

By e-mail

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Dear David

Inspection action plan review visit

Further to my visit with Debbie Jinks on 3 March 2010 to review progress with the inspection action plan, I am writing to confirm the outcome of our visit and the next steps with taking this forward.

Our visit confirmed that considerable work has been undertaken and that nearly all of the inspection recommendations have been implemented. From the information provided, and from meeting with members of staff, assurance has been given on the continued progress made in a number of areas.

In the attached report, I've summarised progress and outlined the two areas where further information is required: firstly, with developing value for money targets for teams and managers; and secondly, with a sustainability policy.

I can confirm that the TSA will sign off your inspection action plan as completed once the two areas above have been satisfactory concluded.

I wish you and your staff all the best in carrying forward the work they have been doing to improve services to tenants. I would be keen to hear more about your community connections group and how this is operating, in due course. In the meantime, please do contact me if you have any queries about this letter or report.

Yours sincerely



Sara Hurst, Tenant Standards Advisor





| Inspection Report Recommendations | | |
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| R1 (By October 2009) | Strengthen the focus on customer care by: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and publishing a suite of measurable and challenging service standards in consultation with tenants | Feedback: completed. We note that monitoring performance with the service standards will commence in April. Please provide a copy of this when it is available. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting and involving tenants in the design and delivery of services | Feedback: completed. We note the positive examples of how tenants have helped shape services, such as work on the mobile office and common rooms in sheltered housing schemes, and the on-going work around resident involvement and empowerment. The mystery shopping programme appears to be particularly successful and we note plans to role this out to more diverse groups. This includes establishing the Community Connections Group, and the possible scrutiny role that will develop from this. We liked the clear layout and easy to read format of the resident involvement impact statement. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a clear strategic approach to improving access based on a clear understanding of current levels of access and satisfaction among customers | Feedback: completed. We note the piloting of increased opening times for phones and the Sherborne Office, improving facilities at Hollands House, and closing poorly attended surgeries. Please send us a copy of the report that will go to the board in January 2011 setting out progress at that time with the implementation of the access strategy. |



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving website facilities to allow more services to be delivered online; and | Feedback: completed. We note the further developments to be made to the website and that mystery shopping is due to take place in this area shortly. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishing a clear five-year planned maintenance programme | Feedback: completed. A 5 year programme has been published and is also available to residents by searching by street on the website. We particularly liked this because it is open and transparent. |
| R2 (By October 2009) | Strengthen the focus on equality and diversity by: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a greater understanding of the profile of tenants and using this understanding to shape service delivery; | Feedback: Our assessment is that this recommendation has been completed, and that this information has been used to shape strategies. We note that Magna recognizes there is further work to be undertaken to ensure that the profiling information the association has includes all the diversity strands, is being used in a joined-up way (so that, for example, tenants are not being asked similar questions lots of times), and how satisfaction levels broken down by tenants' profiles will be reported to tenants' forums or the Community Connections Group. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing equality impact assessments on key areas of policy and service delivery and developing robust action plans to address any negative impact of policies and inform strategies on equality; and | Feedback: completed. We note the good progress with completing equality impact assessments with the priority list of policies identified; you may wish to consider how Magna measures what the impacts are or actually have been. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that performance reporting highlights equality and diversity issues | Feedback: we are satisfied that this recommendation is covered elsewhere in Magna's action plan. |

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| R3 (By October 2009) | Strengthen the approach to value for money by: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a robust understanding of how costs compare with peers | Feedback: completed. Similarly with our feedback on other recommendations, we note the 'work in progress' to embed a value for money culture across the organisation. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routinely reviewing service cost alongside service performance | Feedback: completed. We note that meetings to discuss performance and the management accounts are now combined and that more cost information has been included in the PI pack. This pack is quite lengthy and it may be helpful to cross reference some of this data (for example F3, the average cost of repair, with A4.1, tenant satisfaction with the quality of repair work, and similarly with major repairs expenditure and satisfaction). |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing policies to ensure they maximise opportunities for efficiencies through measures such as the use of joint procurement; and | Feedback: completed. We note the examples of maximising opportunities for efficiencies such as jointly procuring gas servicing with MWS. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing value for money targets for teams and managers as part of performance management arrangements | Feedback: please provide further evidence that value for money targets have been set for managers and teams, and a summary of progress with meeting these targets. |

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| R4 (By February 2010) | Improve performance in service areas by: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a clearly defined 'decent homes plus' standard which is influenced by tenants and board members | Feedback: completed. The 'Magna Standard' has been agreed with residents and is available on the website. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a clear policy for maximising opportunities to increase the sustainability of the housing stock | Feedback: not yet completed. Please send a copy of the relevant section of the asset management strategy once this has been discussed and agreed with residents and the board. |
| | Systematically evaluating the impact of starter tenancies | In feedback letter to MHA 15.1.10: We are satisfied that this recommendation has been fully completed. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving performance monitoring information available to senior managers, board members and tenants | Feedback: Completed. Information has been improved, and is 'work in progress'. We note the plans to establish a community connection group and scrutiny group who will contribute to the development of performance monitoring information. |