

Response to inspection report

Northwards Housing

ALMO Re Inspection

Introduction

This response has been prepared by Northwards Housing following an inspection carried out by the Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate. Inspected bodies are asked to prepare responses to the Inspectorate's reports which set out how the report's recommendations will be met and how services to users will be improved following the inspection. The Commission has editorial control over the content of the responses of inspected bodies.

Response

The Board welcomes the inspection report and is delighted with the result as it reflects the hard work and commitment of both our staff and partners, who have working continuously to improve and deliver excellent services since the organisation's launch in December 2005.

We believe the strengths, especially the ten areas of significant strength and areas of positive practice identified in the report, truly reflect the culture and ambition of Northwards Housing to deliver the best possible service to our customers.

The organisation is working closely with Manchester City Council, our partners and stakeholders to build on this positive result and to continue to deliver on our excellent prospects for improvement.

Northwards Housing has produced a formal action plan with clear timescales for delivery to address the recommendations of the Inspection Report.

In relation to the 3 main recommendations we have already taken the following action:

In relation to void management we have already introduced a robust quality checking process for ready to let voids and we have already started to review the void standard in consultation with our tenants. We are also working on a proposal for consideration by our Board in March 2009 to improve further our approach to void management.

We are improving our approach to leasehold management by implementing a new communications strategy with leaseholders and working in partnership with Manchester City Council to calculate sinking funds. Work to review the Section 20 notices with tenants has already commenced and new notices were implemented in January 2009.

We are developing a proposal to improve our approach to income management including a review of our rechargeable repairs policy and the introducing a number of new targets to tackle financial exclusion.

The Board and Executive Management Team would like to acknowledge the Audit Commission for their courtesy and professional approach during Inspection.

We will use the Inspection Report and action plan to drive standards and continually improve performance to meet the organisation's objectives and deliver on our promises to tenants in North Manchester.