



## Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

Paper presented by Ruth Davison, Chief Executive of Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association (ISHA)

### Background:

ISHA is a community housing association which builds and manages homes in North and East London, particularly in Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest. It is anchored in those places and seeks to partner with local authorities and others who share their vision.

## Building a fairer, safer and more sustainable Hackney

ISHA helps deliver that vision by:

- Building and helping others build
- Striving to be a great landlord
- By being anchored in the community
- Being a great employer
- Being serious about environmental sustainability

ISHA in numbers:

Despite our name, you can see from the following table that the majority of the homes we own and manage are actually in Hackney. ISHA first moved into the borough 60 years ago and has been building ever since. We are strongly committed to Hackney, building predominantly social homes and shared ownership homes to help keep it mixed and vibrant and meet housing need. The majority of the 875 homes we have in Hackney have been built in the last 20 years, some with the assistance of the Borough. We also help other small community housing associations to build – in Hackney, North London Muslim HA – through the North River Alliance consortium which we launched 15 years ago.

The 'general needs' homes on the table on page 2 are social rented homes. ISHA's Board committed not to convert social rents to 'affordable' rents under the Affordable Homes Programme of 2010 onwards. There are no affordability checks for social rents, and we have never had introductory or time-limited tenancies – all are life-time tenancies.

Of the social rented homes, 247 are one-beds, 173 are two-beds, 106 are three-beds and 46 are four-beds.

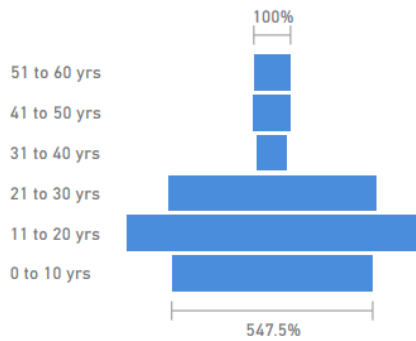
Number of properties

Customer type	(blank)	Camden	Hackney	Haringey	Islington	Tower Hamlets	Waltham Forest	Total
General Needs		33	576	42	616	22	303	1,592
Shared Ownership	14		171		64	1	123	373
Affordable Rent	43		76		29		90	238
Supported			19		36		7	62
Housing for older people			30		12			42
Market Rent			1		17			18
Intermediate Re			1		1			2
Staff			1		1			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>2,329</b>

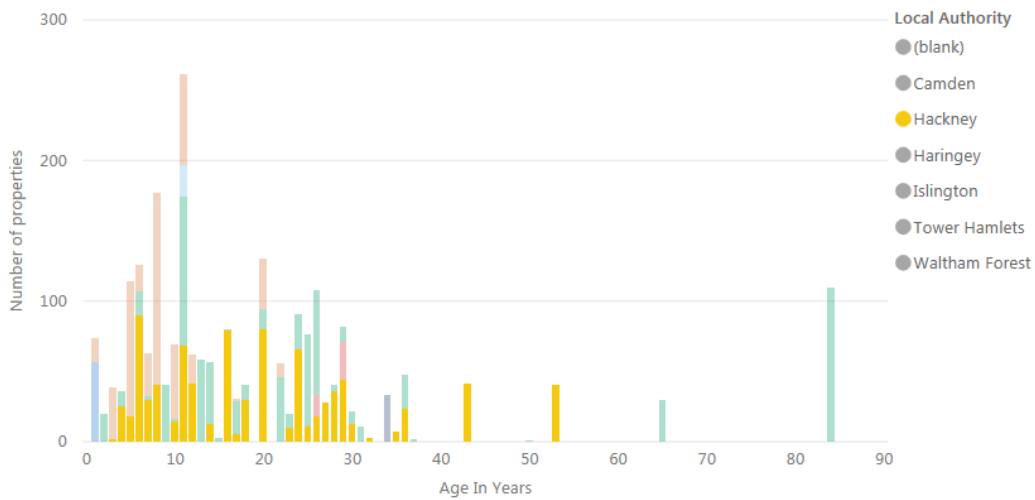
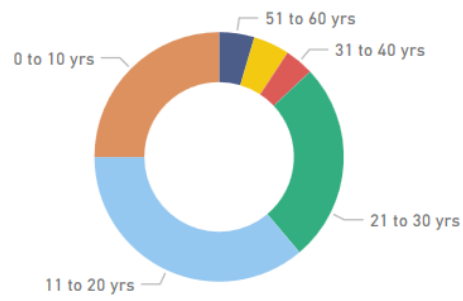
NB: 'staff' doesn't mean we only have one member of staff for Hackney, it means we have one ISHA-owned staff home

ISLINGTON & SHOREDITCH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD  
AGE OF PROPERTIES OWNED  
NOVEMBER 2019

Age in years



Age in years





We were the first housing association in the borough to be a London Living Wage employer and insist all of our contractors are too. We don't just want people to be housed well, but to live well.

We take the climate emergency seriously and have achieved 'SHIFT GOLD' status, a housing industry sustainability award that looks at new and existing homes, commercial spaces and business practices.

### **Striving to be a *great* landlord (...we're not there yet)**

#### **Repairs and maintenance:**

Our main responsive repairs contractor is MPS Housing formerly Mitie. We entered into this contract in March 2017 on a five, plus five, plus 5-year contract with the option to go to an alternative delivery model during the period.

The objectives of the contract are:

- Partnership – the team is co-located at ISHA's offices, and branded as ISHA Home team, with branded vehicles, uniforms and I.D.
- Value for Money – we're continuously looking to work more efficiently to demonstrate reduced costs and value for money to all our customers
- Customer Satisfaction – It is a core objective to provide a service that meets our residents' expectations and needs
- Social Value – The partnership will create more training, job and community opportunities in our neighbourhoods

#### *Responsive repairs*

We have carried out more than 12,000 repairs in 2018-2019 across all our contracts including lifts and door entry (which are not included in the scope of our main contract). In 2018/19 customer satisfaction with responsive repairs was 75% and below what we expect it to be.

We aim to complete all our repairs as a 'first fix' which currently stands at 78%. However, what the man or woman on the street thinks is first fix (me included!) and contractors' class as first fix is different e.g. if a toilet's leaking and you stop it leaking, that's a 'first fix,' even if the whole toilet needs replacing and the contractor has to return the following week to do the job.

We work with our residents to make sure we offer them flexible appointments. Our emergencies are attended to within four hours. We do not have other priorities for repairs other than customer choice, so resident is offered the next available appointment or can choose sometime in the future.



We are taking a strong line on quality and good customer service to tenants and residents and recently terminated a contract after just six months because it failed to deliver on this – even though re-procuring cost us more in cash terms.

#### *Planned maintenance*

Like many organisations we held back on some of our planned works due to the impact of rent cuts. However, even before those ended, we stepped up investment again. We aim to replace 5 per cent of kitchens and bathrooms each year. Residents have a choice of cabinet style, colours and flooring. We also aim to replace 75 boilers each year. Our team of experts are always upgrading quality and value for money in terms selecting the correct products. We also carry out an intensive cyclical programme and are currently working on 11 blocks to complete our cyclical programme for this year ensuring that kerb appeal is part of the remit.

We have budgets set aside for estate improvement which are managed by our Neighbourhood Team and includes things such as installation of railings to low walled area to alleviate antisocial behaviour or replanting flower beds during the spring and summer months.

#### **What we're doing to improve the experience of residents and tenants:**

- Setting new standards co-created with residents at 'action days' – pioneering in the sector
- Holding people to account against them – staff and contractors
- Joined the Institute of Customer Service & putting all staff through its training
- Investing more in stock & repairs in our new plan
- Re-building processes with the resident, not organisation, at heart

#### **Community outreach & support teams:**

You'll notice the Lien Viet logo on this paper. Lien Viet was small housing association founded by refugees from Vietnam who faced first war, then discrimination in the provision of housing when they arrived here. It joined with ISHA some years ago and was properly incorporated last year. We have promised to continue to deliver culturally sensitive services and support in Vietnamese and to celebrate that proud history. We have two Vietnamese members of outreach staff who provide services not only to our tenants and residents but to any who need our help in the boroughs we work – something especially pertinent in Hackney. We also made a large bequest to the Geffrye Museum so the story and contribution of that community can be told to a wider audience.



**Development:**

We have a detailed plan to build new homes in our 5-year strategic plan and have two schemes scheduled for handover in Hackney this financial year – one for us and one for North London Muslim – totalling 16 homes.

We also have in the pipeline a proposed redevelopment for part of the site at Alexandra Court which will achieve 16 new homes. It will also vastly improve the accommodation of those people in temporary accommodation in the block that Hackney lease from us. Early consultation was promising, and we hope to get planning permission soon.

Ruth Davison

December 4<sup>th</sup> 2019