

Solomon Project

12th Annual Report

2010



Working together

Sharing good practice



Rick Brunwin, Chief Executive of the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation

Welcome

Welcome to the annual report of the Solomon Project. Formed in 1998, we are proud to be one of the longest-standing benchmarking groups of housing associations in the country. But as we've always said, our collaboration is much more than just looking at statistics and performance information. We are "there for each other", as the saying goes. If someone needs a helping hand with a particular project, an independent eye on a service review or a piece of instant advice in a dilemma, there's always someone there to help.

In concrete terms, some of our achievements include:

- Annual staff conferences
- Regular meetings of practitioner groups
- Shared training events
- Joint procurement
- Sharing of policies and good practices
- Joint tenant events
- Events for board members
- Joint annual reports
- Collective responses to consultation documents
- Staff secondments
- Joint service reviews

We are delighted to announce that we are now working in collaboration with *Skills & Projects* who now manage the collection of performance indicators through a web-linked programme for small associations.

Goodbye Agudas Israel and Hornsey!

We are sad to say goodbye to Agudas Israel Housing Association and to Hornsey Housing Trust. AIHA are withdrawing from the group in order to try another approach to collaboration and networking. HHT are hoping to merge with another larger association. Both founder members of Solomon, we are sorry to see them go. HHT will be especially missed at future conferences for being the very noisy winners of the annual quiz (twice)! We wish them both well in the future. Over the years, the staff individually and collectively have helped to make Solomon the vibrant partnership it is.

After stable membership for some years, we are now considering bringing some new organisations into the group.

Why Solomon matters now more than ever

Regulators may come and go but it is now even more important to provide our tenants with really good comparative information, enabling them to assess the service they get from us. Tenant scrutiny matters to us all and we are increasingly able to give high quality performance data to our customers and partners. Staff at all levels within the Solomon Project collaborate to find better ways of doing things. The partnership has fostered an openness which has allowed us to share our mistakes and learn from each other.

New Chair

Rick Brunwin of the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation has just stepped down as Chair after two years in the role and is succeeded by Leslie Laniyan. Managing Director of Shian Housing Association – another founding member of Solomon – Leslie needs no introduction. The ebullient former Chair of FBHO and board member of a number of BME associations, Leslie has been a stalwart participant in all Solomon activities. In a characteristically self-effacing way at the last softball competition, he turned his Shian t-shirt inside out and played for Rick's team. "Warm thanks to Rick for leading us through the last couple of years. I look forward to chairing the group and particularly in ensuring that one of the Solomon members brings back the softball cup north of the river."



Ita Symons MBE, Chief Executive of AIHA



Leslie Laniyan, Managing Director of Shian HA and new Chair of Solomon

Performance indicators

We have selected a small representative sample of performance indicators showing how we as a group compare with housing associations' performance nationally. As the tables show, we are doing worse than the national performance in three areas and better in the other three. It is of particular interest how very much better we are doing in terms of sickness absence. More detailed information is available on the Skills & Projects website www.skillsprojects.co.uk and in our own individual reports.

% Total tenant complaints year average

2.84% Solomon Group Average

3.27% SPBM Average [Housemark n/a]

Relet times (cal. days - all tenancies)

31.08 Solomon Group Average

29.99 Housemark Average

Working days lost to sickness absence

3.04 Solomon Group Average

9.20 Housemark Average

% Reactive repairs completed within target time

96.07% Solomon Group Average

97.00% Housemark Average

% Dwellings with valid gas safety certificate

98.67% Solomon Group Average

99.71% Housemark Average

% Rent lost through dwellings vacant

1.24% Solomon Group Average

1.30% Housemark Average

PIs are often no more than "can-openers", enabling us to look beyond the bare statistics into what can be deeper and more complex problems. Our very active functional groups meet regularly to examine how and why we have the results we have.

Agudas Israel Housing Association



Richard Blakeway, Housing Advisor to the Mayor of London, explaining the future of affordable housing at AIHA's AGM.



Steve Douglas, Interim Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration at Hackney, on a walkabout of AIHA's Avigdor scheme which will produce 29 units, mainly 4 bed accommodation.

Hornsey Housing Trust



Pictured from left: Drop-in Centre user Frank Bonus (98); Cllr Eddie Griffiths (Mayor); Kevin Crompton (Chief Executive of Haringey Council); Lydia Gathogo (Chief Executive of Hornsey Housing Trust), and Drop-in Centre user Maisie Williams (90).

Haringey Council celebrated National Community Meals Week (October 2010) by hosting a lunch at Abyssinia Court, Hornsey Housing Trust, handing out free meals to clients who had had a birthday during that week. Cllr Eddie Griffiths, Mayor of Haringey, attended the event.



Mr White, a keen gardener and tenant of Hornsey Housing Trust has been growing vegetables and flowers in the communal gardens of Abyssinia Court for over 10 years.

Staff Conference 2009



Innisfree Housing Association



Dancing girls at St Patrick's Day party.



Tenants at Unity Close Open Day.

Shian Housing Association

Shian buries a time capsule celebrating the history of the BME Housing Movement at the first scheme developed for Shian in over 10 years. The scheme was opened by Louis Julienne.



Shian tenants and children visited DiggerLand in Kent in August 2009. A good time was had by all.

Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation

The success story of the year for the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation has been the continued progress onwards and upwards of our Pryors Bank catering project. Pryors Bank is an innovative and unique social enterprise based in a beautiful building by the river in Bishops Park, Fulham. The goal is to ease previously homeless ex-Service men and women who live at the Foundation into a working environment through a unique apprenticeship scheme which enables them to work towards a Level 2 NVQ qualification. The project has gone from strength to strength this year and won a prestigious Royal British Legion "Friends of the Forces" award in recognition of their work as well as being featured in The Standard and other press. We were thrilled when platinum selling band "The Soldiers" recently lent their support by performing at the open day and making a sizeable donation. This has enabled the project to progress into becoming a fully fledged all year round evening and event venue as well as a summer café which naturally means that there is more scope for more apprentices.



Waltham Forest Housing Association



Solomon Solfed Softball Competition, July 2010



Ekaya - the winning team.



skills&projects

Skills & Projects Limited are proud to support the Solomon Project.

Our SPBM benchmarking service helps members of the Solomon Project to compare performance and learn from each other and a growing number of other organisations nation-wide.

benchmarking

satisfaction

engagement

mystery shopping

Skills & Projects specialise in working with smaller housing providers and other not-for-profit organisations. As well as benchmarking, our range of services includes customer research, resident involvement, mystery shopping, employee engagement and staff development.

For further information, contact Mark Anderson or Tim Taylor on 0845 539 1963 or info@skillsprojects.co.uk

You can visit our website at www.skillsprojects.co.uk

We wish members of the Solomon Project every success in the future.

involvement

research

facilitation

performance

learning

improvement

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