

## Response to Newham Council's Annual Complaints Self-Assessment

As the Cabinet Member for Council Housing Improvements and Member Responsible for Housing Complaints I welcome this year's self-assessment on behalf of Newham Council's Cabinet and Executive.

Complaints are important to us. They offer valuable insights from residents about the issues that are important to them – where we are getting things wrong, how we can put them right. They offer opportunities for our Housing Service to learn and to shape services to better meet residents' needs. How we respond to complaints is sometimes as important as how we resolve them and I'm pleased that recent feedback from tenants and leaseholders suggests they feel our Housing Services listen to them and treat them with respect. The opportunity to build better relationships with residents through complaints is one we are working though. Complaints also form a crucial part of our housing improvement journey as we work towards compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards following with C4 judgement received in October 2024.

I am pleased to see that the improvements that have been made in the past year have been successful in reducing the number of areas of non-compliance against the Complaints Handling Code from five to one (which is now partially met with plans in place to fully achieve compliance). I am also grateful to the Housing Ombudsman for its timely recommendations for changes to our Housing Complaints Policy, which have all now been implemented.

This response confirms that Cabinet is assured that the self-assessment is a true reflection of the landlord's complaint handling. We have scrutinised and challenged the self-assessment and are satisfied that the areas of partial and non-compliance have been addressed or are well on the way to being addressed.

The Annual Housing Complaints Performance Report sets out a number of actions that the Housing Complaints Team and wider Housing Service will take to further embed and strengthen the policy and improve our overall performance, including:

- Producing a Housing Complaints Procedure to sit alongside the policy and provide additional guidance for officers (section 8.2.1, page 16 of the Annual Housing Complaints Performance Report)
- Use complaints data to prevent escalation and support the ongoing repairs improvement programme to increase the number of repairs completed on time, the first time (section 8.2.2, page 16 of the Annual Housing Complaints Performance Report)
- Improve assurance by introducing reviews of cases and data to ensure that data is reliable and responses to residents consistently meet our standards ((section 8.6.3, page 16 of the Annual Housing Complaints Performance Report)
- Expanding the opportunities for learning from complaints through regular case and service reviews involving wider groups of Housing colleagues (section 8.2.3, page 16 of the Annual Housing Complaints Performance Report)
- Include the above actions within the Housing Services Improvement Programme so that actions are monitored (section 8.2.1, page 16 of the Annual Housing Complaints Performance Report)

As lead member, I will continue to monitor performance against these actions through regular reporting to my monthly Cabinet Accountability Portfolio Meeting and the Housing Services Improvement Programme.

Cabinet will continue to review performance through the quarterly reports it considers on our housing services improvement programme.

Councillor Blossom Young, Cabinet Member for Council Housing Improvements on behalf of Newham Council's Cabinet and Executive