Talk Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

WELCOME

Welcome to issue 37 of Talk Housing, our newsletter for tenants and leaseholders. This edition focuses on our performance in managing our homes – please tell us if it's been helpful for you.

Please email **community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**

AUTUMN 2026 ISSUE 37



Reporting our housing performance

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ROYAL borough of GREENWICH

5 minutes with Cllr Jackie Smith



As a long-time resident of the borough and having lived in Woolwich for many years, I'm determined to make Greenwich the best possible place to live.

And this edition of Talk Housing is all about how well we are serving you as tenants and leaseholders.

There are areas where we are doing well, especially around repairs and keeping homes safe – and we're very grateful to all residents who have shared their experiences and ideas to help us improve.

There are also areas where we know we need to do better, and we have clear plans in place to help us get there.

We want to hear from you about what's good, what could be better, and where we need to learn more.

We'd like to hear from everyone - and we're especially keen to hear from younger residents and from people who have moved into a council home recently.

Find out how to get involved by scanning the QR code at the end of the next article.

You can also find out more about our performance on our website by searching royalgreenwich.gov.uk for 'housing performance'.

With best wishes,

Cllr Jackie Smith
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Greenwich Builds and Estate Management



A message from your Borough Wide Housing Panel Chair

Hello everyone,

As Chair of the Borough Wide Housing Panel, I'm pleased to share a few thoughts with you in this year's Talk Housing annual report.

Over the last year, we've worked hard to make sure residents' voices are heard and are making a real difference. One of the biggest changes has been setting up a Steering Group, which gives residents a stronger say in what the panel focuses on and helps make sure we're talking about the issues that matter most to tenants and leaseholders.

I'm excited about what's ahead and look forward to working with our new Steering Group Chair, Alf Wright, along with all our panel members. Together, we'll continue to make sure the panel stays focused on what matters to residents and helps shape better housing services for everyone.

If you'd like to make a difference in your community, I'd encourage you to get involved. The Borough Wide Housing Panel is a great way to share your views, help influence decisions, and be part of positive change. We'd love to hear from more residents and welcome new faces.

Candice McQueen

Join our YourView resident engagement channel at **communityconversations.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/tenants-and-leaseholders**



Our annual housing report: in summary

We work hard to improve services for you - as a tenant or leaseholder – and we've made good improvements in some areas, but we know we need to do better in others.

What we're doing well

Keeping homes safe

Our most important job is to keep residents safe in their homes. We're especially focused on gas and electrical safety, dealing safely with asbestos, water supplies, fire risk, and lifts.

Our data shows that we're doing well on these core areas. We'll keep working on safety, and please let us know if there are problems we should know about.



Repairs

We've made good progress on repairs in the last few years, especially with getting non-emergency repairs done on time. Our average time to complete a repair has gone from 21 days two years ago to 11 days now, and we're doing better with managing complex repairs and answering the phone quickly.

We're working to get non-emergency repairs done faster, and to manage complex jobs which need multiple tradespeople more efficiently.

What we're improving

Complaints

When things go wrong, we aim to respond to your complaints quickly and well. We're not fast enough at responding, and some of you are waiting too long for a response – we're working to improve this by employing more staff to deal with complaints and by improving our systems, so they are faster and more efficient. We're also reviewing our responses to make sure they are always clear and to-the-point.



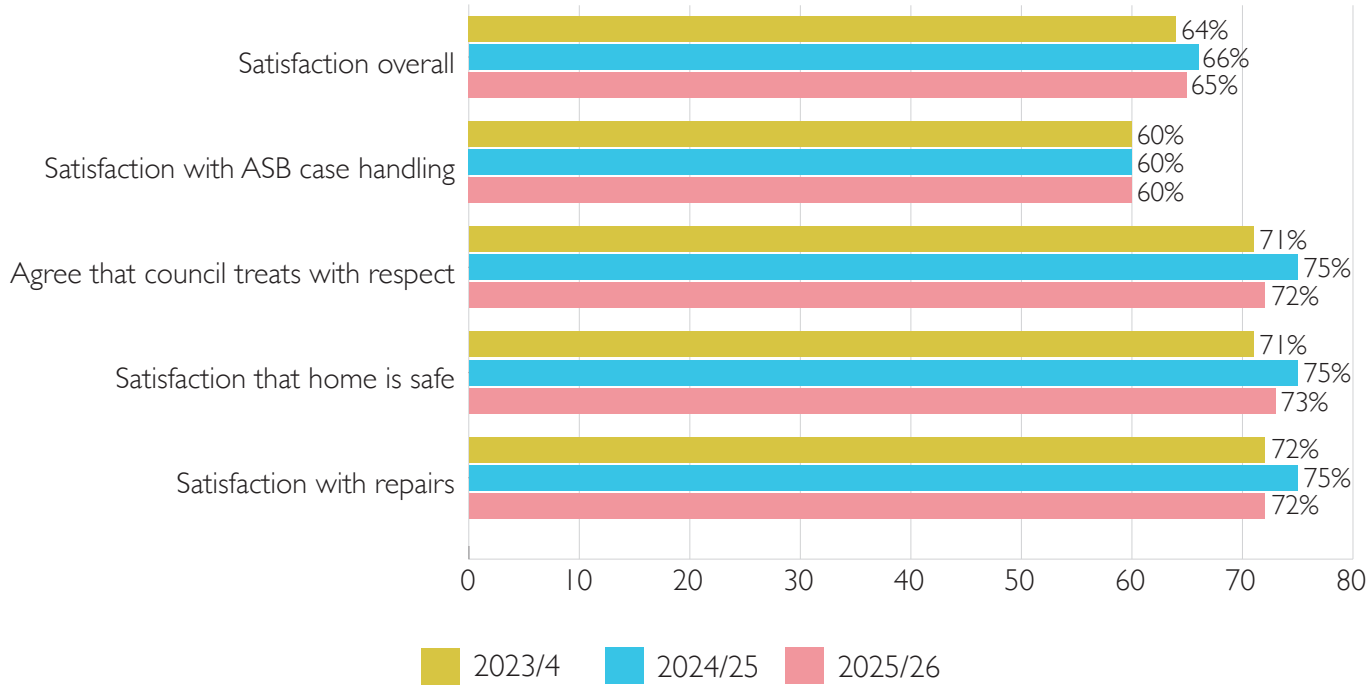
Anti-social behaviour

You report hundreds of anti-social behaviour cases to us every year. We resolve many of them successfully, but sometimes we're not fast enough or we don't communicate well enough through the process.

We're bringing in anti-social behaviour specialists to work with local tenancy teams and resolve issues more quickly, and we're improving information for our residents about what to do when there's a problem.

How we're performing

Tenant satisfaction surveys



Our surveys of tenants show that satisfaction has reduced slightly since last year but is similar to the year before. We're working hard to improve, and you can read about the changes we've already made on page 9.

This chart shows five of the 12 survey questions. You can see the others on our website by visiting **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-measures**

About the surveys

Our surveys are carried out by Acuity, an independent research company. They survey about 100 people a month by phone, looking for a representative sample of our tenants, so not everyone will get called. Thank you to everyone who has shared their views.



Keeping homes safe and decent

We are at or close to 100% performance for gas safety, fire safety, asbestos and water safety. At the time of our data return, 3% of lifts were awaiting a lift safety certificate. We have now resolved all these issues.

The Decent Homes standard measures whether a house or flat is in good condition: safe, in a reasonable state of repair, and with reasonably modern facilities and services.

This year, 91.3% of our homes met the Decent Homes Standard. More homes didn't meet the Decent Homes Standard than last year – this is because some repairs are automatically identified as due after a certain amount of time. We're reviewing all of these this year.

Equality and diversity





Our resident surveys show that overall:

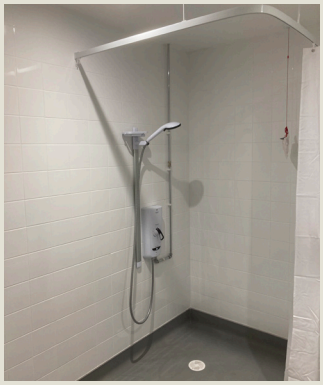
- men are more satisfied than women
- older people are more satisfied than younger people
- white British tenants are less satisfied than Asian or Black tenants.
- people living in sheltered housing are more satisfied than those living in other types of homes.

Compared to the population of Greenwich, tenants living in our homes are:

- more likely to be women
- more likely to be Black
- less likely to be Asian or White European
- These differences reflect differences in housing need and eligibility for social housing over many years.

We regularly review our data to look at different outcomes and experiences in different groups. We're setting up a Housing Diversity Panel to explore the experiences of different groups of tenants and help us find ways to improve our service.

To find out more and get involved, email the Community Participation team at **community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**





Different housing needs

- We make adaptations like adding wheelchair ramps, accessible showers and grab handles for people with disabilities who live in our homes. This includes our tenants, leaseholders and private tenants. Last year, we completed over 2,000 adaptations, which is up more than a quarter over the last two years.
- We are building extra care housing for people who want to live independently with their own flat, but with care and support available. We're also making improvements to our existing extra care block at Richard Neve House in Plumstead.
- If you're living in a house or flat that's too big for you, or if you have stairs and you'd rather live on a single storey, we will support you to downsize to a smaller home. We can help with moving costs, pay you an incentive to say thank you, and you'll get top priority on the Housing Register so you can choose a smaller place. We've helped 101 people to downsize in the last 12 months.

Our services to tenants and leaseholders

Responding to anti-social behaviour



You have told us that you want a better and faster response to anti-social behaviour – this is a top priority for us this year.

What we've done so far

We've strengthened our policy to allow us to take firm action, while looking after vulnerable people. We're also introducing a new Good Neighbour Guide so everyone who lives in our homes is clear about what we expect. Thank you to everyone who has helped us shape this work.

What the data tells us

We've had more reports of anti-social behaviour this year than last year – about 35 for each thousand homes we manage. There has been a small increase in the number of cases that involve hate incidents (e.g. racism or homophobia), but the numbers are still very low. We think this increase is likely to be because we've made it easier for people to report an issue.

What we're doing next

We're introducing specialist anti-social behaviour officers to manage each case and to find a resolution, and we're investing in better systems to manage anti-social behaviour and to learn from what has worked.

Report anti-social behaviour

If someone is in danger, call 999.

Report it to us on 020 8921 8609, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, or email **tenancy-enforcement-teams@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**

Looking after our blocks and estates



Photo by Killian O'Sullivan

Our 160 caretakers clean and look after the shared areas in our blocks and our estates. They also deal with fire hazards, fly tipping, and they work with colleagues across the council on repairs and bin collections.

Their job is getting bigger, because we've had lots of new blocks in the last few years – including these at Kidbrooke Park North.

Last year, 91% of our caretaking jobs passed inspection.



Improvements to our homes

Last year, we delivered:

- Loft insulation to keep 1,561 homes warmer and reduce bills
- 1,521 new or improved bathrooms
- 1,086 new windows*
- 916 new or improved kitchens
- 783 new doors*

*Some doors and windows are in shared areas, and often homes have more than one new window or door.



Value for the community

When companies deliver home improvements for us, we ask them to deliver value to the community as well. In the first three months of this year, they delivered:

- Skills and careers training for young people at school, including interview training, information about apprenticeships, and careers skills
- Practical volunteering at local charities including a foodbank and groups which support new parents, homeless people, and people with mental health needs
- Installing a new level access shower for disabled young people, and new flooring in children's services buildings.

Improving our services

We don't get it right every time, and when that happens, we're committed to learning from our mistakes.



Responding to complaints on time

Last year, we responded to:

- **38%** of Stage 1 complaints on time (the first-time people contact us about an issue)
- **48%** of Stage 2 complaints on time (where people aren't satisfied with our initial response)

This is down on the previous year, because of problems with our systems and difficulties recruiting the right staff. We're committed to doing better this year and we have an improvement plan in place.

Improving the quality of responses

We want every response to a complaint to be clear and to-the-point, and we will apologise when we haven't got things right. We've started a review programme with council staff to increase the quality of our responses to complaints, and we're planning to introduce tenant reviews as well.

To get involved in these, please email the Community Participation team: **community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.**

Learning from complaints

We regularly review our complaints to see where we can learn and do better.

Repairs are the most common form of complaint from people who already have a council home, and we're investing in improvements here.

For people who don't yet have a council home, we get the most complaints about housing allocations. Many people in serious housing need are waiting too long for a home – we're building new council homes, but unfortunately economic pressures on local families mean demand is much higher than supply.

You can see examples of changes we've made in response to complaints and other feedback on the next page.

You said, We did



You said: Repairs are taking too long, and if you need multiple visits to fix a problem, these can be hard to arrange

We did: Improved our repairs systems so non-emergency response times are significantly quicker.

Changed our systems so repairs staff book follow-on appointments while they are still in the residents' home, cutting out the chasing

We are doing now:
We are continuing to improve repairs response times, with a particular focus on damp, mould, condensation and leaks.



You said: When there are problems with anti-social behaviour, they take too long to resolve

We did: Introduced a new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Good Neighbour Guide, to make it clear what behaviour we expect in our homes

We are doing now:
Rolling out new procedures, which include clear timescales for actions to successfully implement the new policy. Introducing dedicated anti-social behaviour officers to manage cases needing specialist skills in Tenancy from start to end.



You said: We need a dedicated space for leaseholders to discuss issues that affect them

We did: Set up a Leaseholder Engagement Panel to discuss topics including service charges and capital works projects

We are doing now:
We will continue to run the Leaseholder Panel and adapt it in line with leaseholders' feedback.



You said: Some of the letters we send aren't clear enough

We did: Rewrote the letters that we send most often, and the ones which are most important, with our expert communications team. Worked with tenants to improve our draft letters.

Ran clear writing training for teams who regularly communicate with tenants

Set up internal complaints reviews to improve individual responses

We are doing now:
We are continuing to review letters as part of our service improvement. We are setting up a forum for tenants to advise us on how we can improve the quality of our written complaints responses.



You said:
The community hall at Tom Smith Close and Chrisp House should be brought back into use

We did: Made improvements to the Hall to make it more usable and attractive, and worked with tenants to set up a TRA which will operate the hall for the local community

We are doing now:
We will work with tenants to monitor the use of the community hall to make sure it meets the needs of the community.

Help shape our housing plans

This autumn, we're developing our Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2027 to 2032 and want your views on our draft commitments, which have been shaped by your feedback in previous discussions.

The draft commitments cover all types of housing, including council and private renting, as well as our work to reduce homelessness and support people with different housing needs.

Are these the right commitments? Are there any other important areas we've missed? We want to hear your thoughts on four key areas:

- Tackling homelessness and ending rough sleeping
- Support for people with specific housing needs
- Safe and sustainable homes
- Building resilient and vibrant communities and neighbourhoods

The survey will open on **26 October** and close on **20 December**. You can have your say by scanning the QR code below or visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing-survey**.

Paper copies are also available from any borough library. The final strategy will be published in early 2027.



Making rent fairer and more consistent



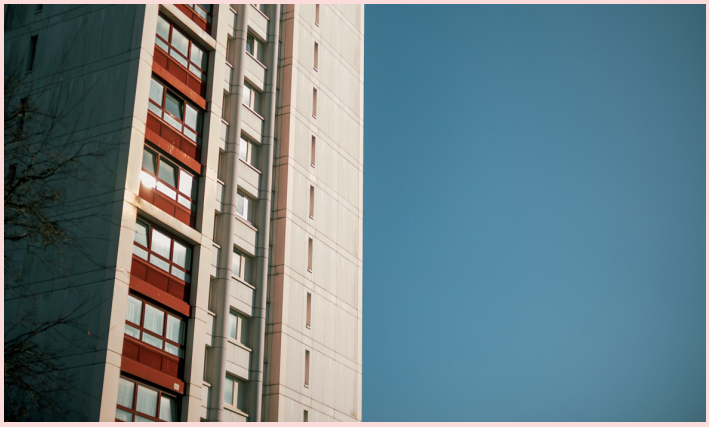
The government is trying to make social housing rents more consistent across the country. The aim is to make sure tenants in similar homes pay similar rents – this is called formula rent.

Council rents in Greenwich are less than half of private rents and are lower than in similar boroughs.

From April 2027 councils will be able to increase rents by £1 per week for people who are not yet at formula rent. This is in addition to the usual inflation increase.

The council will make a decision about rents in February 2027, and we will write to you to tell you what it means for you.

Building and Fire Safety Guide: download your copy



Our Building and Fire Safety Guide provides important information on fire safety, as well as other important safety aspects of your building, including:

- how you can report concerns
- how to evacuate in an emergency
- your role in helping to keep your home and communal areas safe
- what to expect from us and where to find more support and advice

Download your copy by scanning the QR code below

or visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/building-fire-safety-handbook**

Call **020 8921 8161** if you'd like to request a printed version.

Purdy name change

On 10 August, our repairs and maintenance contractor Purdy changed its name to Sureserve Compliance Electricals Ltd.

You may start to see the new company name on vehicles, uniforms and letters over the coming weeks.

There will be no changes to the repairs or maintenance services you receive, how you report repairs, or any existing or future appointments.

Remember to always ask for and check ID before letting anyone into your home. If you're unsure call us on **020 8921 6584**.

Stay safe around bonfires and fireworks

As the bonfire and fireworks season approaches, please remember that bonfires and fireworks are not allowed on housing estate land, access roads and balconies.

Bonfires and fireworks can pose serious risks to people, homes and communal areas. Sparks, hot ash and discarded fireworks can easily ignite communal bins, dry grass, fences and landscaped areas. Leftover debris, unexploded fireworks and hot ash create immediate safety hazards for children and pets using the space the following day. Bonfires or fireworks in communal spaces can also block access routes, making it harder for residents to leave safely and for emergency services to reach those who need help.

Risk to homes and residents

Stray fireworks and flying embers can damage property by scorching walls, melting plastic fixtures and setting fences on fire. They can also ignite items stored on balconies which can lead to rapid, vertical spread of fire up a building. Misused fireworks can lead to severe burns, eye injuries and smoke inhalation, while loud bangs can cause distress to vulnerable residents, older people, people with respiratory conditions, people living with PTSD and pets.

How you can help

- Don't leave unwanted furniture or items on your estate. As a council tenant you can request a free bulky waste collection via housing-caretaking@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- Report fly-tipping, rubbish build-ups or stored fireworks in communal areas.
- Keep windows, doors and balcony doors closed and pets indoors during busy firework periods
- If using fireworks in a private garden where legally permitted, only buy fireworks that are stamped with the safety standard BS 7114 and follow safety instructions.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby or a hosepipe in case of smouldering fire or burns.
- Never return to a firework once it has been lit - even if it hasn't gone off, it could still explode.
- Attend organised, professionally managed firework displays where possible.

By following this advice, we can help keep our estates safe and enjoyable for everyone.

£ WE'RE HERE TO HELP



If you are struggling to pay your rent, please speak to your Income Officer.

Our Income Officers can agree an affordable repayment arrangement and give advice on further support.

They can also refer you to the Universal Support Team for guidance with your Universal Credit claim.

The Universal Support Team can check whether your income could be maximised with additional benefits or grants, ensure your housing costs are being paid at the highest eligible rate, and identify any disability benefits you may be missing out on.

They can also assist with claims or disputes you may be having with the DWP. If you do not receive Universal Credit, your Income Officer can refer you to another team for benefits advice.

Call your Income Officer on the number at the top of your rent statement or email **rent-account-enquiries@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**



GREENWICH SUPPORTS

Save the Date: Borough Wide Housing Panel

Our next Borough Wide Housing Panel meeting will take place on Wednesday 9 December from 6.30pm to 8.00pm at:
The Woolwich Tramshed
51-53 Woolwich New Road, SE18 6ES

Residents can attend 1-to-1 surgeries from 5.30pm to 6.30pm, followed by the main meeting. We look forward to seeing you there.

Borough Wide Housing Steering Panel

The Borough Wide Housing Steering Panel welcomed Alf Wright as Chair in July. Congratulations, Alf!

The panel helps shape housing services by reviewing performance, resident feedback and meeting priorities.

Interested in getting involved? Join YourView to share your views, receive updates and take part in resident panels and groups.

Visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview**

Talk Housing is produced by Royal Borough of Greenwich, Wellington Street SE18 6HQ