



## QHS Status – November 2009

### 1. What is QHS?

Quality Housing Services (QHS) Ltd is a non profit distributing, membership based organisation formed in 2003 with the support of an IGP grant from the Housing Corporation. There are currently some 60 members including Western Challenge - one of the founder members. Currently 46 members are certificated and 15 of these are at the enhanced certification level.

This assessment and its associated mark is one of the key tools, which we can use to give form and meaning to the service we provide and drive continuous improvement of our services to you.

### 2. What does it mean for our customers?

The QHS quality standard has set new and very challenging targets for Housing Associations to achieve. The standard has identified over 200 individual critical service areas. These are brought together under the following 10 components:

- Opening and Reception
- Telephone accessibility
- Information and documentation
- Dealing with those seeking housing (application, assignment, handover and follow up)
- Maintenance
- Rent Payment and collection
- Complaints handling
- Estate Services (Including management of anti-social behaviour)
- Participation
- Diversity and equality

### 3. How does QHS measure the quality of the service?

QHS will assess the quality of our services by using:

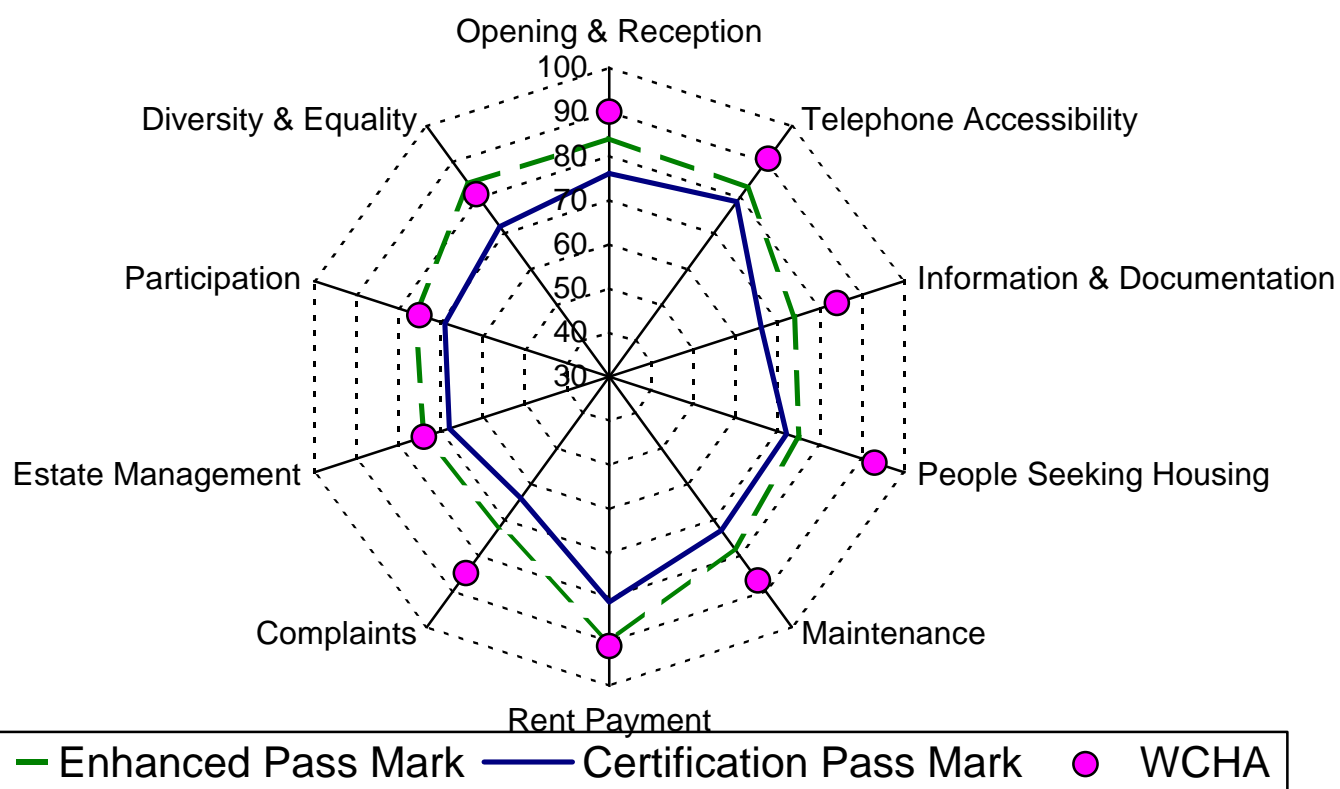
- **On Site Checks** - QHS employees will visit us from time to time asking us to provide information relating to policies and procedures and how they work.
- **Mystery Shopping** - QHS employees will telephone and call in to the office posing as customers. They will look for how they are treated, how long they had to wait on the phone, were they called back within a reasonable time.
- **Telephone Enquiries** - QHS will call Western Challenge to see how we answer our phones and how our services work over the phone including our out of hours repairs service.
- **Customer Opinion Polls** - QHS employees will choose residents randomly and telephone them to ask what they think about us. They will ask general questions and questions about allocations, our repair service and complaints.

## 4. Where is Western Challenge now?

Western Challenge achieved full Certified Member status in May 2005 and have retained this ever since. Western Challenge was one of the first 3 RSLs to achieve this in England. This means that we are fully accredited to the certification standard.

In 2008, QHS launched a higher 'Enhanced' target to give those Associations who had been at certification level for some time, a more challenging target. The current position of Western Challenge is shown on the following table (the maximum score in each of the components is 100%). It shows WCHA's overall results compared with the Certification Target and the Enhanced Target. It also shows whether a score has improved, stayed the same or fallen since the last time:

Component	Certification Target	Enhanced Target	WCHA Overall Score		WCHA Component Scores			
					Secret Shopper	Opinion Poll	Phone Access	Office Audit
Opening and reception	76%	84%	90%	↑	99%	95%	-	84%
Telephone accessibility	79%	83%	91%	↑	-	70%	89%	97%
Information / documentation	66%	74%	84%	↑	-	97%	-	87%
People seeking housing	72%	75%	93%	↑	88%	99%	-	97%
Maintenance	73%	78%	87%	→	-	87%	100%	83%
Rent payment and collection	81%	90%	91%	↑	-	72%	-	95%
Complaints handling	64%	72%	85%	↑	-	83%	-	86%
Estate management (inc ASB)	68%	74%	74%	↑	-	54%	-	84%
Participation	69%	76%	75%	↓	-	63%	-	81%
Diversity and Equality	72%	84%	81%	↓	-	59%	-	86%



## 5. What is Western Challenge Doing Next?

Western Challenge has achieved enhanced certification target in all but 2 areas; Participation and Diversity and Equality. Our operational objectives for 2010 are to reach and retain the enhanced certification target for all areas.

As part of our 2010 action plans, we are looking to address the following;

- Improving communication with customers who have disabilities and providing leaflets and handbooks in CD format
- Assist residents to establish a Disability Forum
- Develop a mentoring programme for involved residents
- Review facilities for recycling on schemes