



Lewisham

Building Safety Resident Panel minutes

Date: Wednesday 29 April 2026

Time: 18:30–20:00

Format: Online (Teams)

Chair: Charles Richards, Resident Engagement & Complaints Lead

Attendees:

- Jon Davis – Head of Building Safety
- Charles Richards – Resident Engagement Lead
- Residents: Bruno Viteritti (Aston Heights), Wonde Mutukumosi (Mermaid Tower), Patricia Armstrong (Woodvale), Natalie (Rosenthal House)

1. Welcome & Purpose of the Panel

Charles opened the meeting by thanking residents for attending and emphasised the importance of re-establishing the Building Safety Resident Panel after previous membership declined.

He reiterated that the panel is intended to be **resident-led**, collaborative, and a space where residents' voices shape building safety decisions.

Jon provided background on why the panel exists, linking it to lessons from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and the legal requirement for a **Resident Engagement Strategy**.

He stressed that residents are “**experts of their buildings**” and that the panel is a key mechanism for ensuring their concerns influence policy, procedures, and day-to-day building management.

2. Resident Introductions & Key Themes Raised

Residents introduced themselves and shared their experiences. Three strong themes emerged:

A. Communication Challenges

All residents raised concerns about unclear or inconsistent communication from the council.

Key issues included:

- Not knowing who to contact for repairs or safety concerns
- Emails going unanswered
- Difficulty navigating the Lewisham website
- Lack of visibility of the Resident Panel
- Confusion over which departments handle which issues

Examples from residents:

- *“We don’t know who to contact... it’s always been unclear.”* (Bruno)
- *“Sometimes it feels like you’re fobbed off.”* (Natalie)
- *“I never knew this panel existed in 10 years.”* (Patricia)

B. Repairs, Safety Concerns & Responsiveness

Residents raised several building-specific concerns:

Aston Heights (Bruno)

- Long-standing issues with lifts and building defects
- Scaffolding left in place for months
- No response to complaints
- Unclear communication routes

Mermaid Tower (Wonde)

- Items blocking fire panels and escape routes
- Concerns about sprinkler system completion
- Worries about vandalism or damage to new safety systems
- Desire for regular monitoring

Woodvale (Patricia)

- Damaged internal fire door not repaired
- Difficulty booking repairs
- Concern about single staircase and evacuation
- No awareness of inspections taking place

Rosenthal House (Natalie)

- Lack of sprinklers
- Anti-social behaviour and unauthorised access
- Delays to promised works
- Repeated assurances without follow-through

C. Desire for Better Engagement & Understanding

Residents expressed interest in:

- Understanding how Lewisham Council operates
- Learning more about building safety and fire safety
- Helping improve communication
- Attracting more residents to the panel
- Practical, action-focused meetings

3. Council Responses & Clarifications

A. Building Safety Manager (BSM) System

Jon explained that each high-rise has a dedicated BSM responsible for:

- Monthly inspections
- Checking fire doors, risers, roofs, plant rooms, emergency lighting
- Monitoring fire alarm and sprinkler systems
- Responding to resident concerns

Residents can request inspection reports at any time.

Residents were not aware of this, indicating a communication gap.

B. New Dedicated Building Safety Contact Details

Charles confirmed:

- A **new direct phone line** for the Building Safety Team
- A **generic email address**
- Both will be added to all Building Safety noticeboards
- Updates will appear in the next Building Safety Newsletter (May)

C. Sprinkler Installation Update (Mermaid Tower & others)

Jon confirmed:

- 10 flats remain outstanding across the estate
- 6 expected to be resolved soon
- 4 may require legal action
- System is safe for residents whose sprinklers are installed
- Commissioning expected by **end of June 2026**

Charles confirmed he is personally visiting no-access flats next week.

D. Website & Noticeboard Improvements

Actions include:

- Reviewing website navigation
- Ensuring BSM details are correct and visible
- Adding key contacts to newsletters
- Updating all noticeboards within days

4. Resident Suggestions for Improving the Panel

Residents suggested:

- Leafleting and door-to-door engagement
- Posters in buildings
- Clearer invitations

- Word-of-mouth recruitment
- Guest speakers (e.g., London Fire Brigade)
- A simple “crib sheet” showing when the last BSM inspection took place

Residents supported the crib sheet idea as reassuring and transparent.

5. Council Commitments & Agreed Actions

Immediate Actions

- Update all Building Safety noticeboards with new contact details
- Include full BSM contact list in next newsletter
- Review Aston Heights noticeboard accuracy
- Charles to arrange a home visit for Patricia
- Charles to visit no-access sprinkler flats next week
- Jon to explore feasibility of BSM inspection crib sheets

Medium-Term Actions

- Improve website clarity and navigation
- Explore translation options for residents whose first language is not English
- Develop clearer communication pathways
- Plan themed future panel meetings (e.g., evacuation strategy month)
- Invite guest speakers (LFB, internal teams)
- Increase resident recruitment efforts

6. Future Panel Format

Residents agreed:

- Meetings should be **bi-monthly**
- Time of **18:30–20:00** works well
- Mix of online and occasional in-person sessions
- Next meeting proposed for **end of June 2026**

7. Closing Remarks

Jon and Charles thanked residents for their time, honesty, and willingness to work in partnership.

They reaffirmed their commitment to transparency, responsiveness, and continuous improvement.

Charles confirmed the meeting was recorded and that minutes would be shared.