

# Residents' Annual Report 2023/24



LONDON BOROUGH OF  
**HARROW**

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# Foreword

## Cllr Mina Parmar

Cabinet member for Housing Services

Welcome to the London Borough of Harrow's Annual Report 2023-2024, showing the performance of the Housing Services department over the past year.

### **Our Housing Vision is:**

**"Working together to deliver affordable housing and a high-quality customer experience that puts the needs and wellbeing of residents first".**

We acknowledge how important it is that we communicate in a transparent manner, and ensure we are taking your views into account. To ensure we are doing this we:

- ✓ Started organising regular drop-in sessions across the borough open to everyone
- ✓ Held Housing Matters webinars every other month open to everyone
- ✓ Held the Housing Options event in June 2023 for households living in temporary and emergency accommodation
- ✓ Opened the Gayton Road centre in April 2023 where some staff in social care and Housing Needs are based

One of our key challenges in 2023/24 has been trying to manage a smooth change over to our new repairs contractor, United Living in June 2023, as well as moving to a new IT customer management system two months before this. We accept we have a lot more work to ensure we achieve our performance targets.

Lastly, we are delighted that after several years development, residents moved into their new homes as part of phase 1 regeneration of the Grange Farm estate. 87 of the 89 homes are inhabited, with one shared ownership and one shared equity sale about to go through.

## Erica Fontaine

Chair of Residents' Board

As we reflect on the past year, 2024 has been a time of both considerable challenge and notable progress. The difficult economic climate, compounded by the ongoing cost of living crisis presented significant hurdles for our residents and the London Borough of Harrow.

In this regard, residents living in temporary accommodation highlights the urgent need for delivering more social housing in the borough.

The findings of the Housing Ombudsman Service clearly identified significant areas for improving service delivery, which have been accepted by the council. Hopefully, the green shoots of improvement will be helped by the transition to a new repairs contractor for voids and repairs and with the launch of a new online housing account.

Amidst these challenges, we have seen many successes. Last summer's 'Week of Action' saw residents actively participating in shaping the future of our housing services, with impressive engagement levels. Staff went door-to-door, demonstrating ongoing commitment to a forward-thinking, resident-led approach. In addition, workshops across the borough, including the November 2024 'Your Voice, Your Views' session and the bi-monthly 'Housing Matters' webinars, have continued to foster meaningful dialogue and engagement.

The successful completion of the Homesafe3 project, which saw 434 flats across 64 blocks receive essential fire safety upgrades, was a major milestone. Additionally, 56 kitchens and 59 bathrooms were refurbished as part of the 2023/24 programme, ensuring homes are safer and more comfortable.

Looking ahead, residents want their voices to be heard as we work together to address their concerns and needs in the drive for meaningful change.



# How are we performing?

The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced a new set of indicators to measure the performance of all social housing landlords. The indicators are known as the Tenant Satisfaction Measures or TSMs and cover issues of importance to tenants such as satisfaction with services, performance on repairs, safety and complaints.

Apart from the 12 tenant perception TSMs, there are also a range of management information TSMs that we are required to submit. We can compare our performance to other organisations using data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

ONS published TSM data from 29 London councils and ranked them from best to worst. We have compared our performance with the average for these London councils. Here are the TSMs and our performance against them.

## Tenant Satisfaction Survey (January 2024: tenant perception)

Harrow year end 2023/24 compared with 29 London councils (average)

	Harrow	London Average
Overall satisfaction with the landlord	59.3%	59.3%
Landlord listens to tenants' views and acts on them	51.8%	49.9%
Landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	63.8%	66.0%
Landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	67.4%	68.2%
Their home is well maintained	58.8%	59.7%
Overall repairs service over the last 12 months	62.6%	62.5%
Time taken to complete their most recent repair	61.8%	59.1%
Provides a home that is safe	66.5%	67.2%
Landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood	57.2%	62.0%
Landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	59.7%	62.8%
Landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	53.3%	55.7%
Landlord's approach to handling complaints	19.1%	25.5%



## Management Information TSMs (as at March 2024)

Harrow year end 2023/24 compared with 29 London councils (average)

	Harrow	London Average
Number of stage one complaints per 1,000 homes	52.0	76.9
% stage one complaints responded to in target time	79.5%	71.1%
Number of stage two complaints per 1,000 homes	8.8	14.1
% stage two complaints responded to in target time	88.1%	62.6%
Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	6.9%	12.0%
% non-emergency repairs completed in target time	88.9%	78.1%
% emergency repairs completed in target time	96.2%	88.6%
Gas safety checks	99.9 %	99.6%
Fire risk assessments	98.8%	99.3%
Asbestos safety checks	100.0%	97.1%
Water safety checks	90.7%	94.8%
Lift safety checks	77.3%	92.9%
Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1,000 homes	32.1	43.4
Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involved hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes	3.1	1.0

Coffee morning at Goddards Court Sheltered Scheme



# 2023/24 highlights

## Launched our new Housing Online Account

After several years without a housing portal, we were delighted to launch the new portal in April 2024, enabling 24/7 access to reporting and tracking repairs, viewing rent transactions and identifying the relevant housing officers.

## Increased the number of visits to tenants

In 2023/24 we completed 1078 housing officer visits and 1001 visits to people with additional needs and this is helping us tailor services by getting to know you better. We are starting to collect information about all household members as this helps us prioritise the response to damp and mould enquiries.

## Regeneration of Grange Farm estate

From October 2023 tenants and shared owners started moving into their new homes, and the developer Higgins, has been busy ensuring all snagging issues are dealt with. We held a Meet Your Neighbour Event in July 2024 where neighbours could come and meet each other in the central courtyard.

### 2023/24 London Borough of Harrow Flagship Actions

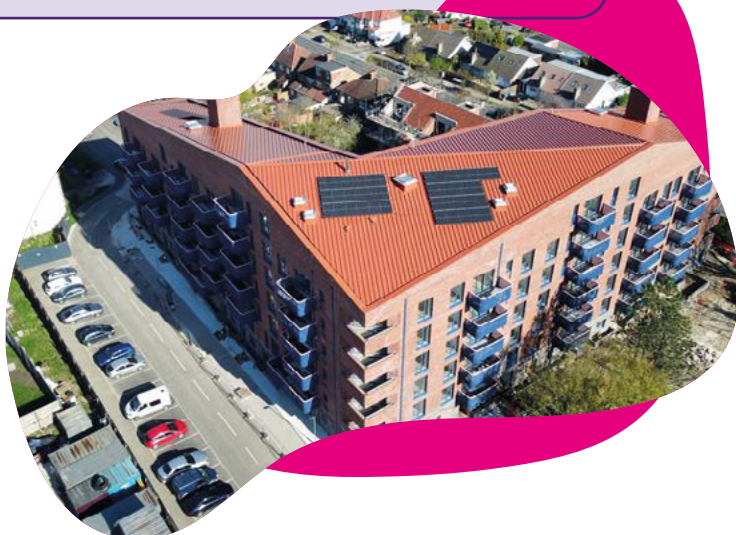
Source: Cabinet Report February 2023

- 1 Deliver Phase One of the Grange Farm estate regeneration**  
Harrow's largest estate regeneration – by the end of 2023, delivering 89 quality affordable homes. **GREEN**
- 2 Development of our new customer centre at Gayton Road** for people at risk of homelessness or concerns about vulnerable residents. **GREEN**
- 3 Start construction on Milton Road, resulting in 100% high quality, affordable housing**, which includes family-sized homes. **GREEN**
- 4 Install full fibre internet to all council homes and include Grange Farm Community Hall and Northolt Road Community Hall by the end of March 2024**, helping our council tenants be more connected. **GREEN**
- 5 Respond to 90% of complaints in 15 working days**, improving our responsiveness and customer experience. **AMBER**

## Electrical safety checks

We received a Notice in April 2023 from the Regulator about the low level of Electrical installation condition reports (EICR's) completed. By the end of March 2024 we had completed 67.3% (3225 out of a total of 4793) based on a rolling 10-year programme. We are now well on the way to achieving our target of 100% by March 2025, at which point we will move to a 5-year rolling programme.

Residents have moved into Grange Farm phase 1 of the estate regeneration



# Communication and engagement

We acknowledge that our customer service team has been under pressure to respond in a timely manner to calls during 2023/24, particularly as the team faced a 17% increase in the number of calls compared with the previous year.

## How residents contacted Housing Services in 2023/24

Number of contacts	2023/24	2022/23	
Number of calls to the contact centre	76,680	65,344	▲
Number of emails to our contact centre	15,968	17,700	▼
Number of e-forms contacts	8,029	6,166	▲
Website visits	23,088	24,331	▼
Total contacts	123,765	113,541	▲

- An increase of 9% in total contacts compared to the previous year, mostly due to a higher number of phone calls
- Almost two-thirds of all contacts were made by phone
- Only 25% of all contacts are online

## Communication and engagement opportunities grew

### 1 More drop-in sessions

We started our first drop-in sessions in March 2023 to give residents the opportunity to talk face-face about the rent and service charge increases. Residents could also attend to discuss any issues they might be having with their home – this could be outstanding repair issues and tenancy issues such as anti-social behaviour, fly tipping etc. With more than 40 residents attending each session we then moved to monthly drop-in sessions across the borough which were advertised in Homing In magazine. We held 12 sessions during 2023/24.

### 2 Regular Housing Matters webinars

We held 6 webinars online in 2023/24 open to all tenants and leaseholders. The average attendance varied from 20 to 30. Dates were advertised in Homing In magazine with a follow up email invitation sent to all tenants and leaseholders whose email address we have on record. If you have not advised us of your up-to-date email address, please do so when you next contact your Housing Officer.

### 3 Homing In magazine

We published 4 editions of Homing In magazine during 2023/24 and these can be found on the website: [www.harrow.gov.uk/homingin](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/homingin).

### Looking forward

**Encourage online take up** From April 2024 onwards we would expect to see more residents contacting us online using the housing portal or a web form. We were pleased that by December 2024, 1460 tenants had registered on the housing portal.

**Week of Action** To up our level of engagement with tenants and leaseholders, we delivered our first 'Week of Action' door knocking exercise in June 2024. For one week, all housing staff were involved in the initiative, talking to tenants and leaseholders. As part of this exercise we visited 9 estates and 6 sheltered schemes and responded to a number of service requests.



Daffodils planted by Terry Mackin at  
Harrow Weald Park Sheltered scheme

# Your voice counts

There are a lot of ways you can help shape our housing service, no matter how much time you can spare, we have an opportunity for you in a way that suits your needs.

## Apply to join the Residents’ Board

We have an active Residents’ Board that meets face to face monthly, chaired by a resident and attended by the Director of Housing. All changes to policies are discussed by members, performance trends are analysed, and service suggestions are recommended.

## Shape your neighbourhood

### Estate Champions

In 2024 we introduced the role of resident Estate Champions, who can volunteer to be the eyes and ears on their estate. This is now an active group which meets online, to discuss issues and to share reports. Currently there are eight Champions representing different estates.

### Neighbourhood Grants

You can apply for a ‘Flying Start’ grant, usually up to £350, for your local community. In 2023/24 we funded six applications: five went to sheltered schemes and one to a charity, Village and Plate which ran a surplus food project from the Julie Cook Hall for a few months.

### Resident’s Group

There is currently one active Residents Group called Eastcote Lane TRA (ELTRA) covering South Harrow.

### Have your say on specific issues

**Complaints Panel\*** – residents collaborated with us on the new Complaints and Compliments Policy, Compensation Policy and complaint template letters

**Asset Management Panel\*** – meets bi-monthly to receive information about planned investment works and to ask questions

**Leasehold Improvement Group** – meets bi-monthly to review the leasehold service

**Surveys** – January 2024, 585 tenants responded to the Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

\* These Panels were discontinued in 2024/25 whilst officers and the Residents’ Board review how to work with residents to scrutinise services.

## Looking forward

- June 2024 we used Housemark’s online survey during the Week of Action (350+ surveys)
- November 2024, we ran a ‘Your Voice, Your Views’ survey to find out your priorities for allocating housing income (91 responses).

To find out more about all of the above involvement opportunities: [www.harrow.gov.uk/rinvolve](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/rinvolve)

## TSMs

Tenant satisfaction that views are listened to and acted upon	51.8%
Tenant satisfaction that they are kept informed about things that matter to them	63.8%
Tenant agreement that they are treated fairly and with respect	67.4%





Staff talking to residents as part of  
the Week of Action in June 2024

# Responding to your complaints

When we embarked on our housing improvement programme last year, we knew we needed to improve our complaints process.

**April 2023 to March 2024 we have:**

- ✓ Reviewed the end-to-end complaints process to identify further opportunities to help us improve how we respond to and learn from complaints
- ✓ Introduced a new IT system called Cx in April 2024, to improve how we manage and monitor complaints
- ✓ Held complaint handling training for relevant staff
- ✓ Investigated several 'deep dive' complaints to learn from them and instigate process changes
- ✓ Increased the size of the complaints team to manage, respond to and learn from complaints
- ✓ Reviewed the learning from 14 maladministration reports from the Housing Ombudsman
- ✓ Followed up the specific repair issues raised by tenants in surveys.

**Looking forward**

- ➔ During 2024 we called back most complainants to check if the agreed actions had been delivered or not
- ➔ 144 tenants responded to questions around our complaint handling performance, as we strive to understand where we fall down and to improve in this area (June 2024)
- ➔ We consulted on and published both the Housing complaints and compliments policy and our Compensation policy (June 2024)
- ➔ We published our Code for Complaints Handling on the website (June 2024)

**TSMs**

% stage 1 complaints responded to in target (tenants only)	79.5%
% stage 2 complaints responded to in target (tenants only)	88.1%
Number of stage 1 complaints received per 1000 homes	52
Number of stage 2 complaints received per 1000 homes	8.8



# Improving your homes and estates, including energy efficiency

The Decent Homes Standard is the minimum level of safety and quality that social homes must meet. Over 93.1% of our homes meet this standard and we are working to increase this to a higher level.

We deliver a rolling programme of capital works all over the borough. These are planned, large-scale works that include things like roofs, windows, communal lighting, lifts and heating. In 2023/24 we spent £7.8 million on our capital works programme.

We are also working to improve energy performance in our homes and provide improvements – such as insulation and window glazing – to help tenants in the least energy efficient homes save money and live more comfortably.

Capital works are vital to keep your homes and buildings in good condition, but the rising cost of materials and labour are having a significant impact on our leasehold residents. We are reviewing how we manage these costs to make sure we offer the best value to leaseholders while delivering much-needed work.

## April 2023 to March 2024 we have:

- ✓ We completed 56 kitchen and 59 bathroom refurbishments, replaced 136 windows, installed 113 new boilers and fitted 32 new roofs
- ✓ Published our Asset Management Strategy 2023
- ✓ Homesafe 3 programme has continued – with a total improvement plan for 434 flats within 65 blocks getting full fire safety improvements – new block front entrance door, fire doors, alarm detection system, video door entry and handsets, block emergency lighting and 35 new bin areas
- ✓ Obtained a £2.1 million government social housing decarbonisation grant + £3 million from London Borough of Harrow to start decarbonisation works to improve energy efficiency of up to 236 council homes
- ✓ Installing ground source heat pumps at Alma Court and Meadfield Sheltered Schemes
- ✓ Obtained Transport for London funding to set up 10 bike racks on council estates.

## Looking forward

- ✓ Increased the capital works budget from £8.4 million in 2023/24 to £11.4 million in 2024/25
- ✓ Installing solar canopies in the gardens of seven council homes
- ✓ Envelopment improvement works to 26 flats at Mountside (includes new roofing, communal doors and windows, communal decorations, lateral mains and level-access paving throughout the estate plus a perimeter fence)
- ✓ Planned envelopment work to 15 flats at Amy Johnson Court, Edgware
- ✓ Roof renewal at Tapley Court and Park Gates, Arundel and Treganna Court
- ✓ Continuing with our 2-year window and door and kitchen/bathrooms programme.

## TSMs

Proportion of homes that do not meet the decent home standard	6.9%
Tenant satisfaction that their home is well maintained	58.8%

United Living donation to MyYard Charity for their Christmas party in South Harrow



# Improving our repairs service

During 2023/24 there was a strong focus on contract management. The savings made on monitoring the contracts were able to be spent on the increasing costs of dealing with damp and mould enquiries and catching up on outstanding electrical tests. Surveyors also moved over to using the SharePoint system to save inspection reports, a more accessible IT system.

In 2023/24 we spent £7.3 million on repairs, voids and compliance. This was similar to the 2022/23 budget.

Alongside this work the focus has been on managing disrepair cases and getting a more robust procedure in place to handle damp and mould enquiries.

We ended our contract with Wates and Slade at the end June 2024 and moved to working with just one repairs and voids contractor, United Living.

Work is underway to improve the integration so that tenants can raise repairs requests more easily. This will make the process better for residents, council and contractors.

We are pleased to report an improved performance in getting our standard re-lets fit for letting from 69.5 days in 2022/23 to 61.6 days in 2023/24.

## Looking forward

- ✓ Committed to working closer with a contractor called Dwelling Doctors, to investigate and remedy damp and mould enquiries and getting ready for Awaab's law
- ✓ Improve the online housing account function for residents and council staff alike
- ✓ Revisit the Repairs Charter now that we have our new contractor in place
- ✓ United Living has started putting some social value initiatives in place.

## TSMs

Tenant satisfaction with repair service over the last 12 months	62.6%
Tenant satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	61.8%
Non-emergency repairs completed in target	88.9%
Emergency repairs completed in target	96.2%

# Tackling damp and mould

We have a cross-council damp and mould project team focusing on improving the way the council records, triages and treats damp and mould enquiries. One of the outcomes is the damp and mould leaflet on our website – [www.harrow.gov.uk/dampandmould](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/dampandmould)



Our repairs team inspects and manages all reports of damp and mould to ensure residents get the work they need in a timely manner and makes sure that the causes of damp and mould are monitored.

Our repairs team has dealt with 1040 cases of damp and mould, with reports coming to us from tenants, surveys and inspections, our housing officers, and online referrals as well as from local GPs. The team prioritise swift resolution of the issues and monitoring of problems so that they do not return and prioritise households with vulnerabilities.

- 1** Within 24 hours of receiving a report of damp or mould, the team will contact the resident and arrange an inspection.
- 2** Within three working days of the team contacting the resident, a surveyor will carry out an inspection (dependent on resident availability).
- 3** Within the following seven working days a mould wash will be completed on affected areas (also dependent on resident availability).

**1040**  
completed damp and  
mould cases in 2023/34

**83%**  
increase in cases  
compared to 2022/2023  
(568 cases)

**83%**  
damp and mould cases  
completed on time

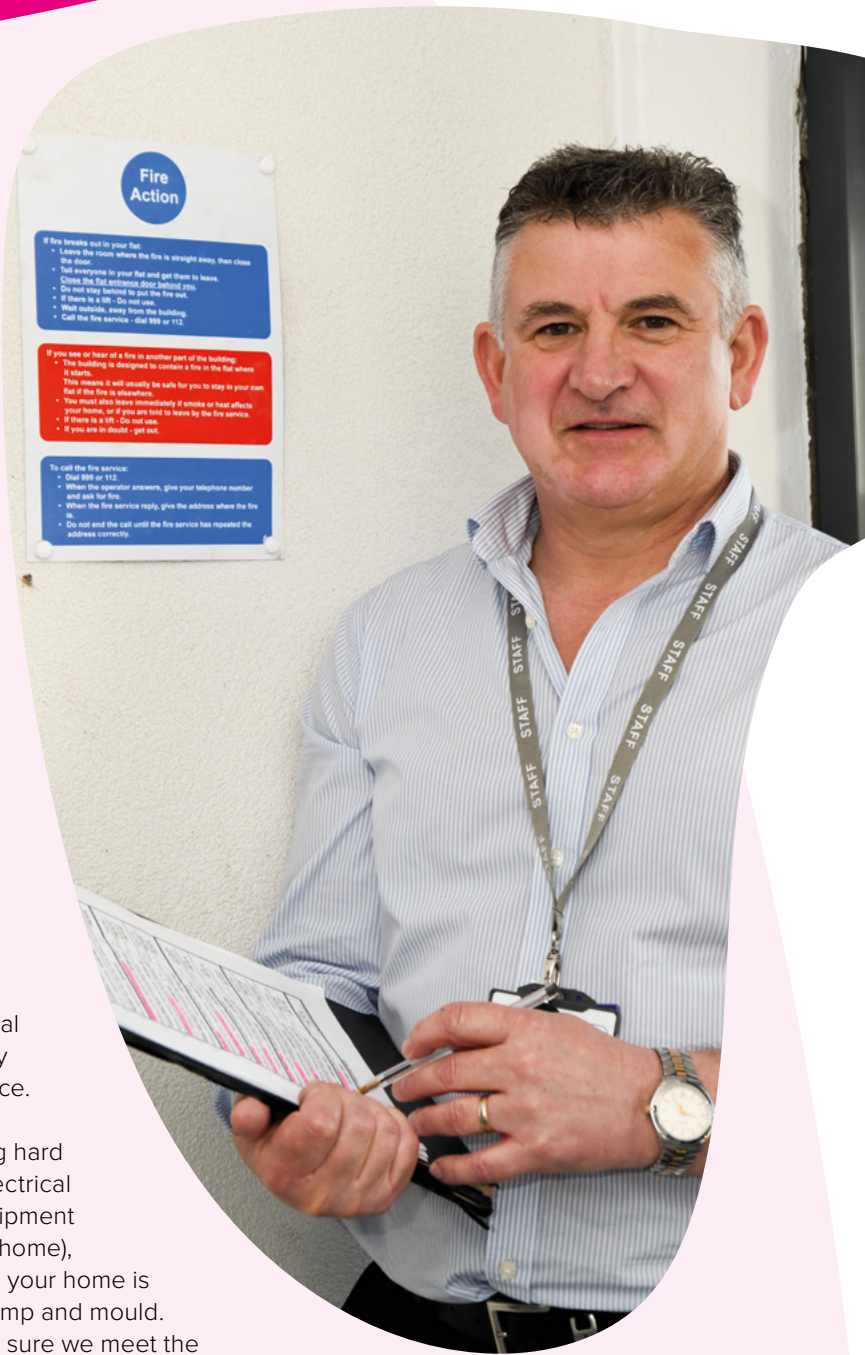


# Keeping you safe

The safety of your homes is our top priority. Recent legislative changes require landlords to do more to protect tenant safety. This includes implementing the Building Safety Act and Fire Safety Act with a particular focus on high rise buildings and fire safety across all types of property. We comply with all regulatory requirements and meet the highest standards of inspection and associated works.

Since we received a Notice from the Regulator of Social Housing in April 2023, we have been meeting with the regulator every month to track our progress with completing electrical checks. By March 2024 we had completed 67.3% electrical checks (EICR's) and we are pleased to say that by December 2024 we had achieved 93% compliance.

Alongside fire safety work we have been working hard to fulfill our responsibilities around gas safety, electrical safety, lifts (both in communal areas and any equipment we have installed to help you move around your home), asbestos, and water hygiene, as well as ensuring your home is in good condition and free of hazards such as damp and mould. It is the compliance team's responsibility to make sure we meet the requirements in these areas.



Our Fire Safety Officer carrying out a Fire Safety Assessment

### Looking forward

- ✓ Developing process maps for all areas of compliance, due for completion March 2025
- ✓ Develop six compliance policies which will be published on our website
- ✓ Start work on a 'Tenants guide to property safety'
- ✓ We want to improve access for residents to get safety documents relating to their home.

### TSMs

% of fire risk assessments in target	98.8%
% of properties with valid gas safety certificates	99.9%
Water safety checks	90.7%
Lift safety checks	77.3%
Asbestos safety checks	100%

# Improving your communal and green spaces

We collaborate closely with residents and other organisations to ensure our estates and neighbourhoods are safe and appealing places to live. We conduct regular walkabouts with residents on estates, make sure communal spaces are kept clean and tidy, problems fixed, and play equipment is safe for families. We also maintain and hire out space in several community centres.

## You said... we did

Last year in the tenant perception survey the biggest dissatisfaction area was to do with cleaning of internal communal areas and the frequency.

**We increased the frequency of wet cleans for communal areas, which are now carried out every six to eight weeks.**

## April 2023 to March 2024 we have:

- ✓ Brought pest control in-house and signed a service level agreement with our external contractor. We carry out regular controls of the worst affected estates.
- ✓ We completed year one of the tree pruning programme
- ✓ Cleaned communal windows twice a year
- ✓ The council funded two warm hubs at Pinner Grove and Grange Farm estate, working in partnership with MyYard charity, who supplied surplus food bags, expertise, wellbeing activities, arts and crafts and advice sessions
- ✓ Sponsored MyYard charity with a lease agreement for a community centre, so they could store and dispense surplus food
- ✓ Worked in partnership with MyYard charity who delivered surplus food at eight of our sheltered schemes
- ✓ Worked in partnership with Christchurch Roxeth to deliver a Kids Club on Grange Farm estate, including a homework club.



MyYard 'Warm Hub'  
activities at Grange Farm

## Looking forward

- ✓ Develop our Estate and Neighbourhood Strategy
- ✓ Invest in a mobile cleaning vehicle and install external taps for easier access to water to carry out wet cleaning in blocks
- ✓ Create an estate improvement fund that Estate Champions, residents and officers can apply to, e.g. mending walkways and paths
- ✓ Create welfare facilities for caretakers across the borough with Alexandra Avenue as the pilot scheme
- ✓ Plan to create a network of resident Estate Champions to act as main point of contact for neighbours to raise estate issues, ideas, and suggestions.

## TSMs

Tenant satisfaction that landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood	57.2%
Tenant satisfaction that communal areas are kept clean and well-maintained	59.7%

Joint walk about Grange Farm estate with officers, police and councillors



# Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We understand that anti-social behaviour (ASB) can severely affect residents’ quality of life and sense of safety in their communities.

That’s why we collaborate closely with the police and other key services, both within and outside the council, to address residents’ concerns promptly. We will take enforcement action and work to support vulnerable residents in addressing the underlying causes of ASB when necessary. Information on how to report ASB can be found on our website. If you are a London Borough of Harrow tenant or leaseholder, you can report ASB via the housing portal: [www.harrow.gov.uk/housing](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/housing) or call 020 8901 2630.

Our approach is to record every case of ASB we receive, to write up an action plan for every case (which we categorise by its nature and its severity) and these are stored in a central location. We meet weekly with the Community Safety team and police officers and discuss hot spots in the borough, prevention strategies and cuckooing. We hold regular case reviews for tough cases with the police and the relevant Housing Officer and Manager. And we are trying to be more visible on estates, door knocking in hot spots. We are working closely with our resident Estate Champions to report repairs needed to prevent rough sleepers living on estates.

We work closely with Cranstoun, a specialist organisation, who assess, support, provide refuge and help move on people experiencing domestic abuse.

**April 2023 to March 2024 we have:**

- ✓ Dealt with 156 ASB cases
- ✓ Published our ASB Standards on the website
- ✓ If we can refer residents to mediation, we refer cases to Ealing Mediation Services

**Looking forward**

- ✓ Create the role of ASB Co-ordinator to deal with high level ASB cases and guide Housing Officers on lower-level cases
- ✓ Work on an ASB process on Cx to capture, record and enable improved case management
- ✓ Capitalise the cost of CCTV for use in ASB hot spots
- ✓ Put aside a budget to tactically employ temporary security guards (with dogs) to patrol areas when needed (such as providing nighttime security on five estates during December 2024)

**TSMs**

Tenant satisfaction with the landlord’s approach to handling anti-social behaviour	53.3%
Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1000 homes	32.1
Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1000 homes	3.1





Residents at Tapley Court Sheltered Scheme celebrated the King's Coronation

# Supporting tenants

Housing Services is here to support tenants, help people to maintain and sustain their tenancies and live comfortably and safely in their homes. We set out to treat everyone with respect and fairness and make sure our services are easy to access and meet people's needs.

We know that people's circumstances are different, and we have been working hard to improve the way we support people with needs.

This includes contacting all our tenants to make sure we understand their support needs and have reasonable adjustments in place to meet them.

### April 2023 to March 2024 we have:

- ✓ Carried out 1001 visits to vulnerable tenants and we are starting to collect data on the whole household through all our audits
- ✓ Carried out 146 rent arrears visits
- ✓ We are working in partnership with Citizens Advice Harrow to help residents sustain their tenancies with 85 referrals
- ✓ Utilised the Household Support Fund (from the government) to help people in need to sustain their tenancy. We credited £121,000 to rent accounts, helping over 2000 households
- ✓ Invested £750,000 in aids and adaptations for council tenants to help them remain in their home. A large proportion of this went into building disabled level-access shower rooms.

### Looking forward

- ✓ Increased resources to ensure we have contact information for all tenants
- ✓ Reduced communal heating bills have been reduced for two sheltered schemes by installing air source heat pumps
- ✓ Partner with Public Health to deliver a digital training pilot in three sheltered schemes in January 2025
- ✓ From October 2024, we used the Household Support Fund to help 60 households in need, to sustain their tenancy – a total of £19,891
- ✓ From October 2024, we funded sheltered housing residents £60 per household, to help with their facilities bill (mainly heating)
- ✓ A Financial Inclusion Officer started in November 2024, helping new tenants with their housing benefit review form and Universal Credit claims
- ✓ Developed and published our new Access Strategy, Reasonable adjustment policy and People with needs policy.



# Supporting leaseholders and shared owners

Our dedicated Leasehold and Right to Buy team provides advice and support to leaseholders, making sure they are informed of any changes to their buildings, understand the support available to them and can get involved in decisions about where they live.

We offer a range of financial support options for leaseholders struggling with their service charges or major works bills, and work with people individually to find a repayment plan that works for them.

We are increasing the number of Shared Owners in the borough, with 20 additional new homes at Tamarind Court, South Harrow.

We value the feedback we receive from members of the Leasehold Improvement Group, including feedback on topics such as how to extend their lease.

## April 2023 to March 2024 we have:

- ✓ Held 12 drop-in sessions across Harrow ranging from daytime to evening sessions
- ✓ Launched the housing portal in April 2024 where communal repairs can be reported
- ✓ Published a lease extension pamphlet to the lease extension queries
- ✓ Signed up 20 shared owners to their new homes at Harrison Court, Grange Farm.

## Looking forward

- ✓ We plan to extend the Housing Portal with a leasehold module during 2025
- ✓ Review the Leasehold Handbook with the Leasehold Improvement Group, including adding more explanation about service charges
- ✓ Ensure easier access to information via drop-in sessions, both virtual and face to face
- ✓ Following purchase, we plan to introduce induction sessions about roles and responsibilities under the terms of the lease.

Harrison Court, Grange Farm, where flats have been purchased by Shared Owners



Grange Farm phase 1 - inner courtyard and play ground

# Providing homes for people who need them

In Harrow, there is a high demand for council homes, and we are seeing increasing numbers of people apply for social housing. Demand for social housing continues to outstrip supply with over 2000 households on the waiting list.

We do everything we can to meet as many people's needs as possible. We were delighted that phase 1 regeneration of Grange Farm was completed and 69 social housing households were able to move in in October 2023, plus an additional 20 shared owners purchased their homes.

### From April 2023 to March 2024, we:

- ✓ Received 1465 homeless applications and 4171 homeless approaches
- ✓ Successfully prevented 420 households from becoming homeless and were able to end our prevention duty for 614 households – equating to a 68% prevention performance vs London average of 44%
- ✓ Purchased 10 private rent properties to house families living in emergency accommodation, all in Harrow. The programme continues in 2024/25
- ✓ We successfully recovered eight tenancies and intercepted three Right to Buys subject to fraud and misuse resulting in loss avoidance savings to the authority of £1.1 million
- ✓ Enabled 15 mutual exchanges to take place and rehoused five households experiencing domestic abuse
- ✓ Helped 18 households to downsize their home, which helps to help free up much needed family sized homes
- ✓ Held a Housing Options event on 13 June 2023 at Harrow Baptist Church – over 100 households living in temporary and emergency accommodation attended
- ✓ Started using a first stage rough sleepers Hub with accommodation for up to five rough sleepers where they can be provided with intensive support prior to moving them into alternative accommodation
- ✓ Opened our new customer centre at Gayton Road in March 2023 for people at risk of homelessness or concerns about vulnerable residents.

### Looking forward

- ✓ Working with an organisation, they helped to find suitable private rent accommodation for 25 families living in emergency accommodation, plus four ex-offenders (2023 to December 2024)
- ✓ Working on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy with resident consultation in November 2024 – January 2025.

### Our new build programme:

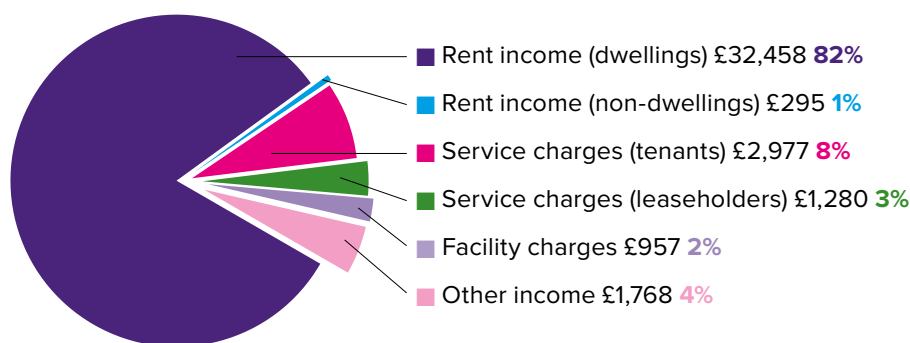
- ✓ At Milton Road we have 12 affordable rent homes (10 houses and two flats) and these will become available for let between March to July 2025
- ✓ Deliver nine new homes at Brookside Close, plus a new Community Centre in early summer 2025
- ✓ Deliver five new homes at Charles Crescent in late spring 2025.

# How we spend your rent and service charges

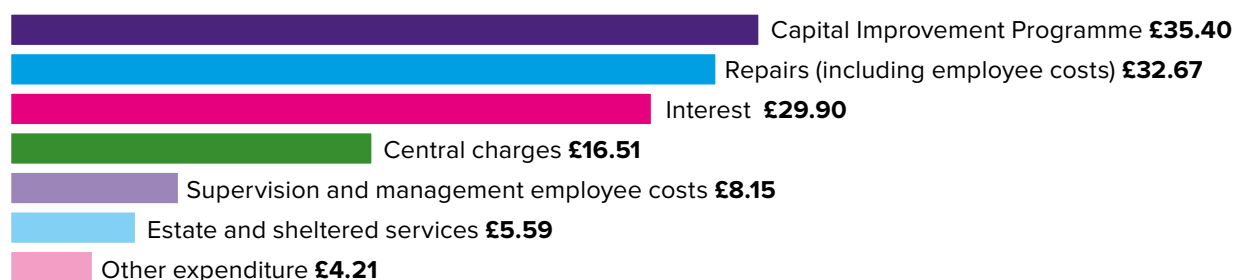
The council keeps a separate account of income and expenditure for managing the housing stock and providing housing management services. This is known as the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The main sources of income are rents and service charges from tenants and leaseholders and for 2023/24, total income was £39.7 million.

## Income sources 2023/24 £'000



## Average rent per week (£132.43) – how it is spent



## Comparing our performance against other London Boroughs

Source: Housemark 2023/24

Rent arrears have increased in 2023/24 vs the previous year as cost of living and energy prices impact residents, but Harrow's rent arrears are still lower than compared to our peer group.

	Harrow	London average
Current tenant arrears as a % of the annual rent debit	4.06%	4.9%
Housing management cost per unit	£366	£392
Responsive repairs and voids cost per unit	£846	£1289

## For housing enquiries:

🌐 [www.harrow.gov.uk/housing](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/housing)

☎ 020 8901 2630

New homes at Milton Road will be completed later in 2025

Brookside Close homes due to be completed later in 2025



Charles Crescent homes due to be completed late spring 2025



LONDON BOROUGH OF  
**HARROW**