

**Meeting:** Integrated Housing Board

**Date:** 21 September 2009

**Report Title:** Welcome Visits

**Report of:** Paul Dowling, Principal Housing Strategy Officer

**Purpose:**

To circulate information collected on the use of new tenancy welcome visits by Homes for Haringey and other London Boroughs.

To request that Housing Association members of the Integrated Housing Board conduct background investigation in their respective organisation for further discussion at the meeting.

**Summary:**

This is a covering report for further discussion at the Integrated Housing Board meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009.

**Legal/Financial Implications:**

None identified.

**Recommendations:**

That the attached information from other London authorities be noted for discussion.

That the Housing Association members of the IHB conduct background research into the use of welcome visits at tenancy commencement in their respective organisations prior to the IHB meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009.

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**Questions for consideration**

1. Does your organisation conduct welcome visits after tenancy commencement?

2. If yes, what do these visits entail?
3. Are there set timescales for conducting these visits i.e. within 30 working days of tenancy commencement?
4. Is there a target for the number of visits conducted within the specified timescale?
5. At what times/days during the week are these visits conducted (e.g. in the working week/at any time/when is convenient/between 8am and 6pm)?
6. Have set targets been achieved?

### **Appendices**

The attached information collected from other London Boroughs is a snapshot of the timescales required by those authorities. Further work needs to be carried out to determine how 'Welcome Visits' are conducted and what is involved before any useful comparisons can be made.

Further work to establish performance against those targets set by other authorities would also be necessary in order to draw usable comparisons.

Homes for Haringey performance data for 2009-10 is also attached.

## Welcome Visits – Peer Research

Local Authority	Welcome Visit
Barnet	<p>In terms of visiting new tenants, Barnet Homes are expected to do this within 12 weeks, with 93% set as minimum target – generally performances achieved are close to 100%.</p> <p>They also have another measure which is their key measure. This is to gauge the level of satisfaction of new tenants with property condition. The Council have agreed a target of 90% with Barnet Homes – they achieved 85% last year.</p>
Hackney	<p>In Hackney, their measure is for new tenants to be visited within 20 working days. No target was agreed with Hackney Homes but the outturn for 08/09 was 80%. They are investigating whether evening and weekend visits happen.</p>
Newham	<p>At Newham Homes a new tenant visit is completed within 30 working days and the target is 100%. No evenings or weekends visits take place in the evenings and weekends.</p>
Slough	<p>Slough have a target for all new tenants to be visited within six weeks. One of the drivers for this target is to reduce rent arrears.</p> <p>After three years evidence suggests that it does prevent arrears creeping up early in the tenancy and helps to get any straggling HB forms returned. Generally this target is met but when it does not, say through staff shortages, there does seem to be a correlating increase in rent arrears.</p>
Tower Hamlets	<p>Target is 100% but they are checking the cost benefit of it. When this is completed they sent information to us.</p>
Westminster	<p>We are still waiting for data from Westminster.</p>

## Homes for Haringey Welcome Visits 2009-10

## Appendix II

Ref	Tenancy management	Target	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
TM07	% of welcome visits completed	99%	98.6%	87.0%	90.2%	89.8%	89.2%
TM08	% of welcome visits completed within 6 weeks of new tenancy	85%	97.3%	83.3%	88.5%	89.8%	85.1%