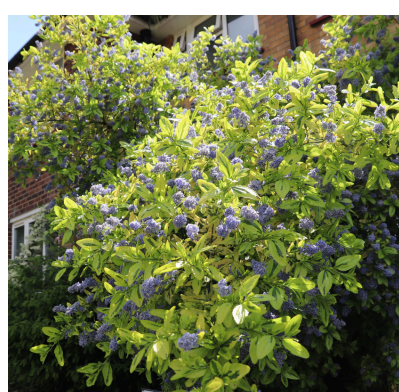
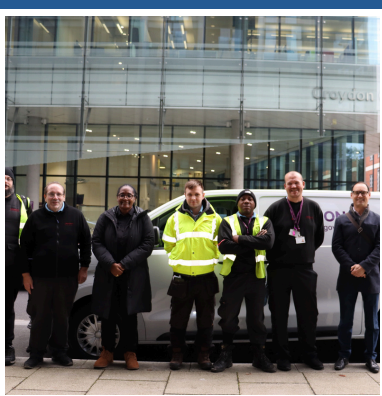


# CROYDON HOUSING Annual Report

2023/  
2024

Housing report to our council tenants & leaseholders



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# Foreword

Once again, I am very pleased to report on another year of service to you in this Annual Report 2023-24.

Many of you will be familiar with the challenges faced by the housing service that came to prominence in 2021 with the clear failures that led to the appalling living conditions suffered by residents at Regina Road.

It became clear in this investigation that there was a serious broader issue of widespread disregard for the priorities and needs of you the residents as well as a long-term lack of investment in the Council's housing stock. This coupled with poor performance of the then supplier of our contact centre and repairs meant that the Housing Service was no longer hearing your voice.

My report this year is one of progress and of hope for the future.

In response to the evidence at Regina Road and poor housing services delivered elsewhere, the Council developed a major programme of change in your housing services. We now have a new leadership team which is working with residents to bring about substantive improvements in service. This will not happen overnight, but we are putting in place the real building blocks of change and ongoing improvement.

None of this can happen effectively without us working closely with you. Tenants and leaseholders were instrumental in the creation of the programme and have played a crucial and central part in the projects as they have developed (see section Residents Engagement).

This report sets out some of the many achievements we have made together so far. These include, new repairs contractors, a new Housing Repairs Contact centre for you to report your repair requests, a new Housing IT system to underpin all key housing services, an extensive programme of stock condition surveys so that we can plan major improvements to your blocks, and crucially a programme of culture change and customer care training for all housing staff.

We have a good relationship with the Government's Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) with whom we share progress on the improvements within the housing service. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, that became law in August 2023 requires the RSH to make sure landlords provide homes that are safe, warm and well maintained, and deliver good quality services to tenants and that we hear and respond to your needs and concerns.

Your safety is the number one priority for us, and I am pleased to see strong performance in the areas of compliance with safety measures. These are included in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) that we have been collecting for a year and are published throughout this report and online on the Council's website.

These measure your satisfaction with our services and are another key guide for us in the services we need to improve. There will be many challenges ahead, but I hope that this Annual Report 2023-24 provides for you an open and honest account of where we are now with your housing service and our progress with where I know you would like it to be.



**Susmita Sen**

Corporate director of housing

**Councillor Lynne Hale**

Deputy Executive Mayor of Croydon

# Involving residents

It is clear that in the past we have not always listened to residents sufficiently or treated them with the respect they deserve. This was a failing in our housing services that we have been working hard to improve.

In December 2022 the Council formally adopted the Residents' Charter which was developed with residents and overseen by members of the Tenant and Leaseholders' Panel, to give residents a stronger voice in the development of policy and decisions that affected them as tenants and leaseholders.

The key principles of the Residents' Charter include treating residents with respect, being transparent with our residents about how we are performing, giving residents a voice and encouraging meaningful decision-making activities.



# New Consumer Standards

From 1 April 2024, there are new consumer standards that set out the Government's requirements of social housing landlords like Croydon Council. These require landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, when necessary, influence decision-making and hold their landlord to account. We fully agree with this approach and have built these expectations into our new Resident Engagement Strategy.

66

It has been a year of real progress. We have worked hard to improve how we support tenants and make homes safer and better managed.

There is still more to do, but we are listening, learning and staying committed to giving you the service you deserve.

99

**Mary Larbie**

Director of housing management

# Resident Engagement Strategy

The development and adoption of a new Housing Resident Engagement Strategy is a key project within Housing's programme of change and improvement that provides the essential engagement, influence and transparency for residents in the future.

The strategy was co-designed with residents. During Summer 2023, the Council held twenty sessions with tenants, leaseholders, staff, and partners to identify what residents want and require from our housing services. The feedback from these sessions helped us to develop the changes that you wanted to see and which we have reflected in our programme of improvement.

The draft priorities and objectives also reflect feedback from tenants and leaseholders received through the consultation on rent increases that was held in December 2023. The consultation identified the following key priorities of tenants and leaseholders: keeping neighbourhoods clean and tidy, improving the repairs service, tackling anti-social behaviour, and improving neighbourhood safety. The Resident Engagement Strategy is due at Council's Cabinet in July 2024.

Thank you to all tenants and leaseholders who have worked with us over the last year. Listening to residents through the Housing Improvement Board, and many other forums (see below) has been a hugely collaborative and productive experience.

## Residents Influence and Participation

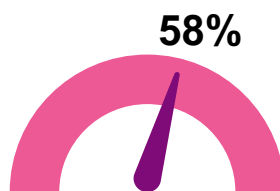
The following changes and improvements have been made in collaboration with residents during 2023-24:



Around 500 residents and partners helped develop the Housing Strategy



Resident Engagement and Asset Management strategies shaped with residents, due at Cabinet July 2024



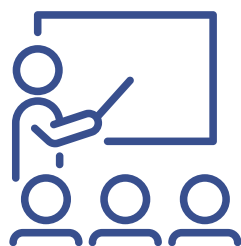
Recent feedback showed tenants feel informed, but there's still room to improve



Around 400 residents and partners helped shape the Homelessness Strategy, due at Cabinet July 2024



Annual rent consultation carried out with residents



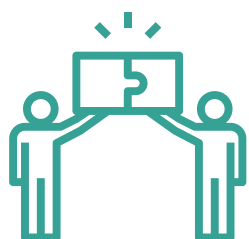
Customer service training started May 2024 – residents helped choose the provider.



Policies and procedures – in consultation with the Resident's Reading Group



Procurement of three repairs contractors with residents involved in the procurement process



Improved Voids Lettable Standard designed with residents and now live

43%



Recent feedback shows tenants feel heard, but we're working to do even more



Capital Delivery contract review – residents involved in feedback sessions

58%



Recent feedback shows tenants feel respected, but we want to keep getting better

# How we use your money

It is important that your Council Housing service provides good value for money. That's why we work hard to manage our finances carefully.

In 2023/24 we collected **£81.4 million** in rent from tenants

This represented **97%** of all rent due in that year.

Service charges income was **£6.5 million**

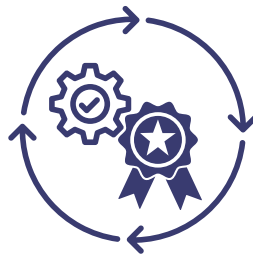
**In 2023/2024 we spent:**



**£35.4m  
on improving  
homes**



**23.5m on  
day to day  
repairs**



**£31m on  
managing  
our service\***



**15.6m on depreciation,  
bad debts, debt  
management\*\***

\*This includes tenancy management, income collection, supporting tenants, and tenant involvement.

\*\*These costs are funded by a capital contribution from the Housing Revenue Account reserves. These costs are not funded by rental income.

## Paying your rent

The rent you pay helps us to maintain your home, improve council estates and provide support when you need it most. To make it easier to stay on top of your payments, we advise that you set up a direct debit by calling **020 8726 6100, choose option 2.**

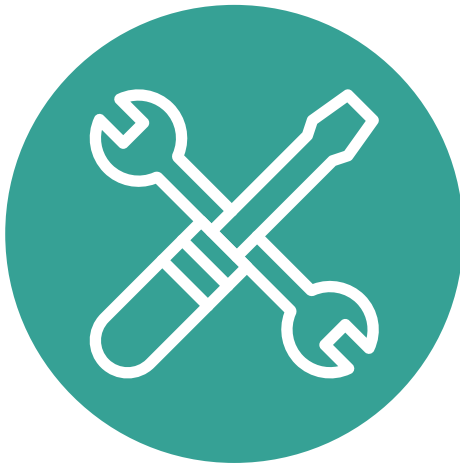
If you are finding it hard to keep up with your rent payments, there is support available. The rent hardship fund is there for council tenants facing financial difficulties. If you need support, please get in touch by emailing:

**[councilrents@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:councilrents@croydon.gov.uk)** or calling - **020 8726 6100** and asking for the **rent recovery team.**



# Maintaining your home

## Day to day repairs service



Repairs completion times are improving, but we know we still have a way to go in providing the service you would like to see.

A new dedicated Damp and Mould (D&M) team has been established within the repairs service. The Damp and Mould Manager has reviewed our policy and service offer, and residents are being involved in this work over coming months.

## New repairs contact centre



The Council's new housing repairs contact centre went live in August 2023 and now has a full complement of permanent and fully trained staff. Satisfaction with the service is rising as we answer your calls more quickly and effectively.

We can also now keep you better informed about your repair appointments – you will now receive a text message when you raise their repair, a further text message two days before the appointment; a further text message on the day of the appointment and you can track your operative on the way to the job via the contractor's portal. You can also reschedule appointments online.

## Stock condition surveys



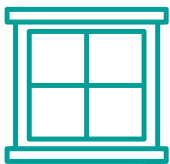
We have been undertaking stock condition surveys of the Council's housing stock to enable us to plan an extensive programme of work to improve your homes. By March 2024 we had completed surveys of 40% of all council housing with an aim to achieve 80% completion by April 2025. Planned works of window replacements, new roofs, boilers and so on is a much more effective way of maintaining your homes in good repair than through responsive repairs.

# Maintaining your home

In 2023/24, we carried out works to **3,183 homes** and spent **£26.6 million** on repairs and improvements. We also asked 1,000 tenants for feedback as part of our quarterly Tenant Satisfaction Measures. These questions focused on home maintenance and repairs, helping us understand how we're doing and where we need to improve.



For the year 2023/2024, the following works were carried out:



We have replaced **232 windows**  
(225 properties, 7 communal windows for blocks)



We have replaced **215 kitchens and bathrooms**



We have replaced **149 doors**



We have replaced **596 boilers**

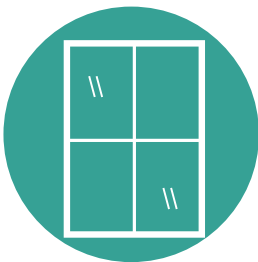
To improve energy efficiency, replacements were made to:



Boilers



Loft insulation



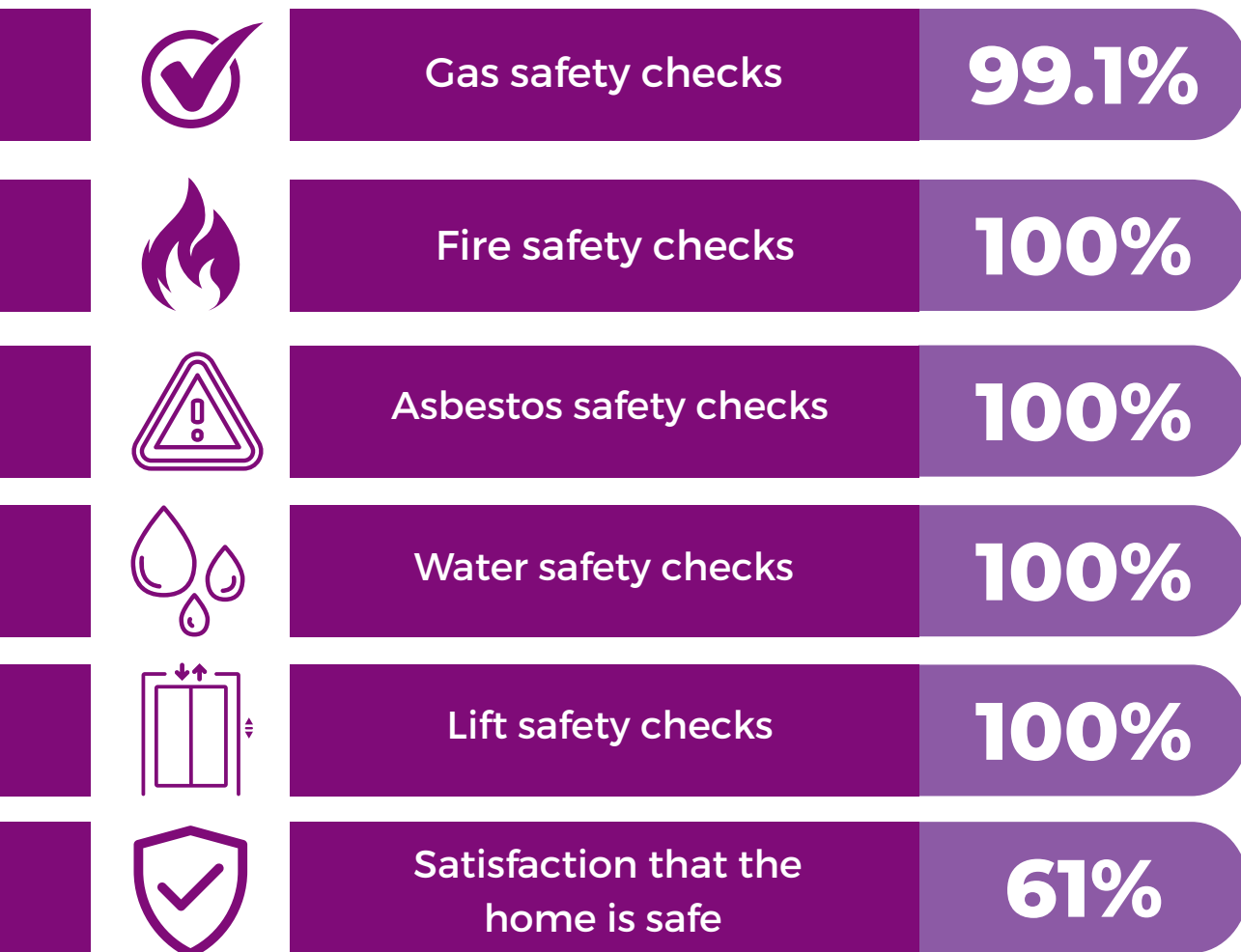
Windows/doors



Roofs

## Keeping you safe

Keeping residents safe is our main priority. Our dedicated team work to cover all areas of legislation and building safety compliance. Our performance on carrying out safety checks in 2023-24 was:



### In 2023/24 we have:

- Expanded the building safety team to ensure we could meet all our responsibilities
- We started work on bringing all elements of safety work into one fire & building safety team
- Undertook fire risk assessments across 100% of your homes
- Extra focus was given to our extra care homes to ensure our most vulnerable residents are kept safe
- Set up regular meetings with the London Fire Brigade and with the local station commander to ensure we worked in partnership

### In 2024/25 we will:

- Complete the set up of a fire safety team and a building safety team.
- Develop a wider fire & building safety policy
- Reprogramme the fire risk assessment schedule to ensure that we maintain our 100% record
- Focus on our Large Panel System (LPS) homes
- Start a programme of installation of internal fire/smoke detection to cover all of our flats
- Carry out training to ensure we have adequate officers to carry out person centred fire risk assessments and personal emergency evacuation plans where needed
- Continue our accelerated drive on completing fire risk assessment actions
- Aim to carry out a joint exercise with the London Fire Brigade

# Managing your neighbourhood

Keeping your communal areas safe, welcoming, well maintained and free from antisocial behaviour.



Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) cases relative to the size of the landlord

129\*



Satisfaction with communal area cleaning and maintenance

51%



Satisfaction that the Council are making positive contributions to the neighbourhoods

49%



Satisfaction with the Council's approach to handling ASB

49%

\*Number of ASB cases reported in 2023-24

**In 2023/2024:**



Over 200 young people attended 'Summer of Fun' activities at Tollers Lane, Regina Road, Tolgate Estate, Longheath Gardens and Handcroft Road.



All high-cost refurbishment of empty properties are being completed or have been let in 2023-24.



£15,900 funding was obtained for tree planting, with a total of 170 trees planted in 2023



**Regina Road** regeneration project - £54m funding allocated by the Greater London Authority (GLA)

# Effective handling of complaints:

We are aware that the complaints process needs improving and we are working hard to achieve that.



Number of stage 1 complaints received per 1000 households

**74.6**



Proportion of stage 1 complaints responded to within complaints handling code timescales

**20.7%**



Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints

**26%**

In 2023 / 2024 we have:



Improved investigations to ensure all elements of the complaints are investigated



Improved our response times better to comply with our complaints handling timescales



Improved the quality of responses at both stages of the process

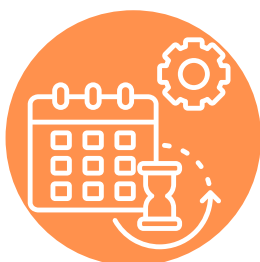
However, we do appreciate that there is more work to do to further improve our complaints handling which includes.



Improved communication with residents regarding their complaints



A full and detailed formal acknowledgment of concerns detailing the complaint definition to be sent within five working days



Further improvements needed to respond to you within our complaints code timescales



Introduce a learning framework to ensure that we actively learn from your complaints

We are working through a complaints improvement plan to ensure that we can improve our complaints handling, put things right, learn and improve our services.



# Thank You

We welcome your feedback if you have any comments on this annual report.

Please contact us at:

**[residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk)**

or call: **020 8726 6000, ext. 44524**



[www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)



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