Annual report to tenants and leaseholders

2025/26

Welcome

Welcome to our Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders for 2025/26. This report aims to give residents of Council-managed homes a clear round-up of how our Housing Service performed in the last financial year, what has improved, and where we still need to do better.

This report uses a range of information we collect throughout the year, including our Tenant Satisfaction Measures data. This is the data we report to the Regulator of Social Housing and helps us understand how we are performing in key areas, as well as how residents feel about the services they receive.

We are continuing to use your feedback, performance data and regulatory requirements to focus improvement where it matters most: safer, better homes and housing services residents can trust.

We know many residents have experienced frustration when trying to get issues resolved, particularly with repairs, damp and mould, and complaints. This report is part of being open about those challenges, while also showing what work we're doing to overcome them.

Cllr Natalie Thomas
Cabinet member for Safer Homes, Homelessness and Housing Services

Listening to you

	Our 24/25 results	Our 25/26 results	Bench mark*
Tenant satisfaction that their landlord listens to their views and acts upon them	44%	43%	54%
Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	66%	69%	70%
Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	62%	60%	72%

** The benchmark is the average score of London local authorities, provided by Housemark.*

These results show that trust remains one of the biggest challenges for the Housing Service. Although we are close to the London average in terms of tenants feeling that we keep them well informed, we clearly have a lot of work to do to prove that we listen to your views and act on them and make sure that we treat you fairly and respectfully whenever you need to talk to us.

We know that the only way to rebuild this trust is to be consistently better: responding more reliably, communicating more clearly, acting on feedback, and locking in improvements so they last beyond any single project or short-term push.

Resident engagement

In 2025/26, we continued putting our Resident Engagement Strategy into practice, strengthening the ways tenants and leaseholders can influence housing services, and giving you more opportunities to ask questions and get problems solved.

Over the year, residents were able to get involved through roadshows, repairs open days, door-knocking, estate walkabouts, housing officer surgeries, panels, forums and task groups. These structures give residents practical opportunities to raise issues, scrutinise performance and help shape improvements.

The Service and Performance Panel and Resident Review Panel remain a key part of this approach, giving tenants and leaseholders a formal route to review performance, make recommendations and feed resident insight into wider council decision-making. We will continue to develop these structures, so engagement is inclusive, useful and focused on improving services and neighbourhoods.

Complaints

Indicator	24/25	25/26	Bench mark*
% of Stage 1 complaints responded to on time**	34%	71%	74%
% of Stage 2 complaints responded to on time**	73%	69%	69%

** The benchmark is the average score of London local authorities, provided by Housemark.*

Complaints handling is a mixed picture. Despite a slight drop in state 2 complaint response time, we are now above the London average for response times for both stage 1 and 2 complaints.

We are regularly reviewing and updating complaint handling guidance for staff, with a focus on learning from your feedback, and we are working across Council services to improve first contact resolution and reduce avoidable complaints.

A recent internal audit found satisfactory assurance, clear evidence of service improvement over the year, stronger compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and no high-severity weaknesses.

Explainer: **First contact resolution** means getting things sorted the first time you contact us, so you don't have to keep chasing the same issue. Getting this right as often as possible is the best way to improve residents' experience of our services

Supporting our residents

We are very aware of the cost of living crisis and the challenges some residents may face to stay on top of their rent and other bills.

We have a dedicated team in the Housing Service which helps residents access all the benefits they are entitled to as well as referring them to other available support.

Helping tenants access welfare benefits

In 2025/26, the Welfare Benefits team helped tenants access **£1,292,400** in backdated Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Housing Costs.

We also accessed another **£223,146** through additional benefits such as council tax reduction, discretionary housing payments and pension credit.

The team assisted a total of **2,617** tenants – an increase of 40% from 2024/25.

We also made a total of **70** small grants from our hardship fund to help tenants in emergencies by providing food vouchers or household items.

Home Checks

During 2025/26 we ran a pilot programme for Home Checks, where we proactively get in touch with residents we think may be vulnerable or have extra support needs. We spoke to **879** tenants and will are now rolling the programme out so that we make every effort to speak to every resident at least once every five years, even if they don't contact us.

Case study

Supporting vulnerable residents to maintain their tenancies often requires close partnership working and tailored support. An elderly tenant who lives alone had lost Housing Benefit due to a mix-up, contributing to rent arrears of more than £10,000. Our team submitted a revision request to reinstate and backdate the claim, providing evidence to clarify the resident's circumstances. We worked with the resident and their informal carer to gather supporting documents. Recognising the resident's vulnerability and lack of digital access, a Housing Officer also arranged a home visit to provide practical support and help secure their entitlement.

Looking after your home

Repairs

	Our 24/25 results	Our 25/26 results	Bench mark*
Tenant satisfaction with landlord's overall repairs service (who have received a repair in the last 12 months)	58%	60%	66%
Tenant satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair (who have received a repair in the last 12 months)	53%	54%	64%
Tenant satisfaction that their home is well maintained	51%	53%	65%
Tenant satisfaction that their home is safe	61%	61%	71%

** The benchmark is the average score of London local authorities, provided by Housemark.*

Repairs performance remains one of the most important areas for residents. Our data shows strong improvement in repairs call handling, but continued challenges in completing repairs on time and improving resident satisfaction.

- The average time to answer repairs calls fell to 2.3 minutes in March 2026. Across 2025/26, the average repairs call waiting time was **4.9** minutes, just under the 5-minute target and a significant improvement on 15.4 minutes in 2024/25 and 46 minutes the year before.
- We received over **29,000** calls for new repairs but nearly **37,000** calls about existing repairs, which means we aren't doing enough to keep residents informed about the progress of their repairs. This is a top priority for the service.
- We significantly reduced our repairs in progress backlog, from **8,359** in March 2025 to **4,840** in March 2026, meaning we are completing more jobs and staying on top of our data.
- Appointments kept improved to 90% in 2025/26, compared with 86% in 2024/25.
- Tenant satisfaction with our repairs service was 60%, up from 58% in 2024/25 but still below the London average of 64%.
- Most repairs-related satisfaction measures improved compared with 2024/25, but all remained below the benchmark.

The next stage of improvement focuses on sustaining progress, reducing repeat visits, improving scheduling and follow-on repairs, and using resident feedback alongside performance data.

We are recruitment more in-house repairs staff, as well as bringing new contractors on board to support a more flexible and consistent service, particularly around complex repairs.

Decent homes

	Our 24/25 results	Our 25/26 results	Benchmark*
% of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	17%	15%	9%

** The benchmark is the average score of London local authorities, provided by Housemark.*

Our target was to reduce the number of homes which don't meet the Decent Homes Standard to 10% by the end of March 2026. Although the figure was at around 12% in January 2026, delays in some of our major works programmes meant that it rose again for year-end.

The Decent Homes figure represents a snapshot of the condition of our homes at a particular date. It improves when we complete repairs and investment works, but can also increase when new surveys identify previously unknown issues, access is gained to properties that have not recently been inspected, or housing stock records are updated.

Damp and mould

Awaab's Law is new legislation for social housing in England which came into force on 27 October 2025. It brought in new requirements for social landlords to address all emergency hazards and all damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants within specific timeframes.

We have created a new dedicated Damp and Mould service to meet those requirements and improve your experience every step of the way.

The number of active damp and mould cases stood at 2,110 at the end of March 2026. This was 426 fewer than at the end of 2024/25.

As well as dealing with individual cases of damp and mould, it is also a key focus of our Major Works programmes, with buildings prone to damp and mould being prioritised for refurbishment as a long-term solution.

Explainer: **Disrepair** is a legal definition which means a home has repair problems that have not been fixed properly or quickly enough, and we have a legal duty to put them right, and may be required to pay the tenant compensation.

Disrepair

We had 886 open disrepairs cases at the end of 2025/26. This was a significant reduction compared with the position a year earlier, when there were 1,031 active cases.

We spent £51m on upgrading homes

In 2025/26 we installed:

192 New kitchens

135 New bathrooms

65 New roofs

107 New block and communal area doors

369 Homes got new windows

399 Central heating boilers

Capital programme and investment in homes

In 2025/26 we spent:

- **£40,679,496** on improvements to homes
- **£9,390,816** on building new homes
- **£546,516** on aids and adaptations for disabled tenants

We had budgeted over **£60m** but some programmes were delayed, particularly in high-rise and higher-risk works which were affected by stringent Building Safety Act requirements. It is a top priority for the service to get on top of these new regulations so we can unlock the full budget we have allocated to improve our homes.

Retrofit programme

Lewisham Council has made strong progress in improving the energy efficiency of its council homes, completing a major retrofit programme and laying the groundwork for the next phase of investment. In 2025/26, the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund programme exceeded its revised target, with 240 homes improved against a target of 239, helping residents benefit from warmer, more energy-efficient homes. Of these, 213 properties reached EPC C and nine reached EPC B, with homes seeing an average SAP increase of 9.83 points. The council also secured and began delivery of the next phase of the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund programme, which will survey 2,000 properties, design improvements for 1,200 homes and carry out works to up to 800 properties.

Keeping your home safe

	Our 24/25 results	Our 25/26 results	Bench mark*
% of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	99.9%	99.7%	99.7%
% of homes for which all required Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) have been carried out	99.4%	100%	99.98%
% of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out	100%	100%	100%
Water - % of homes for which all required Legionella Risk Assessments (LRAs) have been carried out	100%	100%	100%
% of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out	93.7%	91.3%	98.8%

** The benchmark is the average score of London local authorities, provided by Housemark.*

Explainer: **Compliance** means making sure we complete the safety checks, inspections and legal duties needed to keep homes and buildings safe.

Compliance performance in these areas remained strong overall, although some safety measures still require attention. As well as the above measures which we report to the Regulator of Social Housing, we also keep track of:

- % of homes with a valid electrical safety certificate 95.8%
- % of homes with tested carbon monoxide detectors 99.9%
- % of homes with tested smoke detectors 99.7%

Fire safety

We regularly conduct Fire Risk Assessments to our buildings, either as a complete building check or by logging reports from staff visiting properties, including caretakers, housing officers and repairs staff. If an assessment raises an issue that needs fixing, it becomes an action which we track on our compliance system, giving it a deadline depending on how urgent it is.

At the end of 2025/26 we had **0** overdue immediate risk actions, but a total of **2,466** lower risk overdue actions. We have employed a new Fire Risk Assessment contractor for 2026 to help improve our response times.

Building safety for tall buildings

The Building Safety service looks after the specific requirements of our 55 high-rise buildings. Across 2025/26, it met the 100% target for high-rise block inspections in 11 of the 12 months.

Building Assessment Certificates

During 2025/26, the Building Safety Regulator issued three Building Assessment Certificates for Eddystone and Daubeney towers on the Pepys estate and Hawke Tower on the Woodpecker estate.

This certification confirms we have identified and are managing building safety risks; that we have effective resident engagement and communication; and that the building has robust safety systems and documentation.

The Regulator tells us when to submit the required documentation for certification of each building, so we look forward to engaging with them in the coming months as each of our 55 high-rise buildings is assessed.

Housing management

Anti-social behaviour

	Our 24/25 results	Our 25/26 results	Bench mark*
Tenant satisfaction with landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour (ASB)	56%	55%	60%

** The benchmark is the average score of London local authorities, provided by Housemark.*

Tenant satisfaction with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour was below the London average. During 2025/26 we created a new improved online reporting form in our Resident Portal for anti-social behaviour cases, to help residents report more easily, and to improve the way we track cases.

Call handling

Call handling improved across housing overall. The Housing division received **214,332** calls in 2025/26, and answered **173,114**, which is 81%. This was above the 80% target and a 4% improvement compared with 2024/25.

Case study: Partnership working to tackle anti-social behaviour

Our Anti-Social Behaviour team spearheaded a very effective multi-agency response recently, following sustained antisocial behaviour and drug-related activity in some Council homes in Sydenham. They were able to make a case for increased police patrols, leading to over 20 arrests and a court order for tenants to vacate a property.

Further action a few weeks later secured additional court orders to vacate two other properties, which can now be let to families in need on our housing register.

We take community safety issues seriously, and we will pursue your complaints.

The many faces of housing fraud

In 2025/26 we got 65 homes back from fraudulent tenancies

The main question for our housing fraud team is whether a property is being used by the tenant for its proper purpose – as their main home. Subletting to someone else is certainly fraud, but so is abandoning it or using it as a second home. We will do everything in our power to get those properties back so we can provide a secure home for someone who really needs it.

If you suspect someone is committing housing fraud, let us know. All reports will be kept confidential, and you can remain anonymous. Email **reportfraud@lewisham.gov.uk**

Case study: obtaining a tenancy by making a false statement

We received an anonymous referral to say that our tenant was subletting their four-bed house.

We investigated and found they owned two properties outside the borough, and in fact already owned them when the current tenancy was allocated.

The County court awarded us possession of the property, and a badly needed four-bed house was freed up for a family on our waiting list.

Rent collection and arrears

Rent collection remained strong, at 100.75% for the year (over 100% because we have collected some rent arrears too).

The Income Team continues to focus on ensuring tenants pay rent on time and maintain repayment agreements for rent arrears, as well as referring tenants who are having difficulty paying to our Welfare Benefits team or other available support.

In 2025/26 we began trialling a new automated rent arrears alert software – this will mean tenants are automatically informant when they fall into arrears so they can adjust their payment straight away, before the amount builds up.

Lettings and voids

Void performance remained a significant challenge throughout 2025/26. Over the year, 305 properties were relet with an average turnaround time of 142 days. This was nearly double the 2024/25 average of 80 days, when 311 properties were relet.

We are working to bring more local contractors on board so that we can relet properties quicker.

Explainer: **Voids** are council homes that are empty between tenancies while they are being repaired, checked and prepared for the next resident to move in. We lose rent when a property is empty, and the quicker we can repair and relet a property, the quicker we can move a family out of temporary accommodation into a secure home.

Caretaking and grounds maintenance

	Our 24/25 results	Our 25/26 results	Bench mark*
Tenant satisfaction that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained (who report that they live in a building with communal areas)	61%	62%	63%
Tenant satisfaction that their landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood	57%	62%	66%

** The benchmark is the average score of London local authorities, provided by Housemark.*

Our caretaking and grounds maintenance teams work across our estates to keep communal areas clean, safe and well maintained, and to help create neighbourhoods residents can be proud of.

Tenant satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained was 62% in 2025/26, up from 61% in 2024/25 and close to the 63% London benchmark. Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood also rose to 62%, compared with 57% the previous year and a 66% benchmark.

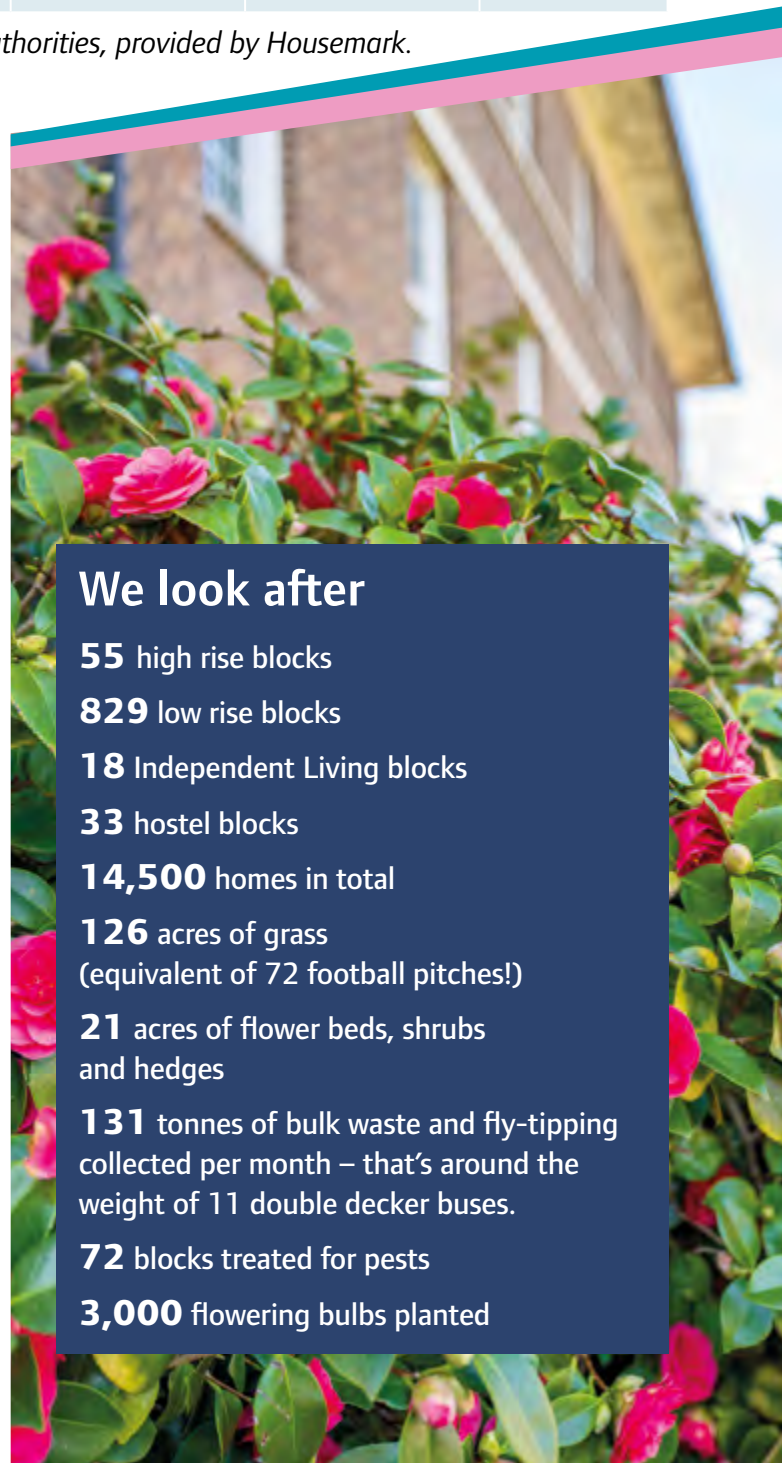
Residents have let us know that our weekend cover arrangements continued to disrupt weekday caretaking schedules in 2025/26, particularly affecting internal communal areas. We are planning to reorganise the caretaking and grounds maintenance service in 2026/27 to introduce a less disruptive way of covering weekend duties.

Food waste recycling

Between January and March 2026, 805 of you living in flats received food waste recycling bins. We started with a trial on nine estates to test the service and make sure residents had the support they needed.

As part of the trial, our Recycling Advisors knocked on doors and spoke to 182 residents, answering questions and helping people get started with food waste recycling.

The rollout has since gathered pace, and many more of you can now recycle your food waste at home.



We look after

55 high rise blocks

829 low rise blocks

18 Independent Living blocks

33 hostel blocks

14,500 homes in total

126 acres of grass (equivalent of 72 football pitches!)

21 acres of flower beds, shrubs and hedges

131 tonnes of bulk waste and fly-tipping collected per month – that's around the weight of 11 double decker buses.

72 blocks treated for pests

3,000 flowering bulbs planted

Independent living for older residents

Independent living is housing designed to help older residents live safely and independently in their own self-contained home, while being part of a supportive community.

Our 18 independent living schemes offer accessible accommodation, shared facilities and opportunities to take part in social activities, with staff available to provide advice, information and signposting when needed.

Highlights

- Weekly drop-in sessions
- 20 social events, including arts and crafts, Chinese New Year, bingo, pitch and putt, Black History celebrations, Christmas party, sewing club
- 13 fire safety awareness training events
- 36 scam and dementia awareness sessions Independent Living Resident Forum introduced in June 2025 – to help review processes, influence scheme improvements, monitor performance and plan events and activities

Leasehold

	24/25 results	25/26 results
Leaseholder satisfaction with the overall service	33%	32%
Leaseholder satisfaction with landlord's overall repairs service	35%	30%
Leaseholder satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	30%	23%
Leaseholder satisfaction that their home is well maintained.	33%	33%
Leaseholder satisfaction that their home is safe	50%	47%
Leaseholder satisfaction that their landlord listens to their views and acts upon them	20%	21%
Satisfaction that the landlord keeps leaseholders informed about things that matter to them	54%	51%
Agreement that the landlord treats leaseholders fairly and with respect	45%	44%
Leaseholder satisfaction with landlord's approach to complaints handling	15%	12%
Leaseholder satisfaction that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	37%	38%
Leaseholder satisfaction that their landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood	38%	42%
Leaseholder satisfaction with landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour	32%	39%

Around a quarter of the homes in buildings we manage are owned by leaseholders.

Leaseholder satisfaction with our overall service remained low in 2025/26. The year-end figure was 32% against a target of 40%, broadly in line with 33% for the previous year.

We recognise that higher service charges and major works costs, against the backdrop of cost-of-living pressures, are having an impact on leaseholders.

For 2026, Lewisham's Mayor and Cabinet approved proposals to introduce more flexible payment options for resident leaseholders, including extending interest-free payment terms, to help leaseholders manage the cost of major works, as larger investment programmes get underway for essential improvements to homes, including energy efficiency upgrades and major repairs.

Social value

Social value delivery generated **£165,250** in 2025/26 including **£32,350** in direct contributions and an equivalent of approximately **£132,900** through employment, training and apprenticeships delivered in partnership with Lewisham Works (Lewisham Council's internal employment and skills team).

Contributions supported key resident priorities, including cost of living support, home and estate improvements, employment and skills, and community wellbeing initiatives such as digital access, youth programmes and resident led projects.

Explainer: **Social value** means using our contracts and spending to bring extra benefits for residents and communities, such as jobs, training, local investment and support for community projects.

Case study

The Home Comforts project is a resident led initiative that provides practical support such as carpets, curtains and essential household items to improve comfort, warmth and wellbeing for Lewisham tenants. Funding is in place from contractors including BSW, Travis Perkins Managed Services, and United Infrastructure, and we are working with housing officers to seek residents who could benefit.

The referral process for the project has been developed in partnership with residents on the Tenants Advisory Board.

We have also received funding from Frankhams for a different aspect of the project for residents who have experienced sudden and often traumatic damage to their homes, for example through fire or severe leaks, and who have had to leave their homes temporarily. Many of these households do not have contents insurance or the financial means to replace essential items such as beds.

By providing beds and other basic furnishings, the fund enables residents to return home more quickly, reducing disruption and supporting their recovery. It also reduces the need for extended temporary accommodation, helping the council avoid ongoing hotel costs and ensuring better value for money.

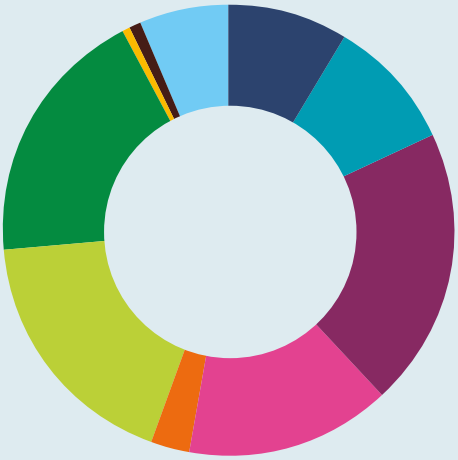
"Just want to say a huge thank you for getting the vouchers done and helping me out this much! I'm genuinely overwhelmed with it all and appreciate anyone in your team that has helped me get these vouchers and the help"

Our income and how we spend it

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is our budget for managing and maintaining council homes. Most of its income comes from rents and service charges, and the money can only be spent on council housing and related services.

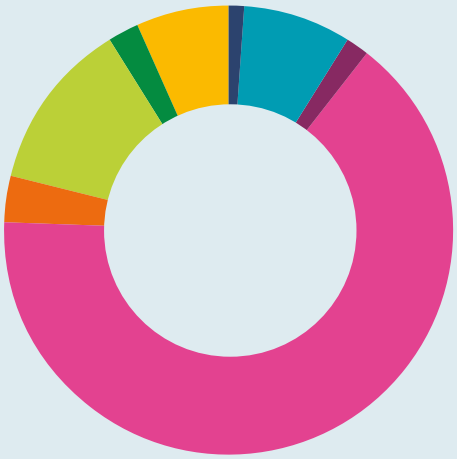
The HRA must have a balanced budget, meaning its planned income and spending must be equal. If income is higher than spending, the extra money can be added to reserves. If spending is higher than income, we will draw on reserves to balance the budget.

Expenditure total – £135,724,000



- Repairs and maintenance **£24,346,000**
- Employee costs **£25,370,000**
- Directors' salaries **£578,000**
- Premises, rents and rates **£1,241,000**
- Various management costs **£8,451,000**
- Contribution to capital investment fund **£11,910,000**
- Interest on debt, debt management, bad debt **£12,825,000**
- Depreciation charge* **£27,180,000**
- Brockley PFI costs** **£19,757,000**
- Energy costs **£4,066,000**

Income total – £135,723,000



- Transfer from reserves **£4,705,000**
- Service and facility charges **£16,619,000**
- Other rental income **£2,842,000**
- Other contributions and income **£8,921,000**
- Major works charges to leaseholders **£1,744,000**
- Brockley PFI subsidy** **£10,353,000**
- Interest **£2,338,000**
- Residential rent **£88,201,000**

All figures rounded to nearest thousand

** The depreciation charge helps make sure there is funding available to refurbish buildings as they wear out over time. This money goes to our capital investment fund, where it will be spent on major works.*

*** The Pinnacle Brockley (Regenter B3) Private Finance Initiative contract covers the management of 1,810 council homes in the Brockley and Ladywell areas. This contract is due to expire on 3 June 2027.*

Lewisham

Housing Services

Laurence House, 1 Catford Road SE6 4RU

lewisham.gov.uk/housing

0800 028 2028

housingenquiries@lewisham.gov.uk

Freepost HOUSING SERVICES

If you need this document in another language or format, please contact us. We will do our best to provide it in a way that meets your needs.

599-NY-1a