

Talk

Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 29 of the Talk Housing newsletter, packed with information for tenants and leaseholders. We hope you enjoy it and if you have any feedback or ideas for future issues we would love to hear them.

Please email
community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

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Tenant Satisfaction Measures: how do we measure up?

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community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

5 minutes with Jamie Carswell



In this edition, we present the main findings from our Tenant Satisfaction Measures which were introduced last year. These are service standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing who oversee all social housing providers to make sure we deliver quality homes and services.

As a tenant they provide you with greater transparency about our performance as your landlord. They are an important benchmark for assessing what we're doing well on and what we need to improve. We are committed to our mission of ensuring that you have a safe and secure home that meets your needs and remain accountable to you on our performance.

The main themes cover repairs, building safety, resident engagement, complaint handling and neighbourhood management. I'm pleased to note that 63.5% of you are satisfied overall with the service we provide as your landlord which brings us broadly in line with other councils in London.

However, we are not complacent about the areas we need to improve on to be able to deliver the type of services you deserve and are continuously looking at ways to improve them. Please take some time to read our summary of those results on pages 8-11. If you would like to read the full results, please visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-measures.

As ever, if you would like to get more involved in shaping or improving our housing services, please visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview.

This is our final edition for 2024. Our next edition will be with you in the new year so I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very enjoyable Christmas and New Year when it comes.

With best wishes,

Jamie Carswell
Director of Housing and Safer Communities



Become a volunteer housing champion!

The Community Participation & Diversity Team is looking for residents who want to get more involved in their local community and take an active part in helping us to shape housing services.

The role involves:

- representing the resident voice in your local area
- signposting neighbours to services
- encouraging those you meet to become involved themselves, working together as a whole community.

There are three levels of commitment on offer so there is something for everyone, and in return you will receive:

- a welcome pack and induction training
- access to an extensive training package to support and develop you in the role.
- support from the Community Participation & Diversity Team

If you are a council tenant or leaseholder and would like to find out more about becoming a housing champion, please get in touch by emailing YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.



Electrical safety checks in your home

In an earlier edition of Talk Housing, we told you that we are currently in the process of carrying out vital electrical inspection safety checks on all council homes and appointments that were due to be made.

It's important that we can carry out electrical safety checks in the council homes we manage, to help keep you safe and to meet our obligation as your landlord to ensure these checks are undertaken. We do these checks within a five-year period.

If you receive a letter about this, it means your property is now due an electrical inspection and access must be granted. Please book an appointment as soon as possible to allow our contractors to carry out these checks in your home.

The check will normally take around two hours and the electrical supply to your home will need to be disconnected while the check is being carried out. If any further work is needed to ensure that the electrical installation in your home remains safe for you and your family, our contractor may need to arrange a further appointment with you.

If you or a member of your household has a need for a constant supply of electricity due to a disability or medical need, then please let us or our contractor know as soon as possible so we can accommodate your needs.

If you need any more information, please contact **020 8921 6609** or email Housing-Safety-Questions@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

We have completed around 80% of electrical safety checks in our homes so far - so thank you if you are one of those residents who allowed our contractors to complete this vital work.



Baby and child safety at home

Nappy sacks

Young babies under six months old naturally grasp things and pull them to their mouths, but then find it difficult to let go. Nappy sacks are very thin, so can easily cling to the face of a baby as it breathes in. Tragically, some small babies have been suffocated by nappy sacks left within their reach.

The Child Accident Prevention Trust advise that you keep nappy sacks well out of reach of children and they should never be put in a buggy or cot.

Button batteries

Button batteries, in particular big, powerful lithium coin cell batteries, can badly hurt or kill a small child if they swallow one and it gets stuck in their food pipe. Please visit capt.org.uk/resource-topic/button-batteries and capt.org.uk/button-battery-safety for more advice around keeping children safe.

Baby baths

Babies and small children are at high risk of drowning at home in the bath or in the garden without careful adult supervision. That's why you should always keep babies in arms' reach in water.

Many parents mistakenly believe bath seats will keep their baby safe, with potentially tragic consequences. Bath seats are not designed as safety devices; the suction pads can fail, or babies can slip out.

Co-sleeping with babies

Sometimes parents find themselves co-sleeping with their babies whether they mean to or not. To reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), the safest place for a baby to sleep is in their own clear, flat, separate sleep space, such as a cot or a Moses basket.



Firework safety tips this autumn



Colourful firework displays will bring some much-needed sparkle to the dark November evenings. Here's a few words of warning to help you enjoy this time of the year without any accidents!

Sparkler safety

It's really important to supervise children around sparklers, making sure they keep them at arm's length and don't wave them in each other's faces or drop them onto anything flammable.

Please have a bucket of water or sand to drop the sparkler in once its extinguished itself, they do get incredibly hot. If they are dropped in the wrong place, its heat source has the potential to ignite dry grass or paper.

Bonfire and firework safety

- Always buy fireworks that are stamped with the safety standard BS 7114.
- Store unused fireworks in a closed box and keep dry.
- Carefully read instructions on each individual firework and make sure there's plenty of space and clear sky for the fireworks to be let off, directing away from people, trees and overhead cables.
- Never go back to a lit firework or try to re-light it, once the fireworks have been used, put them into a tub of water, and dispose of them in a bin the next day.



We understand that most of this is common sense, but if not used correctly, fireworks can cause real damage, but if used safely, can provide an evening of fun and entertainment for the whole family.

Damp and mould

As the autumn months are now upon us and many people will soon be looking at how to keep their homes warm. We thought we would remind you about how you can help keep damp, mould and condensation at bay in your home.

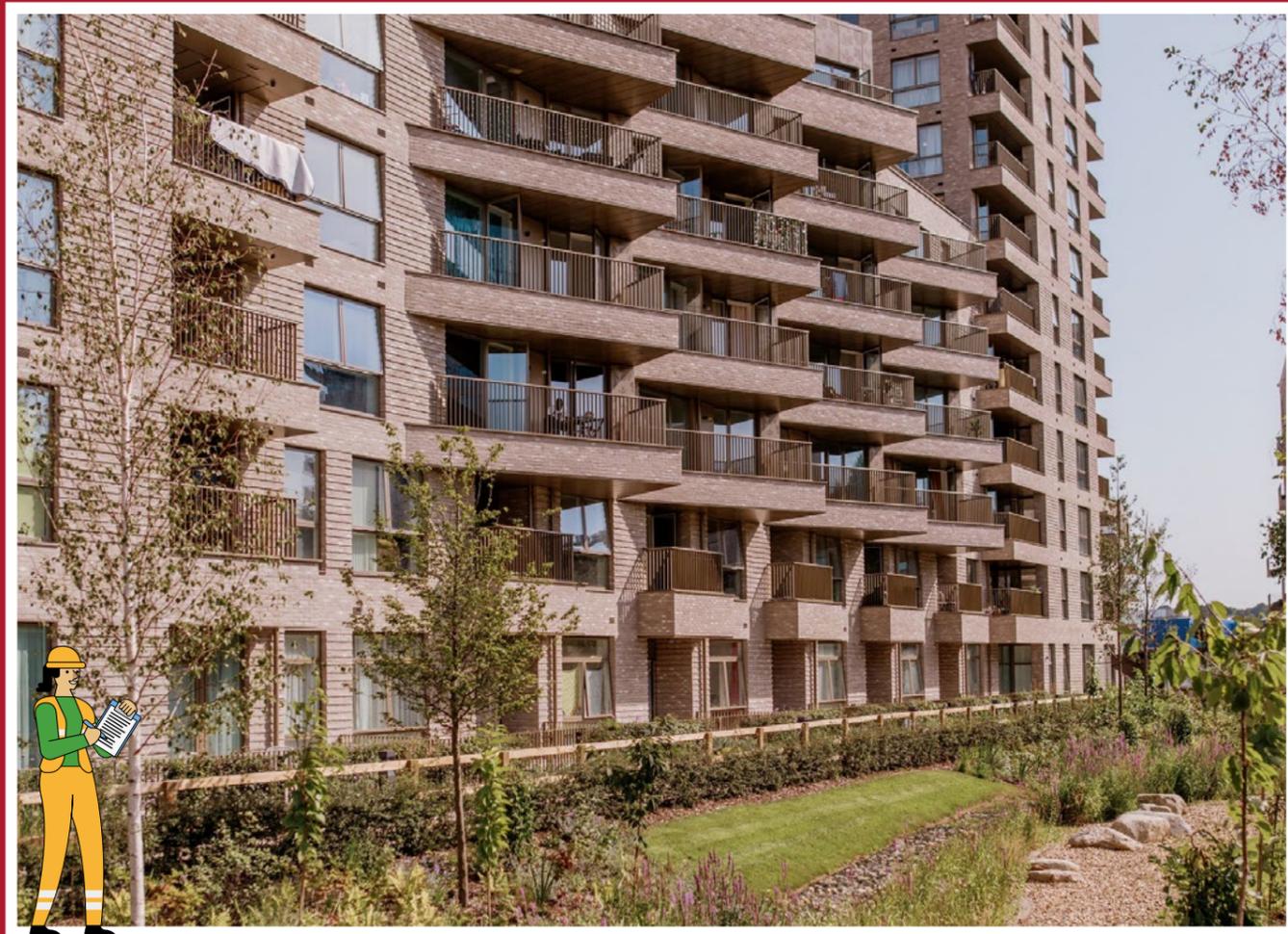
To find out more please visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/damp-and-mould

E-scooters and e-bikes: a clarification

In the last edition of Talk Housing, we published an article on what to look out for if you are thinking of buying an e-scooter or e-bike. This was in response to recent fire incidents caused by charging batteries at home. We would like to stress that although it is not illegal to buy an e-scooter in the UK, it is illegal to ride one on any public road, pavement, cycle lane or pedestrian-only area. This also covers land managed by the Council and includes housing estates.



199 new council homes for Greenwich Peninsula



We recently bought 199 brand new homes in Greenwich Peninsula, turning them into council properties for people who are on the housing register or in temporary accommodation.

Tenants started moving in to the new one, two and three-bedroom apartments at Greenwich Millennium Village earlier this year. They were purchased with a combination of the Council's own funds and a grant from the Greater London Authority.

A hundred properties are complete and 99 more are currently being built. The development forms

part of our commitment to create 1,750 new council homes across the borough.

Abiola, who with his daughter had been living in temporary accommodation for over a year, said their new flat had brought "a lot of improvement... you feel more peaceful, it makes you feel like you want to engage more with the community around you". He said his daughter "feels great" and that "he can start to prepare for the future".

Other residents spoke of nearby transport allowing them to get to work easily and of their children making friends in the development.



Greenwich Builds

A council spokesperson, said: "The purchase of these 199 beautiful homes shows that we are grabbing every opportunity to tackle the urgent housing crisis, whether that be the hundreds of homes we're building with our Greenwich Builds initiative or the properties we've purchased here at Greenwich Millennium Village.

The flexibility of our approach means that we are able to pivot where needed and navigate the challenges facing home-builders everywhere, from supply chain issues to labour costs.

Greenwich Peninsula is an area that has seen huge growth and transformation over the past decade and we're thrilled that families who were previously in housing need are able to access the prosperity, jobs and investment flowing into this part of our borough."

Of the first 100 homes 10% are wheelchair adapted, and all the properties are finished to a high specification with underfloor heating and sustainable technology including:

- Solar panels
- MVHR ventilation
- Green and brown roofs.



The building's design meets standards for Sustainable Homes and Lifetime Homes, and public spaces around the development include biodiversity measures such as:

- A wildflower meadow with species selected by the nearby Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park's Land Trust
- Insect hotels
- Wetland planting and shingle beaches along a sustainable water drainage swale

The 99 homes currently under construction are due for completion in 2026.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

The Regulator for Social Housing oversees social housing providers to make sure they deliver quality homes and services for current and future tenants. They set standards which all registered social housing providers must meet. By 1 April 2024, the Royal Borough of Greenwich owned 20,780 council homes.

In 2023, the Regulator for Social Housing introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). These are service standards for housing that all registered providers must collect and feedback to tenants. The survey results will help us to focus on areas to improve.

What the measures cover

There are 22 tenant satisfaction measures, covering five themes.

Acuity Research and Practice carry out tenant surveys to gather feedback on 12 measures. The remaining 10 are collected directly from data within the Council. The survey and management questions are set by the Regulator.

The five themes are:

1 Keeping properties in good repair

2 Maintaining building safety

3 Respectful and helpful engagement

4 Effective handling of complaints

5 Responsible neighbourhood management

Overall satisfaction

It is important for us to have feedback from a diverse range of tenants to reflect the different experiences of housing services.

1,356 tenants completed the survey, mostly by phone.



Age

Satisfied

18 - 24	100%
25 - 34	57.3%
35 - 44	60.2%
45 - 54	61.1%
55 - 59	61.5%
60 - 64	62.4%
65 - 74	69.7%
75 - 84	74.4%
85 +	83.3%



Ethnicity

Satisfied

Asian or Asian British	74.6%
Black or Black British	67.6%
Chinese or other groups	73.9%
Mixed backgrounds	52.8%
Not given or refused	66.9%
Other White backgrounds	61.5%
White British or Irish	59.3%



Gender

Satisfied

Female	62.7%
Male	64.1%



Housing type

Satisfied

General council housing	62.4%
Sheltered housing	77.5%
Temporary accommodation	92.9%



Our results

Keeping properties in good repair:

- Satisfaction with the overall repairs service from RBG **71.1%**
- Satisfaction with time taken to complete their most recent repair after reporting **62.6%**
- Satisfaction that RBG provides a well maintained home **64.9%**
- Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard **5.4%**
- Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within RBG's target timescale **62.9%**
- Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within RBG's target **71.6%**

Maintaining building safety:

- Satisfaction that RBG provides a home that is safe **70.6%**
- Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out **99.7%**
- Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out **99.6%**
- Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out **100%**
- Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out **100%**
- Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out **98.5%**

Respectful and helpful engagement:

- Satisfaction that RBG listens to their views and acts on them **52.6%**
- Satisfaction RBG keeps them informed about things that matter to them **71.2%**
- Satisfaction that RBG treats them fairly and with respect **71.1%**

Effective handling of complaints:

- Satisfaction with RBG approach to complaints **28.7%**
- Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes **47**
- Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes **7**
- Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales **46.7%**
- Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales **45.8%**

Responsible neighbourhood management:

- Satisfaction that RBG keeps communal areas clean and well maintained **65.5%**
- Satisfaction that RBG makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood **68.8%**
- Satisfaction with RBG's approach to anti-social behaviour **60.4%**
- Number of anti-social behaviour cases, opened per 1,000 homes **35**
- Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes **0.4**

The results we have seen from other local authorities show that we are broadly in line with other London councils at providing good quality homes and services for our tenants. While there are numerous positives, there are areas we can strengthen.

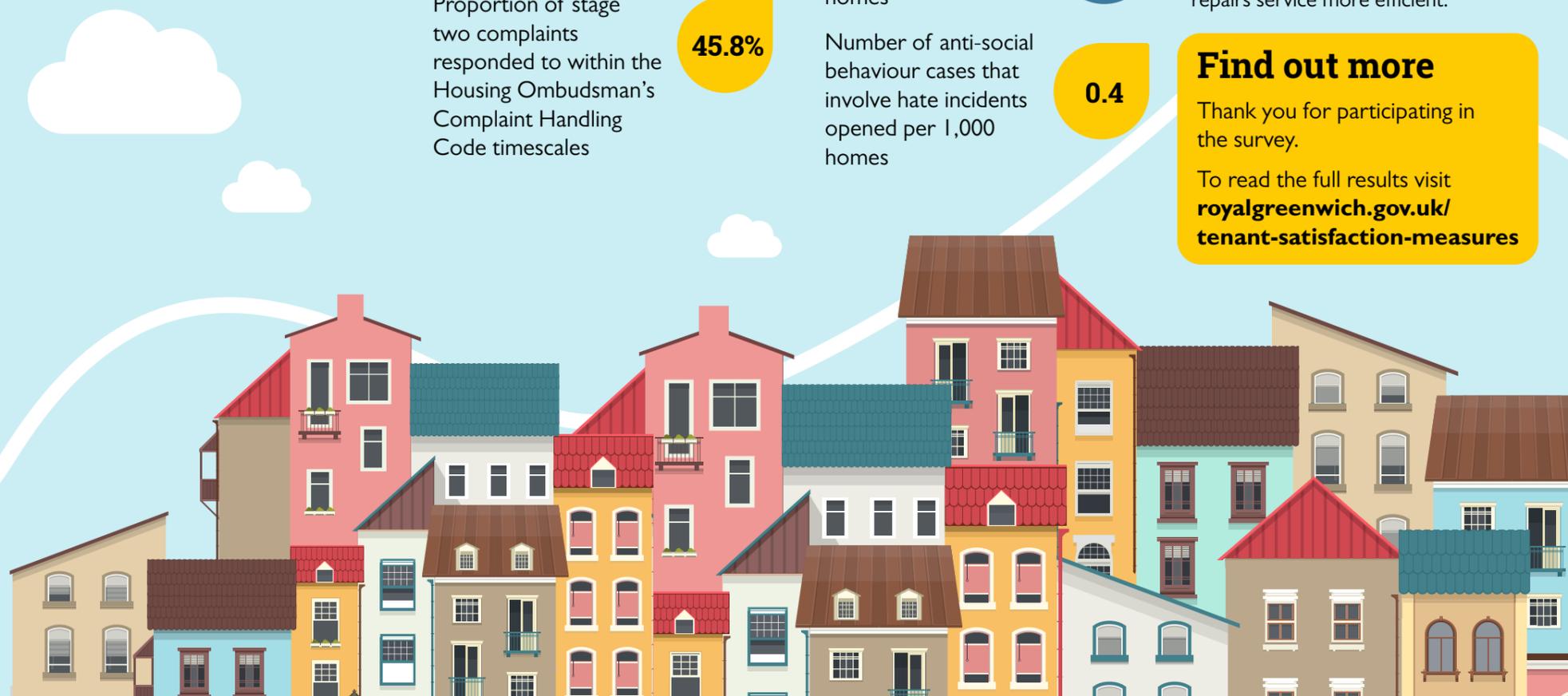
The central and repairs casework teams have been expanded and restructured, with new roles added to manage complaints in the tenancy team. A new Tenant Engagement Strategy, aligned with the Corporate Engagement Strategy and based on TPAS advice, is being introduced.

We are planning to introduce a new tenant scrutiny function to give tenants more power to investigate and report on concerns. We are also undertaking a multi-year repairs transformation programme to improve residents' experience of the repairs process and to make our repairs service more efficient.

Find out more

Thank you for participating in the survey.

To read the full results visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-measures





GET ADVICE ON THE SWITCHOVER TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Residents who receive one or more of the benefits listed below will be invited to claim Universal Credit:

- Income Support
- Working Age Housing Benefit [HB] (although HB will remain in payment for those in temporary or specific types of supported accommodation)
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits including pensioners who receive Working Tax Credit
- Income Related Employment Support Allowance



Universal Credit managed migration advice sessions

At our advice session, our advisers assist residents who are affected by the move to Universal Credit, also known as Managed Migration.

The Universal Credit managed migration advice sessions run every Tuesday from 10am to 12pm at the Woolwich Centre, Wellington Street, Woolwich, SE18 6HQ. The drop-in sessions will end in December 2024.

Our advisers can provide specialist advice on making the move to Universal Credit once you receive a Migration Notice letter inviting you to claim.

Find out more about our advice sessions at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/uc-advice

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