

*your*

LANCASTER  
CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

# council housing matters

SUMMER 2024 *Special Edition*



# WELCOME TO YOUR 2024 SUMMER SPECIAL NEWSLETTER!

Here at Council Housing we thought we would take the opportunity to update you on one or two things, share some news about new things we are going to be doing and share feedback many of you provided to us in the 2023 Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey, and what we have been doing about what you told us.

## KEEPING YOU SAFE

The Council Housing team works hard to make sure you live in safe homes and communities. Here's how we do it:

In the most recent Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) survey 70% of you told us you were satisfied that we provide a home that is safe.



### HOME SAFETY

Did you know we carry out regular checks and inspections to ensure everything is in good working order? These checks help us spot and fix problems before they become serious. In addition to these inspections, we handle thousands of repairs requests each year. Whether it's a dripping tap, a broken window, or a more serious issue, our team is ready to fix it quickly and efficiently.

We also run planned maintenance and improvement programmes throughout the year. These programmes help us keep all our properties in top condition.

DID YOU KNOW?



Last year we spent £1.4m on fire safety works including new fire doors and fire stopping works

98%

of homes have had a valid electrical check in the last five years

99.5%

of carbon monoxide alarms have been tested in the last year and are working

99.3%

smoke alarms have been tested in the last year and are working

ALL

our homes have had a valid gas safety check



In 2023/24, 380 homes in our rural areas have benefitted from the installation of new interlinked smoke and heat alarms and carbon monoxide detection alarms

Our Building Safety Resident Engagement Group is now active, giving tenants a chance to have their say on how communal areas are managed and address any safety concerns. If you'd like to join this group, please contact the council's Community Engagement Officer at 01524 582929 or email [councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk)

# COMMUNITY SAFETY

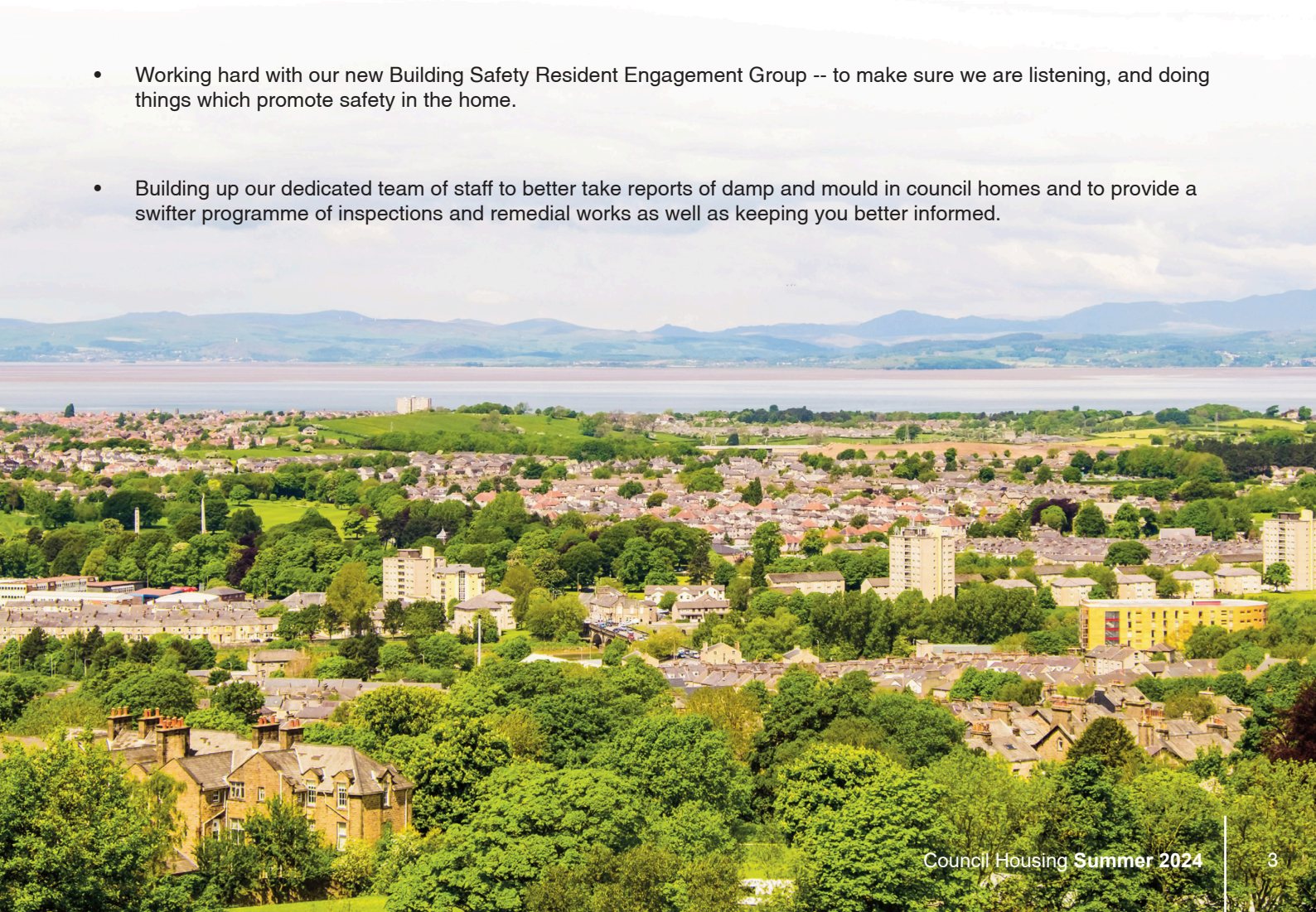


We take reports of anti-social behaviour and nuisance seriously and act quickly to resolve them. We now have a dedicated team which works closely with the police and Lancashire Fire and Rescue on various safety initiatives. These partnerships help us prevent crime and enhance fire safety in our communities, ensuring peace of mind for all residents.

If you need their assistance, you can reach them at 01524 582929 or by email at [communitysafety@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:communitysafety@lancaster.gov.uk)

## WHAT WE ARE DOING NEXT...

- Developing better information to share with you about safety related work carried out by the council in your home (things like gas, electricity, water, asbestos, fire safety, lifts and damp and mould) -- so that you can see what measures are in place to protect you and your home.
- Working hard with our new Building Safety Resident Engagement Group -- to make sure we are listening, and doing things which promote safety in the home.
- Building up our dedicated team of staff to better take reports of damp and mould in council homes and to provide a swifter programme of inspections and remedial works as well as keeping you better informed.



# MAINTENANCE & CLEANING UPDATES

You've given us valuable feedback through the Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey, and we've listened closely. Here's what you told us and how we're responding:



According to the recent TSM survey:



Only 54% of you are happy with how we keep communal areas clean and well maintained.



Only 67% of you are happy with how we keep communal areas clean and well maintained.



76% of you are pleased with the overall repairs service provided in the last 12 months.

We understand from these results that there is room for improvement, especially in keeping communal areas clean and well maintained.

## WHAT ARE WE DOING?

**Block Cleaning:**  
We have a cleaning service in place for communal blocks. Most blocks are cleaned once a month, while Mainway blocks are cleaned once a week. Additionally, we have planned maintenance programmes designed to keep these areas in good condition.

**Building Cleaning Supervisor:**  
We've employed a Building Cleaning Supervisor whose job is to monitor the cleaning standards and ensure any issues are addressed promptly. Please say hi to Alison if you see her out and about and let her know what you think.

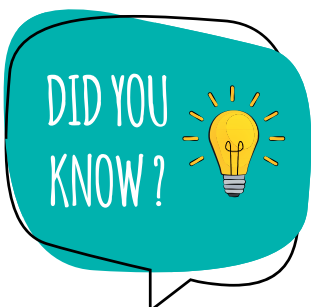
**Cleaning Schedules:**  
Our Building Cleaning Supervisor is working on creating block cleaning calendars. These will be shared with you so you can know when the cleaning team is coming and monitor the quality of their work.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendations:**  
Our tenant-led Scrutiny Panel reviewed our Repairs and Maintenance service and made some excellent recommendations. We are working on implementing these, including:

- **Repair Appointment Confirmations:** Soon, you will receive repair appointment confirmations by text message.
- **Improved Calling Cards:** We will introduce more friendly calling cards to inform you of missed repair appointments.
- **Repairs Tenant Engagement Group:** We are forming a new group to continue gathering tenant views on our repair services.
- **Communication Improvements:** We are also focusing on improving how we communicate with you about repairs. Expect better information and updates on waiting times, delays, and missed appointments.

**Updated Maintenance Programmes:**  
From autumn onwards, we will provide updated planned maintenance programmes. This will help you see when different works are scheduled to take place.

**Virtual Inspections:**  
We are trialling virtual repair inspections for simple repair jobs. This involves using photos sent in by tenants to diagnose issues, which can save time and streamline the repair process.



- We carried out a total of 11,500 responsive repairs (about three repairs per home).
- We launched a £450,000 re-roofing programme.
- We delivered a £500,000 boiler and central heating replacement programme.
- We fitted 126 new kitchens.
- We installed many metres of new fencing.
- We delivered over £300,000 worth of external refurbishments to communal blocks, and much more.

# COMMUNICATION AND AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Through the recent Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey, we know we can improve in this area. This is what you told us.

## ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY:

70%

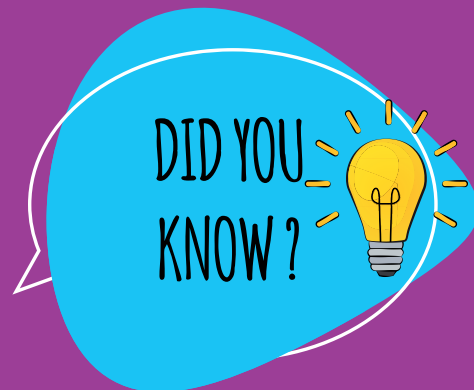
of you said the Housing Service is easy to deal with.

57%

Only 57% of you felt satisfied with how your views are listened to and acted upon.

1 IN 3

About one in three people were not satisfied with how well we keep you informed about things that matter to you.



- Our Council Housing customer services team answered 21,000 phone calls and 19,800 emails from tenants and other residents.
- During winter 2023/24, we delivered our popular annual winter welfare programme, contacting 215 tenants over the age of 75 to offer benefit checks and advice, energy and warm homes discount advice, take repair requests, and provide other support.
- We provide almost 600 Independent Living tenancies, supported by dedicated Independent Living Officers, and around 500 community alarmed bungalows for tenants who need the reassurance of an emergency alarm call facility in their homes.

## WHAT ARE WE DOING?

- **Scrutiny Panel Recommendations:** Our tenant's Repairs and Maintenance Scrutiny Panel report identified communication as a priority. We are implementing a range of improvements, including text messages, virtual inspections, an improved repairs handbook, and better updates on delays and repairs timescales.
- **Independent Living Scheme Plans:** Our Independent Living teams are working with residents to develop 'scheme plans' to tailor the service to their specific needs.
- **Online Services:** To improve communication with those who prefer online access, we have redesigned the council housing web pages and plan to make them more user-friendly and useful. This includes a new, improved 'report a repair' form.
- **Complaints Process:** We are working hard to publicise the formal complaints process more widely and make it easy to use.
- **Learning from Complaints:** We are committed to learning from complaints to improve our services. In our most recent Annual Complaints Report, we identified that communication regarding complaints, leaseholder matters, and choice-based lettings are all areas we have significant control over, but need to improve upon. We are working on this, this year.





# HOW CAN YOU GET INV

We offer numerous ways for residents to get involved in shaping how the housing service delivers its services. For example:

**Neighbourhood Community Project Fund:**  
This fund supports groups of residents in delivering fantastic projects in their communities - the tenant's panel make the decisions on whether to fund these projects.

**Local Residents Groups:**  
These groups focus on the things that matter most to local tenants them across the district.

**Community Events:**  
We organise litter picks, 'green weeks', and the big Community Fun Day at Ryelands Park, happening on Thursday, 15 August 2024, between 1pm and 3pm.

**Tenants Voice:**  
This residents group meets every other month. It's a vibrant and fun group that actively gets things done.

**Tenant Scrutiny Panel:**  
This panel closely examines how services are delivered and makes recommendations for improvements.

For more information on any of these or to get involved email [rharland@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:rharland@lancaster.gov.uk)

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

### Customer Services:

Our Customer Service Team is available to help you with any issues you may have by phone at 01524 582929 or by email at [councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk).

### Emergencies:

In case of emergencies outside of regular business hours, please call our out-of-hours emergency number: 01524 67099.

### Housing Officers:

You can reach our Housing Officers by phone at 01524 582929 or via email at [housingofficers@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:housingofficers@lancaster.gov.uk).

### Community Safety Officers:

Our Community Safety Officers can be contacted by phone at 01524 582929 or through email at [chasb@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:chasb@lancaster.gov.uk).

### Energy Support Officer:

For assistance with energy-related matters, call our Energy Support Officers at 01524 582929 or email them at [councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk).

### Income Management Officers:

If you have questions about financial matters, you can reach our Income Management Officers by phone at 01524 582541 or via email at [chincomemanagementteam@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:chincomemanagementteam@lancaster.gov.uk).



FREE  
ENTRY

RYELANDS PARK  
THURSDAY 15TH AUGUST  
11AM TO 3PM

JOIN US FOR OUR 2024

# COUNCIL HOUSING COMMUNITY FUN DAY

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY  
ENTERTAINMENT • MUSIC FROM BEYOND  
RADIO • PETTING ZOO •  
SPORTS • GAMES • INFLATABLES •  
CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES & CRAFTING •  
SUPPORT, ADVICE & INFO STANDS •  
DEMONSTRATIONS • FOOD AND DRINK  
PLUS LOADS MORE...



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North Lancashire's  
**beyondradio**  
FM • DAB • ONLINE

# Gardening Competition 2024



**WIN UP TO £100 IN OUR 2024 GARDEN COMPETITION!**

We know there are lots of green-fingered Lancaster City Council Housing tenants across the district...so we thought what better way to celebrate your hard work than to run a garden competition!

## CELEBRATING CREATIVE DIVERSITY

Not everyone has a garden, but we won't let that stop us from celebrating the creative diversity that exists within the Lancaster City Council Housing Community, so we have four prize categories this year:

 £100 GIFT CARD

**BEST  
GARDEN**

You can include flowers  
and/or fruit, vegetables &  
herb

 £50 GIFT CARD

**BEST CONTAINER  
GARDEN**

 £50 GIFT CARD

**BEST COMMUNAL  
GARDEN**

Including both Independent  
Living schemes &  
community gardens within  
estates

 £25 GIFT CARD

**BEST CHILDREN'S  
CONTAINER GARDEN**

Be as imaginative as you  
like - it can even be made in  
a seed tray!

You can enter yourself, a friend or neighbour or a communal garden by email up to three of your favourite photos to **[councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk)** - or send your entry by post to **Garden Competition 2023, Housing and Property, PO Box 4, Lancaster Town Hall, Dalton Square, Lancaster, LA1 1QR**  
Alternatively speak to your Housing Officer or Independent Living Officer with details of your entry and photos of the garden.

**SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY BY AUGUST 14**