

Annual report 2023-24

Making the most of our resources



Shian Housing Association Ltd

Report from the Chair and Managing Director



Welcome to Shian Housing Association's Annual Report for 2023-24.

After two years of high inflation, not matched by rent rises, small housing associations have had to find new ways to navigate increasing financial challenges. For Shian, the key has been to work in partnership to make the most of our resources.

Playing to our strengths, we entered into a strategic alliance with Odu-Dua Housing Association on 1 June 2023. Leslie Laniyan, our Managing Director, now has the additional role of Acting Chief Executive at Odu-Dua, while staff across the two organisations are working together closely to share their expertise and resources. Odu-Dua is smaller than Shian, owning and managing around 160 properties.

Taking on this additional responsibility has inevitably taken hard work and commitment from all our staff, but we are finding it rewarding to provide the same high standard of service to a larger group of tenants.

In April 2024, Shian began providing services to Old Etonians Housing Association, on a one-year contract. Old Etonians have 55 tenants – 40 of them living at a large block in Highbury and the remainder living in smaller blocks and street properties in the Islington area. We intend to provide the same high standard of service to our new residents – who are mostly teachers who work in the London Borough of Islington.

As in previous years, partnerships have also been central to our development programme. Thanks to our partnership with New River Alliance, and funding from Hackney Council, we were able to develop six new flats at an infill site in Pitfield Street in N1.

We are continuing to work with L&Q (who formerly led the Build London Partnership, which has now closed) and will take handover of our first scheme in Dagenham in the autumn of 2024. Our Parsloe Road development will provide 36 mixed-tenure flats.

Meanwhile, Apex Airspace have funded a study to check the feasibility of them developing new homes above our existing Moreland Street estate in Islington.

In our ongoing work, we continued to make the most of our

relationships with the other landlords in the BME London Landlords group. We also worked with our tenants – through our Tenant Scrutiny Panel and by using the feedback generated by the major survey we carried out in January 2024, as well as the regular satisfaction data collected for us by Acuity.

We added value to the community by opening our offices to elders for regular coffee mornings and by offering volunteering opportunities to local people building their CVs. A partnership with the Felix Project is also enabling us to offer free surplus food from our office during the main school holidays.

Sadly, we also reached the end of an era, as we took the hard decision to wind up our Makeda Weaver Project. We launched the Project in 2005, as a positive response from the BME community to the wave of young men getting involved in crime, drugs and gang violence.

At its peak, Makeda Weaver ran six separate projects. As well as providing hostel places and flats, the project went out to schools, trained social workers, teachers and other professionals to share its message about how to deal with gang members. It also mentored young people, worked with young women to help challenge sexual violence and exploitation, supported families threatened with murder and violence, and worked on the streets of Islington to diffuse community tensions.

The recession in 2008, followed by the long years of austerity, took their toll. For many years, we focused on providing two hostels: one for ex-offenders and one for young people attempting to exit south London gang life. However, increasingly, we were providing a high level of support for which we had no funding. This year, we opted to decommission the project altogether – quite simply, it was no longer financially sustainable.

Our plan is now to sell one of the hostels and to repurpose the second for much-needed key worker housing.

We hope you enjoy reading our report, which sets out our achievements during the year and confirms the continuing strength of our organisation.

*Aaron Whitaker, Chair
Leslie Laniyan, Managing Director*

Cover photo: Residents enjoying this year's summer trip to Thorpe Park.

Partnerships with other landlords

Odu-Dua Housing Association

The first year of our strategic alliance with Odu-Dua Housing Association has gone well, with staff from the two organisations working closely together, in Zoom meetings and face to face, to raise standards and make the most of our shared resources.

Odu-Dua in particular has benefited from:

- Shian staff taking its repairs orders
- its first independent tenant surveys – provided by the company (Acuity) that also works for Shian
- updated financial and complaints policies
- new tenant and repairs guidance handbooks
- updates to its website
- a full stock condition survey, which informs a more systematic major repairs programme
- enhanced health and safety work – carried out by independent contractors and overseen by experienced consultants
- better IT programs to handle housing management and stock condition records, and
- better asset management – a number of short-life properties will be returned to their owners, because they need a high level of repairs.



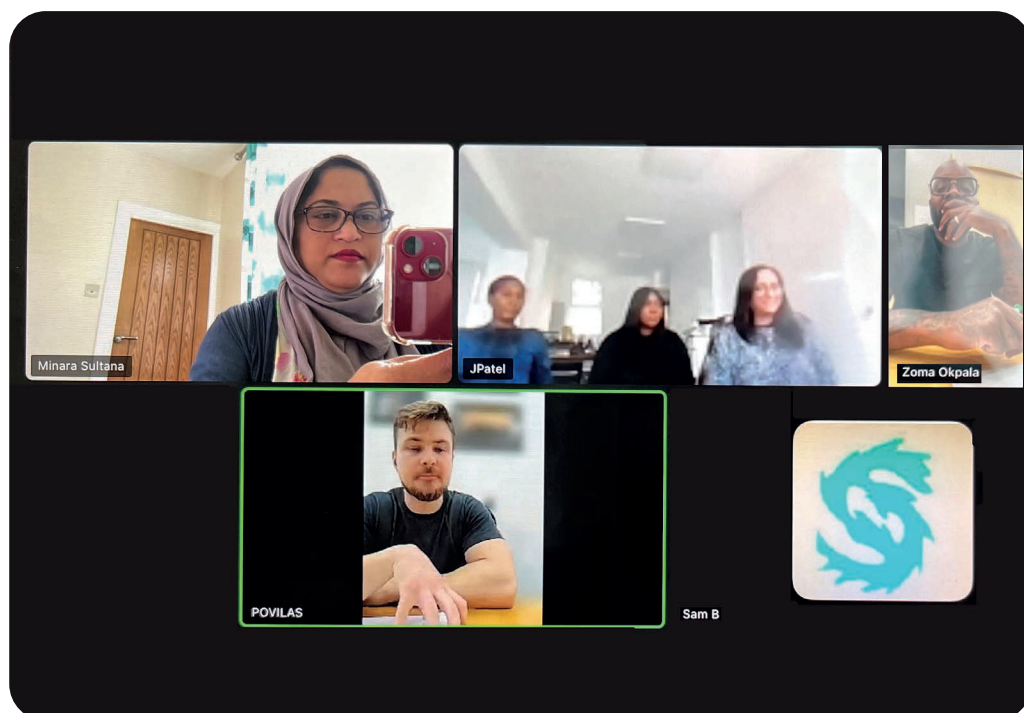
Old Etonians Housing Association

Towards the end of the year, Shian also negotiated an initial one-year contract to manage the properties owned by Old Etonians Housing Association. This means we now provide housing and repair services to an additional 55 tenants – 40 of whom live at Eton House, a large block in Highbury, while the rest live in smaller schemes and street properties in the Islington area.

OEHA was set up in 1937 to provide homes for workers in crowded cities. The name came from former pupils of Eton College public school. OEHA particularly focuses on providing housing for teachers who work in Islington.

Above: Eton House in Highbury.

Below: An online meeting with the teams at Shian and Odu-Dua.



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Cost-of-living support for residents

We prioritise offering support to residents who are struggling to make ends meet.

Keeping tenancies on track

When tenants get behind with their rent, our staff can offer the option of a payment agreement.

Over the year, we helped nine tenants to claim Council Discretionary Housing Payments. We also signposted people to other sources of grant funding, as well as specialist debt and benefits advice.

Grants from Shian

Our own welfare fund, which provides up to £200 tenants who need essential items, saw a lot applications during the year. We were pleased to help 12 people.

Felix Food Project

As a member of the BME London Landlords group, we were pleased to accept the offer of free surplus food for our residents thanks to a partnership with the Felix Project.

The London-based Felix Project rescues good quality surplus food from hundreds of supermarkets, wholesalers, farms, restaurants and other suppliers. Then, using a network of volunteers, they deliver this surplus food to charities,

community groups, housing associations and schools.

As a small organisation, with a limited number of staff in the office each day, we decided to focus on school holidays. We held our first free food session at our Hackney office in the New Year period. We plan to repeat this during the main school holidays.

Our first session was very successful. After sending out a text message to all our residents, 30 arrived on the day to collect their food parcel. The residents were pleased and surprised by the fresh fruit, vegetables, milk, yoghurt and freshly cooked food on offer. The packs also included olive oil, biscuits, drinks and some canned foods.

We know that too many of our residents find it hard to buy all the food they need, so we were particularly pleased when some told us that they felt far more comfortable collecting food parcels from our office, rather than a local food bank.

Below: Shian's team get ready to open the office for our first free food session for residents.



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Keeping service standards high

Our staff work three days in the office and two at home. They answer most tenancy queries on the phone or by email, but we can also offer pre-booked face-to-face appointments at the office.

Our 24/7 online MyTenancy service gives residents access to their tenancy and repairs accounts, and there is lots of useful information on our website.

We use digital services – including sending messages by text – because this saves us money on printing, postage and paper. However, we also provide options for people who are not online.

At our estates, we carry out regular inspections and residents are welcome to join us.

Complaints during 2023-24

Between April 2023 and the end of March 2024, we received a total of 18 complaints.

Eight complaints came from the same resident, about a range of issues. None were upheld – including five that went to the Housing Ombudsman.

Two complaints went on to stage 2 of our complaints process.

We apologised to a tenant who pointed out that we had not updated their details on our systems.

We agreed a plan of action with a new tenant who complained about a number of things, including a delay in changing her front door.

In a case where a tenant who took their complaint through their MP, we found we had not acted wrongly. However, we invited them to apply to Shian's Welfare Fund.

We explained to a tenant unhappy about smells from a neighbour's home that this was not reasonable and that air purifiers in the communal area would be a fire risk.

We resolved a complaint about poor communal cleaning, removal of leaves and illegal fly-tipping. A second landlord is responsible for the bin area at this scheme.

One resident was not happy that they had to wait for temporary accommodation after a fire – but we explained that we had met our responsibilities.

We received four further complaints about repairs. Two were gas repairs, which we got our contractor to sort out. We gave compensation to one tenant.

We did not uphold a complaint about the gap between a front door and its frame.

A resident complained about their kitchen after moving in. We replaced some handles, but still found them responsible for a rechargeable repair.



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Raising satisfaction

Major survey

Acuity, an independent survey company, carried out our latest major tenant satisfaction survey in January 2024. The questions included the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures launched by the Regulator of Social Housing a year ago.

In all, 173 residents responded, with 75% saying they were satisfied with our overall service, that we keep them informed and treat them fairly and with respect. We scored higher for satisfaction with our overall repairs service (80%) and how easy we are to deal with (79%). However, with just 42% telling us they were happy with the way we handled their recent complaint, we know this is an area we need to improve on.

Ongoing satisfaction results

We have a regular contract with Acuity, whose staff ring a sample of our residents each month to ask their views on our services. We report on the results during the year in our newsletters. In the tables opposite, we report satisfaction averages for aspects of our services across the whole year.

Comparing with other landlords

Every other month, we meet up online with the other small housing

Acuity: Customer contact survey	2023-24
Overall satisfaction	82%
Ease of contact	96%
Query resolved first time	80%
Overall satisfaction with call	84%
Kept informed	84%
Easy to deal with this time	88%
OK to contact	84%
Number of interviews	114

Acuity: Repairs survey	2023-24
Overall satisfaction	96%
Ease of reporting repair	98%
Kept informed	89%
Worker's performance	96%
On time	89%
Quality of work	96%
Right first time	93%
Easy to deal with this time	95%
OK to contact	73%
Number of interviews	82

associations in the London and South East Benchmarking group. We compare our performance results and share what is working well, or not so well, in the way we each do things.

Below: Summer trip to Thorpe Park.



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Providing good quality repairs

During 2023-24, we carried out 1,571 repairs.

In total, we spent £424,330 on day-to-day repairs.

Our regulator sets targets for us to meet (see bottom table) and our performance against these last year was in line with other similar landlords.

However, for non-emergencies, we aim to work to a higher standard than our regulator expects. We call this our gold standard.

As the top table shows, we met our gold standard timescale targets for urgent and routine repairs, by completing urgent work in an average of 1.7 days and routine



work in 5.8 days. This compares very well to other similar landlords.

All the same, not every job can be completed on time – usually because parts are needed – and last year, 80 repairs were done late. Of these, 72 related to gas heating repairs. We are taking this up with our contractors.

Meeting our gold standard: How long repairs took in 2023-24	Usual standard	Shian's gold standard	Average achieved
Urgent repairs	5 days	3 days	1.7days
Routine repairs	20 days	10 days	5.8 days

Reported to our regulator: Repairs completed on target	2022-23	2023-24	Target 2023-24	Peer group median
Emergencies (24 hours)	100%	100%	95%	98.13%
Urgent (5 working days)	99.8%	100%	97.5%	–
Routine (20 days)	100%	99.6%	97.5%	93.73%
Repair completed 1st visit	86%	89%	85%	90.5%
Annual gas safety certificate	100%	100%	100%	100%



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Reinvesting in homes

Stock condition surveys

We carried out a stock condition survey during the year – for Shian, as well as Odu-Dua. We also introduced M3Vision – an IT program for storing and managing our stock condition data.

Our surveys now include recording EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) ratings. By 2030, social housing landlords are expected to bring their homes up to a level 'C', so we needed current information to help us plan a future programme of insulation works.

We are hoping to plan a pilot involving very different properties – for example, street properties, detached and terraced buildings, flats and more recently built homes – to see what it would take to bring them to net zero carbon emissions.

Improving our properties

We spent a total of £310,139 on major works to our properties.

We replaced:

- one kitchen
- two bathrooms
- 19 gas boilers
- heating systems in three properties with air source heat pumps
- windows at 12 properties

- the roofs at two blocks with a total of 12 flats, and
- the roof at a cottage.

Health and safety

Health and safety issues are an increasing part of our work, so we took the decision to create a new role of Health and Safety Manager, to cover Shian and Odu-Dua.

We were pleased to appoint Zoma Okpala, when his role as Project Manager at Makeda Weaver came to an end. As a longstanding staff member, Zoma is proving the ideal person, with the right level of commitment for the job.



We got him started by sending him on a number of training courses – which will be a regular feature of his work, as health and safety regulations evolve.

Zoma is now overseeing all our fire risk and other health and safety assessments – and ensuring that we follow through on any recommendations made.



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Rehousing people in need

During 2023-24, 14 properties became empty – 12 at social rents and two at higher affordable/intermediate rents.

Among our social rent re-lets, three one-bed flats went to Makeda Weaver tenants to give them a permanent home. We also provided two homes for residents of another housing association whose former homes were being refurbished.

Three Shian tenants benefited from a transfer – in two cases because they were overcrowded and in the third because they were downsizing. Other properties were available for council nominations or needed void repairs.

An abandoned one bedroom flat ended up being empty for well over a year, due to the time it took to get court permission to repossess the property, followed by a 14-month wait for a Bailiff to carry out the formal repossession. Cases like this impact on our lettings performance.

All our re-lets went to tenants from the black and minority ethnic communities.



Right: A Shian resident enjoying her home.



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Developing new homes

Working with other partners has once again been key to our new home developments.

Parsloe Road

Our partnership with L&Q saw continued work on 36 homes at the site of the former Kingsley Hall community centre in Parsloe Road in Dagenham.

Due for handover in the autumn of 2024, we will add three one-bed flats, 32 two-bed flats and one three-bed flat to our stock.

The affordable rent properties will all be let to people nominated by Barking and Dagenham Council.

Symister Mews

Partnership with New River Alliance and Hackney Council, which provided funding, has allowed us to develop six lovely flats for affordable rent at a former car park in Pitfield Street.

The homes at Bolade House in Symister Mews were handed over in July 2024.



Above: Bolade House in Symister Mews.

Airspace

Apex Airspace have funded a study to check the feasibility of them developing new homes above our existing Moreland Street estate in Islington.

Below: New homes in development at Parsloe Road in Dagenham.



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For tenants and communities

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Shian's Tenant Scrutiny Panel met four times. We discussed our performance, as well as sharing details about upcoming works and health & safety programmes.

The panel asked us to re-advertise our Scholarship Fund as take up has been low. They also looked at our welfare grant applications, deciding which should be accepted.

We discussed our work with Odu-Dua and Old Etonians Housing Associations and were asked by one tenant to revisit our parking permit scheme in future, as they still find it too complicated.

We discussed ways to encourage more tenants to take part in the Panel – all tenants are welcome to attend.

BME Tenants Forum

Two regulars from the Panel, Eldridge and Pat, also represent us at the BME Tenants Forum, which brings tenants from different BME landlords together to influence London housing policy.

Volunteering opportunities

For over a year, we have had a succession of volunteers coming for work experience from a local college.

Coffee clubs

We began opening on Tuesdays for a coffee club for around 10 elderly people.

We are considering starting digital coffee clubs – inviting groups of residents into the office for digital upskilling sessions with refreshments.

Supporting residents

A growing number of the residents living in our general needs schemes are now elderly. Social landlords are being asked to consider this fact as they provide services.

We are planning to take on a new housing officer, who will do an apprenticeship in supported housing, so that we can offer more support to our older residents.

Protecting the community

Our partnership working with local authorities has this year included getting together with council policy officers and other landlords to help shape domestic violence policy in Hackney. We now have universal policies across multiple organisations.

Summer Trip to Thorpe Park

This year, for our summer trip, we took 64 residents to Thorpe Park.

Tenant feedback was mostly positive:

"Me and my kids enjoyed the time we spent together getting on rides and getting to know some of Shian residents."

"It was amazing, and my family enjoyed the trip. No improvements, it was better than the last one."

"It was so nice, the Shian staff were lovely. Everything good."

However, one resident felt that Thorpe Park hadn't been a good choice for her and her three-year-old grandson.

Below: Summer trip to Thorpe Park.



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How well we performed

Stock breakdown

Our rented housing stock was made up of:

- 422 general needs homes
- 14 bedspaces in two hostels
- six shared ownership properties
- three homes under the Rent to Homebuy scheme
- 26 homes let at intermediate rents and
- two homes at market rents.

Our performance on rents

Prices rose faster than our rents for the whole of 2022-23 and from April to June in 2023. This put pressure on our budgets.

Our rent rises are usually based on the level of inflation (CPI) in the September before our rent rise. When Government guidelines allow, we can typically add an additional 1%. However, in 2023, we kept our rises 3.1% lower than the level of

inflation the previous September. Like other landlords, we did this because so many of our residents were struggling with rising food and energy costs.

In July 2024, our rise of 7.7% was based on CPI in September 2023 – even though, by July, inflation was falling. This is allowing us to start catching up, so that we can safeguard services and continue to reinvest in our existing properties.

Rent arrears

In 2023-24, we saw a rise in residents getting behind with their rent. To keep people on track, including offering more support, one of our Tenancy Services Officers began focusing solely on rent accounts from April 2024.

Key performance figures	2022-23	2023-24	Target 2023-24	Peer group median
Rent collected	98.57%	98.03%	100.5%	99%
Current rent arrears	2.97%	3.33%	3%	5.06%
Rent loss from empty properties	1.09%	0.35%	0.5%	0.52%
Management cost per home	£1,505	£1,434	£1,930	£1,322
Repairs/maintenance cost per home	£2,795	£2,658	£2,310	£1,005



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Value for money

Shian's Board takes the lead in ensuring that we achieve value for money, at the same time as delivering good quality services and investing to keep our existing property standards high.

We benchmark our performance against other landlords using a number of tools, including Housemark, Acuity and the value for money metric scorecard (see below). This helps us to make sure we are working as well as our peers and are staying in touch with what works well elsewhere.

We are keeping costs in check and improving our services by making good use of digital technology and redesigning services.

Our budget surpluses and profit levels are lower than for the past two years – mainly because of our increased spending on fire safety measures. We will continue to prioritise investing in the quality and safety of our properties.

Value for money reporting metrics	2022-23	2023-24	Target 2023-24	Peer group median
Reinvestments (spend on existing homes)	2.55%	0.51%	0.58%	2.45%
New supply delivered (new homes)	0.01	0.	0.	0.
Gearing (our debt levels – finance debt allows us to invest in existing homes or to develop new ones)	27.71%	29.68%	33.47%	28%
EBITDA MRI interest cover (measures our surpluses against the interest we pay)	131.89%	141.47%	127%	159.5%
Headline social housing cost per unit	£6,794	£5,753	£5,860	£6,358
Operating margin (shows how profitable our business is)	25.10%	31.08%	26.6%	24.35%
Return on capital employed (ROCE)	3.43%	2.86%	1.99%	2.59%



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Financial performance

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ending 31 March 2024	2024 £	2023 £
Turnover	4,858,493	4,926,018
Cost of sales	–	(294,639)
Operating costs	(3,348,608)	(3,394,757)
Surplus on disposal of fixed assets	5,379	519,315
Operating surplus	1,515,264	1,755,937
Interest receivable and other income	–	126,739
Interest payable and similar charges	(1,184,883)	(835,093)
Movement in fair value of investment properties	–	(155,000)
Surplus on ordinary activities before and after taxation	330,381	892,583
Actuarial loss on defined benefit obligations	(248,000)	(77,000)
Total comprehensive income for the year	82,381	815,583

Statement of financial position at 31 March 2024	2024 / £	2023 / £
Fixed assets		
Housing properties	51,338,547	50,555,689
Other fixed assets	661,995	688,396
Investment properties	2,160,000	2,160,000
	54,160,542	53,404,085
Current assets		
Debtors	363,243	225,693
Cash in bank and in hand	1,245,686	447,076
	1,608,929	672,769
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(2,803,020)	(2,893,323)
Net current liabilities	(1,194,091)	(2,220,554)
Total assets less current liabilities	52,966,451	51,183,531
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(39,456,465)	(37,814,926)
Pension liability	(422,000)	(363,000)
Net assets	13,087,986	13,005,605
Capital and reserves		
Share capital	14	14
Revaluation reserve	1,218,058	1,218,058
Retained surplus	11,869,914	11,787,533
	13,087,986	13,005,605

Below: Residents take part in a mutual exchange event.



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Aaron Whitaker (Chairman)

Aaron has worked in housing since 1983. He chaired the governing body of a secondary school for eight years. He has run his own computer software company since 1991. He has studied Tai Chi for over 10 years, is a fully qualified instructor and runs classes for over 50s, old people's homes and people with learning disabilities.

**Terry Rocque (Vice-chairman / Chair of Audit & Risk)**

Terry is a Director with a management consulting organisation. He holds an MBA (Marketing) and a BA in Computing. He has previously worked as a housing manager for a local authority and as a director for a Registered Provider.

**Lexanna Anderson**

Lexanna has a number of years' experience within the housing sector, where her role included income and tenancy management in large mainstream housing associations.

**Sandra Brown**

Sandra is a debt specialist with the Citizens Advice Bureau. She formerly worked as a Senior PA Legal Secretary. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Social Science and Diplomas in Geography and Environment, and Development. She is Chair of Odu Dua Housing Association. *Resigned 24 May 2023.*

**Vernon Clarke**

Vernon is a principal policy officer working in tenant participation. He has an LLB (Hons) and is also the author of *Getting Black Tenants Back*. Vernon's work focuses on tenants' rights and housing management.

**Anton Kumar**

Anton is a civil/ structural engineer. He holds an MSc (Structures) in structural engineering, a BE(Civil) degree, is a Chartered Engineer (CEng) and a fellow of the Institute of Civil Engineering (FICE) and the Association for Project Management (FAPM).

**Dr Bola Odepidan**

Bola is Training Director with Housing Advocacy, which is an international regeneration, renewal and training organisation.

**Abisola Omodeni**

Abisola has a number of years' experience as a Project Management Officer and is currently working at one of the big four consultancies. She holds a BSc in Finance from Portsmouth University.

**Rudolph Rutherford**

Rudolph started out as a central heating engineer, but gained substantial experience in asset management, particularly around day-to-day repairs and rehabilitation of properties. He previously worked with Shian and Odu Dua Housing Associations. *Rudolph passed away on the 27 November 2023.*

**Vera Tama**

Vera worked for a local authority in roles including Race Relations Supervisor, Housing Estate Manager, Homelessness/ Housing Needs Officer and Housing Advisor. Vera holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Housing Studies from South Bank University.

**Robert Temowo**

Robert is a careers coach and mentor in higher education, with 16 years' experience in the education, charity and youth sector. He currently works for East London University, completing a MSc in Integrative counselling and Coaching.

**Leslie Laniyan (Executive Board Member)**

Leslie has been the Managing Director of Shian Housing Association since 1989. He is one of the most experienced chief executives of a Black and Minority Ethnic housing association.

**Indran Thavendra (Executive Board Member)**

Indran has been Shian's Finance Director since 1992. He was Treasurer for Apna Ghar Housing Association for nearly 10 years and is currently Chair of the Tamil Community Housing Association.





Shian
Housing
Association
Ltd

Email: info@shian.org.co.uk

Phone: 020 8985 7120

Web: www.shian.org.uk

For the MyTenancy login, go to shian.mytenancy.co.uk

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