

# Resident workshop - Complaints and Repairs transformation (housing)

## 8 January 6.30-8pm (Microsoft teams)



### Purpose of meeting

To share and hear from residents about the repairs and complaints transformation work at Lewisham council housing services.

### Attending

**Lewisham Council Housing Staff:** Dean Cooper (**DC**) (Head of Repairs), Alys Exley-Smith (**AES**) (Community Relations Manager), and Dewbien Plummer (**DP**) (Head of Customer Service)

**Residents:** Dawn (**DA**), Dev (**DB**), Di (**D**), Gosia (**G**), Joanne (**J**) Keith (**K**), Lauren (**L**), Nigel (**N**), Michelle (**M**) Princess (**P**), Richard (**R**), Rosie (**RM**), Timothy (**T**)

**Invited:** Resident scrutiny panel, service & performance panel, TRAs, resident complaints panel, resident community project volunteers.

### Notes from meeting

#### Main themes/ areas covered.

- DP presented slides summarising work on complaints transformation and the 'special investigation' (appendix 2).
- Residents asked questions and fed back on their experience of the complaints and repairs services.

#### Details of some points raised are here:

1. Residents are keen to be informed of the process and requested details of what we've submitted so far to the mobudsman, and progress of the investigation. **Action 3.**
2. Residents would like more information about the financial situation/ context and how that will affect transformation work (recruitment freeze, reduction in council funding), including any approaches to more efficient services that reduce costs (eg. Computer system) **Action 6.**
3. Residents felt they must do the chasing and they don't hear back from Staff when they chase things (repairs, complaints) up.
4. Communication with residents is poor, particularly around individual repairs and major works. **Action 7.**
5. Several individual repairs/ ongoing concerns were raised by residents throughout the meeting, these have all been recorded as action points to be followed up. **Actions 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17**
6. Residents raised concerns that repairs weren't being fixed on a 'right first time basis', which isn't efficient for either the landlord or resident (time & money). The quality of repairs is also an issue.
7. Residents requested to be involved in developing the new portal, and highlighted the need for more efficient repairs reporting. **Actions 4 and 18**
8. Resident requested to be updated and be involved in how work on buildings (the asset management strategy) is being developed and a timeline of planned work where possible. **Action 9.**

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9. Concerns were raised with contractors/ sub-contractors and whether their work is covered as part of the ombudsman investigation. Concerns about contractors included their workmanship, approach and potential not to fix first time. **Action 10.**
10. Residents voiced concerns that they have been told that there will be improvement before (particularly around the portal), but nothing changes and it's still hard to get hold of staff/ report repairs.
11. N suggested sharing details of the building safety regulator website. **Action 13.**
12. Residents requested more information on how they can get involved in volunteering/ shaping services. **Action 3.**
13. Residents asked for details of how we will ensure residents who are not digitally active/ vulnerable can access services. **Action 15.**

### Details of updates from Staff

1. DC summarised that the recruitment freeze does have exceptions when a business case is made. This can include recruiting more operatives/ call centre staff if business needs require this.
2. We are planning to skills test our in-house repairs staff (DLO) as part of the improvement work. (DC)
3. We are putting place an approach where operatives take 'before' and 'after' photos of repairs they carry out to evidence it was completed. (DC)
4. The aim is for Residents to be able to track their repair through the portal.
5. Residents asked for details on the system being implemented. DC responded to say it's 'Total Mobile', this system should replace the 6 current systems used and make reporting and managing repairs more efficient.

### Next steps

- There is an action plan (appendix 1) summarising any issues raised that require a follow up. These actions will be added to the overall action plan for Lewisham Council Housing Services framework feedback (panels, surveys, etc), and will be shared with the Service & Performance Panel quarterly until all actions are completed.
- AES to contact J & R tomorrow (9/1/25) to discuss issues raised (disrepair)- **completed**

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**Appendix 1: Actions and next steps (action plan)**

No	estate name	lead resident detail	issue	lead staff	deadline	notes	photo
1	N/A	N/A	Share slides presented about complaints transformation.	DP/AES	17/1/25	Completed	N/A
2	N/A	N/A	Add slides and notes to webpage	AES	17/1/25		N/A
3	N/A	N/A	Inform residents about other opportunities to engage and keep updated on how feedback has shaped the work.	AES			N/A
4	N/A	N/A	Invite attendees to be involved in shaping portal	AES		P, N. & RM and others expressed interest	N/A
5	N/A	N/A	Share details of what we've shared with the ombudsman/regulator.	DP/AES			N/A
6	N/A	N/A	Share information about financial context for Lewisham housing and how this may affect transformation work.	Finance/AES			
7	N/A	N/A	Improve communication with residents around repairs/ major works.	Property services		-AES called J to discuss ongoing issues and offer support. -J to share details with AES via email. -DC chased up repair(s) with disrepair team.	N/A
8	Bence House, Pepys	J and R				AES called J to discuss ongoing issues and offer support.	

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						<p>-J to share details with AES via email.          -10/1/25: AES requested housing officer contact resident.          -DC chased up repair(s) with disrepair team.</p>	
9			<p>Update residents on how work on buildings (the asset management strategy) is being developed and a timeline of planned work where possible.          Involve residents in developing and communicating this.</p>				
10			<p>Concerns were raised with contractors/ sub-contractors and whether their work is covered as part of the ombudsman investigation.          Concerns about contractors included their workmanship, approach and potential not to fix first time.</p>				
11	Evelyn	Keith	The lock at the building opposite Ashford House isn't working (faulty door entry system) which is causing ASB in the block.	DC			
12	Evelyn	Keith	Need an update on walkabout actions including vents on top of building, and the scaffolding which is an unnecessary cost.	AES			
13	Evelyn	Keith	The lights in Dolphin tower are not working				
			Share details about the 'Building Safety' regulation with residents				
15	N/A	N/A	Share details of how we're ensuring all residents can contact/ request services including those who are digitally excluded/ have communication challenges.				
16	Bence (Pepys)	Dev	The bins aren't being emptied as the lorries can't access and they're becoming full and smelly	MR			
17	Hawkins House	Rosie	Had ongoing issues re. smell/breakages/flies with the bin chutes at Hawkins House - they were replaced within the last 2 years but keep breaking	MR			

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18			Follow up on the portals and logging of repairs / seeing active repairs which we have reported - could there be a portal for each block/house/building to log communal repairs, so that we can see if and when other have reported the same,, and all then have an idea and updates visible re. their status and date of planned repair etc?				
19			<b>Keep attendees updated about previous meetings and update mailing list.</b>  could you add me to your mailing list - <a href="mailto:nat.itomit@gmail.com">nat.itomit@gmail.com</a>				

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**Appendix 2: Slides presented at workshop summarising housing repairs complaints. (Author:**

**Housing Repairs Complaints Updates**

**08 January 2025**

**Regulatory Oversight at Lewisham**



**Self-Referral and Regulatory Notice**



- Management of Decent Homes.
- Failure of repairs service.
- Fire safety.
- Complaints improvement work.

**Investigation into Lewisham Council**



- Leaks, damp and mould,
- Repairs
- Complaint handling.
- From Sept. 2024 to March 2025.



## Ombudsman Services

### Housing Ombudsman Service

The [Housing Ombudsman](#) deals with complaints about social housing, including councils' role as social landlords. This include tenants, leaseholders and people applying to the housing register.

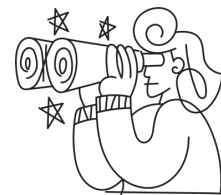
### Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

The [Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman](#) deal with complaints about most council housing services other than social housing. This includes homelessness, housing allocations, housing benefit and home improvement services.



## Housing Ombudsman Service Investigation

- **Why?** Lewisham's handling of leaks, damp and mould, complaints and repairs. High maladministration rate.
- **What?** Investigation beyond an individual complaint to establish whether there are systemic failings.
- **How?** Request for evidence and site visit to meet staff and residents. HOS will review evidence and publish findings.
- **When?** Start November 2024. Findings and report to be published in first half of 2025.





## P49 Special Investigation: Request for Evidence

### Six Areas

1. Policies and procedures.
2. Complaint Handling.
3. Repairs (disrepair & PEEPs)
4. Training
5. Knowledge and Information Management
6. Emerging themes (learning)



## Progress on Special Investigation

- First submission 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024
- Site visit scheduled 28<sup>th</sup> / 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025
- Ombudsman wish to meet residents
- Will provide more details on site visit when they are available.