

Cover

**[Title] Resident's annual report 2010/11
Closer to you**

Inside front cover

Welcome

This year, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), the regulator for all housing providers, launched six new standards following a *National Conversation* with residents. This report sets out how well we are doing in meeting these new standards and what we need to improve. We have compared our performance to other housing associations so you can see how we measure up.

To make sure that the information in this report is relevant to you we have produced local versions which set out how we provide services in your local area. We have also involved you in the production of this report so we can make certain we tell you what you want to know. You have fed in through our website, by email and at meetings.

Our main aim is to continue to improve the services you get from us and we are making good progress. Earlier in the year, the Audit Commission reported that we have more 'strengths than weaknesses', and said that we have 'excellent prospects for improvement'. For the service areas we need to improve we have put together an action plan. A key achievement so far is the delivery of our new service standards so you know what level of service you can expect when you have contact with us.

At a time of economic downturn and uncertainty we have decided to increase our investment in a range of community initiatives such as helping you to get back into training and employment, tackle debt and live healthier lives.

Only by talking and listening to you can we continue to improve what we do. To get involved visit www.affinitysutton.com/involveme or call us.

Neil McCall
Group Operations Director

(For London and South region version introduction will be from Neil. For all other regions introduction will be from Neil and the Chair of the Resident Area Panel)

Chair, xxxx, Resident Area Panel

Word count: 273

Page 3

In May we publicised our new Customer Service standards, covering all the services you receive from us. These standards make up what we call our *National Offer* and will be used to help deliver the six TSA standards.

Through our resident involvement plan we will look to tailor our services at the neighbourhood level by identifying local priorities and will do this by:

- Working closely with our newly established Resident Area Panels (RAPs), set up to scrutinize our services and develop local annual improvement plans.
- Through our Neighbourhood Appraisals
- Via feedback from our customer satisfaction surveys.

What we will do:

- Launch our new *Local Offer's* by April 2011 around your local priorities.

Page 4 and 5

Standard 1 – Resident Involvement and Empowerment

[Sub head]: Customer service, customer choice and complaints and performance

[Intro line]: We want to provide you with the best level of service all of the time and offer more ways for you to access our services in a way that suits your needs.

What we have done:

- Introduced a monthly resident satisfaction survey.
- Introduced a new national complaints policy.
- Piloted extended hours in our Contact Centre
- Tried small laptop computers with access to our systems for staff to use when they visit you at home.
- Made improvements to our website so you can do more over the web.
- Distributed *Shine*, our new regional resident's magazine three times a year.

What we will do:

- Develop ways to measure all our service standards – on a local basis where we can.
- Produce a new customer handbook.
- Make improvements to our services where we do not meet the standard. For example we'll look at how we deal with complaints about repairs.
- Make further improvements to the website.

Our Contact Centre – some key facts:

- 408,710 resident calls.
- 1,622 calls a day.
- 88% answered in under 30 seconds.
- 782 complaints and 1,470 compliments.

Subhead: Involvement and empowerment

[Intro line]: We want to involve you in shaping our services and in creating safe, strong and sustainable neighbourhoods where all of you can enjoy living.

What we have done:

- Launched our new resident involvement strategy *A New Voice*.
- Introduced new ways for you to get involved.

What we will do:

- Set up all the Resident Area Panels nationwide and develop a national residents' council.
- Encourage greater involvement from a wider range of residents.
- Publish our national residents' training programme.
- Develop resident inspectors and a mystery shopping plan.

Subhead: Diverse residents

Intro line: We're committed to promoting equality and encouraging diversity in every area of our work.

What we have done:

- Reviewed all our key services to make sure that all our customers have fair and equal access.
- Built up a profile of all our residents so we can look to personalise our services to you.
- Appointed a Diversity Manager and provided diversity training to all our staff and main contractors.
- Provided information in a range of formats for example in large print, Braille, audio CD on request.

What we will do:

- Develop a regional list of specialist agencies that provide a range of services to staff and residents and make sure that you receive tailored services when you need them.

Page 6**Standard 2: Homes****[Subhead] Quality of accommodation and repairs and maintenance**

[Intro line]: We look after the structure and safety of over 55,000 homes across the country as well as making them more comfortable to live in.

What we have done:

- Invested £98.5 million on our existing homes.
- Spent £28.8 million on major repairs and improvements.
- 95.5% of our homes met or exceeded the Decent Homes Standard (DHS).
- Carried out 150,000 repairs – more than 550 every working day.
- 95% of our routine repairs were completed on target.
- No. of appointments made and kept (*information to follow*)
- Offered you a selection of appointment times.

- Reviewed all our neighbourhoods to check the condition of your homes and involved you in this process.
- Introduced a number of joint initiatives with our contractors to reduce costs and improve the service.
- 99.5% of our homes have valid gas safety certificates.
- Set up a new Aids and Adaptations Team and been proactive in attracting grants where we can.

What we will do:

- Make sure that as far as possible all our homes meet or exceed the DHS standard by December 2010. Where this does not happen, residents who live in such a home will be told why.
- Publish our annual planned works programme and involve you in developing the plan.
- Develop a strategy for buying in future new repairs contracts and involve you in the decision.
- Increase the equipment stored on vans and provide additional training to repairs staff.

Word count: 327

Standard title 3: Tenancy**[Subhead]: Allocations**

[Intro line]: We want to offer you the right home for you, in the place you want to live and where you feel part of the local community.

What we have done:

- **Xxxx** new households have moved into one of our homes during the last year.
- Extended the Homeswapper as another way you can look to move home.
- Helped **Xxx** of you move to a home through a mutual exchange.
- Helped vulnerable young people in London at the start of their tenancies.

What we will do:

- Start a new project called *Perfect Places* that will make our hard to let properties more attractive places to live.
- Increase opportunities for you to be able to move where you want, or need to, across the country.

Subhead: Rents (Income)

Intro line: We want to make sure you pay the right amount of rent for your property and that you can pay your rent in a way that suits you.

What we have done:

- Reviewed the way information about your rent is given to you to make it easier to understand.
- Set up a financial inclusion team who offer help on benefits and ways to pay your rent.

What we will do:

- Look at increasing the number of ways rent can be paid.
- Make it easier for you to view your rent account on line.

Subhead: Tenure

Intro line: We want to offer a range of homes and tenancy types to suit a range of needs.

What we have done:

- Built 786 new homes and started building 1,239 new homes.
- Introduced starter tenancies for all new lettings (apart from transfers).
- Taken part in the national fraud initiative to prevent illegal subletting.

What we will do:

- Improve our sign-up process for new residents.
- Make sure all new residents get welcome visits.
- Involve you in improving the design of our new homes.

Word count: 473

Pages 8 and 9**Standard 4: Neighbourhood and community****Subhead: Neighbourhood management**

[Intro line]: We want to provide safe, vibrant, sustainable neighbourhoods where you want to live.

What we have done:

- Put a new neighbourhood management strategy in place.
- Introduced neighbourhood appraisals to tailor services to meet your local needs.
- Piloted short notice neighbourhood inspections.

What we will do:

- Train more residents to carry out neighbourhood inspections.
- Develop an annual plan 'blueprint' for your neighbourhood.
- Introduce a new estate inspection process.
- Complete a review on how we deliver our caretaking services.
- Spend £650K on improving the appearance of our estates.

Subhead: Local area co-operation

[Intro line]: We work with a range of agencies and partners to help us deliver thriving communities.

What we have done

- **Getting residents back to work:** We supported 1,736 people through our employment programmes, helping 67 into work and 688 into training.
- **Tackling debt and raising incomes:** We worked with over 30 credit unions last year to encourage residents to take up affordable loans and bank accounts. Over 800 residents signed up for MyHome, our new low cost home insurance contents scheme for residents.
- **Improving neighbourhoods:** We awarded 68 small grants benefiting 9,400 residents and supported 1,707 people with healthy living activities.
- We gave a helping hand to many of you through our retirement and support services we have managed to maintain £4.5 million in external funding to support this work.

This table shows the average number of people we support during a year.

Homeless single women	40
Domestic abuse	250
Young parents	40
Learning disabilities	90
Mental health	230
Retirement	3200
Alarm only	359
Hostel	110
Temporary accommodation	400
Young people	370
Drug and alcohol	40
Physical disability	45
Registered care	203
Owned not managed	149
Substance misuse	50

What we will do:

- Publish all the partnerships we work with in our neighbourhoods.
- Publish the outcomes and assess value for money of our partnership working.
- Publicise our level of housing management involvement.

Subhead: Antisocial behaviour (ASB)

Intro line: We want to robustly tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods we manage.

What we have done:

- Launched our new antisocial behaviour policy and leaflet.
- Worked with a wide range of agencies to deal with and stop ASB.
- Launched new policies for tackling domestic abuse and racial harassment, harassment and hate crime.

What we will do:

- Make it easier for you to report ASB.
- Gain RSPCA gold award for responsible pet ownership.

- Lobby for improvements in dealing with dangerous dogs and gang/knife crime.
- Develop closer links with victim support agencies.

Word count: 539

Page 10 and 11

Performance and stats

(This information will be supplied in a graph format so we are unable to show this at this time).

Page 12 and 13

Local priorities

These pages will include an overview of the RAP area; stock details and neighbourhood environment. Identify priority areas for improvement identified by the RAPs, highlight outcomes from neighbourhood appraisals, local survey data, local partnership work/involvement and regional community investment initiatives.

Page 14

Standard 5: Value for money

Intro line: We take value for money very seriously. Savings over the past few years total almost £13 million. The Audit Commission said that our '*strengths considerably outweigh weaknesses*' in this area.

What we have done:

- To make sure we can continue to invest in our communities we have set up the Affinity Sutton Community Foundation.
- Saved £1.2 million with a new gas servicing contract.
- Compared costs with other organisations.
- Put in place a new value for money strategy.

What we will do:

- Set aside a £2.7 million budget to fund one off projects which will benefit residents.
- Seek value for money in how we buy goods and services and involve you in this.

Standard 6: Governance and viability

Intro line: Our governance arrangements cover how we are run as a business and make sure we meet all regulatory and legal requirements.

What we have done:

- Reported on our performance to you through *Shine* magazine, local newsletters, our annual accounts and our website.
- Our Governance Manual details the roles and responsibilities of our Board, the Chair and Chief Executive, and Committees.

What we will do:

- We will review our governance arrangements this year.

Word count: 302