

Improving Your Homes: Newham Housing Services Improvement Plan



BACKGROUND

In 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) inspected Newham Council's Housing Services and found serious failings in how we were delivering against the social housing consumer standards and it received the lowest C4 grading.

In its report, the RSH highlighted failings in the following two required standards:

- Safety and Quality
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability standards

While no failings were identified under the Tenancy standard, one failing was identified under the Neighbourhood and Community standard.

The Regulator found that while the council's approach to complaints handling is accessible and publicised - and therefore broadly aligning with the

requirements of the consumer standard - there are a high number of complaints that relate to repairs. For instance, currently, 100% of Housing Ombudsman cases relating to damp and mould are upheld.

For this reason, this Newham Housing Services Improvement Plan also includes work that will be undertaken to tackle damp and mould and how we learn from complaints.

We have created this plan to improve things and get things right. We will:

- Deliver improved service outcomes for residents
- Ensure that risks to residents safety are appropriately managed and mitigated
- Deliver the changes expected by residents and by the RSH.



SECTION 1: REGULATORY INSPECTION



REGULATORY INSPECTION

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Newham is responsible for around 19,000 tenanted homes and around 7,300 leasehold properties with most landlord services provided directly by the Council.

A safe and warm home is central to a feeling of security and safety and all life chances flow from having access to good quality housing. A past lack of investment has resulted in a significant deficit in building quality, thus exacerbating the challenges of those homes in meeting resident expectations.

For residents, there is no alternative to using landlord services, so they must work for everyone. Making our landlord services inclusive means making sure anyone who needs to use them can do so as easily as possible.



REGULATORY FAILINGS AND ISSUES

The Council were told on 14th March 2024 that the London Borough of Newham would undergo an inspection under the Regulator's new powers, with a visit in May 2024 and the sharing of evidence required in advance.

Following the inspection, the Council received a grade of C4, the lowest possible grade. The C4 rating means that the RSH considers there to be systemic issues, and serious failings in compliance with the consumer standards.

The final report and grading was published on 16th October 2024.

In its report, the Regulator highlighted failings in the Safety and Quality, and Transparency, Influence and Accountability standards. No failings were identified under the Tenancy standard and one related to the Neighbourhood and Community standard.

REGULATORY INSPECTION

The full list of failings is shown below.

SAFETY AND QUALITY STANDARD

- Over 40% of homes had not had an electrical condition test for more than 11 years
- Over 9,000 overdue fire safety remedial actions, of which over 8,000 were overdue by more than 12 months
- Unable to provide sufficient assurance that it is effectively mitigating safety risks for all homes affected
- Unable to evidence that the relevant regulations are being met for smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- Serious failings in identifying and meeting all legal requirements that relate to the health and safety of tenants in their homes and communal areas
- Does not have up to date stock condition information on the majority of its homes as only c. 40% have been surveyed within the last five years
- Stock condition surveys have not all included an assessment of hazards using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- Around 20% of homes do not meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard
- Only 67% of non-emergency repairs were completed within target timescales
- 5,400 open repairs, of which 49% were outside of target dates, some of which were from earlier than 2024
- Lack of evidence that the council had been transparent with its tenants about

the health and safety issues identified and keeping tenants informed when things go wrong

TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND INFLUENCE STANDARD

- Very limited mechanisms in place at this time to ensure information about its tenants remains up to date
- Only able to provide limited evidence of how it tailors services for its tenants
- Limited evidence that Newham Council provides a range of relevant and accessible information for tenants about its landlord services
- Limited evidence that Newham Council provides a range of relevant and accessible information for tenants about how it is performing
- No evidence of it keeping tenants informed when things go wrong
- Failed to follow our technical requirements for collecting its TSM (Tenant Satisfaction Measures) data
- Limited meaningful opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise strategies, policies and services
- Limited options for tenants to participate in tenant led activities and opportunities

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY STANDARD

- Potential under reporting of hate crime incidents

REGULATORY INSPECTION

We have looked into why these failings happened and we found that we need to improve in the following ways.

RESIDENT SAFETY

- Improve how we use data and information on our homes so we can make sure we are keeping buildings and residents safe
- Make better use of our housing systems to record information on compliance inspections and any actions required
- We need to have the right building safety skills and ways of working in the housing service

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

- Carry out stock condition surveys on all our homes more frequently including health and safety issues
- Have a clearer approach to completing outstanding repairs
- Improve how we use data and information on the performance of our repairs service

RESIDENT PARTICIPATION AND TRANSPARENCY

- Have a plan and approach to keeping residents informed
- Have a plan and approach for understanding residents' needs and how we keep information updated
- Check how well we are doing at meeting residents' needs
- Work with residents to design the information on our services and how to access them
- Improve how we share how we are doing and what we are doing to improve our services
- Co-produce our resident involvement strategy with those it affects

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- Improve our processes for identifying and responding to reports of hate incidents

SECTION 2: ACHIEVING COMPLIANCE



ACHIEVING COMPLIANCE

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Housing Services Improvement Programme sets out how we will achieve compliance with the consumer standards and how:

- i. The Council will markedly improve both the quality and the consistency of the services it provides to residents.
- ii. Boards and Councillors who govern the Council's service delivery can ensure that the consumer standards are being met and can be open and accountable in how the Council is meeting its objectives.

The programme has been shaped into four themes to align to the consumer standards and the enablers needed for the improvement:

1. Ways of Working
2. Safety and Quality
3. Neighbourhood and Communities
4. Transparency and Resident Access



OBJECTIVES

For the Improvement Plan to be a success, the following objectives will need to be achieved:

Objective 1: The Council meets the outcomes of the Regulator of Social Housing consumer standards within an agreed timeframe

Objective 2: Tenant satisfaction as measured under the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM), including that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them, reaches the current quartile 1 performance (64.1%) of London councils benchmarking by 27/28

Objective 3: Boards and Councillors who govern the Council's landlord services have the right level of assurance that consumer standards are being met within a timeframe agreed with the RSH

Objective 4: Health and safety risks resulting from outstanding compliance actions are mitigated within an agreed timeframe with the RSH

Objective 5: The Council has accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes that reliably informs their provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants

Objective 6: The Council has accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the diverse needs of tenants

SAFETY & QUALITY (COMPLIANCE & SAFETY) IMPROVEMENTS

What we have done so far

- At the end of March 2025, 75% of homes had an electrical condition test within 10 years. 100% will be completed by the end of June 2025
- At the end of March 2025, we have reduced the number of overdue fire safety remedial actions to 7,291 and have repair and replacement programmes in place for the remaining actions
- We have started an external review of how we make sure we complete all legal requirements that relate to the health and safety of tenants in their homes and communal areas
- We have introduced a new service to contact tenants that we think may be at increased risk of having or responding to a fire so we can put in place person-centred fire risk assessments
- We have brought in additional resource to our building safety team

What we will do next

What we will do	When we will do it by
Complete a review of how we make sure we complete all legal requirements that relate to the health and safety of tenants in their homes and communal areas	Jun-25
Carry out an electrical condition test on homes that have not had one for 10 years	Jun-25
Improve how we use information to make sure each home has a working smoke and carbon monoxide alarm	Jun-25
Put safety measures in place for any buildings where there are outstanding compliance actions	Aug-25
Put in place recommendations from the review of how we make sure we complete all legal requirements that relate to the health and safety of tenants in their homes and communal areas	Dec-25
Improve how we use information that is collected during communal block health and safety inspections	Dec-25
Carry out an electrical condition test on homes that have not had one for 5 years	Jun-26
Complete any work that is needed following a fire risk assessment including replacing or repairing fire doors	Mar-29

SAFETY & QUALITY (STOCK CONDITION & REPAIRS) IMPROVEMENTS

What we have done so far

- Carried out new stock condition surveys on 11% of homes including checking for any health and safety issues
- Reduced the number of repairs that were outstanding at the time of the inspection to under 300 at the end of March 2025

What we will do next

What we will do	When we will do it by
Improve how we plan for improvements to our homes by using data and information more effectively	May-25
Complete any repairs that were not carried out on time when we were inspected	May-25
Put new contracts in place to carry out stock condition surveys	Sep-25
Improve how we manage damp and mould cases and be ready for Awaab's Law	Oct-25
Complete any damp and mould cases that were not carried out on time when we were inspected	Oct-25
Improve how we use property data and information so that we can improve how we maintain our homes	Nov-25
Redesign and implement delivery model for Property Services	Dec-25
Improve or replace the housing systems we use for property information including compliance and stock condition	Dec-26
Carry out stock condition surveys including checking for health and safety issues across all our homes	Mar-27
Bring all our homes up to the decent homes standard	Mar-29

TRANSPARENCY AND RESIDENT ACCESS

What we have done so far

- Set out a new plan and approach to communicating with residents
- Carried out our tenant satisfaction surveys on time

- Set up a co-create page for our new Resident Involvement Strategy
- Set up a Resident Challenge Board so our tenants and leaseholders can scrutinise and monitor the delivery of our improvement plan

What we will do next

What we will do	When we will do it by
Set out a new plan and approach to communicating with residents	Completed in Mar-25
Set up a new Resident Challenge Board	Apr-25
Carry out our tenant satisfaction surveys on time	Jun-25
Co-produce a new resident involvement strategy	Sep-25
Update our information on landlord services and make sure it is accessible	Oct-25
Improve how we share performance reporting and information for residents	Nov-25
Set out an approach for how we collect, use and keep resident data up to date	Dec-25
Set out how we make sure services meet residents' needs and improve how we deliver them so residents are treated with fairness and respect	Dec-25

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS

What we have done so far

- Started to make changes to our systems so we can record hate incidents more easily

What we will do next

What we will do	When we will do it by
Improve how we manage domestic noise complaints	Jul-25
Improve how we identify and manage cases which involve a hate incident	Dec-25

WAYS OF WORKING IMPROVEMENTS

What we have done so far

- Appointed a new Director of Housing, Head of Building Safety, Programme Director (Tenancy Services) and Assistant Director of Property Services so that we have the right leadership in place
- Appointed a data governance manager to improve how we use data and information
- Set up new governance boards, including a Resident Challenge Board, to monitor and scrutinise how well we are meeting our legal requirements and delivering the improvement plan

What we will do next

What we will do	When we will do it by
Review our HRA Business Plan to make sure we can invest in our homes and meet the decent homes standard	Jul-25
Deliver a new performance reporting framework	Aug-25
Commission an external review of failings and external support services for the improvement plan	Aug-25
Produce a framework for how we manage and govern data	Dec-25
Deliver a new performance reporting framework and monitoring for PFI and Local Space homes	Dec-25
Produce and regularly review our policies	Feb-26
Recruit to new management structure	Mar-26
Put in place a new housing services structure and roles	Mar-26
Set out an approach for how we use knowledge and information to deliver and improve our services	Mar-26

SECTION 3: GOVERNANCE & SCRUTINY



GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY

The improvement programme has been developed as the Council's Housing Services Improvement Programme.

To ensure the improvement plan receives the right oversight, assurance and challenge, a Housing Strategic Improvement Board has been established.

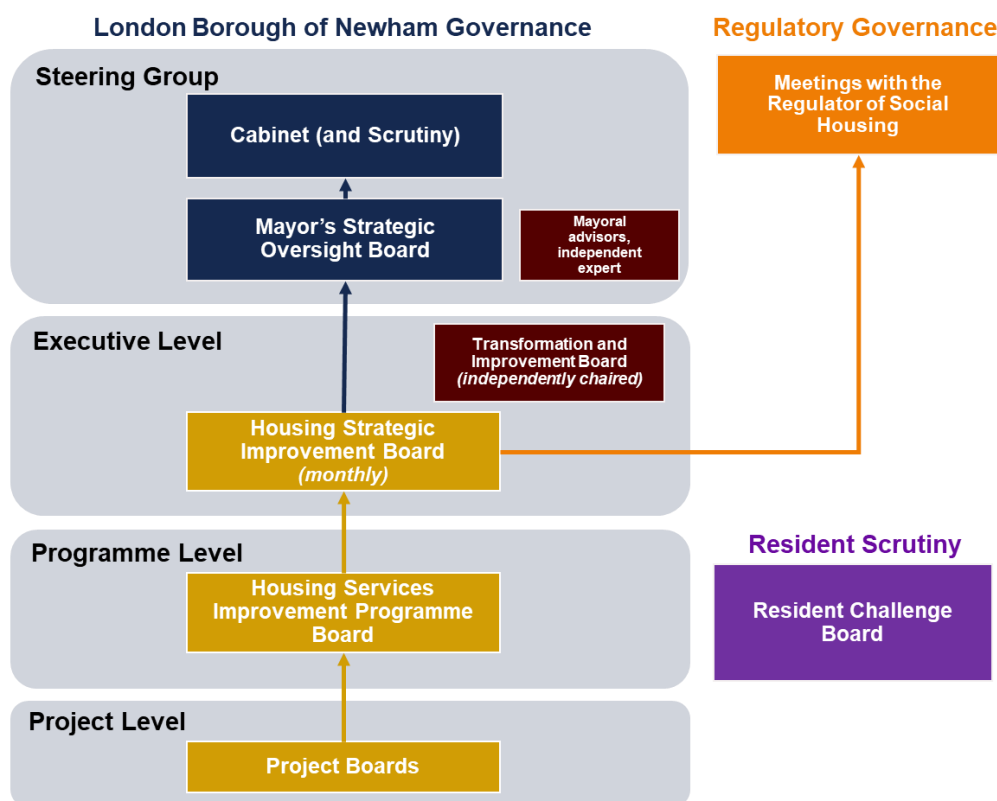
Chaired by the Council's Chief Executive, membership also includes:

- The Corporate Director of Inclusive Economy and Housing as deputy-chair
- Relevant senior officers
- Both Cabinet Members holding a housing portfolio
- An independent Board Member who also sits on the Council's independently chaired Transformation and Improvement Board.

The Board leads on planning and monitoring progress of the improvement programme, monitors safety and stock condition issues, ensures there is effective engagement with residents and provides assurance to the Mayor of Newham in line with the Council's governance arrangements.

Our organisational governance reporting arrangements also includes quarterly reporting to Cabinet, Scrutiny and Audit, the Mayor's Strategic Oversight Board, a newly created Resident Challenge Board as well as regular meetings with the Regulator for Social Housing.

The governance structure is shown below.



RESIDENT CHALLENGE BOARD

A Resident Challenge Board has been set up to provide oversight, feedback and scrutiny of the Housing Services Improvement Programme. The resident-led panel will provide programme oversight, aiming to provide input on service delivery and help to drive improvements.

The panel will have a scrutiny function that allows participants to conduct scrutiny exercises either together as a whole group or in smaller subgroups. The Panel has been designed with support from Tpas who will inform the structure, terms of reference and meet any training requirements.



EVIDENCING COMPLIANCE

Improvement will be measured by achieving the following outcomes and measures which will be developed following reviews and with residents.

OUTCOMES

1. Properly resourced housing services
2. A culture that reflects high performance, learning and resident focus
3. Robust policy framework to meet legal and regulatory standards
4. Governance and reporting structures for effective oversight, insight and foresight
5. All properties have an up-to-date stock condition survey
6. Data relating to assets and compliance is robust and maintained
7. Delivery of the repairs service is effective and responsive to changing legislation (e.g. Awaab's Law)
8. All properties have valid, up to date health and safety certificates
9. Risks are well managed and mitigated with appropriate assurance
10. A clear approach to ASB and hate incidents
11. The resident voice influences decisions, service delivery and priorities through scrutiny, feedback and learning mechanisms established throughout governance framework
12. TSM survey approach and reporting is robust, compliant and timely
13. Data and systems are robust to understand diverse resident needs and deliver tailored service with fair and equitable outcomes

14. Effective complaints handling which meets the expectations of the HO complaints handling code and consumer standards

MEASURES

1. Reduction in stage one repairs complaints being upheld (repairs stage 1 complaints in 23/24 - 1,148 and 66% upheld)
2. Improved satisfaction with 'How satisfied were you with how we kept you informed about the progress of the work' from 79% at the end of March 2024 to 82% at the end of March 2025
3. Reduction in disrepair cases (baseline of 436 disrepair cases opened in 2023)
4. Repairs KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)
5. Compliance with existing H&S KPIS; new H&S KPIs to be established following delivery of landlord compliance review
6. Increase in satisfaction with 'Landlord's approach to handling ASB' from a baseline of 58% to quartile 1 performance of 59.7%
7. Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations
8. Improved satisfaction with 'Overall service from their landlord' from baseline of 59% to q1 performance of 78%
9. Improved satisfaction with 'Landlord keeps them informed about things that matter' from baseline of 62% (q3) to 71.7% (q1)
10. Service level performance reporting against protected characteristics (specific measures to be designed)

EXTERNAL ASSURANCE AND REVIEW

Three areas of external assurance have been commissioned in response to the Regulatory Judgement.

1. **Investigation into corporate reporting and governance arrangements.**

To examine corporate reporting and the governance arrangements surrounding housing services, the consumer standards, and information provided to Members and Cabinet as part of this process. To determine what lessons should be learnt to improve compliance in the future. In particular, the review will consider whether information held should have highlighted issues of non-compliance with the consumer standards earlier and whether the information held was sufficiently robust, accurate and transparent to allow proper governance, oversight and scrutiny.

2. **Strategic partner assurance.**

External support and challenge to ensure the improvement plan is robust.

1. Providing external challenge in respect of root cause and diagnostics analysis of our current position. 2.

Providing external challenge in the development of improvement plans, and the wider programme planning process. 3. Providing external quality assurance of those plans, specifically in relation to their adequacy, deliverability and sustainability. 4. Providing expert advice in respect of all aspects of our improvement journey.

3. **Landlord compliance review.** To undertake an in-depth review and assessment of nine main health and safety compliance areas. Deep dive into our data capture, and review of the quality of data used in the management of each risk area. Assess the accuracy of recording and reporting procedures across the nine areas. Assess whether there are adequate processes and procedures to manage hazards and ensure safe systems of work. Escalation of any newly identified areas of non-compliance of regulatory risks, supporting the development of a risk management framework and the redefining of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for these service areas.

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) are collected by landlords according to requirements set by the regulator in the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. TSMs include information from tenant surveys and those generated from management information held by landlords on areas including repairs and maintenance, complaints and engagement, respectful and helpful engagement and building safety.

TSMs are intended to be a tool to allow tenants to scrutinise their landlord's performance, give

insights to landlords on where they might look to improve their services, and provide a source of intelligence to the regulator on how far landlords are meeting the outcomes of the new consumer standards. They are a key measure for evidencing improvement and compliance with the consumer standards.

The table below shows the tenant satisfaction measure results for 23/24 taken from tenant satisfaction surveys. Results for 24/25 will be published at the end of June 2025.

	London Boroughs & ALMOs			Newham	
Satisfaction measure	Quartile 3	Median	Quartile 1	23/24 result	Quartile
Overall service from their landlord	52.2%	59.0%	64.1%	59.0%	Median
Overall repairs service	57.1%	63.3%	65.8%	72.0%	Q-1
Time to complete most recent repair	54.8%	60.0%	63.4%	62.0%	Median
Home is well maintained	54.8%	60.9%	65.0%	61.0%	Median
Home is safe	62.1%	66.5%	71.1%	71.0%	Q-1
Landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them	43.9%	51.3%	55.8%	54.0%	Median
Landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them	61.5%	66.0%	71.7%	62.0%	Q-3
Landlord treats them fairly and with respect	61.7%	69.0%	73.6%	73.0%	Median
Landlord's approach to complaints handling	20.5%	25.6%	27.7%	27.0%	Median
Landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	57.6%	61.5%	65.4%	70.0%	Q-1
Landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood	57.5%	62.0%	67.8%	57.0%	Q-3
Landlord's approach to handling ASB	52.1%	57.7%	59.7%	58.0%	Median

The following measures are derived from housing management systems and are shown for 23/24.

Tenant satisfaction measures	Performance	Median of other London councils and an ALMOs
CH01 - Complaints relative to the size of the landlord (Stage 1)	84	70
CH01 - Complaints relative to the size of the landlord (Stage 2)	7	13
CH02 - Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales (Stage 1)	72%	73%
CH02 - Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales (Stage 2)	69%	69%
NM01- Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord (cases per 1000 homes)	149	32
NM01- Anti-social behaviour cases relative -hate crimes only (cases per 1000 homes)	0	0
RP01 - Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	29%	9%
RP02 - Repairs completed within target timescale - non-emergency repairs	67%	79%
RP02 - Repairs completed within target timescale – emergency repairs	96%	91%
BS01- Gas safety checks	100%	100%
BS02 - Fire safety checks	98%	100%
BS03 - Asbestos safety checks	82%	100%
BS04 - Water safety checks	98%	99%
BS05 - Lift safety checks	91%	98%

