



**Genesis**

# **Report to residents**

September 2011





# Report to residents 2011

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Each year we assess our performance and quality against the national standards the Government's regulator for housing, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), has set for housing association services.

This year we commissioned an independent specialist to make an objective assessment of where we stand against the five standards the TSA has laid down that we must comply with. These are;

- 1. tenant involvement and empowerment;**
- 2. home;**
- 3. tenancy;**
- 4. neighbourhood and community; and**
- 5. value for money.**

The results of the assessment are outlined in this report.



## Overview

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This has been a year of enormous change for Genesis as we have worked to merge Genesis Housing Group, PCHA, Springboard and Pathmeads into a single organisation, Genesis Housing Association. At the same time, we have aimed to continue providing a good housing and community service to all of our residents.

The overall view from the independent assessment is that there is a great deal of good work being done to improve services and that the plans we already have in place should overcome most of the weak spots identified in the assessment.

Inevitably, because of all the changes it has been quite difficult to measure our performance accurately compared to previous years. A lot of improvement work has also started but not finished and the positive results we hope to achieve will not yet be apparent. However the investigation was still able to highlight underlying improvements.

For example, the following were classed as important strengths:

- We have focused on putting our customers at the heart of the organisation
- We are starting to better monitor key services and customer satisfaction
- We are laying strong foundations to improve services
- We have become much more self-aware about our strengths and weaknesses
- We now have a better framework for resident involvement that matches our service aims.

We know that our residents' top priority is more reliability in the services we provide. Our goal is to move from being an average performer, albeit with some strong points, to being one of the very best housing landlords. With your help, we know we can do it.

As the independent assessment said "There is a long way to go, but the work undertaken so far and the fundamental changes made give confidence that Genesis will deliver."

We hope you enjoy reading this report.



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# Tenant involvement and empowerment

## Key areas of assessment and result against the TSA standard:

*Customer service, choice and complaints* – Compliant

*Involvement and empowerment* – Partially compliant

*Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants* – Partially compliant

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The independent assessment says that the Genesis business plan sets some exciting targets, demonstrates a real commitment to provide excellent services, and will help us to deliver more service improvements.

The assessment recognises the progress we've made over the last year in a number of important areas, including customer contact, the new resident involvement strategy and our new service standards in the Genesis Commitment. There have been many examples of improving performance too, for example in dealing with anti-social behaviour calls, satisfaction with new homes and keeping appointments to carry out repairs.

But it believes we need to go further in several areas in order to be fully compliant with the Tenant Services Authority's standards. For example, we need to build on the Genesis Commitment to create more local service offers for residents, and we should keep collecting information on the profile of our customers to help us deliver the right kind of

services to meet people's needs effectively.

Service promises to residents which we've delivered in the last year include:

- Developing new customer service standards and reporting them back to residents
- Working with customers to improve our website, including providing more interactive services
- Introducing the new contact centre for customer calls
- Improving ways for customers to feedback their views on satisfaction with particular services, through the Customer Feedback Programme

The Genesis business plan sets out an ambitious programme of service improvements. At the moment, it is work in progress and we know we have much more to do. But we believe we've made a very positive start.



# Home

## Key areas of assessment and result against the TSA standard:

*Quality of accommodation* – Partially compliant

*Repairs and maintenance* – Partially compliant

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The independent assessor's report suggested that our performance in this area over the last year has been mixed.

There are some strong points. For example, just 0.3% of the Genesis stock did not meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard by the target date of December 2010, which is a good performance compared to many housing associations, and our performance on servicing all gas appliances annually is good.

Our decision to bring the main repairs service in-house in 2010 has created some inevitable teething problems, and the target of 85% satisfaction with the service is a stiff one. But we are confident that the decision was right and that it will lead to big improvements in service quality by next year.

On issues such as aids and adaptations, we actually increased our budget and the number of

adaptations we did last year, helping 330 tenants live more comfortably. But the assessor felt we needed to publicise information about this and some other services better and to collect better performance information.

We believe many of the improvements required to make us fully compliant with the TSA's standards in this area are in hand. For example, we are currently updating our design and development guide to ensure it meets all necessary requirements.

Service promises to residents which we've delivered in the last year include:

- Completing our Decent Homes works in all but a handful of properties
- Involving customers in selecting new contractors when contracts end
- Improving our systems for planned maintenance work to homes.



# Tenancy

## Key areas of assessment and result against the TSA standard:

*Allocations* – Partially compliant

*Rent* – Compliant

*Tenure* – Compliant

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This is an area where the independent assessor felt Genesis was generally meeting the standards required. The main issues that we still needed to address in allocations were around ensuring our turnaround time to relet empty homes was more consistent and making sure our procedures were clear. The new lettings policy we are developing should address this last point.

The assessor regarded our rent collection as good and noted that our performance on reducing rent arrears is improving. Our revised tenancy agreement and residents' handbook, developed with the close involvement of residents, were reported as being user friendly and provided helpful information.

Our efforts to help residents who are more vulnerable were also recognised, particularly

the new welfare benefits advice service and the direct individual support we aim to give people to help maintain their tenancies through the tenant support team.

Service promises to residents which we've delivered in the last year include:

- Reviewing and updating our tenancy agreement and residents' handbook
- Developing debt and benefit advice services for residents
- Introducing targeted tenancy audits to tackle illegal occupation and support legal occupiers
- Working to drive down levels of unpaid rent.



# Neighbourhood and community

## Key areas of assessment and result against the TSA standard:

*Neighbourhood management* – Partially compliant

*Local area co-operation* – Compliant

*Anti-social behaviour* – Compliant

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This was also an area where the independent assessor felt we were doing reasonably well. On neighbourhood management, she identified the fact that we need to get a specific policy for maintaining and improving neighbourhoods in place and to increase the regularity of our estate services surveys. But the actual quality of our estate services and our involvement of residents in selecting contractors was seen as good.

We think the plans we have in place, including developing our new asset management and neighbourhood strategy, should resolve these last issues by next year.

Our local area co-operation, particularly the work done by Genesis Community, was noted as an area of real strength for us. We achieved some excellent results last year, for example, providing IT training and internet training to over 1,000 older people in west London by expanding our UniTe programme, and engaging over 1,300

young people through our Youth Programme.

The involvement of customers and other local stakeholders, including local councils and other housing associations, in helping to make improvements in the way our anti-social behaviour service is provided were recognised, and while our performance is still not as good as we want it to be in this area, it is improving.

Service promises to residents which we've delivered in the last year include:

- Forming a residents focus group to help improve the anti-social behaviour service
- Training front-line staff in dealing with anti-social behaviour and reviewing our anti-social behaviour policy
- Involving customers in helping to select new contractors and inspecting and monitoring estate services.



# Value for money (VFM)

## Key areas of assessment and result against the TSA standard:

*Value for money* – Partially compliant

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The independent assessor said that while there are some good examples of value for money around the organisation, we have not been consistent enough in our approach to improving VFM and that more work to raise awareness amongst staff and to track value for money would help us achieve full compliance with the Tenant Services Authority's standard.

We recognise this and accept it. Indeed, improving the value for money and consistent quality of our services was one of the biggest reasons for our move to create a single organisation from the different Genesis subsidiaries.

The many and various steps we have taken in the past year to deliver better value for money will bear fruit over the coming years, but it was too early in the process to be able to demonstrate to the assessor a lot of the measurable gains we expect to achieve.

Even so, the assessor highlighted several areas where our performance on value for money was moving in the right direction. We have made, or expect to make, significant savings on, for example, estate services costs, reletting homes more quickly, office accommodation and a number of IT services. Creating a single organisation is saving us £2 million in staff-related costs alone.

These are some of the areas we have worked on in the past year:

- Seeking VFM in how we buy goods and services, including involving residents in identifying ways Genesis can become more efficient
- Reviewing contracts for grounds maintenance and cleaning to improve services while achieving better VFM
- Making savings of around £2 million from the amalgamation of the whole organisation into Genesis Housing Association.



# Looking forward

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Looking to the coming year we have committed to a number of key improvement projects. These tackle some of the points raised in the assessment and also other areas that we believe need special attention. More information on these and other projects will be included in the residents magazine and we have outlined key projects below.

## Repairs services review

Earlier in 2011 we began a thorough review of the way our internal repairs service, Shenstone, operates. Shenstone carries out repairs to the majority of homes that Genesis manages and we were aware that the satisfaction of residents with the service they were receiving was dropping. The review has allowed us to introduce new ways of working to help us complete more jobs on our first visit, make sure we keep our appointments and offer you more precise appointment slots.

## Contact centre improvements

The Contact Centre improvements have already begun. The overall programme of improvements are focussed on:

- Making it easier for you to contact us
- Ensuring we consistently deliver a good service
- Dealing with your enquiry "right first time"
- Being quicker at dealing with your enquiry

Details of the changes you will see were outlined in the last issue of the residents magazine.

## Service charge improvements

For residents who pay Genesis a service charge we are aware that the statements and information provided has not been as clear as it should have been. We have already begun a project to make sure you receive much clearer information on your charges from September next year.

## Supported housing transformation

In the coming months we are starting a project to modernise our Care and Support Services to offer customers more choice. Using input from you, our staff and partners we want to improve and make sure we provide a consistently good service.

Look out for more information and other projects in the residents magazine.

# The Genesis Commitment

The Genesis Commitment is a set of commitments and standards about improving our services. The standards were set based on residents' priorities. Most of the standards are measured through an independently run satisfaction resident survey, to ensure that you can have confidence in the results. We promised to keep you regularly informed of progress. The table below shows our starting point in 2010, and progress against our end-December 2011 targets. If you would like more information please e-mail [mygenesis@GenesisHA.org.uk](mailto:mygenesis@GenesisHA.org.uk).

**1**

Our standards	By end of 2011	Performance at August 2011	2010 baseline
It will be easy to get through when you need to contact us.	<b>75%</b> of residents satisfied it is easy to get through.	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>72%</b>
	<b>Maximum 7%</b> calls to contact centre are abandoned.	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>11%</b>
When we've made an appointment to visit you, we will arrive on time.	<b>7/10</b> residents satisfied their appointment is kept.	<b>87.3%</b>	<b>5.9/10</b>
We will aim to ensure you're satisfied with the quality of repairs.	<b>8/10</b> residents satisfied with the quality of their repair.	<b>76.2%</b>	<b>7.5/10</b>

**2**

Our standards	By end of 2011	Performance at August 2011	2010 baseline
We will get back to you when we say we will.	<b>70%</b> of back-office messages receive a response within 3 working days.	<b>84.3%</b>	<b>69%</b>
We will let you know in advance when we're running early or late.	<b>9/10</b> residents satisfied they're updated when we're running late.	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>2.3/10</b>
When it's a complicated matter, we will keep you regularly updated.	<b>7/10</b> residents satisfied they're updated for the duration of the problem.	<b>64.1%</b>	<b>NOT MEASURED</b>

We are working hard to improve our services and we will keep you up-to-date on our progress against these commitments in the resident magazine throughout the year. If you would like more information please email [mygenesis@GenesisHA.org.uk](mailto:mygenesis@GenesisHA.org.uk).

### 3

Our standards	By end of 2011	Performance at August 2011	2010 baseline
We will resolve call enquiries when you first contact us.	<b>65%</b> contact centre calls resolved at first point of contact.	<b>63.0%</b>	<b>66%</b>
We will provide our service in a way that recognises your time is valuable.	<b>7/10</b> residents satisfied repair service was convenient.	<b>80.9%</b>	<b>NOT MEASURED</b>
We will complete repairs right first time.	<b>7/10</b> residents satisfied repairs completed right first time.	<b>65.6%</b>	<b>6.3/10</b>

### 4

Our standards	By end of 2011	Performance at August 2011	2010 baseline
Our staff will be consistently polite, helpful and respectful.	<b>9/10</b> residents satisfied staff were polite, helpful and respectful.	<b>86.4%</b>	<b>8.7/10</b>
We will deal with complaints fairly and helpfully.	<b>6/10</b> residents satisfied with way complaint was handled.	<b>37.1%</b>	<b>3.8/10</b>
For most of our services, performance will be measured by an independent organisation so you can rely on the accuracy of our reports.	Most service standards will be measured by an independent organisation.	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>0%</b>





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**Bengali**

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**Farsi**

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**Turkish**

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