Resident Engagement Strategy
2013 - 2016
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1. Foreword

As well as being the Council’s Lead Member for Tenants, Residents and Communities, I am also a council tenant and know how important it is to have a housing service that understand what matters most and meets the needs and aspirations of my fellow residents. This is why the Resident Engagement Strategy is vitally important to us as your landlord - it sets out how we make sure we are hearing from you, our residents, about what it is that you care about most and what improvements you want to see to your homes and services.

As the biggest social landlord in the borough Islington Council is responsible for managing 38,000 homes - 29,000 which are tenanted and 9,000 homeowner properties. We work with our other housing management providers; tenant led organisations and Partners for Improvement in Islington (Partners) and key contractors to deliver a full range of housing landlord services to our residents.

We value the input of all our residents, whether tenants, homeowners or other householder members living in council homes. Throughout this document when we refer to residents, we include all of these groups.

We place great importance in providing both good quality homes for you and a positive environment for you to live in. We also realise the wider impact that our services can have within the community and their life experiences. It is therefore essential that we are aware of your changing needs and aspirations for the homes and communities that you live in. For this reason we are committed to involving you in decisions made about your housing and the service that we provide to you.

Our strategy for resident engagement aims to put your needs and aspirations at the heart of decision making. It aims to provide a variety of ways for you to tell us about the issues that are most important to you and your family, so that we can improve our services. We believe working actively and positively with you is the best way to achieve this.

This strategy is about how we engage with you, therefore we are keen to know if there is something you think we have missed out and get your feedback on what you like or do not like about it. Please give us your view on the slip on page 16 or via email to Resident.Engagement@islington.gov.uk.

Barbara Sidnell
Lead Member for Tenants, Residents and Communities

2. Our resident profile

Despite its wealthy image, Islington is the fourteenth most deprived local authority area in England and 5th most deprived in London, with extremes of wealth and poverty. Islington covers an area of just over six
square miles and borders four other London boroughs, Camden, Hackney, Haringey and the City of London.

Islington is an area of tremendous diversity, not only in terms of the people who live here, but also the environment. It is a vibrant, diverse borough, with 47% of our residents are from an ethnic minority community, whilst 37% describe themselves as coming from a white British background. A further 10% are from a white Turkish, Kurdish or white other background. The most prominently represented ethnic minority community groups are Black African, Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi. Islington also has the eighth highest proportion of residents in the "other white" census category. Many of the people in this category come from Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish and Greek Cypriots backgrounds. Many of our residents are affected in some way by unemployment, poverty, poor health and low levels of qualifications. This diversity is reflected in our tenant profile. Currently 70% of our tenants are below 50 years of age and we have a significantly higher proportion of residents of under 30 years of age (40%) than the average for both London and the UK.

The six most spoken languages besides English are Turkish, Somali, Bengali, Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese.

Within our council managed housing there is a relatively high proportion of homeowners. Therefore it is important that we engage with our homeowners and consider issues that may be particular to them. We therefore offer all engagement opportunities to all our tenants and homeowners to support them in engaging with us as well as carrying out consultation with them focused on issues that are particular to them.

It is important for us to consider the different circumstances of our residents in order to target our services to their needs and to where they are needed most.

3. What resident engagement means to us

We see resident engagement as a process that allows residents to have an impact on the decisions about their homes and to improve the quality of our housing services.

We recognise that residents may wish to be involved in many ways, on differing issues and at different levels of activity. That is why we should have arrangements in place to allow views to be expressed in a way that is convenient to our residents.

Not only do we need to listen to our residents, we also need to show how we are listening to and are accountable to our residents. We do this by:

- Telling our residents how they have help us improve services and how they have been involved in decision making
- Keeping residents informed about changes that will affect them
- Providing residents with information on how we are performing

We will ensure that resident engagement activities are open to all members of the community. We will take into account special needs or requirements when
planning meetings or events and ensure that meeting areas are appropriate and accessible. Where appropriate out of pocket expenses will be agreed and paid to cover attendance of residents at focus groups, special consultation meetings, childcare responsibilities and costs associated with attendance for resident training.

4. Our resident engagement review and consultation feedback

The council wrote to all tenants and homeowners in December 2011 to ask what their experiences have been like being engaged with us, what barriers they may have faced and how they would like to engage with us in the future.

Residents told us:

- They wanted their engagement to result in better services and to be able to see this
- They did not always feel empowered and did not want to be involved in tick box activities
- They wanted their service providers to be accountable and housing staff to be more visible on estates
- They liked to get engaged locally and were sometimes frustrated at not being able to have more impact
- They do not always want to be engaged on a regular basis but still want to get involved. Having the time to get involved can be a real issue
- They wanted to be empowered to make a real difference
- Some felt they had achieved both personal development and improvements for the community by being involved
- Some Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) are really good and others are reliant on a very small group of people
- Some really good outcomes have been achieved locally through resident engagement. Some groups of residents are harder to encourage to be engaged such as young people

The findings of the review were used to develop this strategy and our resident engagement arrangements.

5. Our vision for resident engagement

As an organisation that delivers services to residents in 38,000 homes, our primary focus is to ensure that our residents receive the best possible service. This is against a backdrop of restricted resources and a variety of other challenges.

To achieve this we need to have the right opportunities in place that allow residents to influence decisions that affect them. We believe getting this right will lead to better outcomes for residents and more effective decision making and accountability to them.

Our tenant profile is incredibly diverse and Islington Council needs to ensure that it is listening to views across this spectrum. To achieve this, we aim to
give residents the widest possible choice as to the way in which they can give us their views.

Our key principles are therefore based on the following assumptions:

- We should actively encourage and support resident engagement
- Resident engagement opportunities should be open and accessible to all residents
- Residents should be fully informed of outcomes from any consultation exercise
- Residents should have a choice of ways to engage with us
- Staff should have a good working knowledge of engagement opportunities available to residents and promote these

The development of this resident engagement strategy reflects our commitment to involve residents in improving the quality of services and deciding how services will be developed.

This strategy is for our residents and we have tried to make it engaging. We have therefore kept the detail to a minimum but put more information in the attached A-Z of resident engagement. Where more information is available in the A-Z we have highlighted the related key term in green.

6. The national context

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) took over responsibility for the regulation of social housing providers in England from the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) on 1 April 2012. The HCA is the independent regulator for affordable housing in England. It works with social housing landlords and tenants to improve the standard of service for tenants and residents. Following national consultation in April 2010, joint regulation between the landlord and its residents, known as co-regulation, became the expectation for all social landlords. The following standards were introduced for social housing providers and their residents to assess their performance against;

- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and Community
- Value for money
- Governance and Financial viability (not applicable for Local Authorities)

These are set standards that social housing providers must meet, review and monitor with their residents. They are designed to help ensure housing services meet a good standard and are continually improved. Our statutory consultation arrangement (a requirement under s.105 of the Housing Act 1985) have been expanded as a result of the review and include all the methods of resident engagement that we use, rather than being restricted to any particular format. This allows us to choose the most appropriate method for consulting and engaging with our residents and meeting our statutory requirements.
The theme of resident engagement cuts across these standards and is central to the ethos of co-regulation. We will set out annually to our residents how we are meeting the standards in an annual report. This strategy sets out how we intend to achieve the tenant involvement standard required.

**Localism Act 2011**

The Localism Act contains a wide range of measures to devolve more powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities greater control over local decisions like housing and planning. Tenant empowerment and tenants involvement in decision making is a key element of the Localism Act and is something that Islington Council is actively promoting through its resident engagement structures.

7. **Local Factors**

**Fairness Commission**

The Islington Fairness Commission was set up to look into how to make the borough a fairer place and to tackle the problems of income inequality that exists in Islington. The council and key partners have engaged in wide ranging efforts to deliver the actions in the recommendations from the Commission. Recommendations covered key services such as housing, community safety, health and education. Seven priority areas were identified with key recommendations in each area to help make the borough a fairer place for all. The priority areas are income, work, families, community, safety, housing and health. The resident engagement strategy seeks to support the priorities and recommendations from the work of the Commission.

**Homeowners**

Homeowners make up a relatively high proportion of residents living in homes managed by us or on our behalf, compared with other social landlords. It is therefore important to us that our engagement opportunities are open, welcoming and convenient to homeowners. We also understand that there are issues that are particular to or have a greater level of relevance to homeowners and seek to address these through tailored consultation for this group.

8. **Key objectives of the strategy**

**Objective 1 - Engaging residents actively in all key decision making about their housing services**

**Our commitment to engaging residents**

To be sure we are delivering excellent services residents should be involved in decisions about their housing and the shaping of their services.

**How we involve residents in making decisions?**

**Borough wide arrangements and support**
In 2012 and in response to Islington Councils objective to expand and increase opportunities for tenants and homeowners to have greater say in how their housing is delivered, elections were held for the Housing Executive and Residents’ Improvement Taskforce.

The **Housing Executive** was set up as an official advisory committee considering all significant housing decisions, providing advice to the Council’s Executive and lead officers. The Housing Executive provide recommendations to the council, which are considered in all major decision making.

The **Residents’ Improvement Taskforce** is focused on service improvement. Its role in reviewing services puts residents in control of the services they want to consider for improvement, carrying out service reviews to identify these improvements and recommending these to the Housing Executive, who are in a position to recommend the implementation of the improvements to the council.

The **Resident Involvement Register** allows residents to choose how they want to participate and engage with us on their housing service. Residents can engage with us at a time, in a way and in a format of their choice. This format has proved popular with those members of the register and has been invaluable in developing policies and procedures and informing service improvements over the last six years.

The **Disability Panel** is used to “impact assess” policies and procedures to ensure that all potential issues have been addressed and to influence key decision making being considered more widely.

We run a **Resident Training Programme** that includes options for those who chose to engage with us. We provide a wide range of training which includes the opportunity of developing relevant skills to help residents get involved in service improvement and decision-making including topics such as service reviews, mystery shopping, resident inspector training, finance and chairing skills. Our partnership with the London Metropolitan University provides an accredited course for residents on housing services. Through accessing these courses we hope to encourage residents to become involved in our decision making processes.

**Local arrangements**

**Resident led organisations** manage 10% of our stock. Tenant led organisations are run by elected resident committees who take responsibility for the key decisions on how their homes and services are run. All residents have a right to set up such organisations and the council will provide them with support in doing this.

New **Tenants and Residents Panels** have been put in charge of their agendas and encouraged to increase attendance within their communities. The panels are open to all interested local residents and can discuss the housing related issues that are most important to them. The panels are an opportunity to shape and question how services are provided locally.
Tenants and Resident Associations (TRAs) are often at the heart of key local consultation, for instance making suggestions for improvements schemes to be funded through a variety of budgets, including major works programmes to be carried out on their estates.

Carrying out major works to residents homes can be a time of considerable disruption for residents therefore it is important that residents are not only kept well informed, but also actively involved in the scoping of works and on how best to minimise disruption. This is an area of great importance to residents, which is demonstrated by it having been selected by the Residents’ Improvement Taskforce as their second service review. Major works consultation arrangements see individual residents and TRAs involved in scoping and planning the works, and arrangements such as residents steering groups have helped large works projects to be delivered more successfully.

Our priorities for 2013-16

Resident scrutiny

Resident scrutiny is central to involving residents in service improvement and decision making. The Residents’ Improvement Taskforce service reviews are becoming central to our approach. The Housing Executive has been operating for a year and has become effective in its scrutiny role. There is however some a lack of clarity between in the relationship between Housing Executive and the Resident Champions roles in leading service review. We will carry out a review of the current arrangement aiming to identify opportunities to strengthen the elected resident roles.

Resident led service improvement

Prioritising our service improvements to respond to resident priorities for improvement is vital to ensure our services reflect what is most important to our residents. The Resident’s Improvement Taskforce is our means for ensuring this. We will continue to ensure that the Taskforce have the support they need from us to carry out this important work.

Service standards

We want to provide our residents with the best possible service. To do this we have housing service standards in place. The standards cover all aspects of the housing department’s services including customer care, repairs and dealing with anti-social behaviour. They also show how the council is meeting these standards.

To ensure that the standards reflect resident priorities, we aim to review standards with residents every two years. We will report on how we have performed each year in our Annual Report to Residents.

Major works consultation

Residents have fed back that this is an area where we could improve our engagement with them, in a number of ways including decision making. Therefore we are keen to work with residents of the Taskforce to identify improvements to this area of resident engagement. We will work through an
action plan following the review to implement agreed improvements to this process.

**Resident training programme**

We will continue to support and encourage residents to attend training opportunities by promoting them in resident publications, through residents groups and other community contacts. We will ensure that our programme contains training that reflects priorities for residents and provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to work with us.

**Objective 2 - Offering residents a variety of ways to tell us how to improve our services**

Listening to the views of the widest possible cross section of our residents is a major theme of this strategy. We believe that all residents should have the opportunity to have their say on issues that matter to them. We understand that time is precious to many of our residents and that therefore we need to make it as easy as possible to make a contribution or give us feedback. Additionally, we consider it important to enable residents to speak to us in their preferred method of communication, rather than adopt a single approach.

**How are we getting more residents engaged?**

Our *Resident Involvement Register* is open to all residents to join. Residents choose what they are consulted on, how and when. The register is widely used through a variety of means, such as discussion groups and email and phone surveys to gain feedback on services and identify opportunities for service improvement.

Residents from the register can get involved in activities such as:

- discussion groups
- mystery shopping
- resident inspection
- resident scrutiny
- the Readers Panel
- the Resident Training Programme

In recognition that it might be more difficult for particular groups of residents or communities to engage with us and work with us to improve their services, we have to tailor our approach for harder to reach groups. The *Disability Panel* was set up to ensure that the disabled community are able to report back on their customer experiences and to assess the impact of our policies on them and those they represent as service users. The feedback that the panel provides helps to improve services both for those with particular disability issues and residents more generally.

We engage and hold liaison meetings with local organisations that represent black and minority ethnic communities who may not always engage in other ways in commenting upon our services. The council have established links
with local community groups, including those for Somali, Turkish and Bengali residents. This also includes groups which have been set up to support women from within these communities. We also carry out regular visits to elderly groups in the borough.

We consider it important to help to set up more community groups, including Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs). We are keen to support more TRAs and community groups to form and to help existing ones to continue successfully. Community and Service Development Officers in the Area Offices set up 10 new TRAs during 2012/13 and will support these new organisations through an induction process. They also help existing TRAs to carry out their roles in the community by acting as their primary contact for community events and resolving housing problems in their area.

Finding better ways to involve young people is essential to ensuring their voice is heard. On occasions, we also use our extensive youth engagement programme to seek the views of young people, a section of the community who are often difficult to engage with. The Council support a number of youth engagement initiatives, working in partnership with Arsenal Positive Futures, Access to Sport, All Change and Aquaterra. We are also using these links to develop employment opportunities for the young people on our estates. We want to further develop the ways we seek the views of young people to ensure our services are meeting their needs and aspirations as residents.

**Our priorities for 2013-16**

**Residents’ Improvement Taskforce**

We will support the Residents’ Champions and Taskforce Review Panel to carry out service reviews. We will also train the Review Panel members in the skills required to carry out all areas of scrutiny. We will continue to recruit and advertise for new members of the Taskforce Review Panel to ensure that more residents are involved and aware of this important resident scrutiny and service improvement process.

**Resident satisfaction surveys**

We will carry out regular surveys with residents to gauge satisfaction with services, including carrying service wide satisfaction surveys. We will review feedback and publish findings of our surveys, using the feedback to focus our service improvements. We will report to residents on the actions taken from their feedback in resident publications, through resident forums and on the housing area of the website.

**The Disability Panel**

We will continue to develop the Disability Panel as a forum for assessing the customer experience of our disabled residents, improving our services and as a means to assess the impact of our policies.

**Developing greater representation on our estates**
Currently, only 50% of our estates have Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) and we would like to increase this number where it is clear that they are actively able to represent the views of all residents. Our Community and Service Development Officer’s will continue to support the development of new TRA’s. Where there is an expressed level of interest in an area that might not sustain a formal TRA we will work flexibly to ensure that a forum is provided where residents can give their views.

**Improve links in the community**

We place great importance on ensuring we have good contacts with community and voluntary sector organisations who may be representative of our residents. We will continue and extend our programme of annual visits and outreach events taking in the views of elderly groups, BME organisations and young people.

**Encouraging a youth voice on our estates**

We will work with our youth engagement partners to ensure that young people on our estates are given the opportunity to feedback on services that we provide and which directly affect them. This will be carried out every year so that we can measure the programmes’ impact and delivery.

**Working with Tenant Management Organisations**

We will continue to support the work of resident led organisations to improve our relationship with them and ensure their residents are getting the best possible service from them and us. Support will continue through training and advice for committee members and their staff, seeking their views on how we can work better with them, sharing of best practice and providing opportunities for them to feedback on the council services that they work with.

**Objective 3 – Supporting residents to become involved in their communities**

We continue to value the residents in our communities that promote the views of others and who put their own time into improving the estates and communities that they live in. We are thankful for their enthusiasm, knowledge and expertise. We recognise the important role played by TRAs and other residents groups in representing the views of local people and enhancing their local communities.

**Supporting Tenant and Residents Associations (TRAs) and community events for our tenants and residents**

TRAs and other residents groups are often at the heart of their communities. We therefore support them through dedicated staff at our area housing offices and offer additional support through our central Resident Engagement Team. TRAs receive support in the form of administration grants, help accessing funding for improving their estates and help funding and organising community events.
Many of our TRAs have requested financial support to assist them in running events believing them to be an excellent way of fostering community spirit. We have supported many events including estate events and fun days, festivals, and theatre and seaside trips. The feedback from residents is extremely positive about the impact of these activities and we intend to continue to provide this support.

**Community Facilities**

We are committed to continuing to support and encourage over 40 **community centres committees** of community volunteers who run these **community centres** on our behalf.

We have a network of **Community Hubs** based at community centres, supported by the Third Sector Partnerships Team, who work with communities to enhance the opportunities available locally to them. This supports residents in their wider aspirations for their communities.

We provide a portfolio of training opportunities for residents and volunteers who run our community centres, through both our Resident Engagement Team and Third Sector Partnerships Team, enabling them to develop such key skills as applying for funding, chairing meetings and managing a small budget.

**Our priorities for 2013-16**

**Offering a package of support to involved residents**

The review of resident engagement demonstrated the need for enhancing the opportunities for support we offered to involved residents. Although a funded discrete resident resource centre would be too expensive as resources are limited, we are looking for alternative ways to provide the same outcomes wanted by involved residents. We will seek to provide a package of support that enables residents to achieve their desired engagement with us.

We will provide resources for residents to access support and advice to set up a Tenant and Resident Association and obtain funding and training. We will provide residents with space in which to meet with other residents groups to share their skills, knowledge and experiences and support one another. Facilities to support community activities will be made available and advertised as part of this offer.

**Enabling our Community Hubs and Community Centres to develop**

We will ensure our resident training programme takes in the training needs of community volunteers running these important community facilities on our behalf. We will work with committees locally to support them in maintaining vibrant and well used community facilities.

**Objective 4 – Keeping residents informed**
We know that keeping residents informed about their services, changes that may affect them and the opportunities there are to influence both services and their housing are important. The information that residents have about their services and planned changes, helps them to decide when and how they want to be involved. We strive to ensure the information available to residents is informative and accessible, enabling them to decide when and how they want to get involved.

How we keep residents informed

Newsletters

Our Your Home magazine is delivered to all residents and is used to update them on our services, ways they can get involved, opportunities to get involved with their communities and how we are performing. The Readers Panel advises on how information in Your Home can be made accessible and interesting for all residents.

Website

We maintain an up to date website that gives detailed information on our services, how to access them and our performance. It also enables residents to comment on aspects of our service and promotes opportunities to engage with us. The Readers Panel advise us on the content on our website to help improve it for residents.

Community events

We attend community events to gather feedback from residents and also to provide information on new services and changes to existing ones. Regular events include a regular opportunity for community representatives to meet and discuss issues affecting their communities and the Leaseholders Fair.

Information at Area Housing Offices

We place great emphasis on making sure our offices display the most up to date information on our services.

Drop in sessions for major work contracts

Where major works are due to take place, all residents are invited to a public meeting where they can meet representatives who will be delivering the project. We know that these works can be disruptive and affect our residents in many ways. Therefore these meetings enable the proposed works to be explained and any questions and queries answered.

Our priorities for 2013-16

Better use of technology
Technology provides many opportunities for communicating with our residents and providing information to them. We want to continue to develop the ways we use our website to provide information, making the best use of this increasingly well used tool.

We will examine the more effective use of technology in the following areas:
- Involving the young in consultation exercises by developing the use of texting for this purpose
- Developing online consultation through our website
- Better use of e-mail to communicate with residents

Improving our newsletters

We will work with the Readers Panel to ensure that our newsletters, including Your Home, are informative and interesting. Our Your Home editorial board also includes a resident representative to ensure that our newsletter is as appealing to our residents as possible.

9. Putting this strategy into action

The action plan in Appendix 2 sets out how this strategy will be delivered. The action plan will be annually updated to reflect how we intended to deliver the objectives in this strategy. Progress with the action plan will be monitored by the Housing Executive annually.
What have we missed?

If you think we have missed something in this strategy or there is something you like or do not like that you want to tell us about, please use the space below and send it to the Resident Engagement Team:

Highbury House
4-5 Highbury Crescent
London
N5 1RN

Or email Resident.Engagement@islington.gov.uk
Resident Engagement A-Z

Area Housing Office

We have three area housing offices in the north, centre and south of the borough. They are public offices and are the base for staff delivering local services such as caretaking, estate services, tenancy management and customer services.

Community centres and community centre committees

Our estate based community centres provide well needed space for local organisations, community activity and meetings and activities of residents groups. These community facilities provide a base for key activities that enhance the lives of our residents. We have over 40 community centre committees who run these centres on our behalf.

Community Hubs

Community Hubs are a number of key local community centres that are provided with core funding to provide an enhanced service to the local community, making links with local voluntary groups, providing space for local groups to meet and support to other community facilities in the area.

Community and Service Development Officers (CSDOs)

There are five CSDOs working with resident groups across the borough. Each CSDO is assigned to an area and are the key link between the community and the Areas Offices. Their duties include supporting TRAs and other community groups to form, run their organisations, help them resolve their local issues, access available funding to carry out community projects, arrange community events and make links with other community and voluntary groups and facilities.

The CSDOs are:

In the south (area covered by Old Street Area Housing Office):

Jade Alogba
020 7527 6259
Jade.Alogba@islington.gov.uk

In the central area (area covered by Highbury House Area Housing Office):

Christopher Donovan
020 7527 5379
Christopher.Donovan@islington.gov.uk

Lee McDermott
In the north (area covered by Holland Walk Area Housing Office):

**Pam Aristokel**  
020 7527 7471  
Pam.Aristokel@islington.gov.uk

**Disability Panel**

The Disability Panel meets every 2 months and is formed of twelve of our tenants and represents six different impairment groups. They are a key consultation panel for Islington Housing Services.

**Estate improvement and estate security**

Each year TRAs, tenant led organisations, other residents, ward councillors and relevant officers are invited to put forward schemes for consideration for funding from the Estate Improvement Budget. This budget is prioritised by the Tenants and Residents Panels and confirmed by the Housing Executive. Supported schemes improve the estate environment and security for council homes. Applicants are asked to explain the scheme and what impact the scheme will have on the local community. All schemes are considered by their local Tenants and Residents Panel. The panel use agreed criteria to assess each application.

Schemes put forward as ‘top priority’ and those on the ‘reserve’ list are put forward to the Housing Executive for approval.

**Discussion groups**

Discussion groups are set up to gain detailed feedback from resident on a particular service, issue or topic. They give residents the opportunity to talk to us in more depth about an issue that has particularly effected them or in which they are interested. Discussion groups are designed to gain particular feedback and therefore those invited to take part will depend on the issue or service under consideration. If we are trying to find out more about why we for instance have a high level of complaints about a particular type of repair, we might invite a group of residents who have recently complained about that particular repair. If we are seeking feedback on as proposed strategy we would invite residents who have expressed an interest through our Resident Involvement Register or who are involved in our Tenant and Resident Panels.

**Housing Executive**

The Housing Executive is made up of elected council resident representatives, councillors and a resident representative of housing association tenants. Tenants managed under the three different types of
management arrangements (directly by the council, through our private finance initiative contractor and through resident led organisations) within Islington are represented, alongside a homeowner representative and a resident representative for housing associations.

The Housing Executive acts as an advisory body to the council’s Executive and housing directors. The Housing Executive looks at all housing matters that affect council tenants and homeowners and meets every two months.

For more information about the Housing Executive please go to www.islington.gov.uk/housingexecutive or contact the Resident Engagement Team on 020 7527 2903.

**Leaseholder Fair**

We hold an annual fair for homeowners and it is attended by all sections in the organisation that provide services to homeowners. The fair provides an opportunity for homeowners to learn about any changes to services and to also discuss any concerns they have with staff.

**Major works consultation**

Major works to homes are generally carried out as part of a cyclical programme on estates. There is a consultation process designed to inform and consult residents at key points in the programme such as scoping, during the works on site and following completion of the works.

**Mystery shopping**

We have a trained team of 30 volunteers as resident mystery shoppers. These tenants and homeowners make regular assessments of the quality of service provision and comment on customer care skills and knowledge of our staff. They provide important feedback that can be used to improve the way we deliver our services.

**Readers Panel**

The Readers Panel meets on a quarterly basis and is formed of the residents from the Resident Involvement Register who have expressed an interest in our communications. The group reviews resident publications, website pages and advises on how information can be made accessible to all residents.

**Resident Engagement Team**

The Resident Engagement Team was set up in 2012 to work with residents living in council homes across Islington. The aim of the team is to offer a variety of engagement opportunities for resident to help us improve services by giving us their feedback, telling us what their priorities are and working with us on designing better services. The team also supports residents and other voluntary organisations to work within their own communities to offer opportunities for those living in our homes. The team support the Residents’ Improvement Taskforce to review housing services, provides a programme of resident training, oversees the youth engagement programme, carries out
surveys and discussions groups, runs the mystery shopping and residents inspectors programmes and provides funding for community run events.

**Residents’ Improvement Taskforce**

The Residents’ Improvement Taskforce was set up to directly involve tenants and homeowners in reviewing housing landlord services. The group is led by a team of elected residents, the Residents Champion and two Vice Residents Champions.

The Residents’ Improvement Taskforce holds regular meetings open to all residents to gather their feedback on services. This feedback informs reviews being carried out and the Taskforce’s planned programme of service reviews. The Taskforce aims to review 3 to 4 service areas per year. Reports setting out the findings of the service reviews are presented to the Housing Executive for recommendations to be reviewed and discussed. The Housing Executive then recommends an action plan for the council to take forward to improve that service.

A Taskforce Improvement Panel of residents who want to be involved in the carrying out the service reviews have been fully trained to carry out all aspects of a service review. Residents are encouraged to join the Taskforce Improvement Panel and help to shape our housing services.

For more information about the Residents’ Improvement Taskforce and information on how to get involved please visit [www.islington.gov.uk/taskforce](http://www.islington.gov.uk/taskforce) or contact the Resident Engagement Team 020 7527 8630.

**Resident Inspection**

The Resident Inspectors are trained to carry out estate inspections either alone or accompanied by estate co-ordinator staff. The inspections monitor the communal areas of the estate to ensure they are meeting the expected standards from the prospective of a resident. It is hoped that the inspectors will carry out inspections on the proportion of estates where there is no Tenants and Resident Association representation. This approach will ensure that even though there may not be representation that residents are still having a resident voice on their estate. The inspections help identify inconsistency of service delivery and improvements to the condition of our estates.

**Resident Involvement Register**

The Resident Involvement Register was set up in June 2007. It has a membership totalling over 1,000 comprising of over 700 tenants and over 300 homeowners (May 2013). The Register allows residents to choose how they want to participate and engage with us on their housing service. Residents can engage with us at a time, in a way and format of their choice.

**Resident led organisations**

10% of our stock is directly managed by residents themselves. We have 25 [tenant led organisations](http://www.islington.gov.uk/taskforce), known as Tenant Management Organisations.
(TMO), Tenant Management Co-operatives (TMCs) and Estate Management Boards (EMBs). These resident led organisations have taken over management of some of the services on their homes and communal areas.

Resident scrutiny

Resident scrutiny can take many forms and there are many models used by social landlords and a number of guides describing best practice. We set up two key scrutiny bodies the Housing Executive and Residents' Improvement Taskforce in 2012 to lead on scrutiny of key decision making and services. Many of our other resident engagement arrangements also contribute to resident scrutiny such as Tenants and Residents Panels, focus and topic groups, satisfaction surveys, Tenants and Residents Associations and community and special interest groups.

Resident training programme

Our training programme aims to support and encourage residents to attend training opportunities by promoting them in resident publications, through residents groups and other community contacts. We will ensure that our programme contain courses that reflects priorities for residents and provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to work with us. We aim to deliver courses in areas and facilities that are accessible to residents.

For more information about the residents training programme and information on how to get involved please visit www.islington.gov.uk/residenttraining or contact the Resident Engagement Team 020 7527 4079 or resident.engagement@islington.gov.uk.

Satisfaction surveys

We will carry out regular surveys with residents to gauge satisfaction with services, including carrying out service-wide satisfaction surveys. We will review feedback, publish findings and use the feedback to focus service improvement. We will report to residents on the actions taken from their feedback in resident publications, through resident forums and on the housing area of the website.

We carry out regular surveys on overall resident satisfaction, anti-social behaviour, repairs, customer care standards, major works programmes and for new tenants and we also carry out surveys when needed to support service reviews, policy changes and significant service changes.

Service Standards

The Standards cover all aspects of the housing department’s services including customer care, repairs and dealing with anti-social behaviour. They also show how the council is meeting these standards.

Tenant involvement and empowerment standard.
This standard is aimed at tenant involvement and empowerment and covers the following:

- Customer service
- Choice and complaints
- Involvement and empowerment
- Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants

This standard requires landlords to consider the following outcomes:

- Offering all tenants a wide range of opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing, including the ability to influence strategic priorities, the formulation of housing related policies and the delivery of housing-related services
- Consulting with their tenants and acting reasonably in providing them with opportunities to agree local offers for service delivery
- Empowering residents in scrutinising a Landlords performance against the TSA standards and to influence the development of the annual report
- Providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved

This strategy sets out how we intend to achieve the standards required.

**Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)**

Please see resident led organisations

**Tenant Management Co-operatives (TMCs)**

Please see resident led organisations

**Tenants and residents associations (TRAs)**

There are approximately 70 active recognised TRAs in Islington. The TRAs exist to represent the views of council tenants and homeowners on a particular block, estate or area. They provide community events, encourage community spirit, campaign to improve housing services and are consulted by the council on changes, improvement programmes and other major issues in the area they represent.

TRAs represents residents at the most local level. A Community and Service Development Officer for each housing area is their main contact between them and the Area Housing Office but many TRAs interact with key officers and managers throughout their Area Housing Office.

For more information about TRAs and setting up a TRA please visit www.islington.gov.uk/TRA or contact your area Community and Service Development Officer (contact details above).

**Tenants and Residents Panels**
There are six Tenants and Resident Panels and another forum for those residents managed by Partners for Improvement in Islington. The six Tenants and Residents Panels represent different areas of the borough. The panel meetings are open for all residents from that area to be involved in. Tenant and Resident Panels set their own agendas and are there to discuss the most important issues to residents in those areas. Panels also prioritise applications for funding from the Estate Improvement and Estate Security budget and put forward the recommended priorities for their area to the Housing Executive for confirmation.

The panels were launched in January 2013, replacing the previous local arrangements. The new arrangements reflect the findings of the resident engagement review and were developed with the help of residents.

**Your Home** (resident newsletter)

Your Home magazine, the quarterly newsletter for our tenants and homeowners, is used to update residents on our services, ways they can get involved, opportunities to get involved with their communities and how we are performing. The magazine also promotes key changes affecting residents, such as recent change to the welfare system.

**Youth engagement programme**

We deliver a programme of sport, education and creative arts for young people living in council homes. As well as positive opportunities for young people the programme provides an opportunity to engage with our young people and get their feedback.

To find out more about our work with young people visit [add in web link].