Repairs Performance Review and Improvement Panel
Repairs Contact Centre Recommendation
Response from LBN Housing Services

Introduction

I want to thank the Repairs Performance Review and Improvement Panel for their comprehensive report on "First Contact" – phoning the Repairs Contact Centre. It's clear the amount of work the Panel have done in investigating the work of the Repairs Contact Centre, in meeting with Council officers, mystery shopping, visiting the call centre to hear other residents' experiences first hand and meeting to deliberate their findings. I also want to thank Council staff, in particular the Resident Involvement

The report is comprehensive and highlights important areas of feedback for the Council to consider

After reviewing the report, we identified that the panel made 33 recommendations. We have detailed the status of each recommendation in the table below, along with our reasoning and the actions we plan to take in our response. We recommend the panel to review the status of each recommendation at the quarterly meeting as an agenda item.

Recommendation Status	Number of Recommendations
Agree	24
Not Taking Forward	5
Partially Agree	4
Total	**33**

	Issue raised by Panel	Recommendation	LBN Action/Response	By Whom	By when
1	Repair priority to take account of disability	A1	We agree with the panel's recommendation. Where a repair issue may specifically affect a person with a disability, we already have measures in place to prioritise these cases. Our agents are trained to identify households with disabilities and give priority to repair issues that may specifically affect these residents.	Head of Resident Engagement	Complete
			Additionally, The Care and Support Team (CAST) have been established and will be conducting vulnerability screening over the next 12 months by contacting known vulnerable residents to update their information on our system to ensure their request are dealt with accordingly and with repairs are raised taken into account their circumstances.		Complete
2	Need for enhanced options to share photos with contact centre such as website or WhatsApp	A2	We agree with the panel's recommendation. The online portal is currently being developed to include reporting repairs, which will allow uploading photos.	Transformation	Revised timescales for go live to be confirmed

					by mid-June
			We are continuing to focus on fully developing the new digital solution for reporting repairs via the online form. This will enable resident to submit photos on the form. The changes identified during the resident usability testing have been reviewed by the developer and they have confirmed an additional seven working days of effort are required to carry out the changes. The Digital team have been asked to confirm when the work will be carried out and it is expected that timescales will be confirmed and communicated to the panel mid-June. There will be further testing with residents.		
3	Higher priority if repeat repair	A4	We agree with the panel's recommendation. However clarity is required on what repeat repairs refers to. It is known that on some occasions, residents have to contact the council to chase up a repair on a repeat basis and there currently is not a way to flag these cases on the system so the Project Manager for repairs improvement will discuss with the AD of Property Services and the Head of RMS to agree adding this to the scope of the improvement plan.	Transformation and Property Services	Changes to the project scope and timescales to be confirmed by mid-June.

			Changes to prioritisation will be addressed through a policy review. It is also recognised that some repairs may be fixed but then require a repeat repair e.g. a recurring leak or a main entrance door that keeps getting broken. System developments have been requested but no timescales yet confirmed.		
4	Ensure online reporting portal is accessible	A6	We agree with the panel's recommendation. The repairs portal is designed to be inclusive, offering various accessibility options for residents. Users can customise screen colour, utilise text-to-speech functionality, and adjust font size to suit their needs. Furthermore, the portal was tested by the panel, and their recommendations have been incorporated to ensure a user-friendly experience for everyone. There is some additional work needed to address changing the background colour following the resident testing which is included in the additional development request.	Transformation / ICT	Revised timescales for go live to be confirmed by mid-June.
5	Review RCC call-handler scripts noting	B1, B3,	**B1: Clear Identification**	Head of Resident	Complete

	the Feedback above from Panel	B4	We agree with the panel's recommendation. Our staff are now identifying themselves at the beginning of each call by providing their first name. This is to ensure transparency and build trust.	Engagement / RCC Manager	
			B3: Job Number Provision We agree with the panel's recommendation. For any communal jobs, our agents are verbally providing the job number. This helps in tracking and ensures residents have all necessary information.		Complete
			B4 Emergency Classification The "lights out" scenario is already classified as a priority 2 emergency, with a response target of 4 hours. This ensures urgent issues are addressed promptly.		Complete
6a	Change to give queue position regardless	C6	We agree with the panel's recommendation. The queue position function was enabled but had to be deactivated due to a high rate of call abandonment. However, we have reinstated this feature. Residents will now be informed of their position in the queue, which we believe will enhance transparency and reduce uncertainty.		Complete

			Additionally, we have activated a call-back function. This allows residents to request a call-back without losing their place in the queue, ensuring that their needs are addressed efficiently without the need to stay on hold.		
6b	Change messages & music with regard to our points	C1 C2 C3 C4 C5 C8 C9	**C1: Alert callers of system issues** We agree with the panel's recommendation. We ensure that an appropriate message is included in the IVR (interactive voice response) system to inform residents at the beginning of the call if a significant part of the repairs operation is not working. Additionally, our agents will apologise and inform residents again when they get through if they are unable to raise the job		Complete
			C2 – C4: Messages on the IVR We partially agree with the panel's recommendation. Following a review of the messaging with Corporate Team responsible for the IVR, it has been advised the current volume setting is at a standard level. We carried out test calls to the RCC and did not observe any messages being distorted. We have been advised this		Complete

			can be impacted by the caller's network. Additionally, the gap between the end and start of the messages has been reduced to improve the caller experience. **C5: Repeat messages to go online** We agree with the panel's recommendation and are actively promoting and encouraging residents to use our online platforms. We acknowledge your feedback and have discussed it with the Corporate Team. We can confirm that the emergency queue has no messages. However, the new appointment and follow-on queues do present a message, but only once people enter the queue. **C8: Queue message** We will not be taking forward this recommendation. The queues are now separate for each option therefore a queue message is not required. We have allocated additional resources to prioritise emergency calls. **C9: Message for new appointment**		Complete No further action Complete

				We agree with the panel's recommendation. We have taken this recommendation on board and have implemented the suggested change.		
7	Ensure more staff on at peak times	A7		We agree with the panel's recommendation. RCC recently recruited four part-time staff and an additional Team Leader to help address the demand, particularly during opening hours. Additionally, we are currently recruiting for two more part-time staff to further enhance our capacity and improve queue times.	Head of Resident Engagement / RCC Manager	June 2025
8	Put partitions in between desks in call centre to minimise background noise & for privacy	A10		We will not be taking forward this recommendation. We operate in an open environment to enhance collaboration and communication among our staff or RMS teams. While partitions between desks are not feasible, we have provided staff with noise blocking headsets to minimise background noise. Additionally, partitions have been installed at the ends of the rows of desks to reduce noise from people walking past.	Head of Resident Engagement / RCC Manager	No further action
9	Provide communal repair reference	B3		We agree with the panel's recommendation. Agents have been instructed to verbally provide the job number for any communal jobs. This helps in tracking and ensures	Head of Resident Engagement / RCC Manager	Complete

			residents have all necessary information.		
10	Appropriate staff training programme required	A5

B1 | **A5: Staff Training**
We agree with the panel's recommendation. RCC staff received comprehensive training in December 2024 on Customer Services, delivered by an external company, IKON. Additionally, a modular training programme is being developed, which includes on-boarding, customer service, and repair-specific training (e.g., plumbing, carpentry, gas, emergencies). RMS managers hold monthly meetings with RCC agents to provide refresher training and address any questions the agents may have.

B1: Clear Identification
We agree with the panel's recommendation. Staff have been instructed to always identifying themselves clearly at the beginning of calls by providing their first name. | Head of Resident Engagement / RCC Manager | Complete.

Complete |
| 11a | Ensure website has guidance on what to expect when they call | D2 D4 | We agree with the panel's recommendation. The repairs section of the website will be updated to include relevant information, such as | Head of Resident Engagement / Comms | May 2025 |

	and the quietest times for calls.		the busiest periods for calls and average queue times residents can expect.	(outside Housing)	
11b	Other website-related recommend-ations	D1, D3, D5, D6	**D1: Changes made to system messages** We will not be taking forward this recommendation. The System Management team in the Corporate Centre is responsible for making these changes. Unfortunately, we do not hold a record of the changes made.	Read of Resident Engagement / Comms (outside Housing)	No further action
			D3: Real-time data on the website. We will not be taking forward this recommendation. We do not have the capability to provide real-time data on queue times and average wait times on our website. However, residents will be informed of their queue position when they call.		No further action
			D5: Present changes to the Panel We will partially take forward this recommendation. It is not feasible to run all repair webpage changes by the Panel before implementation. Decisions on changes are made by relevant managers based on team performance and data. However, we will update the Panel with		April 2026

| | | | substantive changes on an annual basis.

D6: Link webpages
We agree with the panel's recommendation. We will link relevant information about the Repairs Contact Centre to https://www.newham.gov.uk/housing-homes-homelessness/repairs-1 | | June 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | Don't delete record of call | A9 | We agree with the panel's recommendation. Call logs can be accessed for up to 12 months. Voice recordings are also available for 12 months unless they are downloaded, in which case they can be kept for a longer period. Staff are not able to delete calls on Ring Central.

Once a repairs request has been logged on our system, it cannot be deleted, only cancelled. | RCC Management | Complete |
| 13 | If context provided does that impact on the priority of repairs | A3 | We agree with the panel's recommendation. All repairs raised are in line with the current repairs policy and the use of the repair finder platform which allows the officer to diagnose repair inquires based on pictorial and repair codes. However, there may be a deviation of the | RCC Management | Complete |

			priority based on if person's vulnerability can be determined.		
14	The ability to *book* a repair, including an emergency, or a gas repair, is not to be prevented, e.g. on account of that service not being in a position to *execute* the repair within a certain time	A8		We agree with the panel's recommendation. All emergencies repairs are actioned during our operational hours. In the event of a service not being available, this would be raised and referred to a Gas manager.	RCC Management	Complete
15	Staff answering phones should have diagram of property available onscreen, to help them understand what we're saying, as & when such facility is available.	A11		We will not be taking forward this recommendation. Currently, we do not have a platform that supports this functionality, nor do we have records of each property's floor plan. Acquiring these records would incur significant costs. However, we ensure call agents are asking the right questions in order to diagnose the repair accurately.	RCC Management	No further action
16	Staff answering phones should have available onscreen pictures of e.g. different types of taps available, so staff can more easily understand what	A12		We agree with the panel's recommendation. We already have a system that supports the diagnoses of repair inquiries, we have a platform called Repair Finder. This is launched when raising a repair and has pictures to provide a guide. There is a need to review the current	RCC Management	Complete

			Repair finder to have more pictorial options.		
	resident is talking about if they refer to particular types of tap by name.				
17	All changes to the automatic messages system to be run past Repairs Panel - before implementation if practical	C10	We will partially take forward this recommendation. It is not feasible to run all automatic message changes by the Panel before implementation. Decisions on changes are made by relevant managers based on team performance and data. However, we will update the Panel with substantive changes on an annual basis.	RCC Management	Complete
18	Wording of automatic texted confirmation/reminder should be changed to take into account how it comes out on landlines (the ref. no. is garbled currently), or possibly have different messages if technologically possible.	C11	We agree with the panel's recommendation. The automatic text messages sent to landlines currently sends a voice message to landlines, outlining that an appointment has been booked and providing the date and time. We have tested a text message going to landline and it was clear.	RCC Management	Complete