

HOUSINGnews

News and information for our tenants

April 2025



Cllr Sue Sampson,
Cabinet Member
for Housing
Management and
Homelessness

THE RESULTS ARE IN!

Last year, we asked our tenants to complete our second Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey so that we could hear your views and help us improve the services you receive. The survey covers everything from building safety, repairs and maintenance to how we interact with you and deal with Anti-Social Behaviour and complaints. Thank you to everyone who took part. We received over 1,000 responses.

In January 2024, we performed in the top quarter of London council landlords across all of these categories (the data for 2024/25 has not yet been published).

In January 2025, you told us that we had increased tenant satisfaction over all of our previous year's results, with 70% of tenants expressing overall satisfaction with our service.

You can see the results of this year's survey below.

WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR HOME

73%



felt we provided a home that is safe

68%

felt we provided a home that is well maintained

WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THE SERVICE YOU RECEIVE FROM US

75%



were satisfied that we keep you well informed

77%

felt we treated you fairly and with respect

WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

71%

felt that we made a positive contribution

70%

agreed communal areas are clean and well maintained

GET IN TOUCH

You can check who your estate improvement officer is, and when the next inspection is taking place on your estate noticeboard.

Welcome to the latest edition of **Housing News**, designed to share important information from Hounslow Council's Housing Service and update residents on improvement works taking place across our estates.

Last year, many of you took part in an important survey to tell us what you think about your home, the service you receive from us, and your local neighbourhood. We are very pleased that you gave us an overall satisfaction rate of 70% - an improvement from our previous year's results. We would like to share the initial findings from the survey with you, and will continue to work with you, so that we can make real changes to our service and to your experience living in our homes.

As a Council, we are committed to listening to and working with our residents. We will be refreshing 'Residents Voice' Scrutiny Group next month (May 2025) to attract new members. This scrutiny group gives our residents a greater voice and opportunity to engage, be a "critical friend", influence, and scrutinise our housing service - turn to page 8 to find out more.

In other news, we have had to make some big decisions about our housing service this year. We are committing to long-term funding towards making vital improvements to our council homes, which will benefit all residents.

However, due to various factors such as high inflation and increased interest rates, we have had to increase rents and service charges for tenants. Many of you will be covered by your benefits - and we will support tenants as well as we can.

If you have any queries or concerns, then please get in touch with our team or myself. We are here to help.

Cllr Sue Sampson

Cabinet Member for Housing
Management and Homelessness



Areas for improvement

The survey is also important for us – and our tenants – because it gives us an insight into issues that you may have about the services we provide. We take your feedback seriously and have identified some areas that we need to improve on, and will continue to work with you to make further improvements.

COMPLAINTS

64% of those surveyed were not happy with our response to complaints handling.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

63% were happy with our response to ASB



30% were not happy with our response to ASB



(7% had a neutral response)

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Handing back your keys

From 1 April 2025, if you are transferring to a new home or permanently vacating your home, you must return all keys (including those held by family members) for your previous home to: Hounslow House, 7 Bath Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 3EB.

All keys can be returned to Reception on the main ground floor on any day, Monday to Friday. Your rent account will be closed on the first Monday following the return of your keys. The reception staff will notify an Allocations team staff member who will take your keys and give you a receipt, which is your proof that the keys have been returned.

- Any returns after midday on Monday will incur a further week's rent charge
- Keys cannot be returned to any other council building
- Failing to return your keys to Hounslow House means that you will continue to be charged rent for your former home

SPOTLIGHT on ASB

We take all acts of anti-social behaviour (ASB) seriously and are committed to taking clear steps to deal with ASB.

WHAT DOES ASB INCLUDE?

ASB includes a range of unacceptable behaviours – from everyday incidents, such as noise nuisance, to serious criminal acts. The types of behaviour considered anti-social include:

- Nuisance
- Cuckooing (a practice where criminals take over a vulnerable person's home)
- Dangerous dogs
- Street or residential drug dealing
- Verbal abuse
- Physical abuse
- Vandalism
- Intimidation or harassment
- Noise nuisance, for example loud music

Improving our complaints process

We are committed to providing our tenants with the best possible service. We always aim to resolve any issues promptly and to your satisfaction. However, if we fall short of your expectations, we want to know about it so we can fix the issue and learn from it.

We are currently working alongside a group of tenants to review our complaint handling, so it would be helpful if you could share any experiences you have had with the complaints process – good or bad. We will also introduce new pages on our

website to make it easier for you to tell us when something goes wrong.

You can share your experiences around the complaints process by emailing engage@hounslow.gov.uk or drop a note to Housing Engagement at Hounslow House.



SECURING YOUR FUTURE

Cabinet approved the updated Tenancy Strategy 2025 (in February 2025), which replaces council housing tenants' existing fixed-term flexible tenancies, with secure lifetime tenancies.

With a secure lifetime tenancy, tenants can enjoy stability, peace of mind, and the ability to establish a long-term home.

This decision comes following a consultation (518 responses) carried out late last year, which found that the majority were in favour of the reintroduction of secure lifetime tenancies – thank you to everyone who took part.

From April 2025, we will stop issuing flexible tenancies. Tenants will have a 12-month introductory tenancy, and if they keep to the terms, they will receive a secure lifetime tenancy.

NEW DROP-IN SESSIONS



Safety Awareness session - Council officer talking to local resident

We have introduced new Safety Awareness drop-in sessions for people living on estates to come and speak to our housing officers and the Police about ASB issues, as well as any tenancy and estate improvement issues. We have already held four sessions in February and March. Upcoming sessions will be shared on the digital screens in our estates and social media.



Report ASB

You can report an ASB incident in person to your housing officer, online, via telephone, or via email. We will respond to your ASB report within two working days.

Your housing officer will agree an action plan with you to how we will progress the case. For this purpose, we may ask you to support us with evidence gathering and cooperation:

- **Completing diary sheets** – This will enable us to demonstrate a pattern of behaviour and the impact that it is having, as well as having the information available as evidence in court (if needed)
- **Reporting to other services** – If criminal behaviour is involved, we may ask that this is reported to the police. For noise nuisance, we may ask that this is reported to the specialist noise team to investigate
- **Mediation** – If there is a dispute between a neighbour and insufficient evidence to clearly show a breach of tenancy, we may ask that you enter mediation with your neighbour. This is a voluntary, non-legal process

- **Restorative justice** – If there is a clear offender, we may offer the opportunity for you to attend restorative justice. This is where the offender will face the person who has been impacted and for them to understand the harm that they have caused within a controlled environment

Providing formal evidence

If we are required to seek legal enforcement against a tenancy, it would strengthen a case if residents, who are impacted by the behaviours, provide us with a written witness statement and are prepared to attend court to give evidence.

We will respect a person's decision if they do not wish to be named in any legal proceedings, however, this may reduce the chances of being successful with any legal applications, particularly if the case is defended.

For more information, visit: beta.hounslow.gov.uk/council-tenants/anti-social-behaviour

Make a report to us by calling **020 8583 4000** or scan QR code



Working with you to improve our estates



The community coming together to plant fruit trees at Harlech Gardens

We continue to invest in our homes and estates, so that they are well maintained, warm, safe, and attractive to residents.

Our ambitious estate improvement programme is driven by the vital feedback provided to us by residents to see where we can do better when it comes to estate improvements.

Communal gardening at Harlech Gardens

In March, we opened a brand-new community garden at Harlech Gardens estate in Heston, giving residents of all ages and abilities the opportunity to grow herbs and vegetables while connecting with their neighbours.

There were a number of residents interested in developing the area, so a fun day was organised to get resident input, and this was very successful. Tenants helped to develop the plan for the garden with the ground's maintenance team, including the design, layout, and key features.

A questionnaire also helped ensure that we had a pool of residents that would be closely involved in maintaining the area, as well as telling us what activities residents would like to see run from the garden.

We are excited to see the herbs and vegetables grow and the wildflowers bloom over the coming months, and the fruit trees start to mature and produce fruit for many years to come.

Bug hotels and wildflower areas

As part of our ongoing commitment to enhance biodiversity and introduce more wildlife and wildflowers into our communities, we've been busy building brand-new bug hotels and dedicated wildflower beds in Housing areas across the borough.

Last year, we created 26 new bug hotels to provide safe havens for mini beasts such as pollinators and those that keep garden pests at bay. Each of these bespoke bug hotels is surrounded by rich pollinating wildflowers for the bees and insects to enjoy.

Scan here to find information on where, when, and what estate improvement works will be taking place



Hounslow's natural SUMMER

Let's grow together to help wildlife thrive



In keeping with what has become a Hounslow tradition, we will be going back to nature this summer with Hounslow's Natural Summer.

Together with our ground's maintenance partner, Lampton Services, we will be letting the grass grow in selected housing areas across the borough over the summer months – to give flowers the chance to bloom, support bees, butterflies, and other pollinators and reduce air and noise pollution from mowing.

Hounslow's Natural Summer will begin at the beginning of May and the selected areas will be left to flourish until the end of October.

Find out more: www.hounslow.gov.uk/natural-summer



CHANGES TO RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES

Cabinet has had to make the difficult decision to increase rents and service charges across our social housing.

Years of funding cuts from governments, high inflation, and increasing demand for services have put severe pressure on council budgets, and we have had to look at ways that we can continue to provide safe and good-quality homes to tenants.

We haven't taken this decision lightly – we know many local families are feeling the pinch, with wages not keeping up with the ongoing high cost of living. We have worked hard to keep these charges as low as possible, to minimise the impact on residents' budgets.

From April, rent increased by 2.7% – an average weekly increase of £3.53.

The new average rent of £134.09 a week is still low compared to similar areas of the country. Service charges increased by an average of 4.8 per cent.

Improving homes for everyone

All rent and service charge goes into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), a ring-fenced pot of money that is used solely to manage and maintain council homes and provide the housing service.

Last year (1 January to 31 December 2024), the Council improved the quality of its homes and estates with core works, to ensure that homes are safe and well-maintained; and enhancement works, to improve estates across the borough and help decarbonise homes:

Completed
38,085
housing repairs

Invested in
3,502
new fire doors

✓ Set up two new growing communal areas in the Hogarth Estate in Chiswick and Harlech Gardens in Heston

Planted
56 more trees on housing HRA areas



HELP AND SUPPORT

There is help and support available for those struggling to pay rent and service charge.

Many tenants will be able to apply to fully cover the additional costs through their benefits, and there is financial support from the Household Support Fund for council tenants who are on lower incomes.

HOUSING STRATEGY consultation coming soon

We will be opening a consultation on our draft Housing Strategy for 2025-2030 soon.

The new strategy will set out our One Hounslow approach to tackling current and projected housing need, with an ambitious vision for the next six years.

Our priorities for addressing the housing crisis and supporting residents in housing need in Hounslow are as follows:

1. To tackle homelessness and rough sleeping
2. Ensure that all council homes are safe, decent, and affordable to live in
3. Raise standards in the private rented sector
4. Work with partners to address issues such as disability and mental health, anti-social behaviour, and domestic abuse and safeguarding, so that residents live healthy, independent and sustainable lives
5. Secure more genuinely affordable homes

You will be able to feed into the strategy, tell us what you think, and ensure that your voice is heard as we refine the Strategy.

SPRING CLEAN



to help maintain a Healthy Home

With Spring finally in the air, we've created a helpful checklist to help prevent condensation, damp, and mould in your home:

- Ventilate your home at regular intervals – in the morning, after cooking, or bathing
- In colder weather, use your heating system to maintain a constant temperature in your home
- Always use your extractor fans in your kitchen and bathroom, especially when cooking and bathing
- Always keep air ventilation ducts clean and clear of obstructions
- Do not dry clothes on radiators
- Wash off mould growth from walls and ceilings with mould remover
- Clean and wipe moisture from windows when it appears
- Leave space between the walls and items, such as beds and sofas, to allow air to circulate

For more advice, visit: www.hounslow.gov.uk/healthy-homes

SCAM WARNING

We have been made aware of a scammer calling residents from an 033 number claiming to be from the Council asking residents if they have any repairs, damp or mould which need attention.

If you receive one of these calls, hang up immediately. Please share this message.

BUILDING SAFETY RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

consultation coming soon

Our residents' safety is the number one priority. The Building Safety Act 2022 requires landlords to have a specific Resident Engagement Strategy for High Rise Residential Buildings (HRBs), and we are opening our consultation on this strategy to residents this month.

During the consultation, we will be asking your views on how and what you would like to be consulted on, plus the details of the contents of the strategy. This is all part of making sure you have a voice in how your buildings are being managed and maintained.

As required by the new legislation, all 26 HRBs have been included on the

Building Safety Register, and we are progressing with producing the Building Safety Case Report which demonstrates how we continue to manage our high-rise buildings in a safe manner.

We are also improving our guidance to residents for fire and building safety on the council website, including a clear method for affected residents to report concerns in respect of Building Safety, and these improvements are expected to go-live in June this year.

You will be able to take part in the consultation here -

talk.hounslow.gov.uk

SAFETY FIRST

e-bikes and e-scooters

Following the recent fire in one of our council houses, we are reminding residents of the dangers of electric scooter and bike batteries.

Whilst e-bikes and e-scooters offer a great way round the borough, if the batteries become damaged or begin to fail, they can start fast and furious fires, damaging your home, furniture, and putting lives in danger.



Fire damage to the outside of council house caused by e-scooter battery

Here are some simple things you can do to prevent one in your home:

- Always follow the manufacturers' instructions when charging
- Unplug your charger once your battery has finished charging
- Always use the correct charger for your battery, and make sure both meet UK safety standards
- Always charge your battery on a hard flat surface to allow proper airflow and cooling
- Store and charge your battery somewhere away from a main through route or exit
- Fit a smoke alarm in the area where you charge your battery
- Make sure you and your family have an escape plan in place in the event of a fire
- Never use a damaged battery
- Never leave your battery charging unattended or while you are asleep
- Never expose your battery to extremes of temperature
- Never block your escape route with e-bikes or e-scooters

Reflecting on 2024

Last year was jam-packed with events. We celebrated the diversity and multiculturalism of the Hounslow borough with cultural events to see in Chinese New Year, Christmas, Diwali, Easter, Ramadan, and Vaisakhi. The pictures speak for themselves. Fun, food, music, and community.



Children making Easter and Vaisakhi cards for their loved ones

February: Chinese New Year was celebrated in style at the Oriel Community Centre in Feltham, with card making, everything in red – in Chinese culture, red symbolises prosperity, joy, and good fortune – and lots of good food.

April: A fusion festival was held to celebrate both Vaisakhi, the Sikh new harvest festival and Easter. The line-up included Bollywood dances, a culturally diverse menu for both cultures and, of course, Easter eggs for the children. Cllrs Marina Sharma and Cllr Rhys Williams attended this special event.

October: Residents across the borough, along with Cllr Allan Joseph, came together to celebrate Diwali. There was a real sense of community spirit at this festival, with residents cooking and bringing food from home, as well as Rangoli coloured powder on the floor to add a blast of colour, and card making.

November: For Health Awareness Week, we held an event at Mission Hall Community Centre in Brentford where residents discovered the ways semantic yoga and meditation can enhance their overall health and wellbeing – a big thank you to Roya Massumi who led the one-hour session.

December: To help our residents who attend the social café at Mission Hall get into the Christmas spirit, a community-led arts and crafts event was held. Residents displayed their arts and crafts, from crochet and cardmaking to knitting. Father Christmas (one of our estates improvement officers) was also spotted handing out presents.



Cllr Sue Sampson and Cllr Allen Joseph celebrating Chinese New Year



The housing and estate improvements team meeting local residents at Summer on the Green in Convent Way

HAVE A QUESTION?

Come along to our drop-in sessions where you will be able to meet your Housing Officer and Tenancy Sustainment Officer. No appointment needed.

Bellamy House 16 Biscoe Close, Heston, TW5 0UX	Monday 2pm - 4pm Wednesday 10am - 12pm
Flaxman House Devonshire Street, Chiswick, W4 2JP	Tuesday 10am - 12pm Friday 2pm - 4pm
Oriel Centre 6a Chamberlain Walk, Feltham, TW13 6YG	Wednesday 10am - 12pm
Haweswater House Summerwood Road, Isleworth TW7 7QS	Monday 2pm - 4pm Friday 10am - 12pm
Feltham Library 210 The Centre High Street, Feltham TW13 4GU	Thursday 10am - 1pm
Feltham Hub Feltham Assembly Hall, Hounslow Rd, Feltham, TW14 9DN	Tuesday 2pm - 5pm
Brentford Hub Brentford Library, 8 Boston Manor Road, Brentford TW8 9LF	Friday 10am - 2pm
Cranford & Heston Hub Beaver's Children Centre and Library, 103 Salisbury Road, Hounslow TW4 7NW	Wednesday 10.30am - 2.30pm
Cranford Hub Cranford Community College High Street, Hounslow TW5 9PD	Thursday 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Save the date

We held two Summer on the Green events last year at Edensor Gardens in Chiswick and Convent Way in Heston. There were lots of fun activities, such as face painting, Smoothie Bike – complete with bike, bar, staff, and smoothies – and Dr Bike. We were also there to support residents with their welfare, benefits, and tenancy management needs, as well as any anti-social behaviour concerns.

Summer on the Green will return in August 2025.

Friday 8 August, 2 – 6pm

Redwood Estate, Cranford

Thursday 14 August 2 – 6pm

Fraser House in Brentford Towers, Brentford

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Resident Engagement Officer

Could you bring residents' views central to the work of the Council? We have a short-term, paid role for someone who can confidently support tenants and leaseholders to engage with each other and officers to help improve services and their living environment. This contract would last until October 2025. To find out more see this job advert [hounslow.gov.uk/haps](https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/haps) and make sure you apply before **30 April 2025**.

HAVE YOUR SAY WITH RESIDENTS VOICE



We recognise the important role that our tenants play in helping us improve and shape our service standards and performance. We will be refreshing 'Residents Voice' scrutiny group next month (May 2025), to attract new members.

Tenant scrutiny is an opportunity for tenants to take a deep dive into different areas of housing and look at the processes that housing management use in delivering their services to tenants.

We asked David Squire, the new Chair of Residents Voice, why he got involved with tenant scrutiny.

He said:

"As the current Chair of Residents Voice scrutiny group and as a local resident, I am pleased that at long last we have been given a chance to scrutinise the Local Authority and the service it provides to its residents. We have been supported by officials, given

access to data on a level never achieved before. This is a new beginning for us residents to work with the Council to bring greater influence on behalf of the residents."

Taking a deep dive

By joining Residents Voice, you will work as part of a team with other residents to give us an independent view of our policies, highlighting what works well and what needs improving.

We have already held two workshops with our 'Residents Voice' members to scrutinise our Repairs and Ground Maintenance systems.

In January, we began a scrutiny of our repairs and maintenance service. The first part of the workshop focused on resident experience – from searching for information and reporting a repair to following up on works. We learned that communication is a big area of frustration for our tenants.

We have taken on board feedback raised by the group and have made some improvements...

You said:

It is hard to get through to us on the phone.

✓ **We did:**

We have improved the way that we allocate our staff to telephone, emails, and online forms, making it easier for you to be able to speak to colleagues in the contact centre.

You said:

When reporting a communal repair, we don't always get updates.

✓ **We did:**

We are looking into adding contact details for work orders for communal repairs, so we can keep you updated, even if the contact is to explain that we are still investigating.



YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!

This is a call out to anyone that wants to get involved with shaping the housing service you receive.

Are you a good communicator or listener?

Are you able to challenge in a constructive way?

Maybe you have an interest in analysing and interpreting data?

All of these are skills would make you a great fit. If you would like to get involved, email

engage@hounslow.gov.uk.

