



If you require a copy of this letter or the report in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call 0844 798 7070.

Date:

Dear Resident,

**Re: - The results of the short notice inspection of William Sutton Homes**

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 William Sutton Homes maintains tenants' homes and concentrated on the following three areas:

- responding to repairs reported by tenants;
- how well residents are involved ; 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 William Sutton Homes' customer care;
- how William Sutton Homes caters for different peoples' needs; and
- whether it provides value for your money.

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

**1. Maintaining tenants' homes**

We found that the repairs service has more strengths than weaknesses. Repairs are being completed quickly and to a good standard, with high levels of customer satisfaction. Appointments are available at times to suit tenants and once arranged these are generally kept. As a result, the repairs service is providing value for money.

We found that gas servicing is generally up to date, with action being taken to gain access to the few properties where tenants have not responded to letters.

**2. Involving and being responsive to tenants**

We found that there are a variety of ways in which tenants can be involved if they wish to, either through the formal structures or in other ways. However, we identified some weaknesses including a lack of clear service standards, which means that residents do not know what standard of services they should be receiving, and weaknesses in the handling of complaints, although a new complaints procedure was introduced just after our inspection, which should lead to improvements. We also found that the association does not have detailed information on the profile and needs of many of its residents, which means that it cannot always shape services to meet tenants' needs.

To help your landlord improve its service to all residents, we have made a number of recommendations, including the following. It should:

- Develop comprehensive service standards with residents, and publicise performance against those standards;
- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the profile of its tenants and use this to ensure that services are accessible and meeting tenants' needs; and
- Improve how well it handles complaints.

The report will shortly be available on our website at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing](http://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 William Sutton Homes 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 William Sutton Homes improving the inspected services. We will then publish our final report. We hope to publish this by 3 June 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 services are delivered.

I hope this letter has been of interest to you. Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

John Goodwin  
Principal Inspector  
Housing Inspectorate  
Audit Commission

CC Tenant Services Authority regulator  
William Sutton Homes 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.