

your

council housing matters

WINTER 2024 *Special Edition*



TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES 2024

77%
OVERALL SATISFACTION

72%
2023

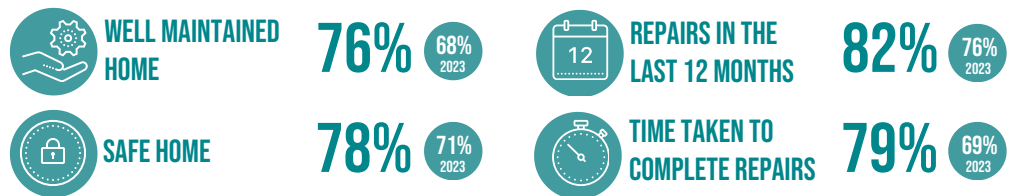
Tenant Satisfaction Measures ask for your thoughts on your home and our services, like repairs and complaints. Your feedback helps us see what's working and what needs fixing. At Lancaster City Council, we want to make sure you're happy with your home and the support we provide.

SURVEY RESULTS: YOUR VIEWS ON YOUR HOMES AND OUR SERVICES

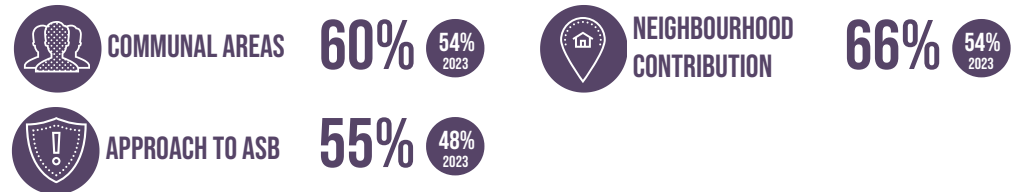
We are delighted to inform you that satisfaction has increased across all service areas in 2024. With overall satisfaction increasing by 5%. However we are focussed on continuing to improve our services and support, and your feedback is crucial for this process.

Your feedback gives us a clear picture of what's working well and what needs improving. By sharing your views, you help us keep improving and making sure we meet your needs.

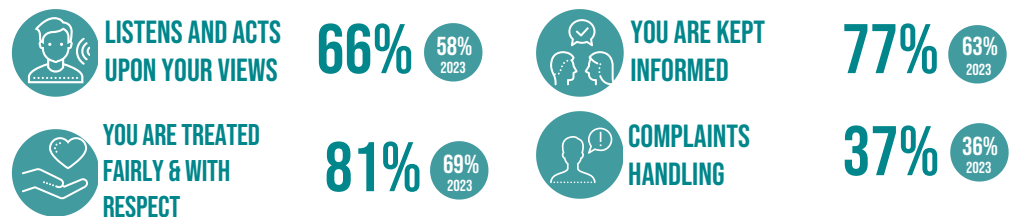
KEEPING PROPERTIES IN GOOD REPAIR & MAINTAINING BUILDING SAFETY



RESPONSIBLE NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT



RESPECTFUL & HELPFUL ENGAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVE HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS



RECOMMENDING LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

- 78% of residents feel that we are easy to deal with.
- Nearly half of our Residents are happy to recommend us as a landlord.
- +21 Net Promoter Score: This is the % of residents who would recommend us, minus the % of those who would not.

NEXT STEPS:

We are currently in the process of reviewing your feedback, comments and suggestions, once this is complete we will create an action plan to improve our services, based on what you have told us. This will be published on our webpage, and promoted via Facebook and X

KEEPING YOU SAFE AT HOME: WHY ANNUAL GAS SAFETY CHECKS MATTER



Your safety is always our main concern at Lancaster City Council. As your landlord, we want to make sure your home is secure and comfortable. That's why we ask all our tenants to have a gas safety check every year. This important inspection helps us keep your home safe and meets our legal duty to give you a valid gas safety certificate each year.

Booking Your Gas Safety Check with EMCOR

We work with a trusted company called EMCOR to carry out these checks. When it's time for your yearly inspection, EMCOR will send you a letter with an appointment date. If that date doesn't work for you, it's easy to change. Just call EMCOR on **0800 111 4521** (landline) or **01744 833398** (mobile) or email them at service.desk@tbr247.com. They'll be happy to find a better time for you on a weekday morning or afternoon.

Why You Need to Let Us In

We know life can be busy, but it's very important to let us into your home for these checks. If you don't, it could mean you're breaking your tenancy agreement. In some cases, we might have to take legal action to make sure we can get in, and you might have to pay legal costs. We really don't want this to happen, so please work with us to keep you safe.

What to Do if You Smell Gas

If you ever think you smell gas in your home, you need to act fast to prevent accidents. Here's what to do right away:

1. Call the National Gas Emergency Line on 0800 111 999.
2. Put out any cigarettes and don't use matches or naked flames.
3. Open all your windows and doors to let fresh air in.
4. Find your gas tap and turn it off.
5. Don't switch on any electrical switches, as they could cause sparks.

By doing these things, you'll keep yourself and your neighbours safe. Remember, we're always here to help you keep your home secure and comfortable. If you have any questions about gas safety or anything else, just get in touch. We're happy to help.

MANAGED MIGRATION

Managed migration is where people getting legacy benefits will have their claims transferred to Universal Credit.

Legacy benefits are Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit for working-age people, income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), and Income Support.

All managed migration notices are expected to be sent by the end of December 2025.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will send you a notice letter telling you that your legacy benefits are ending and what you need to do. If your

Universal Credit entitlement is less than your entitlement to your legacy benefits, you will get a 'transitional amount' to top up your Universal Credit.

You might get a leaflet telling you to get ready for Universal Credit – if the letter you get doesn't have a deadline on it, it isn't your migration notice. Wait until you get a proper migration notice.

UC Universal Credit

citizens advice

Please contact Citizens Advice by phone: 01524 481 508 or email enquiries@northlancashirecab.org.uk if you need support, or you can contact your Income Officer on 01524 582541.

PLANNED IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE: KEEPING YOUR HOME IN TOP SHAPE

To ensure that we are effectively maintaining and improving your home to ensure your comfort and satisfaction. To achieve this, we have a planned programme for major repairs and maintenance, which helps us keep each estate up to a good standard in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Annual Decision-Making Process

Each year, usually in March, the council decides on the improvements and planned maintenance to be carried out. The District Wide Tenants' Forum collaborates with us to develop long-term priorities and is consulted on the programme annually. This process ensures that your needs and preferences are taken into account when planning maintenance works.

Personalised Approach to Improvements

If improvements are planned for your home, we will contact you before any work begins. A member of our staff will sit down with you to explain the process and discuss the range of choices available. For example, if your kitchen is due for replacement, you will have the opportunity to select the style of kitchen units and the colour of floor tiles, among other options. We believe in providing a personalised approach to ensure that your home reflects your individual taste and requirements.

Tenant-Initiated Improvements

As a tenant, you are welcome to improve your home, but it is essential to obtain written permission from us first. This allows us to ensure that the works you carry out will not adversely affect the property and to inform you of any specific issues you may need to address. In some cases, you may need to satisfy building regulations and/or obtain planning permission.

If you are considering making improvements to your home, please email us, and we will arrange for the Maintenance Inspector to provide you with further details.

53 WEEK RENT YEAR REMINDER

(If you are on Housing Benefit, this does not affect you)

We are now in a 53-week rent year and have sent information to tenants about this. We now must remind people to make an arrangement to cover the extra week's rent liability (if you have not yet done so) to avoid going into rent arrears.

As Lancaster City Council provides 4 rent-free weeks, this means there are 49 weeks payable in 2024/2025.

Calculating your extra payments depends on any benefits you receive.

It won't make a huge difference to your normal payments, so don't worry. But it's a good idea to work out your payments now. If you fall behind later in the year, it will be harder to catch up.



Please contact your Income Officer on 01524 582541 to calculate the additional amount required.

STAYING SAFE: WHY YOU SHOULD AVOID STORING ITEMS IN YOUR LOFT

Your safety and the well-being of your home are our top priorities. As such, we kindly remind you not to store items in your loft space or enter it for any reason. While it may seem like a convenient storage solution, using your loft can lead to several risks and potential hazards.

Structural Integrity and Safety Concerns

The ceiling joists in your loft are not designed to support additional weight. Storing items in the loft can put undue stress on these structural elements, potentially compromising the integrity of your home. Moreover, entering the loft space poses a significant risk of falling through the ceiling, which can result in serious injuries.

Damage to Your Home

Placing belongings between the joists is not only dangerous but can also cause the ceiling to collapse. In addition to the obvious health and safety issues, any damage caused by improper loft use will be recharged to you. There is also a risk of dislodging pipework and damaging electrical cables, which can lead to costly repairs.

Pest Infestations and Fire Hazards

Items stored in loft spaces can attract vermin such as mice and rats, who may use them for food and nesting purposes. This can lead to pest infestations that are difficult to control. Furthermore, stored items can hinder airflow in the loft space, increasing the risk and potential spread of fire.

Maintaining Energy Efficiency

Loft insulation plays a crucial role in providing thermal comfort and energy efficiency in your home. Entering the loft space can disturb or compact the insulation, resulting in areas that are no longer properly insulated. This can lead to increased energy bills and reduced comfort levels in your home.



We appreciate your cooperation in keeping your home safe and well-maintained. If you have any questions or concerns about loft usage or storage alternatives, please don't hesitate to contact your Housing Officer.

ALARM MONITORING CHARGE



Your rent may include a 70 pence per week charge for Alarm Monitoring.

This is not covered by Universal Credit or Housing Benefit.

Most tenants choose to pay this for the year, and a payment of £34.30 will cover this charge until 1st April 2025.

If your rent includes this charge and you have not paid it yet, please ensure this is paid promptly to avoid arrears accruing on your rent account.

If you have already paid this, you can ignore this message.



Please contact our Income Team on 01524 582541 to make a payment over the phone, or you can use your usual payment method.

HOUSING OFFICERS

ESTATE NAME	ESTATE PATCH	HOUSING OFFICERS
Arkholme	Hornby & Lune Villages	Michelle McMeeking
Beaumont	OBeaumont	Jenny Crammond
Bolton-Le-Sands	Slyne & Bolton-le-Sands	Graceleanne Higgins
Borwick	Warton & Rurals	Daniel Gee
Bowerham	Bowerham	Daniel Gee
Branksome	Branksome	Janine Camm
Burrow	Hornby & Lune Villages	Michelle McMeeking
Carnforth	Carnforth	Graceleanne Higgins
Caton	Caton	Janine Camm
City Centre	City Centre	Janine Camm
Claughton	Hornby & Lune Villages	Michelle McMeeking
Cockerham	Galgate & South Villages	Jenny Crammond
Dolphinholme	Galgate & South Villages	Jenny Crammond
Galgate	Galgate & South Villages	Jenny Crammond
Greaves	Greaves	Graceleanne Higgins
Hala	Hala	Jenny Crammond
Halton	Halton	Janine Camm
Heaton-with-Oxcliffe	Morecambe Central	Michelle McMeeking
Hestham	Morecambe Central	Michelle McMeeking
Higher Heysham	Higher Heysham	Daniel Gee
Hornby	Hornby & Lune Villages	Michelle McMeeking
Ireby	Hornby & Lune Villages	Michelle McMeeking
Kingsway	Kingsway	Daniel Gee
Leck	Hornby & Lune Villages	Michelle McMeeking
Mainway	Mainway	Jenny Crammond
Marsh	Marsh	Janine Camm
Melling	Hornby & Lune Villages	Michelle McMeeking
Mellishaw Park	Mellishaw Park	Janine Camm
Middleton	Middleton	Graceleanne Higgins
Morecambe Central	Morecambe Central	Michelle McMeeking
Nether Kellet	The Kellets	Daniel Gee
Newton	Newton	Michelle McMeeking
Over Kellet	The Kellets	Daniel Gee
Overton	Overton	Graceleanne Higgins
Priest Hutton	Warton & Rurals	Daniel Gee
Ridge	Ridge	Michelle McMeeking
Ryelands	Ryelands	Graceleanne Higgins
Silverdale	Warton & Rurals	Daniel Gee
Slyne	Slyne & Bolton-le-Sands	Graceleanne Higgins
Thurnham	Galgate & South Villages	Jenny Crammond
Trumacar	Trumacar	Jenny Crammond
Vale	Vale	Daniel Gee
Warton	Warton & Rurals	Daniel Gee
Westgate	Westgate	Michelle McMeeking
Whittington	Hornby & Lune Villages	Michelle McMeeking
Wray	Hornby & Lune Villages	Michelle McMeeking
Yealand Redmayne	Warton & Rurals	Daniel Gee



OUR RESIDENTS GROUPS

GET INVOLVED: YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU



Residents living in council properties have several ways to make meaningful contributions to their communities through various engagement groups.

The **Tenants' Voice** meetings offer direct involvement in decision-making processes that affect local neighbourhoods. These regular sessions provide a platform for discussing community matters and implementing practical solutions.

For residents in council flats, the **Building Safety Panel** meets fortnightly for two-hour sessions. This dedicated group focuses on essential safety considerations and resident communication strategies, ensuring that practical experiences inform future improvements.

A new monthly forum, the **Independent Living Voice**, addresses specific concerns within Independent Living Schemes. This specialist group feeds directly into Tenants' Voice meetings, creating a clear channel for raising and resolving scheme-specific matters.

Residents interested in establishing local community groups can access comprehensive support through the community engagement team. Available resources include practical training in committee management, first aid certification, and guidance on securing funding opportunities.

Each of these groups welcomes new participants who want to contribute their insights and experiences. The community engagement team provides full details about meeting schedules, group operations, and how to get started.



If you'd like to join any of these groups to share your experiences and help shape practical improvements in your community, get in touch by phone on 01524 586891 – or by email at communityengagement@lancaster.gov.uk.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

RESIDENTS RETURN TO TRANSFORMED MELLISHAW SITE

A major redevelopment project at Mellishaw has delivered modern, energy-efficient homes for returning residents. The comprehensive upgrade, completed in June 2024, features improved road layouts and dedicated family spaces.

The redesigned site includes noise reduction measures from the nearby bypass, enhanced flood protection, and a spacious recreational area. Security improvements comprise new entrance features and perimeter fencing.

Feedback from residents, who moved back last month, reflects the positive impact of these changes. "It's like a whole new world living here," shared one resident, while another noted the peaceful atmosphere of their new surroundings.

Recent community activities saw families gathering to plan future developments for the site. Children participated in environmental projects, creating bug houses and planting wildflower seeds near the entrance area. These activities support local wildlife while adding natural colour to the development.

A new community group is taking shape, with residents preparing funding applications for additional site improvements. The youngest community members have already demonstrated their enthusiasm by raising £36 towards new play equipment.





Best Communal Garden

GREEN-FINGERED RESIDENTS SHINE IN ANNUAL GARDENING AWARDS



Residents across Lancaster's council housing communities have showcased their horticultural talents in this year's much-anticipated gardening competition. Following careful deliberation by a panel of five resident judges, the results are now in.

Mr Shaun Wilkinson of Crag Road, Lancaster, secured the top honour for best overall garden, receiving a £100 voucher prize. The impressive communal garden at Melling House earned a £50 voucher, while young gardeners at Mellishaw were awarded £25 for their outstanding children's garden entry.

The competition's success has prompted organisers to seek fresh perspectives for next year's event. Residents with ideas to enhance the competition's reach and appeal are encouraged to share their suggestions via communityengagement@lancaster.gov.uk.

Best Overall Garden



Best Children's Garden



All participants will have another opportunity to feature their gardens in the Council Housing Matters newsletter and compete for voucher prizes in next year's competition.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM A FEW OF OUR OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS:

OCTOBER 2024 - KINGSWAY COURT WEEDING PROJECT

Tenants at Kingsway Court came together for a weeding project, transforming the lawns, pathways, and garden areas. With support from Michelle Baker-Lowe, one of our Independent Living Officers, the community effort has left the spaces looking better than ever!



OCTOBER 2024 - MELLISHAW PUMPKIN CARVING

On a sunny afternoon in late October, families in Mellishaw came together for a fun-filled pumpkin carving event organised by James, the Community Engagement Officer from Branksome. With creativity flowing, both adults and children crafted spooky and scary pumpkin decorations to celebrate the Halloween season. To top off the day, everyone received sweet treat bags as a thank-you for their efforts.

OCTOBER 2024 - MARSH LITTER-PICK & PUMPKIN CARVING

Residents of the Marsh Estate came together for a fantastic community event, combining a litter pick with creative pumpkin carving. Children, parents, and volunteers worked hard to clean up the neighbourhood before showing off their artistic skills carving pumpkins at the Marsh Community Centre.



ENSURING YOUR SATISFACTION: HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

At Lancaster City Council Housing, we aim to provide you with the highest standard of service. Your feedback, including complaints, plays a crucial role in helping us identify areas that need improvement.

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

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

In line with the Housing Ombudsman's guidelines, we define a complaint as "any expression of dissatisfaction related to the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by our organisation, staff, or representatives, affecting individual residents or groups."



HOW TO SUBMIT A COMPLAINT

You can submit complaints through various channels, including in person, over the phone, via email, or in writing. We are also happy to arrange meetings with complainants, where you can bring along a friend, relative, or representative for support.

OUR COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

To ensure transparency, we publish an annual report that evaluates our approach in alignment with the Housing Ombudsman's code and government requirements. This report demonstrates our commitment to addressing your concerns and continuously improving our services.



CONTACT US

If you wish to raise a complaint or have any concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us by email at housingcomplaints@lancaster.gov.uk or by phone at **01524 582929**. We are here to listen, understand, and address your needs.

HOUSING OMBUDSMAN

You can also contact the Housing Ombudsman directly by phone at **0300 111 3000** or by visiting their website at housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

Your satisfaction is our top priority, and we value your feedback as it helps us provide better services to you and all our residents.

Need To Get In Touch?



Office Locations:

Lancaster Town Hall:

- **Opening Hours:** Monday to Friday, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm
- **Address:** Lancaster Town Hall, Dalton Square, Lancaster, LA1 1PJ

Morecambe Town Hall:

- **Opening Hours:** Monday to Friday, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm
- **Address:** Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road, Morecambe, LA4 5AF



Customer Services:

- **Telephone:** 01524582929
- **Email:** councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk
- **Website:** www.lancaster.gov.uk
- **Opening Hours:** Monday to Friday, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Emergency Contacts:

24/7 Emergency Call Centre

For **emergency housing repairs outside office hours**, urgent housing issues that cannot wait until the next working day, or immediate safety risks related to council housing, please contact our **24/7 Emergency Call Centre**:

- **Telephone:** 01524 670999

For urgent emergencies involving **gas leaks**, please contact the **National Gas Emergency Services**:

- **Telephone:** 0800 111 999

Repairs and Maintenance

- **Telephone:** 01524582929
- **Email:** chreception@lancaster.gov.uk
- **Office Hours:** Monday to Friday, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm
- **Emergency Repairs (Outside Office Hours):** 01524670999

Community Safety & Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour:

- **Telephone:** 01524582929
- **Email:** chasb@lancaster.gov.uk
- **Non-Emergency Police Telephone:** 101



External Support:

If tenants have unresolved disputes or complaints about their social housing provider after following the landlord's complaints process, they may need to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service:

- **Telephone:** 03001113000
- **Email:** info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Social Media:

- [facebook.com/LanCityHousing](https://www.facebook.com/LanCityHousing)
- [x.com/LCC_Housing](https://twitter.com/LCC_Housing)

Calls may be recorded to improve our service standards and the accuracy of information.

This document can be made available in large print, audio, Braille, and other languages upon request.