

3 August 2015

Dear Sirs,

We write further to OHG's letters of 15 and 24 July 2015 and your meeting with representatives from Islington Council on 10 July 2015.

We enclose:

1. Schedule of relevant tweets
2. Email containing notes from OHG's meeting with representatives from Islington Council (10 July 2015)
3. Summary of Islington Park Street allocations policy
4. Video of ongoing flooding issues in fourth floor kitchen (July 2015)

We welcome the fact that OHG agreed to meet with representatives from the council and the subsequent commitment to some degree of transparency, in the form of an options appraisal, indicated in your letter of 24 July 2015. We remain hopeful that, with the support of the council or another suitable third party, such as a mediator, meaningful, open dialogue may still be possible.

However, before addressing the issues raised in your letter, we believe it is necessary to acknowledge a further erosion of residents' trust in OHG. In particular, we would like to register our disappointment that OHG continue to spread misinformation in the public arena, both through a bizarre Twitter offensive and in correspondence with elected officials. This behaviour clearly undermines the potential for meaningful dialogue.

With reference to Twitter, it is unclear how it could ever be appropriate for a registered social landlord to use social media to belittle its tenants and to initiate a concerted misinformation campaign. There is an inexplicable absence of compassion in OHG's actions. Many residents have found OHG's social media campaign incredibly distressing, particularly those who are more vulnerable and/or suffer from mental health problems.

The social media offensive against residents has included directly sharing personal information about residents on Twitter with members of the public who are known to be abusive, copying in members of the press to tweets in an attempt to generate media interest in residents' personal situations, mocking

residents' attempts to engage OHG in dialogue and spreading misinformation about residents' eligibility for social housing in an attempt to manipulate public opinion. We refer to some individual tweets in the text below, but please also see

the attached schedule of OHG tweets which evidences this approach.

We would like confirmation of whether this social media strategy was approved by OHG's board members and, if so, how it has been justified. If it was not approved by board members we would like to know what action has been taken in response to it. We would also like OHG to assure residents that no further personal information about residents will be shared on social media or copied to the media, and that there will be no further spreading of misinformation.

We will now move on to discuss the issues raised in your correspondence.

Options appraisal

In your letter of 24 July 2015, you state that as a result of your meeting with Islington Council you will "consider" carrying out an options appraisal "to give everyone more clarity about why we need to phase out the group homes and put the properties to alternative uses for maximum social benefit."

It is clear from this statement that, prior to any appraisal of options, the decision has already been made to phase out group homes. A genuine appraisal would necessarily consider all options, including maintaining 38-44 Islington Park Street as a group home. At present, it appears that an appraisal would simply be a means to justify a predetermined outcome.

We have highlighted the value of our community in our previous correspondence. We have made repeated requests for board members to come to our home to visit us and to see how our community works in practice. We reiterate this request now, and ask OHG to include the continued existence of 38-44 Islington Park Street as a group home as an option under consideration. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to assist you in this process.

Regulatory requirements

To date, the intended eviction of our community has been justified under the auspices of meeting regulatory requirements. As illustrated by the tweets below, you have consistently claimed that you are restricted by the council's nominations agreement and that it is significantly your obligations under this

agreement that have informed your decision to evict.

2 July 2015: We are bound by legal agreements over who has the right to occupy them.

3 July 2015: Whatever Cllrs are saying...officers know there is a legally binding allocation agreement...

5 July 2015: which is frustrating as it's their own council's nomination rights we are looking to enforce....

6 July 2015: it's ours and only the council had the right to tell us who to put in it.

This rationale is repeated in your letter to residents of 15 July 2015. However, it does not stand up to scrutiny.

As you are aware, Islington Council's elected members and housing officers fully support the ongoing existence of the community. On 25 June 2015 the full council meeting unanimously approved a motion asking OHG to suspend the NTQ and to enter into dialogue with the community. Councillors spoke passionately about how our unique community was an asset to the borough and how its destruction would be an act of "social vandalism." At the meeting OHG attended on 10 July 2015, housing officers confirmed that they open to the possibility of referring applicants on the council waiting list to our community (see attached notes).

Further, in your letter of 15 July 2015, you state that on 3 July 2015, when residents met with OHG staff, we claimed that our allocations policy "is fine and will stand up to scrutiny." This is also misrepresentative. Residents stated that our allocations policy remains true to Patchwork's original vision and that we have done our best to maintain a fair allocations policy in the absence of any landlord support (see attached summary). However, we recognise that, with assistance from housing officers at Islington Council or other housing professionals, the policy could be improved, and we would welcome the opportunity to make these improvements. To imply that we are not open to revising our allocations policy is disingenuous.

Finally, OHG have further attempted to undermine the community by stating on Twitter that places in our home are allocated to members' friends (*5 July 2015*:

How would you tell a single mum she is stuck in a damp B&B because someone else let their friends jump the queue?).

This practice would, of course, be in breach of regulatory requirements. However, you are aware that our allocations policy specifically prohibits friends from joining and statements such as this appear to be propaganda, designed to discredit the community. The rule excluding friends was introduced well over a decade ago. This was a step taken by the community, without any input from Patchwork, to help to remove potential bias in our allocations process. We keep

full minutes of all community meetings; these minutes clearly evidence that the joining process for new residents is conducted in accordance with our allocations policy.

We have repeatedly asserted that we will take all necessary steps to enable you to meet your regulatory requirements. Indeed, we would welcome the regularisation of our management arrangement and the opportunity for residents to have clear security of tenure and to develop a referral system with Islington Council. If OHG committed to meaningful, open dialogue with the community, there is clearly the potential for its regulatory duties to be met with residents in situ. As such, we believe it is entirely disproportionate to evict our community under this pretext. This is an area of contention where, if it becomes necessary, like you, we would welcome the objective view of the court.

Occupation rights

We have been advised that some residents may be secure tenants as they moved into the property before the 1988 Housing Act came into force; others are likely to be assured tenants. On Twitter you have tried to manipulate public opinion by claiming that residents are only licensees (*5 July 2015: It's a simple fact - they have no tenancy - they have license to occupy. Legally different. Google it.*). However, this is conjecture. Residents were in occupation of 38-44 Islington Park Street for three decades before you took over management of the property. In the absence of written evidence, you cannot reasonably assert that we are only licensees.

Additionally, you have publicly stated on Twitter:

3 July 2015: There are strict criteria for getting social housing. They have jumped the queue.

6 July 2015: The residents have never been properly means assessed in the history of the communes.

3 July 2015: They have all queue jumped to live there when there is a legal route only to social housing.

Yet, you know that this is not the case. For example, in your response to Keith Soutar's request for copies of his personal data, you enclosed his application form to live in a Patchwork property. The application was assessed and approved by Patchwork and he was placed at IPS, the organisation's permanent group home. While it appears that you have not retained other longer standing residents' application forms and other historical documentation, you will be

aware that there are other residents who also had direct relationships with Patchwork, who were assessed and approved as residents and who also have the potential to be secure or assured tenants. Additionally, as highlighted above, following the withdrawal of landlord support, we have maintained an allocations policy, specific to our unique community, which allocates places on the basis of social housing principles and a commitment to communal living. Clearly, the claim that all residents have "queue jumped" is unfair and without foundation.

In short, the nature of our occupation rights is something that would need to be determined by a judge on the facts. As such, this is another example where, if it becomes necessary, we would welcome the objective view of the court.

OHG/IPS communication

A recurring theme in OHG's public narrative is that the decision to evict our community is the unfortunate consequence of residents' refusal to engage. For example, in John Gregory's letter to Darren Johnson of the Greater London Assembly, dated 3 July 2015, he states: "At present there is no formal agreement in place between One Housing and residents of these properties despite repeated attempts over many years to agree one" and "we fully understand that instigating possession proceedings is a last resort." The assertion that we have refused to provide personal data and that we refuse to allow reasonable access for maintenance also forms part of this narrative. It is fundamentally misrepresentative.

To the best of our collective knowledge and according to our records, since OHG (formerly CHA) acquired the property in 2005, there have been very few attempts at substantive engagement with the community. CHA contacted the

community in 2005, upon acquisition. It stated that it had no ideological objection to the principle of group homes but that it worked within a statutory and regulatory framework and that there were some issues relating to the way that the community operated which needed to be resolved with residents. There was no further contact until early summer 2009. Following this correspondence in 2009, requesting basic information from residents, the community responded by stating that a reply would follow in due course. Sometime after, without any further correspondence from OHG, the community was served with a Notice To Quit in September 2009. After the involvement of MP Emily Thornberry, OHG agreed to enter into mediation with the community.

As you will recall, mediation was conducted by Fiona Colquhoun, Director of the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution. A letter from Ms Colquhoun to the community dated 26 May 2015 states that the community:

"entered into mediation in good faith. Furthermore, as the record of the 22nd October 2010 meeting indicates, there was a good discussion and agreed action points. There was also an understanding between everyone who attended that there would be a follow up meeting in November 2010. However, after this meeting One Housing Group did not proceed with the mediation process further. This was disappointing at the time, as it might have established a dialogue between everyone and built up trust between the parties thus avoiding a dispute or impasse in the future. It may have also reached a solution which everyone was comfortable with..... Subsequent to the October meeting I did discuss the continuation of the mediation process with [the junior OHG representative who had attended the mediation meeting] and went to meet him at One Housing offices in early 2011 to try and progress matters, but there was no follow up to this and I was not asked to continue the process. I did offer to meet more senior officers, but One Housing did not indicate any interest in doing so at that point of time and it was inappropriate for me as a mediator to press any further."

Residents were not informed by OHG that it had decided to discontinue mediation and for a long time the community remained hopeful that OHG would reengage with the process. After several months passed it became clear that this was unlikely. Residents heard nothing more about the issues raised until 2 April 2015, 5 years later, when OHG wrote to inform residents that they again intended to serve a Notice To Quit. It is clear that the assertion that there have been "repeated attempts over many years" to agree tenancies with residents is disingenuous.

Co-operation in relation to personal data

On Twitter OHG have stated that:

8 July 2015: We're trying to assess and provide for care and housing needs but get no information to help progress

5 July 2015: They are not legally tenants and have refused requests to evidence their vulnerability.

8 July 2015: We can't see details of your earnings, move-in dates, employment status, dependents etc. That's what we need to know.

In John Gregory's letter to Tom Copley of the Greater London Assembly, dated 14 July 2015, OHG state that during mediation in 2009, residents refused to provide proof of eligibility for social housing." In his letter to Darren Johnson, he simply states that we are failing to engage with "standard information requests."

As you must be aware, this is not a fair or accurate representation of events. Prior to the serving of the NTQ in April 2015, in the decade since OHG took over management of Islington Park Street, requests for personal data were only made in 2009/10. These requests were limited to residents' names, dates of birth and move-in dates. Notably, contrary to OHG's public statements, until OHG's letter of 24 July 2015, there have never been any requests for information relating to residents' entitlement to social housing. As the letter from the independent mediator recognises, the community entered mediation in 2010 in good faith and, had OHG also demonstrated its good faith through continuation of the mediation process, the requested details would have been provided.

This year we provided OHG with copies of identity documents for all residents and, as outlined in our letter of 2 July 2015, we have lodged details of our move-in dates with Councillor Gary Poole. As in 2010, we are fully prepared to provide OHG with our move-in dates, if there is a commitment to meaningful, open dialogue. However, as your discontinuation of the mediation process and current refusal to consider alternatives to eviction indicates, it appears that the information has only ever been required for the purposes of informing your decisions regarding the initiation of possession proceedings. If this is the case, the appropriate time for residents to disclose this data is as part of the court process.

We note that in your letter of 24 July 2015, for the first time, you have asked for details of personal data to evidence entitlement to social housing. However, you have clearly stated that this information is required solely for the purpose of decanting residents. We are committed to staying as a community at 38-44 Islington Park Street and, with the exception of Rupert Thompson and Albert McKeran, we are unwilling to provide the data in this context. We are now seeking legal advice following the initiation of litigation and will only provide the data requested if we are advised to do so by our legal representative. Please note, this is not indicative of a general reluctance to co-operate. We remain open to sharing all personal data as part of meaningful, open dialogue which considers the preservation of our community.

Co-operation in relation to maintenance

A further recurring theme is the allegation that residents do not allow access for ongoing maintenance of the property. For example, in John Gregory's letter to Tom Copley he states that "we are also unable to fully meet our health and safety obligations at the properties due to the enormous challenges of requiring collective approval for the most simple of maintenance interventions." On Twitter you have stated:

5 June 2015: There are also growing health and safety risks there but we are often denied the access we need to make good.

19 June 2015: What if people in the building came to harm because we hadn't been allowed to fulfil our health and safety responsibilities fully?

Again, these assertions are without basis. OHG's maintenance staff have always been given access to the property during your period of ownership. When residents requested personal data held by OHG, the only data you disclosed for several residents related to their roles as maintenance liaison officers. You disclosed many pages of correspondence where these residents were reporting maintenance issues, requesting assistance from OHG and facilitating entry for staff. Please provide evidence to support the assertion that residents have inhibited OHG's ability to meet its health and safety obligations.

Conversely, in reality, the primary concern in respect of maintenance relates to OHG's wilful neglect of the property. In particular, in relation to the roof, OHG has deliberately allowed problems to escalate. As a result, over the past year there has been serious flooding following periods of rain. Please see the attached

video for recent evidence.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasise that we fully recognise the value of social housing and the need to allocate places fairly. However, we also recognise the intrinsic value of community, in particular our specific community where low-income adults with mixed needs thrive in a supportive home environment. As such, we welcome Islington Council's firm acknowledgement of this value and its willingness to refer people on the waiting list to the community, if our management arrangement can be regularised. We also welcome the offer to host discussions between the community and OHG and to act as an independent third party; we hope that OHG will be willing to accept this offer.

We remain hopeful that, with a genuine commitment to engagement from both parties, it may still be possible to resolve the issues that OHG have raised without the need to go through the full court process. We reiterate that residents are willing to assist with a full options appraisal and to engage in meaningful, open dialogue with OHG.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours, in good faith,

Ranjit Krishnamma

On behalf of the residents of Islington Park Street