



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

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**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**  
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I write with grave concern following the Housing Ombudsman's Special Report on Islington Council.

This report was prompted by your organisation's high maladministration rates in respect of complaints about damp, mould, and leaks. I was incredibly disappointed to read that your severe maladministration rate is four times the national average. This is unacceptable. The report identifies unreasonable delays, poor record keeping and communication with your residents, and a failure to follow your own policies and procedures. You failed to identify underlying issues - instead, you took a superficial look at problems such as damp and mould. It is not surprising that, as a result, many of your residents have suffered prolonged periods of distress.

I was also concerned to read that you seem not to have recognised when you failed your residents. It took intervention from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for you to take action to address complaint handling delays.

There is an urgent need for culture change within your organisation. You stopped listening to your residents and failed to deliver the service they deserve. You also failed to recognise the seriousness of the issues raised by your residents and the impact your failings had on them.

Everyone should be able to live in a decent home and have their complaints taken seriously. Residents should be treated with respect and courtesy by their landlord and their health and safety should be paramount. The Social Housing Regulation Act brings in a tough new regulatory regime to help achieve these standards, and this Government expects social landlords to double-down on their efforts to provide the high-quality social housing that residents deserve.

I note that you have been open and transparent with the Ombudsman. You have begun to address some of the issues raised but there is still significant work to be done to improve the service you deliver to your residents. I will be taking a personal interest in the evidence you provide to the Ombudsman about how you intend to address the failings identified in the report.

I would like to meet with you to discuss the findings of the Ombudsman's report and the steps you are taking to improve your services. My office will be in contact to arrange this.

I am copying this letter to Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP, Rt Hon Emily Thornberry MP, Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Mayor Gary Heather, the Select Committee for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Housing Ombudsman.

**RT HON MICHAEL GOVE MP**  
**Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**