

Islington Housing Services: Scrutiny Initiation Document

Recommendations & Comments from Disability Housing Panel

These recommendations came from a meeting of the Housing Disability Panel at the offices of Disability Action in Islington on 2nd August 2016.

- Be clearer about who the term ‘vulnerable’ encompasses, and when a specific line of investigation applies only to one subgroup of this.
- Include a glossary of this and other terms that are being used with a specific meaning, e.g. Benchmarking.
- Explain what isn’t in the review, and the reasons for its exclusion.
- Include a clear mission statement. What are the objectives of the Housing Service, and in what context is this scrutiny taking place?
- Additional lines of enquiry recommended:
 - How do current housing services promote and facilitate independent living? How could this be improved upon?
 - How will recent and upcoming legislative changes impact how IHS plans, procures, and delivers its services? Are current services compliant?
 - How do housing services recognise and uphold disabled people’s rights?
 - Is there a culture of support and good customer service? Are customer-facing staff actively trying to be helpful?
 - How do current weaknesses in service provision disproportionately impact on vulnerable people? e.g. If one department claims that a particular issue is not their responsibility, how many different people will a tenant or resident need to speak to until someone accepts responsibility for their case? Might a vulnerable person give up after the first ‘no’? Would having a single point of contact – some kind of helpdesk/call logging system? – improve this?
 - Review of complaints procedures, and whether vulnerable people are discouraged from making complaints.
 - Review of how the quality of service provision is monitored.
 - What support is available to vulnerable people to help them access and make full use of the services available to them?
 - Review whether current service provision is user-led or co-produced.
 - Review cross-working beyond Adult Social Services, e.g. including health education services et al.
 - Are tenants and residents aware of the services available to them, and how to access them? Are this information and the means of contact accessible?
 - What new technologies can be harnessed to improve the provision of housing services? Are these accessible to vulnerable people?

Officers suggest that many of the above points can be covered during the course of the review and associated revisions have been made to the SID, as highlighted. The Committee is invited to review the above comments and the SID and make amendments as required.

The Disability Housing Panel is invited to give evidence as part of the review and can provide their views on the above topics at that time.