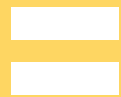


A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a black turtleneck, standing in a doorway and talking to a man in a blue jacket. The scene is framed by a thick yellow border. The text 'Housing annual report 2022' is overlaid in yellow on the left side of the image.

# Housing annual report 2022



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# Annual report foreword from Cllr Una O'Halloran and Jed Young

Welcome to Islington Council's housing annual report.

This year the cost of living crisis is very real for many of us, and it is a really worrying time as our energy, fuel and food prices increase. Our Homes and Neighbourhoods service can provide help, support and advice, and we have provided a useful summary of helpful information and contacts. As a landlord, we have longer term plans to improve the energy efficiency of your homes to help reduce bills.

I know some of you are concerned about paying your bills now. Within this report you will find some handy tips for saving energy. Listening to, and acting on, your ideas and concerns is a key priority for us going forward. It is so important that your views shape the way services are delivered. This partnership working has resulted in changes to the estate caretaker service to increase visibility on our estates.

Read on to find out about the housing services Islington Council delivers, how we're doing, and how we plan to measure and improve our services. You will also see how tenants' rent is invested back into housing services, to protect council housing in Islington now and for future generations.

There is a lot to be proud of: our work during the pandemic, improving building and fire safety and working towards net zero carbon, and our plans to deliver much-needed new council homes and create thriving estate communities.

But there is also room for improvement. This report explains some of our plans to improve services, but to really take our services to the next level we need...you!

Yes, you, our tenants and leaseholders. There are lots of ways to get involved with shaping the services we provide, find out how more on page 8. We are committed to working with residents across Islington to create services which better meet your needs.

Our ambition to make Islington a fairer and more equal place starts with everyone in our community having a decent, genuinely affordable, and safe place to call home. We look forward to working with our residents to help achieve this.

We hope you enjoy reading it.



**Cllr Una O'Halloran**  
Executive Member  
for Homes and  
Communities



**Jed Young**  
Acting Corporate  
Director,  
Homes and  
Communities

# How we performed in 2021/22

We set targets so we can measure how we are doing, where we can make improvements and feedback about the things you care about the most.



## Repairs

**89%** of repairs fixed first time – **target is 85%**

**89%** of calls to repairs service (Housing Direct) answered – **target is 91.5%**

**85%** of tenants satisfied with last repair – **target is 88%**



## Tenancy Services

**89%** of calls to main phone number answered – **target is 80%**



## Caretaking

**93%** of estate cleaning inspections graded A or B – **target is 95%**



## Complaints

**92%** of complaints resolved at stage 1 of our complaints procedure

**94%** of complaints responded to in time (10 working days) – **target is 90%**



## Housing Direct Performance Improvement

Housing Direct is our main point of contact if you want to arrange a repair to your home, either on-line or by telephone.

During April 2021 to March 2022 there was an 11% increase in calls, Housing Direct answered 145,367 calls. The increase was due to people spending more time at home as a result of Covid-19 lockdowns. This higher volumes of calls and staffing challenges due to the pandemic resulted in a downturn in performance when responding to phone enquiries during October and November 2021.

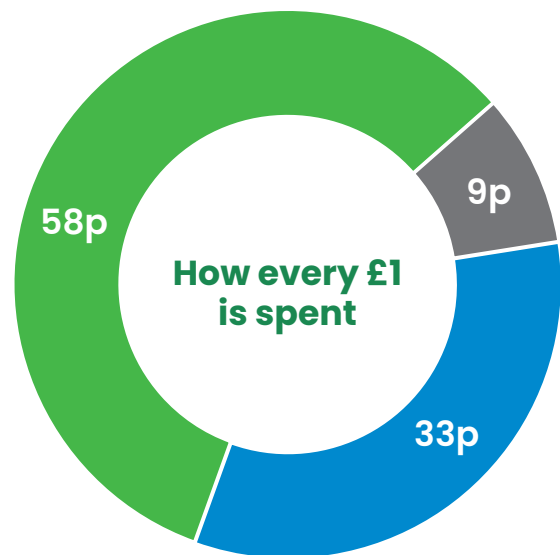
We responded to this downturn and made staffing changes to improve telephone performance at Housing Direct. More staff were made available to handle calls at peak periods and by December 21, call handling times were much improved.

Since April 2022, Housing Direct are performing well above their target of 91.5% calls answered, with a current average of 94% of calls answered.

With the smooth transition of 4000 street properties formerly managed by Partners for Improvement in Islington properties coming back, Housing Direct is determined to meet the increasing demands on the repairs service.

We are investing in new phone systems for our call centres which will make further improvements to our call handling service. These improvements are designed to make your experience of reporting repairs more efficient.

## How we spend your rent



- Running housing services
- Repaying loans and interest
- Repairs, maintenance and major works

- **Running housing services** - includes rent collection, dealing with anti-social behaviour and other tenancy matters, caretaking and letting of empty properties
- **Repairs and maintenance and major works** - includes day to day repairs to homes and communal areas and major improvements, such as lift renewal and replacing communal boilers

# Improving fire safety and building safety

Islington Council continues to make sure we identify and minimise fire and building safety risks across our all our housing estates and blocks, to ensure you feel safe in your home and we remain compliant with emerging legislation and best practice. Fire risk assessments (FRAs) are carried out regularly on all council housing blocks and we completed 750 FRAs between April 2021 and March 2022.

None of our buildings have the type of cladding that contributed to the Grenfell fire, but we are conducting surveys and assessments of the external wall construction of all council blocks over 11 metres in height. We have completed a programme of work to upgrade flat front entrance doors, which help protect means of escape routes in the event of fire or other emergency. We have also carried out a large- scale programme of communal fire safety works over the course of this year, including fire-stopping and upgrades to communal fire doors. We are currently installing integrated fire alarm systems in street properties to help residents to evacuate homes in their block in the event of a fire – because it is harder to prevent fire spread in these older homes.

In addition to all our fire safety improvement works, we are currently working to meet the requirements of the new fire and building safety legislation.

## Damp and mould

The Housing Ombudsman produced a report at the end of 2021 setting out recommendations for landlords on how best to actively tackle damp and mould problems in their housing stock and support residents experiencing problems with damp and mould.

Islington Repairs Team have carefully considered the recommendations in the report and have compared them against our existing services for dealing with damp and mould. While our service was already broadly being delivered in the way the Ombudsman recommends, we have identified some improvements we can make and have started to introduce these. These improvements include:

- Carrying out more analysis of locations of damp and mould on our estates to provide more support to residents living in these areas
- Reviewing our processes and staff training to help us communicate better with residents experiencing problems with damp or mould in their home
- Being more responsive to residents we are working with to ensure they are more aware of the actions we are taking to help resolve their damp or mould issues

“We are delighted to award DAHA Accreditation to Islington Council Housing Management. From the councillors to the frontline officers and operatives, the genuine dedication to tackling domestic abuse has been wonderful to see – all involved should be incredibly proud of this achievement!”

The DAHA inspectors

## Our work supporting survivors of abuse

### Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation (DAHA) success

During the year the Housing Service was awarded Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation.

To pass the accreditation, the service had to prove that they met numerous standards in how they dealt with reports of domestic abuse, delivered safe and effective services and supported survivors of abuse.



daha

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

## Saving energy

Here are some energy saving tips from our website – you can find more online at <https://togethergreener.islington.gov.uk>

- **Use your heating timer** – programme your heating for when you need it, so you aren't heating your home at times when you're not usually at home. There is a video showing how you can do this.
- **Turn your thermostat down by just 1°C** – this can save you money! For most people, between 18 and 21°C is just right for living spaces.
- **Use Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs)** – they control the temperature of each individual radiator, so even if your central heating is on, you don't have to heat rooms you are not using.
- **Layer up** – wear more jumpers, socks and slippers around the house and put an extra blanket on the bed so you won't be tempted to turn the heating up.
- **Switch off your immersion heater** – an immersion heater can be expensive to run, so if you have one, make sure it's switched off when not in use.

## Appliances

- **Switch off appliances** – appliances and chargers continue to use electricity even when they aren't charging.
- **Don't leave appliances on standby** – British households spend a lot of money each year powering appliances left in standby mode.
- **Keep your fridge and freezer well stocked** – by keeping your fridge and freezer full, less warm air will enter when they are opened so they don't need to work as hard.
- **Fill dishwashers and washing machines** – make sure they are full before you use them and always use the most efficient setting. Newer appliances often have an eco mode and most clothes can be washed well at 30°C.
- **Boiling the kettle** – only put in the water you need. You can measure this first using the cup or the mug you will be filling.
- **Air-dry your laundry** rather than tumble drying it if you can. While efficient models exist, tumble dryers are still one of the most expensive items to run in the home.

# Residents – we need your help to improve our services

We know lots of you are keen to get involved, give your feedback and help us improve the services.

We are developing a menu of engagement with the residents to ensure there are a number of ways to hear their voices, whether it be through discussion groups, mystery shopping, online consultation or surveys.

## Want to get involved?

- **Resident engagement opportunities**

Joining the Resident Involvement Register will enable you to take part in on-line and telephone surveys or focus groups about housing related topics that really matter to you. There are other activities available too, for example becoming a “mystery shopper”. We would like to work with you and develop a “menu” of engagement, so we can reach out to as wide a group of residents as possible.

More information can be found at [www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services)

- **Resident Involvement Register**

150 residents joined our resident involvement register across the year and we would love for more of you to join! We want to make sure that our diverse borough is represented and we hear the views of people from all walks of life. To sign up, please visit the [Resident involvement register form page](#) online or contact [service.development@islington.gov.uk](mailto:service.development@islington.gov.uk)

- **Tenants and Residents Association (TRAs)**

We have 42 TRAs in on our estates. If you want to find out more about this and how to join a TRA, you can contact [partnerships@islington.gov.uk](mailto:partnerships@islington.gov.uk)

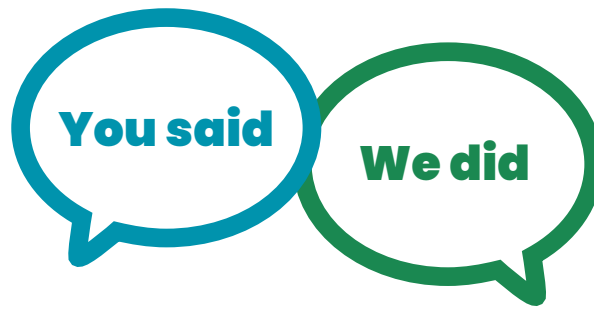
We have also welcomed back residents in street properties who used to be managed by Partners for Improvement and we are looking forward to working with them and involving them in resident engagement activities.

### Estate Champions Team

The Estate Champions team is a newly founded team set up to improve coordination across the Homes and Neighbourhoods department. Team members work on estates where there are multiple programmes of work going on, acting as visible, responsive single point of contact to liaise with residents and residents’ groups.

The Estate Champions Team helps co-ordinate services and communication on estates experiencing one or more difficult or recurring issues, such as repairs, cleanliness, noise and disruption from major works and anti-social behaviour.





Thanks to all the residents who provided online feedback on our services. We read all feedback and your expertise helps improve our services. These are the changes you helped make happen this year.

### **You said**

Accept more feedback on our services.

### **We did**

We set up resident focus groups and online surveys to allow residents to give more feedback on our services and make suggestions for improvements. We will be doing much more engagement in the coming year and will also be publishing a new Resident Engagement Strategy in early 2023.

### **You said**

Improve our complaints handling.

### **We did**

We have streamlined our complaints procedure and now there are only two stages (there were previously three).

### **You said**

Answer phones more quickly within tenancy services and repairs.

### **We did**

We improved call handling times for these services during 2021/22.

### **You said**

Improve access to our front-line services.

### **We did**

We have held two resident focus groups on this topic to get your view on how we can improve access to services.

We will run more focus groups with residents across the year.

### **You said**

Show better information on Electronic Notice Boards (ENBs).

### **We did**

We made the following information available on ENBs:

- Weather updates and bus times
- Local job opportunities and apprenticeship opportunities
- The name of the caretaker on duty on the estate
- Information about reporting anti-social behaviour

### **You said**

Have clearer tenancy service standards.

### **We did**

We have published our services standards on the council's website:

[Tenancy Service Standards](#)

### **You said**

Be more concerned about anti-social behaviour on estates (drug use, people congregating on the estate, monitoring of estates, block signage).

### **We did**

We are reviewing our anti-social behaviour policy and procedures and have:

- Increased our patrols and visits to the estate
- Carried out regular weapon sweeps

## Supporting you and your neighbourhood

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- Put dispersal orders in place. These gave the police extra powers to break up groups of people who are causing problems, harassment, or distress
- Met with local residents to discuss safety concerns
- We installed CCTV cameras
- We worked with local police who set up patrols in the area
- We worked closely with our street population team to provide outreach services supporting people with substance misuse issues
- We issued anti-social behaviour warnings

Additional CCTV was installed.

Additional signage installed.

### Let us know what you think of our annual report

If you would like to give any feedback on this year's annual report to residents, please contact [service.development@islington.gov.uk](mailto:service.development@islington.gov.uk)

Tell us what you found interesting or what you thought was missing and what sort of information you want included in future annual reports.

Thank you!

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## Supporting you and your neighbourhood

We look for opportunities where you can work, and learn, in your community. Find out more about what we offer - and come join in!

### DIY training for residents

The **Repairs Team** run DIY sessions for women in Islington, online and face-to-face, covering skills including plumbing and electrics.

It is challenging to teach these skills online, but there are benefits including reaching women who might not normally be able to attend face-to-face sessions.

A resident who attended one of the DIY sessions now works in the Repairs Team, building on the skills she learnt. The training opened up a job opportunity for her that she may not have previously considered.

## Apprenticeships

The **Repairs Team** have recruited and trained 20 apprentices since 2016, of these:

- Seven have been employed full-time in the Repairs Team
- Eight are in training, ready for employment in the next few years
- Four are female
- All have been helped to find jobs
- Four more apprentice electricians and carpenters are being recruited

The number of apprentices completing their training is excellent and this is due to a well-developed package of training and support.

Our **Neighbourhood Services Team** also recruit apprentices and run a training scheme to support young people and local residents into employment in housing related jobs.

Their model gives apprentices the opportunity to spend a few months in various placements. This allows the apprentices to find where their skills fit best or what they have the most interest in, and gives managers a taster of what an apprentice can offer for their teams.

As a result of this, an apprentice has recently been employed in the **Estate Maintenance Team**. She is now an ambassador for the apprenticeship programme speaking to local schools, other teams and departments across the council.

This apprenticeship programme is being rolled out across other housing services, such as Tenancy, Income and Community Safety services.



One of our successful apprentices, Shareen Widdowson

"As an apprentice I gained management experience, practical experience of carrying out Fire Risk Assessments and dealing with resident queries as well as studying for a Facilities Management qualification. All this experience has given me more confidence in my working life."

Meadow Papamichael,  
Estates Services

### Thriving neighbourhoods programme

Thriving Neighbourhoods is an ambitious, £10million investment programme that aims to transform shared spaces on estates and across Islington. This includes, better storage, improved recycling facilities, better playgrounds, sports facilities, outdoor gyms, more greenery, and improved landscaping. Over the coming months residents are telling us what improvements they want to see and are actively involved in making a positive change to their communities and neighbourhoods. We want our residents to be proud of where they live and be empowered to make a positive difference.

### Community Gardening Team

So far, the team have worked with 88 residents on 6 estates, to find out what they would like in their communal garden areas.

Improvements made so far include an increased standard of garden maintenance on these estates with 11 residents regularly volunteering and assisting with gardening. Four estates have had shrub beds redesigned and planted and one estate has had its food growing area brought back into use by residents. Other estates have had low fencing installed around shrub beds to deter trampling by dogs and six new metal planters have also been installed

Estates directly improved as a result of the Housing Community Gardening Team are Montague Court, Legions Close, Roth Walk, Albert Mansions, Barnes Court, Thornhill Houses, Bures and Colne House.

**Plans and next steps** – We will continue supporting and working with residents on the above estates to improve garden areas; implementing the agreed improvements which include soft and hard landscaping work.

We will also be starting work with residents at Avon and Buckland House, 23-24 Richmond Crescent, Cloudesley Place, Olive Court, 7 – 9 Maygood St and Athelstane Mews.

### Refurbished Harvist Estate football pitch provides safe space for young people to fulfil their potential

Islington Council, Arsenal and adidas have worked together to refurbish the Harvist Estate football pitch as part of the No More Red campaign, to make it a safe space for young people to play the beautiful game and fulfil their potential.

In February, young footballers, Arsenal in the Community coaches, and Islington councillors came together to formally open the transformed pitch, which sits just minutes from the Emirates Stadium.

As part of its commitment to standing with its communities, supporting young people's safety, and tackling knife crime and youth violence, Islington Council is supporting the **No More Red campaign**, which aims to protect young people from crime and violence.

The campaign will see the council, Arsenal and adidas work together in creating and refurbishing safe spaces to play football. The redevelopment of the Harvist Estate pitch is the first step in achieving this, and the council will work with Arsenal to identify more locations for new or refurbished pitches.

Islington Council stands with its communities, so they are safe, connected, and inclusive. It works closely with Arsenal in the Community, both on and off the pitch, to help support young people – and with the Arsenal Foundation, which has funded a knife bin near the stadium in Hornsey Road. The knife bin is one of eight across the borough that have taken more than 1,000 knives and other bladed items off the streets since October 2020.

For more information on **No More Red**, see [www.Arsenal.com/NoMoreRed](http://www.Arsenal.com/NoMoreRed)

Coach Kai Brennan and some of the young people that will enjoy the refurbished pitch



“The Harvist pitch is such an important facility for the local community and it’s great to see it refurbished and looking so good.

We started delivering projects here with Islington Council in 2004 and it’s incredible to think the sessions have been sustained since then. This long-term approach is a serious commitment to the residents of Harvist Estate and one we are hugely proud of.

Thanks to adidas and our No More Red campaign we will be able to extend our youth engagement work at Harvist into the future.”

Freddie Hudson, Head of Community at Arsenal in the Community

As well as supporting the refurbishment of the football pitch, the council is taking numerous other steps to improve the Harvist Estate for everyone, including building 24 new council homes.

“In Islington, we stand with our communities and work tirelessly to make our borough a place where young people are given the best possible start in life, which is why we’re fully supporting the No More Red campaign.

By investing in creating and refurbishing safe spaces to play football, like the Harvist Estate pitch, we can help empower Islington’s young people to fulfil their potential and shape their own, bright futures.

We’re grateful to ward councillors, Arsenal and adidas for making the transformation of the pitch possible and look forward to creating and developing more spaces for young people to enjoy the benefits that sport can bring.”

Cllr Una O’Halloran, Islington Council’s Executive Member for Homes and Communities

## Investing in new homes

In Islington, as across London, residents face a housing crisis.

At the heart of our commitment to create a more equal Islington is the belief that everyone deserves a safe, decent and genuinely affordable place to call home.

Islington Council will build 750 much-needed new council homes to help tackle the housing crisis and provide much needed social housing, transforming the lives of residents and their families now and in the future.

The new homes we build are designed to be energy efficient and are built for people to live in comfortably with good storage and access to outside space. We are proud to build new homes and communal spaces our residents deserve – our homes are excellent quality, look great, meet or exceed all current building and safety standards, and we work with local people to improve communal facilities and landscaping where we can, so the whole community benefits.



A resident stands outside their new home at Mills Terrace



Residents in their new home at King Square



Supporting our residents' wellbeing, the communal garden at the King Square development actively brings the community together

## Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Starting in **April 2023**, all councils will be required by the government to collect 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). Councils will have to gather TSMs annually and report performance to the Regulator of Social Housing. [Regulator of Social Housing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Councils will also have to report performance against TSMs to their tenants every year. This is so tenants can see how their landlord is performing against the measures and hold them to account.

The list below shows the 22 measures. Some of these TSMs will be collected from our own performance records, others will be collected through resident satisfaction surveys and feedback



1. Overall satisfaction
2. Satisfaction with repairs
3. Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair
4. Satisfaction that the home is well-maintained
5. Satisfaction that the home is safe
6. Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
7. Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
8. Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect
9. Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints
10. Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well-maintained
11. Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
12. Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour
13. Complaints relative to the size of the landlord
14. Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales
15. Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord
16. Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
17. Repairs completed within target timescale
18. Gas safety checks
19. Fire safety checks
20. Asbestos safety checks
21. Water safety checks
22. Lift safety checks



## Free, confidential advice to maximise your income

Contact the council for friendly advice and support. We can help you work out what benefits and financial support you are entitled to, whether you will be better off in work, including affordability of childcare, and help you to make a claim.

Call **020 7527 8222**

Email [heretohelp@islington.gov.uk](mailto:heretohelp@islington.gov.uk)

Visit [www.islington.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.islington.gov.uk/costofliving)

## Council support schemes

People on low incomes may be able to get Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Payments and Council Tax Support from Islington Council. All schemes depend on your current circumstances. Find out more at: [www.islington.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.islington.gov.uk/costofliving)

## Do you owe more than one council department?

If you are finding it difficult to pay, our Multiple Debt team may be able to make things easier. Contact us to see if you can agree a single affordable monthly payment. Phone **020 7527 6161** or email [MultipleDebtTeam@islington.gov.uk](mailto:MultipleDebtTeam@islington.gov.uk)

## Reducing energy use (and bills)

visit [www.togethergreener.islington.gov.uk](http://www.togethergreener.islington.gov.uk) for advice and support

## Worrying about money? Support is available in Islington.

### Citizens Advice Islington

Advice on benefits, debt, housing and more  
0300 330 1197 (Advice Line)  
020 3745 8921 (Debt advice)  
[admin@rcjadvice.org.uk](mailto:admin@rcjadvice.org.uk)  
[www.islingtoncab.org](http://www.islingtoncab.org)

### Islington Law Centre

Legal advice on benefits, debt, housing, immigration and more  
020 7288 7630  
[info@islingtonlaw.org.uk](mailto:info@islingtonlaw.org.uk)  
[www.islingtonlaw.org.uk](http://www.islingtonlaw.org.uk)

### Islington People's Rights

Free welfare benefits and debt advice  
020 7561 3685  
[info@ipradvice.org.uk](mailto:info@ipradvice.org.uk)  
[www.ipradvice.org.uk](http://www.ipradvice.org.uk)  
[www.islingtoncab.org](http://www.islingtoncab.org)

### London Capital Credit Union

Low cost loans and credit advice  
020 7561 1786  
[info@credit-union.coop](mailto:info@credit-union.coop)  
[www.credit-union.coop](http://www.credit-union.coop)

## Stay updated

Sign up for email updates on Islington news, events and other topics.  
Visit [www.islington.gov.uk/stayupdated](http://www.islington.gov.uk/stayupdated)


## Join in the conversation

Follow [@IslingtonBC](https://twitter.com/IslingtonBC) on Twitter and search Islington Council on Facebook.

If your household income is feeling the squeeze, you'll find a wide range of support online at [www.islington.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.islington.gov.uk/costofliving)

**If you would like this information in another language or reading format, such as Braille, large print, audio or Easy Read, please contact 020 7527 2000.**

For enquiries, please contact: **Service Development Team**

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