

Summary Report



How Soha meets the Tenant Services Authority Standards and how you can help us make these standards right for you.



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'What is important to you,
is important to us'



Why are we sending you this summary with the Annual Report?

We want to tell all tenants and residents how we are meeting the six standards set by the TSA.



This report was produced with the tenants. Soha would especially like to thank: Nasreen Razaq Al-Hamdani, Victor Breach and Bertie Doy

What is the Tenant Services Authority (TSA)?

The TSA is the National Government Body which monitors and regulates housing associations. The standards came into force in April 2010. They are there to make sure we maintain a high standard of service to tenants, and that we do it by involving tenants.

What is in this report?

There are six standards. Each has a short summary of how we meet the standard. It describes how Soha has involved and consulted tenants as part of setting and meeting the standards. We have also produced a longer, more detailed report which is on our website.

How do I get more information?

- **This summary sets out a concise explanation of how we meet the standards.** The longer report on Soha's website tells you more about how we meet each standard and gives more examples of how tenants have been involved in shaping the way Soha works.
- **'Points of View'**, the Annual Report for 2009 -10 written by residents, gives more information.

How do I know that Soha does what it says in the report?

The information in the report comes from lots of sources, including existing information produced or read by tenants: the Annual Report, the Impact Report, Soha's Corporate Plan. More information on Soha's performance (Key Performance Indicators, or KPIs) can be found in **'Points of View'** (the Annual Report).

- Soha is regulated by the TSA – this report goes to the TSA as well as to tenants
- Soha is inspected by the Audit Commission
- Soha's tenants have been involved in producing and scrutinising the report

For more detailed information, go to the Soha website to read or download the report, or call or email us for a printed copy.

In this report we use the terms tenant, resident and customer interchangeably – basically, we mean YOU!

Standard	How Soha meets the TSA standard	How Soha has involved and consulted tenants
<p>1. Tenant involvement and empowerment</p>	<p>This means we have to give you clear and helpful information, ask for your opinions, offer you choices and involve you in making decisions – and keep you informed about how well we do it.</p>	<p>The TSA said that we were one of the top landlords in the country at involving residents.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer service, choice and complaints 	<p>Soha's 'ten solid principles' set out how we will deliver all of the standards, and how we will treat all residents equally and fairly. These are in the Residents' Handbook and Hometalk.</p> <p>We keep you informed and provide choices through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletters Reports Website Focus groups Events Texts <p>Soha has a clear complaints policy and procedure and a complaints co-ordinator.</p>	<p>We monitor and report on our standards every year.</p> <p>The standards were set in consultation with tenants. The handbook was written and designed with the help of tenants, who checked that this was easy to understand.</p> <p>Tenants write the Tenants' Times and the Annual Report.</p> <p>Local newsletters tell tenants what is happening at Soha and in their neighbourhood.</p> <p>In April 2010 residents took part in a focus group, which looked at the way Soha handles complaints, to help us revise the policy and do it better!</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement and empowerment 	<p>Soha has a model of co-regulation with tenant involvement at all levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readers' groups Mystery shoppers Connect club News team Representative groups Residents' associations Tenant Inspectors The Scrutiny group The Tenants' Forum <p>There are four tenants on the Board of Soha - one of them is the Chair of the Board.</p> <p>Soha's award-winning Annual Impact report on Resident Involvement describes everything residents have achieved over the year.</p> <p>Soha offers a range of training open to all tenants and residents, and provides some specifically for involved tenants.</p>	<p>Resident Involvement is broadly representative of our resident profile.</p> <p>18% of our residents are aged 18 - 39.</p> <p>24% of our residents are aged 40 - 59.</p> <p>46% of our residents are aged 60 and over.</p> <p>We do not know the ages of 13% of our residents.</p> <p>47% of involved residents consider themselves to be disabled.</p> <p>9% of residents involved give their ethnicity as other than white British.</p> <p>4% of residents who were involved in the last year were leaseholders or shared owners. This compares with 7% of our customers who are leaseholders or shared owners.</p> <p>We give residents feedback on what has changed as a result of their involvement, and ask if they see it as good value for money – their assessment is included in the Impact report.</p> <p>Tenants have training in the skills they need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand performance information, be involved in decision making, challenge Soha's performance.

Standard	How Soha meets the TSA standard	How Soha has involved and consulted tenants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding and responding to diverse needs of tenants 	<p>Soha uses information on tenants to respond to individual needs and provide services fairly and equally to all our tenants.</p> <p>We use this to improve services, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hearing loops and translation services; Adaptations in your homes and in the design of new builds; More choice on appointment times; Extended opening hours. 	<p>95% of households have given us information about their individual circumstances.</p> <p>Representative groups are involved in making these decisions and improving services, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access for All (for tenants with disabilities); Seniors' group; Black and Minority Ethnic researchers; Youth Forum.
<h2>2. Home</h2>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of accommodation 	<p>All of Soha's homes meet the Government's 'Decent Homes' standard. Soha has set itself a higher standard called 'Decent Homes Plus'. This is set out in the Residents' Handbook.</p> <p>Soha's Home Improvement Plans are published, sent to all tenants and are available on our website.</p> <p>We send a 'Customer Promise' booklet to explain in detail what to expect when maintenance work is carried out; tell you how long the work will take and who to contact with any queries.</p> <p>Soha gives a one-stop point of access to disabled tenants who need adaptations to their homes.</p>	<p>The standards were set in consultation with tenants. The handbook was written and designed with the help of tenants who checked that it was easy to understand.</p> <p>We consult different groups of tenants on their priorities, working with representative groups including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access for All (residents with disabilities); Seniors Group; Youth Forum. <p>We consult tenants three months before any planned major building work and hold open days for tenants prior to starting work in their area. Tenants are part of the panels that make the decisions on tenders.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repairs and maintenance 	<p>You have told us that those aspects of the service that matter most to tenants are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping appointments; Getting repairs completed quickly; Completed to a high standard; Completed at first visit; A high level of courtesy from contractors. 	<p>Between 2006 and 2009, half of all the Tenant Inspections carried out were on these aspects of Soha's service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repairs; Void standards; Planned maintenance. <p>Recommendations from inspections were used to improve these services.</p>

Standard

How Soha meets the TSA standard

Customer satisfaction with planned works is excellent at 98%. Tenants have a range of choices for:

- Kitchens;
- Bathrooms;
- External doors;
- A range of other internal works.

Overall satisfaction with day-to-day repairs is good at 78%.

We provide a variety of ways to report repairs.

We are able to meet tenants' individual needs, for instance Customer Services Advisors take tenants' needs into consideration when repairs priorities are set (e.g. any children or older residents, disabled or vulnerable people).

Tenants have appointments for over 80% of day-to-day repairs.

Soha offers:

- Morning;
- Afternoon;
- 'School run' (after 9.20am and before 2.00pm);
- Weekday evening;
- Saturday morning;
- Text messaging to remind tenants of appointments.

How Soha has involved and consulted tenants

A Mystery Shop of our 'Out of Hours' service coincided with re-tendering the contract and helped set the standards for the new contract. Tenants were part of the panel that made the decision on the new contract.

A member of the Tenants' Forum chairs the contractor meetings and tenants regularly inspect empty homes.



Standard	How Soha meets the TSA standard	How Soha has involved and consulted tenants
3. Tenancy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations 	<p>Soha worked in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council to introduce Choice Based Letting (CBL). Four of the five local authorities we work with now operate a CBL scheme.</p> <p>We support vulnerable customers by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing good information on CBL; • Giving applicants support to register on line in our offices; • Signposting tenants to support services such as floating support; • Helping to identify benefits entitlement; • A third of all our lettings are to people who are homeless. <p>We are addressing under-occupation by offering support and incentives to help people move.</p> <p>Soha is a member of the national HomeSwapper mutual exchange system.</p>	<p>We report to the Tenants' Forum on the impact of CBL, on transferring tenants and on vulnerable applicants.</p> <p>A full satisfaction survey is conducted with tenants a week after moving in.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent 	<p>Soha has consistently been one of the top performers for income management. We are proud that we have achieved consistently high performance on rent collection at a low management cost.</p> <p>Customers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well informed about the wide range of ways to pay their rent; • Assisted by manageable payment arrangements when needed, working with the Housing Benefit Agency & the local Citizens Advice Bureau. <p>We have a Financial Inclusion Plan and an effective arrangement with the local CAB. Both Soha and the CAB help residents with money management problems find ways to pay their debts.</p>	<p>The Residents' Handbook contains a leaflet on rent. These leaflets were written and designed with the help of tenants, who checked that they were easy to understand.</p> <p>Customers have been involved in surveys and consultation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cash office; • Rent letters; • Rent statements. <p>This has resulted in changes to opening hours, new information leaflets and work to improve the rent statements.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenure 	<p>We offer a starter tenancy for the first 12 months. This is a one year probationary period; if the conditions of the tenancy are met, it becomes an Assured Tenancy.</p> <p>Vulnerable tenants with money management problems can also be referred to an external floating support service.</p>	<p>The Tenants' Forum meeting in July decided to form an Evictions Panel, as we take any evictions very seriously. The panel will include tenants and Board members who will oversee the evictions process with us.</p>

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<p>4. Neighbourhood and community</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood management 	<p>We systematically inspect our estates and feed back the results to tenants, acting on their suggestions.</p> <p>We have Community Action Plans (CAPs) in place each year, where local people can decide what matters in their neighbourhood and then help monitor those issues. We use a 'safer, cleaner, greener' approach to improve neighbourhoods and estates, and reduce Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).</p>	<p>In a survey, tenants at Great Western Drive told us their top 3 priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter - we now have a litter picking project in place; • Community safety - the PCSOs regularly patrol and ASB has reduced; • Car parking - we resurfaced the car parks with clearly marked bays, and commissioned new street lighting. <p>Soha's sheltered housing tenants are very active in sheltered scheme life and in involvement with Soha, e.g. consultation in preparing and monitoring standards for the grounds maintenance and communal cleaning contracts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area co-operation 	<p>We have worked in co-operation with other housing providers on our Community Action Plan (CAP) estates to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-landlord involvement in decision making; • Ongoing sustainability of estates and neighbourhoods. <p>We are members of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).</p> <p>We are hosting a Community Places project worker funded by the Vale and SODC partnership, to help community-led plans and the work of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) to achieve positive outcomes at local level.</p>	<p>All members of the community in this neighbourhood have been consulted on the Great Western Drive CAP.</p> <p>The Community Places project worker appointed is developing a better way of working for LSPs on helping deliver communities' priorities in three localities. So tenants in Berinsfield (one of three localities chosen) have been consulted both by Soha and the local Parish Council.</p> <p>We consult all members of the community before agreeing a CAP.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Social Behaviour 	<p>We have completed a major service review of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). It showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We publish service standards developed with customers; • We provide the Board and the Tenants' Forum with appropriate (anonymised) information on the types of incidents and 	<p>Our Tenant Inspectors reviewed our ASB procedures and asked that we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote our ability to tackle ASB as well as prevent the escalation of ASB; • Respond well to tenants and keep them informed of progress

Standard

How Soha meets the TSA standard

performance against the service standard:

- We now have a new policy based upon the Government's Respect standard that is reviewed annually. It includes a clearer definition of ASB;
- We have excellent partnership working in place with the police and local authorities;
- We tackle low level ASB and act promptly on more serious cases. Soha was one of the first to 'demote' a tenant (reduce their rights) due to ASB.

We enact the latest Home Office guidance in providing a 'named' contact for all ASB, not just the more serious levels.

We improve the services where ASB appears to be above average in a particular locality via Community Action Plans (CAPs).

How Soha has involved and consulted tenants

– an issue raised by a focus group with tenants in January 2010, and echoed by Tenant Inspectors:

- Recognise hate crime and raising awareness of this issue. (Hate crime is harassing, victimising, intimidating or abusing someone because of their race, faith, religion, disability or sexuality);
- Help young people to report nuisance and/or crime confidentially;
- Ensure all residents receive a consistently good service regardless of where they live, and their background.



Standard	How Soha meets the TSA standard	How Soha has involved and consulted tenants
<h2>5. Value for Money</h2>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value for Money 	<p>A Short Notice Inspection in 2009 found there were “considerably more strengths than weaknesses” to Soha’s approach, making us the first housing association to receive the top rating for VfM in a Short Notice Inspection.</p> <p>The VfM assessments for Resident Involvement as part of the impact assessment were praised by the Audit Commission as “clear and thorough, assessing outcomes from the activities and what has been achieved, against the costs”.</p> <p>In 2006 we introduced the re-investment of efficiency savings into innovative projects via our ‘Excellence Fund’.</p>	<p>Involved tenants have been given Value for Money training. Some of them have gone on to give presentations at conferences and workshops for other housing providers, and to provide training for other Soha tenants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tenants training tenants gives excellent Value for Money! <p>Residents are involved in VfM decisions, from helping to set the budgets to consultation over service levels in estates services.</p> <p>Residents are involved in deciding on the initiatives to be funded from the Excellence Fund, which have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting the Tenant Inspectors project; • A youth talent show to increase our engagement with young people; • Funding a young mums’ lunch club to consult this harder-to-reach group; • Producing a ‘Money Matters’ magazine.
<h2>6. Governance and financial viability</h2>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance 	<p>‘Governance’ means how Soha is managed by the Board.</p> <p>The TSA tests how Soha is governed. They said the governing body maintains satisfactory control of Soha.</p>	<p>There are many ways tenants help in the management of Soha. This is shown in our Co-regulation model.</p> <p>Four out of twelve Board members are tenants.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial viability 	<p>‘Financial viability’ means how financially sound Soha is.</p> <p>The TSA test how financially viable Soha is. They said Soha meets the requirements in relation to financial viability.</p>	<p>No resident involvement – this is tested by the TSA.</p>

Local Offers – shaping standards for you ...

The standards in the Residents' Handbook have been set in consultation with tenants. Now we want to ask you 'How we can improve our standards ... and provide you with services that meet **your** needs?' This might be changing how we work with you and other housing providers in the area where you live, or it might be changing the way we provide a service to a particular group of tenants with specific needs.

The TSA calls these changes 'local offers' – Soha will have some local offers in place by April 2011, based on consultation with Soha tenants.

Soha's existing standards have already been agreed in consultation with tenants. Because we involve tenants in checking that we are up to scratch all the time, Soha already has a good track record of doing this. Examples of some 'local offers' already in place include:

Call answering times

We asked you about call waiting times, and you said that the quality of response was just as important as how fast we answered the phone. You want to be sure that your call is dealt with properly – not rushed. So... we agreed to change the time in which we aim to answer the phone from five rings to seven rings. The report on this consultation went to the Tenants' Forum. The Tenants' Forum agreed that this change gave Soha residents what they wanted (what the TSA calls a 'local offer'), and approved the change in March 2010.

Repairs

Tenants are involved in choosing our new contractors. When Jeakins Weir was appointed as our new day-to-day repairs contractor, tenants were part of the panel and a tenant chairs the monthly contractor meeting where their service is monitored. Their performance has gone from strength to strength.

So, over the next few months we will be asking for your views on Soha's 'local offers', then these proposals will go to the Tenants' Forum meeting in March 2011 for approval. The timetable on the right shows how we will do this.

Some of the things we will ask you about are:

• What changes would enable a more diverse range of tenants to:

A Make it easier to contact us?

Should we:

- Extend our hours or have weekend opening?
- Have a mobile service to visit your area?

B Have more say in how Soha works?

Should we:

- Hold more of our meetings in the evenings or at weekends?
- Have a Facebook group?

• How can we work with our contractors to improve the service to you?

We will be holding workshops for you to come along and discuss this with the contractors (Jeakins Weir and Wheldons) and managers from Soha.

• What do you think about our proposals for:

- Developing 'safer, cleaner, greener' neighbourhoods?
- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour with 'Community Payback' schemes?

How and when we will consult you about local offers September 2010 – April 2011

	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
STATUS survey This is a major survey of residents	We will ask over half our residents their views through this postal survey.						Changes based on your views approved by Tenants' Forum in March 2011.	Introduce local offers identified and agreed through resident involvement and consultation.
Connect Club Surveys targeting hard to reach groups, eg: Black and Minority Ethnic								
Seniors' Group								
Access for All								
Youth Forum								
Young Parents								
Residents' Groups								
Tenants' Times								
Hometalk								
Tenant Inspectors								
Tenants' Forum								
Repairs Workshops								
Community Action Plans								
Estate Surveys								

If you would like this information on tape or translated in another language please contact Soha Housing on 01235 515900.

In Albanian

Për informata të tjera, ju lutemi kontaktoni me Soha Housing në numrin 01235 515900

In Bengali

যদি আপনি আরও তথ্য চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 01235 515900 নম্বরে সোহা হাউসিং এর সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন

In Chinese

欲需詳情，請與 Soha Housing（蘇哈房屋協會）聯絡。電話：01235 515900

In Hindi

यदि आपको अधिक जानकारी की आवश्यकता हो तो कृपया सोहा हाउसिंग से 01235 515900 पर सम्पर्क करें

In Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 01235 515900 'ਤੇ ਸੋਹਾ ਹਾਊਸਿੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ

In Polish

Więcej informacji można uzyskać dzwoniąc do Soha Housing pod numerem telefonu 01235 515900

In Slovakian

Ak si prajete tieto informácie na páske alebo v preklade do iného jazyka, kontaktujte prosím Soha Housing na telefónnom čísle 01235 515 900.

In Urdu

پر رابطو کریں اگر آ کو مزید معلومات کی ضرورت ہو تو برائے مہربانی سوہا ہاؤسنگ سے
01235 515900



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