poorer quality service as a result.
- ISHA is not monitoring the repairs contract to ensure that the contractor is following its diversity policies.
- Repairs performance is not monitored by diversity strand. ISHA is unable to determine the satisfaction with the service of different groups, or if they are receiving the same level of service, and is unable to target resources to improve services if problems are found. A lack of awareness of disability issues has led to service failure for some vulnerable tenants.

- The website does not have accessibility features or translation facilities. This means that residents who are visually impaired, or whose first language is not English, will have difficulty accessing the information that is available on the website.
- The language translation straplines used by the association are of limited use as they do not explain what the documents are about. Residents who require translations do not know which documents to ask to be translated.
- Equality impact assessments have not been done for resident involvement and repairs services. ISHA cannot show that it is tailoring services to the needs of all its residents.
- The management and board only monitor the equality and diversity strategy annually. This limits the Board's ability to drive improvements through the action plan.

13 There are a number of strengths.

- General profiling for four elements of diversity is now 88 per cent complete. The information collected is available to help staff and has been used to start to develop targeted services, for example flashcards for gas operatives.
- The last STATUS survey found that satisfaction with overall services of the different communities is similar.
- The staff and board profiles reflect the diversity of the community ISHA serves. The Board understands the issues that affect the association's residents.
- Resident involvement is being monitored. This has been used to target resident involvement activity towards under-represented groups, for example younger people.

Value for money in the service areas inspected¹

14 We found weaknesses outweighed strengths in this area.

15 There are a number of weaknesses.

- There is no systematic focus on linking cost with performance and satisfaction to help ISHA develop an understanding of whether the inspected services offer value for money (VFM).
- ISHA cannot be sure that its services provide value for money as costs are not compared to other providers. While there is evidence of service improvement there is no evidence of comparative costs to demonstrate VFM.
- The VFM strategy sets out general aspirations but does not explain how value for money will be achieved. There are gaps in the benchmarking information, and the action plan is basic.

¹ In assessing value for money we are looking at two questions: 'How do costs compare?' and 'How is value for money managed?'

How good is the service?

- The board does not have an overarching picture of the value for money of services provided by the association, or where high costs need to be analysed and addressed. The VFM aspects of reports provided to the management board are limited and do not enable the board to drive VFM.
- The proportion of responsive to planned repairs is high at 67 per cent in quarter 3, 2009/10. This exceeds good practice recommendations and does not represent good value for money.
- ISHA cannot be sure that its approach to resident involvement offers VFM. None of the impact assessments have analysed any links between cost, satisfaction and performance.

16 There are a number of strengths.

- The budget for repairs and maintenance has been reduced in 2009/10 because of more efficient gas services. In 2007/08, the unit cost of gas servicing and responsive gas repairs was £371, in 2008/09 - £248 and in 2009/10 - £218. This has enabled the association to invest more resources in key areas such as improvements to ICT.
- The appointment of the new repairs contractors has improved value for money by improving satisfaction with the repairs service without increasing costs.
- The proportion of emergency repairs is low at 11 per cent of responsive repairs. This represents good value for money (VFM) as it reduces repeat visits from the contractor.

Responsive repairs

17 We found strengths outweigh weaknesses in this area.

18 There are a number of strengths.

- There are high levels of satisfaction with the responsive repairs service. Residents we spoke to were happy with the repairs service while in November 2009, 92 per cent of those expressing a view after a repair stated they were satisfied.
- There are high levels of customer care in the repairs service provided by ISHA and its contractor, with staff and operatives willing to go the extra mile. The approach to resolving issues taken by staff and contractors is popular with residents.
- There is a range of ways to report repairs including by phone, by email, in person and through repairs diagrams on the website. Tenants find it easy to report repairs.
- The proportion of failed post inspections has fallen from 33 per cent in April 2009 to 4 per cent or lower recently. The standard of repairs work is improving, which is shown by residents' satisfaction with the quality of repairs.

- Repairs and reception staff have received professional training to help them diagnose and assess repairs work. Residents feel that both staff and contractors know what they are doing which gives tenants confidence in outcomes of repairs work.
- ISHA monitors the performance of contractors to make sure that services meet the needs of residents. Staff and the contractor are positive about the contract and effective monitoring means that issues can be resolved quickly.
- Appointments are booked at the point of contact and are confirmed by letter. Repairs staff able to book flexible appointments for residents directly to the contractor's operatives mobile diaries, while operatives are satisfied with the accuracy of the orders provided.
- Communal areas are in a good state of repair. Residents are able to identify and resolve issues with staff and have a sense that the association is listening to their concerns.

19 There are a number of weaknesses.

- Communications between the association and the repairs contractor is sometimes weak. Lack of access to the contractor's IT and inconsistent information about when work is completed made it difficult for staff to answer queries and follow up issues raised by residents.
- The schedule of rates used by repairs staff is complicated and is hard to use, especially for new staff. This contributes to the rate of variations of orders, nearly 60 per cent of orders raised between April December 2009, and could affect the efficiency of repairs ordering.
- Limited information makes the appointments system unclear for staff, operatives and residents. Although there is some flexibility in appointments, different understanding of time-slots and contractors not ringing ahead when they are late contribute to about ten per cent of appointments not being kept.

Gas servicing

20 We found strengths outweigh weaknesses in this area.

21 There are a number of strengths.

- All properties have valid gas certificates. ISHA is ensuring that the gas appliances in its rented properties are safe in line with its statutory duties.
- The gas team offers flexible, including some evenings and weekends, appointments in response to resident demand. This helps ISHA deliver its service when residents need it.
- The importance of gas servicing is well publicised in the residents' newsletter. This brings gas servicing, and issues associated with it, to the notice of residents.
- There is effective working between the gas team and other management teams to ensure access for gas servicing. As a result, the association is using all its resources to address non-access issues.

How good is the service?

- The quality of gas servicing is independently checked. This ensures servicing is carried out thoroughly and correctly.
- Gas service is provided to leaseholders for a reasonable price. This helps to ensure the health and safety of all residents.

22 There is a weakness.

- There is limited information about gas servicing on the website or in leaflet form.

Resident involvement

23 We found strengths outweigh weaknesses in this area.

24 There are a number of strengths.

- The methods of involvement are wide-ranging, have been agreed with residents and are clearly leading to improvements to services. Methods are well publicised and ensure that residents can be involved in a way that suits them and their particular needs. More residents are getting involved with the work of the association, with the forum having 22 active members and 218 taking part in some way in 2008/09. This provides a pool of customers to target for further involvement.
- Residents are positive about the work of the resident forum and more are getting involved with the forum. The forum is seen as being worth attending by residents while the association uses it to build capacity of residents so they can take part in the governance of the association.
- ISHA reports back to residents on the impact of getting involved. This advertises involvement and shows that residents can make a difference by getting involved.
- The resident involvement database captures all involvement activity. This allows the association to assess its performance in involving residents and target future activities.
- Residents are supported by ISHA staff and through training and the payment of expenses and other costs. The association has a dedicated involvement manager and spends a high proportion of money on involvement, £43,370 in 2008/09 which equals the top 25 per cent of associations for spending per property managed. It has had some success in setting up themed events acting on the ideas of residents. The training offered allows tenants to get involved more effectively and to build their skills.
- Board members regularly meet residents through attending forum meetings, including the AGM, and receiving reports on involvement activity.
- Residents are involved at all levels in the work of the association and have been involved in its major initiatives. Forum members are on the board and its subcommittees and take part in procurement and policy development.

25 There are a number of weaknesses.

- Some uninvolved residents are not fully aware of the range of ways to get involved. Some residents who might want to be involved are not being reached by the current menu.
- There has been limited success in reaching out to under-represented groups, particularly those living in street properties and those living in Waltham Forest. The association has tried to reach out to them, for example through a resident forum organised picnic in Waltham Forest and a street properties meeting, but has so far failed to attract involvement from these communities.
- The Board has limited accountability to the wider resident body. Meeting dates are not advertised and minutes of meetings are not readily available.
- Some initiatives to involve residents have had limited outcomes. For example, although a new repairs working group has been recently established, residents have had little input in monitoring repairs and renegotiating the contract.
- Performance monitoring of resident involvement is not fully developed. Although the Board receives reports there is currently no performance indicator for resident involvement to allow the board or residents to monitor involvement or outcomes associated with initiatives in a structured way. A performance indicator is being developed which will be introduced in March this year.

Recommendations

26 To rise to the challenge of continuous improvement, organisations need inspection reports that offer practical pointers for improvement. Our recommendations identify the expected benefits for both local people and the organisation. In addition, we identify the approximate costs¹ and indicate the priority we place on each recommendation and key dates for delivering these where they are considered appropriate. In this context, the inspection team recommends that the organisation shares the findings of this report with tenants and board members; and takes action to address all weaknesses identified in the report. Associations forming part of a group structure should share the lessons and findings of the report amongst the wider group. The inspection team makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation

R1 Strengthen customer care and the approach to diversity by:

- continuing to collect resident profile information and to systematically use it to understand and address barriers to accessing services and areas of unfair service provision and by sharing this information with all contractors;
- improving the approach to learning from feedback, especially complaints, and feeding back to residents that learning;
- reviewing performance information with residents to increase service specific targets and monitor performance and satisfaction to address barriers to accessing service or areas of unfair service provision;
- involving residents in developing a new website that answers their needs;
- putting in to place a timetable of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that services are not discriminating against particular groups;
- involving residents in monitoring the performance of the repairs service; and
- monitoring the contractor to ensure that it understands and complies with ISHA's values in delivering fair and equal services.

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- services will be provided fairly and equitably; and
- residents will have a better understanding of what to expect from services.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented by October 2010.

¹ Low cost is defined as less than 1 per cent of the annual service cost, medium cost is between 1 and 5 per cent and high cost is over 5 per cent.

Recommendation

R2 ISHA should improve value for money by:

- developing a strategic approach to value for money which embeds value for money across the work of the association;
- comparing the cost and impact of its services with other landlords, identifying areas which provide poor value for money and addressing this;
- monitoring value for money, and reporting this to officers and to the Management Board regularly; and
- increasing the proportion on planned repairs compared to responsive repairs.

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- improved value for money in services; and
- a reduction in the amount of responsive repairs.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented by December 2010.

Recommendation

R3 ISHA should improve its approach to responsive repairs by:

- improving communication between the association and the repairs contractor;
- providing clear information on appointment times and on who is responsible for repairs; and
- making the ordering of repairs simpler for staff.

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- a more efficient repairs service leading to higher resident satisfaction.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented by September 2010.

Prospects for improvement

Summary of our findings

27 We have assessed Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association as having promising prospects for improvement for the service areas included in the scope of the inspection. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and a review of its submitted action plan, developed in consultation with tenants, and is outlined below. We will also be taking into account the resident consultation and the resulting action plan.

What prospects are there that the services inspected will improve?

What is the track record in delivering improvement in the areas inspected?

28 We found strengths outweigh weaknesses in this area.

29 There are a number of strengths.

- There has been improvement in performance in the areas inspected.
 - Gas safety has achieved full compliance since September 2009, rising from 97 per cent in March 2009 following a restructure of the service.
 - Resident involvement has attracted more residents at all levels, but most particularly increasing involvement at the resident forum level, from eight members in 2008/09 to 22 when we visited, while 111 residents attended the Forum's AGM in June 2009, a 176 per cent increase on the previous year. In addition ISHA has the benefit of the involvement of its tenants at St Mary's Path tenant and resident association, who actively work to encourage other tenants and leaseholders to participate and host events for them.
 - Some repairs targets have been achieved, most particularly the proportion of post inspections failing has fallen from 33 per cent in April 2009 to 0 to 4 per cent at the point of inspection, however there has been a recent dip in the time taken to complete repairs.
- There has been a general increase in residents' satisfaction between the surveys in 2005 and 2008.
 - Satisfied with landlord services 82.2 per cent up from 61.1 per cent in 2005.
 - Satisfied that views taken into account 63 per cent in 2008 up from 36.5 per cent in 2005.
 - Satisfied with repairs and maintenance 80.4 per cent up from 64.3 per cent in 2005.
 - Satisfied with opportunities to get involved 52 per cent up from 37 per cent in 2005.

- High performance has been maintained over time for answering telephones, including a challenging target for abandoned calls, and responding to letters and complaints. This means that customers can easily access a range of services.
- As a direct result of a review of feedback ISHA has introduced regular estate bulletins which keep residents updated on local events and outcomes from complaints, comments and suggestions. This has improved the information available to residents.
- There is some learning from large numbers of complaints. For example complaints about the handling of defects repairs led to the defects procedure being updated to reflect wider repairs standards to the satisfaction of those who had complained.

30 There are a number of weaknesses.

- The association cannot demonstrate sustained improvements in value for money. There has been little or no analysis undertaken to show the links between cost, satisfaction and performance and whether resources represent good value for money.
- Improvements to the way that ISHA delivers services to diverse groups over time have been held back by the lack of a structured approach to diversity. This has prevented ISHA from being able to be sure that services are delivered fairly.
- The repairs partnering agreement has not brought about the high level of service for residents expected. Limited communications between the contractor and the association has only recently been addressed. Satisfaction with responsive repairs, 92 per cent, has not met target set out in asset management plan, 96 per cent.
- Learning from complaints is not well structured. For example there is no analysis of who is making complaints about what and no clear reporting of the outcome of complaints and how those outcomes have fed into service improvement.

How well is performance managed in the areas inspected?

31 We found a balance of strengths and weaknesses in this area.

32 There are a number of strengths.

- Performance reports, although limited, are clear and set out action taken to resolve problems where necessary. This allows the board, managers and residents to assess the performance reported and the robustness of the response.
- Performance indicators are clear and allow managers, the Board and residents to effectively manage performance.
- ISHA has a strong improvement culture in place. The Board, managers and staff are all keen to make improvements to services for tenants, through identifying issues and resolving them.

Prospects for improvement

- ISHA is keen to identify and acknowledge weakness to improve services to residents. For example in its handling of gas servicing.
- Since our inspection ISHA involved customers in developing a comprehensive, outcome based action plan that addresses our recommendations and key weaknesses throughout the report. The plan has been published on the home page of the association's website and will be monitored by customers and the Board to ensure that customer focussed improvements are delivered.

33 There are a number of weaknesses.

- Reporting of performance is not fully developed. Performance information does not include year-to-date information and there is no benchmarking information to inform discussion. Better performance information would have allowed the Board and senior managers to identify problems with the repairs contract at an earlier date and improve the repairs service for tenants.
- Only a limited amount of performance is monitored through Board or senior management team performance reports. For example repairs are prioritised but performance against these priorities is not monitored through performance reports.
- The association does not compare itself to high achieving landlords. This means that it does not challenge itself in improving performance.
- The continuous improvement plan (CIP), the main improvement tool, is not effective as it records actions completed rather than drives improvement. Staff and residents were not involved in developing the plan and it is too large and detailed for the management board to use effectively.
- Residents are not routinely involved in monitoring performance of contractors, although the repairs working group may undertake this role in the future.
- Appraisals are of variable quality and are not linked to the CIP. The association is missing the opportunity to link staff and organisational performance and development.
- Monitoring of VFM is not effective. There are no overall measures or targets making it difficult for residents and the board to see what progress is being made.
- Performance and satisfaction is not monitored to understand how different groups benefit from services. ISHA does not have the information to drive improvements to all sections of the community it serves.

Do the areas inspected have capacity to improve?

34 We found strengths outweigh weaknesses in this area.

35 There are a number of strengths.

- Staff are professional, enthusiastic and committed to improving services. Staff have made suggestions for improving the repairs service which are now being taken up.
- Residents benefit from an experienced and stable staff. For a small organisation where absences or inexperience can cause problems this is an important positive
- Training is effective. All staff, including the contractor's operatives, have had customer service training while repairs staff have received maintenance training.
- The appraisal system generally works well. It is based around eight clear competencies, including equality and diversity, and there is reflection on training and a training plan for the forthcoming year. Improved staff performance will help ISHA achieve its aims.
- The board is positive about the leadership provided by the chief executive and senior managers. They are supportive of the aim to improve communications with residents and routinely attend the tenant and resident forum and other tenant focussed events.
- Finances are healthy despite the difficult current economic climate. Funding is available to support planned improvements.
- The Board, management and staff reflect the make up of the local community particularly in terms of ethnicity and gender. The association is setting a good example for customers in terms of diversity.
- There is an appropriate focus on improving repairs. Following analysis of the issues ISHA is renegotiating the contract and reviewing access arrangements. The association is also involving residents in improving the contract and access arrangements. A sustained focus on priority areas will lead to higher resident satisfaction.
- ISHA has provided training for the Board and residents to give them the skills to assess performance. In particular a tenant board member, the Chair of St Mary's path, and the chair of the resident forum, have had extra training to empower them to take part and lead other residents in effectively challenging performance.
- The board is well attended and has the range of skills to drive necessary improvements.

Prospects for improvement

36 There are a number of weaknesses.

- There are some gaps in training, for example IT and diversity training. These are important areas that need to be addressed to improve services for all residents.
- The board does not have an overarching sense of the value for money of services provided by the association, or where high costs need to be analysed and addressed.

Appendix 1 – Positive practice

‘The Commission will identify and promote good practice. Every inspection will look for examples of good practice and innovation, and for creative ways to overcome barriers and resistance to change or make better use of resources’. (Seeing is Believing)

St Mary's Path tenants association

- 1 St Mary's Path is an effective tenant association. Founded in 2002, initially to combat anti-social behaviour, it has developed diversionary activities for youths including football training and a current project giving eight young residents the chance to learn new skills by making a film which will be shown at the local Screen on the Green cinema. It runs events and training sessions, using its well equipped office donated by ISHA and refurbished by the repairs contractor, which are open to all ISHA's residents. Its welcome booklet is currently being adapted for use by all the association's residents. It has also developed good links with key partners including the Council, and other local bodies, raising the association's profile and helping to draw in resources for itself, including better lighting on the estate, and the wider association. It has recently won an award for this work with the support of the local authority who considered it to represent an excellent example of tenant led, community action and an example for tenants across the borough.

The Audit Commission

The Audit Commission is an independent watchdog, driving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local public services to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

Our work across local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services means that we have a unique perspective. We promote value for money for taxpayers, auditing the £200 billion spent by 11,000 local public bodies.

As a force for improvement, we work in partnership to assess local public services and make practical recommendations for promoting a better quality of life for local people.

Copies of this report

If you require further copies of this report, or a copy in large print, in Braille, audio, or in a language other than English, please call 0844 798 7070.

© Audit Commission 2010

For further information on the work of the Commission please contact:

Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ

Tel: 0844 798 1212 Fax: 0844 798 2945 Textphone (minicom): 0844 798 2946

www.audit-commission.gov.uk
