



# Residents' Annual Report

2022–2023

Working for better homes

 **Hackney**

# Residents' Annual Report 2022–23

## Contents

P3 – Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation

P4 – Steve Waddington, Strategic Director, Housing Services

P6 – The year in news

P10 – The home standard

P11 – The tenancy standard

P12 – The resident involvement and empowerment standard

P13 – The neighbourhood and community standard

P14 – Resident Liaison Group (RLG) achievements

P15 – How your money is spent

P16 – Your Housing Services senior management team

### **Accessibility statement**

If you require this document in a different format, please email:

[neighbourhood@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhood@hackney.gov.uk)

We will consider your request and get back to you in the next five working days.

# We have made big strides this year but while there is still work to do we remain committed to building on these improvements

As one of the largest social landlords there will always be challenges in delivering the services and support you want and need from us. This last year has been no exception but it has also seen some big strides in our work to continually enhance the service we deliver.

We have always been working to tackle damp and mould, but the tragic case of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who died from prolonged exposure to mould in his family home in Rochdale, reaffirmed our commitment to tackling this issue in our homes.

It is a challenge facing all landlords, and in the past our response may not have always been what it should have been. However, this is changing following the launch in November 2022 of our robust action plan.

Backed by an extra £1m investment, this committed us to inspecting all reports of damp and mould within five working days; speeding up our response times to reports of leaks; and undertaking a sample survey of our homes including specific assessments of damp and mould and prioritising blocks more likely to suffer from the issue.

We still have some way to go to completely achieve our ambition, but it is and will continue to improve people's lives and ensure they have safe, warm and secure places to call home.

This year we also took a big step forward by clearing the backlog of the more than 7,000 repairs built up during the Covid-19 pandemic. We also brought in government investment to support our drive to make some of our hardest to heat homes more energy efficient – which potentially will help save people money off their bills.

Our continued work to improve the service has been made more challenging with the government's below inflation rent cap. Obviously this was good news for our residents in the face of the cost of living crisis. However, the failure to provide the additional money we and other social landlords need to maintain, repair and manage our homes in the face of increasing costs means we will sadly need to make savings over the coming years.



Despite this, myself and everyone across the housing service is committed to tirelessly working to build on the improvements we have already achieved and to work with you to ensure we have a service we can all be proud of.

**Cllr Clayeon McKenzie**

**Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation**

## Big challenges ahead but we are all working hard to improve the service we provide to you

The whole service is continuing to work hard towards our ambition to deliver a first class service to all of our tenants and leaseholders.

We know that we have some way to go to completely achieve our goal – but this year has seen us achieve a number of successes helping us on that journey.

There have been the high profile achievements of clearing the repairs backlog caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the launch of our action plan to tackle damp and mould.

We have also seen the agreement of our Resident Engagement Strategy to help us improve the way we talk to and listen to you as well as involving you in the development of the service going forward. Our challenge now is ensuring we embed this across the service.

On top of these we have also recorded other notable achievements including seeing a 29% drop in the number of new anti-social behaviour cases and reducing the average waiting time for emergency repairs calls to be answered to 2 minutes 35 seconds between January and March.

We are looking to build on these, and to that end we have boosted our repairs service with new carpenters, plumbers, plasterers, electricians and gas engineers to further improve the repairs service going forward.

These annual residents' reports also show where we have not delivered on our targets and the steps we are taking to remedy issues and challenges we are facing.

We continue to look at new and improved ways of delivering our services to you, and a great deal of credit has to go to everyone working across Housing Services for their work and achievements over the last year.

There are still some big challenges ahead of us, but by working together with you I am sure we can continue improving and seeing even more achievements in the coming year.

**Steve Waddington**  
**Strategic Director, Housing Services**

# The year in news

## **April 2022**

An agreement was negotiated between Hackney Council and the privately owned Metropolitan and St Peter Way hostels to secure the provision of temporary accommodation for 163 households over the next five years. Under the agreement the hostel owners agreed to carry out a rolling programme of refurbishment works to upgrade the 110 units at the Metropolitan hostel.

## **May 2022**

People living in around 15,000 Hackney Council homes now have access to full fibre broadband thanks to a three-year plan to roll out the faster and more reliable internet service to Hackney residents.

The expansion of Longford Court community allotment scheme received a £10,000 boost from the South East Consortium. The money was for tools, a storage shed, and materials for up to 25 additional raised allotment beds.

## **June 2022**

Thousands of residents celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at a range of community events supported by Hackney Council. A record number of applications were received for Big Lunch Funding for events to help bring local people together for the celebrations.

A major consultation on the Council's Resident Engagement Strategy (RES) was launched. Built on the feedback of residents and staff, it is designed to improve the way the Housing Services talks and listens to residents and gives them greater opportunities to help shape the way the service is delivered.

## **July 2022**

Leaseholders and freeholders of Hackney Council homes would benefit from a new-look service better reflecting their needs and the support available it was announced. As part of reshaping the service over the summer it would change its name from 'Leasehold & Right to Buy Services' to 'Homeownership Services'. The reshaped service will also provide access to easy-to-understand information, with updated online information.

## **August 2022**

The backlog of the more than 7,000 repairs built up during the Covid-19 pandemic – when the Council was only able to undertake emergency work – was cleared. While

there were still outstanding repairs, none of them dated back to before the start of 2022. The Council appointed 26 new recruits – including carpenters, plumbers, plasterers, electricians and gas engineers – as part of its work to remove the backlog and improve the repairs service going forward.

## **September 2022**

Tributes were paid to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who died on 8 September at Balmoral Castle.

A new gardeners forum was set up as part of the Council's support for the more than 50 community gardens which have taken root across the borough. It is designed to share good practice on gardening and running a community garden.

Young people aged between 13 and 19 years old (or 25 if they have a special education need or disability) were invited to join a new housing youth forum ensuring young people's views are heard and considered when any decisions are being made about the future of housing services.

A four-and-a-half storey image was unveiled on the side of a block on the Beckers estate in Hackney Downs, depicting nine people in the shape of a pyramid to symbolise people lifting each other up to create a stronger community. The images of the people in the mural are based on residents on the estate who modelled for the artist Giacomo Bufarini – also known as RUN.

## **October 2022**

The government consulted on plans to limit the amount social rents could increase by from April 2024 to up to 7%. While recognising this would help tenants during the cost of living crisis, the Council called for additional money to be provided to cover the gap between the rent cap and actual inflation costs to help it deliver much needed services such as repairs and maintenance on its homes.

Residents were asked to help shape how new local housing surgeries offering face-to-face support and advice on housing issues could be developed. A consultation asked people to have their say on when and where they would like to see the surgeries held as well as the range of housing services they would like to be available at them in the future. A number of pilot surgeries were also set up.

## **November 2022**

An action plan was announced to help enhance the Council's response to tackling damp and mould in its homes and of any other social landlord and those renting privately. This included setting targets for inspecting reports of damp and mould within five working days and attending to leaks by the end of the day after they were reported. Under the plan all outstanding repairs involving damp and mould would

also be reassessed to ensure they are prioritised taking account the severity of the case, and the age and health of the people living in the home.

More than 650 residents and leaseholders aged 55 and over attended the first in-person Winter Warmer event held since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic. As well as getting information from the Council and its partners about initiatives that could enhance the quality of their lives, or help them with the challenges of the cost of living crisis, residents enjoyed free food, massages, arts and crafts and a sing-a-long of some well-loved classic songs.

## **December 2022**

The Council's Resident Engagement Strategy was agreed following 18 months of consultation and listening to feedback of thousands of residents and staff to improve and strengthen the way the service works with residents. Developed with residents, and endorsed by the Resident Liaison Group, the strategy provides the foundation to help the service achieve its ambition of providing an excellent service.

Plans to build 400 new homes to replace garages and car parks at 15 locations on Hackney's estates were agreed, with at least three quarters of these for social rent thanks to direct Council investment. These will contribute to the Council's commitment to build 1,000 new social rent homes by 2026.

## **January 2023**

Grants totalling £40,000 were provided to 14 projects, led by local voluntary and community organisations, to support the provision of warm spaces throughout Hackney until the end of March. The schemes were funded through the Council's Housing Services Resident Participation Team.

## **February 2023**

A new service to speed up the Council's response times to visiting reports of leaks was launched. The initiative, part of the damp and mould action plan launched in November, means that all leaks reported in Hackney Council homes will now be visited by a plumber by the end of the following day.

Council tenants were also able to report non-emergency internal repairs to their homes online with the launch of a new improved system. People can now report a repair online at a time convenient for them and book a time for a visit by a repairs officer rather than having to wait for the Council's repairs contact centre to be open.



An Alternative Dispute Resolution approach was introduced to avoid some repairs cases getting caught up in lengthy legal proceedings through agreeing a package of work and any potential compensation payments with eligible tenants.

Applications for grants for people wanting to bring their local community together to mark the coronation of King Charles III in May were launched. Grants of up to £750 were available through its Housing Services as part of the national Big Coronation Lunch initiative.

People looking for a venue for a party, meeting or special event are now able to take a virtual tour of the 37 community halls managed by Hackney Council with the launch of a new online system. It would mean the Council is the first local authority in the country to offer a fully online process for people to have a virtual tour of the halls, book them and pay once the payment option becomes available shortly.

### **March 2023**

Ambitious plans to make some of Hackney Council's hardest to heat homes more energy efficient were supported by up to £4.5m of government funding. Over the next two years the multi-million pound project aims to bring eligible homes up to an energy efficiency C rating.

Plans were announced to upgrade the front doors of around 2,500 Council homes in blocks of flats of 10 storeys or higher to provide residents with even greater protection in the event of a fire.

# The home standard

Every resident deserves a home that meets the highest possible standards, and that's what we strive for. That means responding to repair issues quickly and efficiently to ensure homes are safe, warm and comfortable, and protecting residents from health and safety risks.

## This year's headlines:

- **99%** of new fire risk assessments actioned.
- **99%** of homes with a valid gas certificate.
- **98%** of water tanks inspected to ensure compliance.

## Achievements in 2022–23:

1. **939** homes had boilers replaced and **403** homes had new windows installed.
2. Capital works projects to homes were delivered within **85%** of the estimated costs.
3. Tenant satisfaction increased by **5%** with the quality of the repair work – from **62% to 67%**.

## What's next

1. To undertake a sample borough-wide stock condition survey, which will include specific assessments of damp and mould – prioritising blocks more likely to suffer from this.
2. To enhance our systems to capture instant data on keeping to repair appointments.
3. To undertake approximately **2,000** surveys to deliver improvements to kitchens and bathrooms.

# The tenancy standard

We're here to provide help and support to tenants, and ensure they get the impartial advice and support they need. This includes carrying out regular tenancy checks, providing specialist financial advice, and helping to mitigate against the effects that Universal Credit could have on our residents.

## This year's headlines:

- **1,934** tenancy checks were carried out.
- **222** Financial Inclusion or Care Service referrals resulted from these tenancy checks.
- **9,732** fire & health safety inspections were carried out to blocks.

## Achievements in 2022–23:

- **£188,000** was received from the Homeless Prevention Fund, which helps residents sustain their tenancies and reduce their rent arrears.
- **49** homes were recovered as a result of anti-fraud initiatives, to re-let to tenants in urgent need of housing.
- **484** homes let to new and existing social housing tenants, including **48** mutual exchanges.

## What's next:

1. To continue to support residents in accessing Universal Credit, Discretionary Housing Payments and other available support via our specialist Financial Support Team.
2. To set up a working group to improve the process in recovering homes and assessing applications to succeed tenancies, where the tenant has died or abandoned the property.
3. To undertake an audit to assess the quantity and quality of the estate noticeboards, with a view to removing the older or poor quality ones and standardising/improving the information that is posted.

# The resident involvement and empowerment standard

We're committed to delivering excellent levels of service for all of our residents. This includes handling complaints, understanding the diverse needs of our tenants, and providing opportunities for everyone to have a meaningful say on how we spend money and manage services.

## This year's headlines:

- **185** housing surgeries took place, following the relaunch in October 2022.
- **1,996** stage 1 complaints were responded to – **45%** within 10 working days.
- **1,749** enquiries were received via Members, MPs and the Mayor's Office.

## Achievements in 2022–23:

1. A new Resident Engagement Strategy 2022–2025 was co-produced with residents, with a wide ranging consultation helping us to hear feedback from seldom heard groups.
2. A new reporting system was introduced for officers to ensure better follow up on actions arising from Tenant Resident Association (TRA) meetings.
3. In the last quarter of the year, the average waiting time for emergency repair calls answered by the Repairs Contact Centre was **2 minutes and 35 seconds** – well below the target of 5 minutes.

## What's next:

1. To reduce the number of incoming complaints – working with service areas to learn lessons from the complaints that come in, so that the same issues are not recurring.
2. To build an online system for resident contact with Housing Services, to improve the resident experience and provide a faster service – and also reduce calls to the Contact Centres.
3. To ensure housing services are more accessible to residents, by co-locating surgeries in libraries and other community venues, and holding regular webinars.

# The neighbourhood and community standard

We're committed to ensuring that our neighbourhoods and communities are safe, clean and well maintained. This includes tackling antisocial behaviour, promoting wellbeing and providing more opportunities for recycling on our estates.

## This year's headlines

- **100%** of urgent antisocial behaviour cases responded to within 24 hours.
- **87%** of antisocial behaviour complainants received a work plan within 10 working days.
- **98%** of cleaning inspections rated as good or acceptable.

## Achievements in 2022–23:

1. The number of new antisocial behaviour cases **decreased by 29%** – from **1,407** in 2021–22 to **1,002** in 2022–23
2. The number of estate cleaning inspections **increased by 28%** – from **10,488** in 2021–22 to **13,438** in 2022–23
3. The recycling project was extended to a further **eight estates**: Kingsgate, Regents Court, Provost, Lordship North, Queen Elizabeth Close, Frampton Park, St. Johns Court and Rowley Gardens

## What's next:

1. To achieve the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation for Housing Services by Autumn 2023.
2. To set up a hoarding task and finish group, to ensure that risks associated with hoarding are managed effectively. These risks include fire, wellbeing to the person who hoards, pest control, damage to the property and nuisance to neighbours/third parties.
3. To invite residents to one of seven focus groups to contribute to the discussions around delivering Safe & Inclusive Neighbourhoods. This will shape a new neighbourhood management policy focussed on promoting community cohesion and a joined up approach to antisocial behaviour.

# Resident Liaison Group (RLG) achievements

1. Members of the RLG joined with other residents to review the Service Standards and to contribute to the Council's antisocial behaviour priorities.
2. RLG co-chairs and panel chairs put together a strategy to recruit more Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) and improve support available for existing TRAs.
3. Involved and non-involved residents joined the TRA Toolkit working group, co-chaired by the Head of Resident Engagement and a RLG co-chair.
4. The RLG supported the Resident Participation Operations Manager to recruit three new independent members to join the RLG.
5. An RLG co-chair has been involved with enhancing the Council's antisocial behaviour work, and will be co-chairing forthcoming meetings with a senior police officer.
6. The RLG co-chairs have attended and contributed to a number of Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission meetings.
7. RLG co-chairs continue to deliver on casework as presented by Panels, TRAs and individual residents across the borough.

**Steve Webster**

**Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair**

**Zahra Shoorvazi**

**Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair**



# How your money is spent

**This is how we spent each pound we received from rent, service charges and from the Government:**

## **32p: Supervision and management**

The management and delivery of services to residents.

## **30p: Investment in properties**

The cost of improvements to your homes.

## **22p: Repairs and maintenance**

The work done to repair your homes and ensure your estates are safe.

## **15p: Special services**

The cost of grounds maintenance, estate cleaning, security services, community halls, hostels and communal heating.

## **1p: Rent, rates, taxes and other charges**

The cost of running properties and buildings in which the housing service is based.

*Service charge to tenants and leaseholder pays for the full cost of providing those services such as cleaning, grounds maintenance and heating, concierge and lights of blocks.*

# Your Housing Services senior management team

## **Rickardo Hyatt**

Group Director Neighbourhoods & Housing, Climate, Homes and Economy  
[rickardo.hyatt@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:rickardo.hyatt@hackney.gov.uk)

## **Steve Waddington**

Strategic Director, Housing Services  
[steve.waddington@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:steve.waddington@hackney.gov.uk)

Overall strategic and operational lead for all housing management, building maintenance and capital improvement services. (Interim direct management of support for leaseholders, freeholders and shared ownership).

## **Helena Stephenson**

Assistant Director, Tenancy Services  
[helena.stephenson@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:helena.stephenson@hackney.gov.uk)

Housing management and support to maintain tenancies, rents and service charges, tackling antisocial behaviour on estates, resident participation and community development.

## **Peter Nourse**

Assistant Director, Housing Transformation (interim)  
[peter.nourse@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:peter.nourse@hackney.gov.uk)

Support for performance management and service improvement.

## **Kain Roach**

Assistant Director, Building Maintenance.  
[kain.roach@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:kain.roach@hackney.gov.uk)

General repairs and maintenance of residents' homes, communal repairs, empty council property refurbishments, and tackling damp and mould.

## **Michal Jankowski**

Assistant Director, Resident Safety  
[michal.jankowski@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:michal.jankowski@hackney.gov.uk)

Resident and Building Safety – Fire, asbestos, structural.

**Sinéad Burke**

Assistant Director, Property and Asset Management.

[sinead.burke@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:sinead.burke@hackney.gov.uk)

Capital works programmes, planned internal works (including kitchens and bathrooms), fire safety works, housing retrofit programme, mechanical and electrical services (including communal heating and lifts), asset strategy and performance.