

If you require a copy of this letter or the report in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call 0844 798 7070.

Date: February 2010

Dear Resident,

Re - The results of the short notice inspection at Peabody

A team from the Audit Commission has recently inspected some of the housing services provided by your landlord. This letter tells you what we found.

We looked at how Peabody maintains tenants' homes and concentrated on the following three areas:-

- responding to repairs reported by tenants ;
- resident involvement; and
- the servicing of gas appliances.

We also asked the following questions:-

- how easy it is for tenants to access these services;
- what tenants think of Peabody's customer care;
- how Peabody's caters for different peoples' needs; and
- whether it provides value for your money.

Overall we found that Peabody did most things well, with strengths outweighing weaknesses in two of the three inspected services. (See note on page 2 for an explanation of our judgements). In particular we found the following:

1. Maintaining tenants' homes

We found that the repairs service provided to tenants was an area with more weaknesses than strengths, although we are aware of Peabody's plans to improve this in the near future. Repairs are not being completed quickly or to a good standard, with low levels of customer satisfaction. Although appointments are available at times to suit tenants, once arranged these are sometimes not kept. As a result, this service does not represent value for money. However, we found that gas servicing is up to date, with most properties having had a recent gas safety check. We also found that strengths outweighed weaknesses in the approach to resident involvement, with numerous opportunities for residents to be involved in shaping the services that Peabody provides.

2. Being responsive to tenants

However, we identified some weaknesses in the way that Peabody responds to the needs of individual tenants with limited information known or routinely used to help tailor services, or to make sure that services do not discriminate.

To help your landlord improve its service to all residents, we have made the following recommendations:

- it should continue to collect and use resident profile information to tailor services, making sure that all residents are able to access services;
- it should involve residents in monitoring the performance of contractors, which will help to improve the repairs services; and
- it should use cost, performance and satisfaction information to assess whether its services provide value for money.

The report will shortly be available on our website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing. You can also find further information about housing inspections there. Alternatively the association will be able to let you have a copy of the report.

3. Next steps

We have asked Peabody to work with its residents over the next few weeks to develop an action plan showing how it intends to implement our recommendations. Once we have their finished action plan we will consider the likelihood of Peabody improving the inspected services. We will then publish our final report. We hope to publish this by 8 April 2010.

Peabody's regulator, the Tenant Services Authority will work with them to make sure that the recommendations in the inspection report are acted upon and improvements to your service are delivered.

I hope this letter has been of interest to you.

Yours faithfully

Anna O'Halloran
Principal Inspector
Audit Commission

c.c: Tenant Services Authority regulator
Peabody - Board members

The Audit Commission uses a four point scale for judging the quality of services, as follows:

Strengths considerably outweigh weaknesses;
Strengths outweigh weaknesses;
A balance of strengths and weaknesses; and
Weaknesses outweigh strengths.