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Date:

Dear Resident,

Re - The results of the short notice inspection at Sadeh Lok Housing Group

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 did not inspect all of the services provided Sadeh Lok, but we did focus on those where we believe there is room for improvement. We looked at how they manage tenants' homes with a specific focus on:

- managing rents and income collection; and
- resident involvement.

We also asked the following questions:

- how easy it is for tenants to access these services;
- how Sadeh Lok caters for the different needs of tenants and customers; and
- whether it provides value for your money.

Overall we found a balance of strengths and weaknesses, but weaknesses outweigh strengths in a few key areas. (See note on page 2 for an explanation of our judgements). In particular we found the following:

1. Income Collection

We found that there was a balance of strengths and weaknesses with income collection. It is easy for tenants to pay rent in a wide range of ways and Sadeh Lok helps tenants to get suitable benefit and debt advice. Although the total amount of current tenants' rent arrears is high it is reducing. However, performance collecting former tenants' rent arrears is weak and Sadeh Lok is not yet targeting benefit advice to the groups of tenants who need it the most.

2. Resident Involvement

We found that there was a balance of strengths and weaknesses with resident involvement. A wide range of ways for residents to be involved is publicised and residents increasingly influence local services. However, residents are not yet fully involved developing services to ensure that plans suit their priorities.

3. Other issues

It is easy for customers to access services, staff are helpful and Sadeh Lok respects customers' different needs. As a result tenant satisfaction is generally high and improving.

However, service standards are not comprehensive and performance meeting all standards is not measured and reported to tenants. The website is under developed with a limited number of online services. Sadeh Lok does not ensure that access to individual services is fair and equitable and is not tailoring services to meet individual needs. Sadeh Lok is not ensuring that individual services give value for money compared to other organisations.

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

- it should develop measurable service standards and improve the quality of website information;
- it should use information on the profile of customers to tailor services to meet their different needs;
- it should ensure that residents are fully involved when making policy decisions;
- it should target benefit and debt management advice to help people in the greatest need;
- it should improve systems to recover rent arrears, particularly from former tenants; and
- it should learn from good practice to improve the cost effectiveness and value for money of the least efficient services.

The report will be available on our website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing. You can also find further information about housing inspections there. Alternatively Sadeh Lok will be able to let you have a copy of the report. If you require further copies of this report, or a copy in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call 0844 798 7070.

3. Next steps

We have asked Sadeh Lok to work with its residents to develop an action plan showing how it intends to implement our recommendations. Following on from their report back to us we will consider the likelihood of Sadeh Lok Housing Group improving the inspected services and publish our judgements, together with the Association's action plan, as part of our final report. It is our intention to publish these documents **by 27 July 2009**. Our website will record any changes to this date.

Sadeh Lok's regulator, the Tenant Services Authority will work with the association to make sure that the recommendations in the inspection report are acted upon and improvements to your service are delivered. A copy of this letter is also being sent for information to each member of the board of Sadeh Lok Housing Group.

I hope this letter has been of interest to you. Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Ian Wilson
Housing Inspector
Housing Inspectorate
Audit Commission

CC Tenant Services Authority regulator
Sadeh Lok Housing Group 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.