

## Audit Commission Inspection

Housing Associations, like councils, are inspected by the Audit Commission to make sure they are delivering a good, value for money service that meets the needs of residents and the wider community. Like us, they expect to see our services improving all the time.

A programme of inspections of housing associations is published every year, but now the Audit Commission is also thinking about carrying out inspections with very little notice, in the same way as schools are done.

They have run a pilot to test this approach and A2Dominion North, based in Oxford, volunteered to take part.

With just five days notice, we were inspected in February 2008. The inspectors spoke with staff and residents and examined those areas they considered to be the weakest. These areas were current rent arrears, empty property re-letting and planned maintenance, but they also looked at how accessible our services are and whether they meet the needs of different people.

The inspectors were very positive about our staff. They said they were all open and honest and helpful. They picked out lots of examples of good things we are doing, and where they highlighted weaknesses, they felt we were already aware of these and taking action to address them.

They judged the services they examined as fair with promising prospects for improvement. They made a number of recommendations to improve services. These included responding more quickly to phone calls and resolving complaints more quickly. We are making a number of changes to make sure this happens.