

Strand 3: Support for Specific Housing Needs





Glossary

The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper

Sets out the actions the government will take to ensure that residents in social housing are safe, are listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong.

Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

BME

Black, minority ethnic

Commissioners and Providers

A commissioned service means care, support or supervision that has been arranged and paid for on a client's behalf by a public authority such as

CLDT

Community Learning Disability Team

DHIT

Disability and Home Improvement Team. Homeowners or private tenants living on a low income may be able to get help paying for home improvements and repairs.

DLC

Digital listening campaign

Equality and Equity Charter and Equality Objectives

Our Equality and Equity Charter is our pledge to ensure our borough is a fair, safe, accessible and inclusive place for people of all backgrounds to feel they belong, succeed and thrive. The Charter outlines our guiding principles and helps us to lead by example as a champion for equality and equity in Royal Greenwich and beyond. See link to the Equality Charter royalgreenwich.gov.uk/equalitycharter

Extra Care Accommodation / housing

Extra care housing combines accommodation with care and support services. There are many different types of extra care housing, from small communities of flats and bungalows to retirement villages. The facilities and care provided will vary, but extra care housing schemes usually include: self-contained adapted flats or bungalows

Floating Support

Floating support means support that is not linked to accommodation and not normally provided by a person's landlord, a person might need support with issues such as budgeting, life skills, drug or alcohol misuse, avoiding offending etc. A support provider can offer this as a stand-alone service without providing or arranging accommodation linked to the support



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Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB)

Helps local people get training and matches them with local job opportunities. We work in partnership with a range of organisations to give you the best chance of finding a job in Royal Greenwich and wider area

Handyperson Service

A Royal Borough of Greenwich Service which helps with odd jobs around the home for older or disabled homeowners, private tenants and council tenants to maintain safe and independent living. Check the website for details.

HMO

House in multiple occupation is a property rented out by at least three people who are not from one household (who are not family/blood related), but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen.

HouseProud

HouseProud was set up in 2014 as the network group for LGBT people working in social housing; in housing associations, local authorities and care providers. See link to HouseProud consortium.lgbt/member-directory/houseproud/

Intergenerational Housing

Intergenerational housing is a new idea based on an old model: people of different ages living together and sharing their skills and time. In the past, this tended to be within extended families, or tightly-knit local communities. More recently, this idea has been introduced into some older people's housing.

Intersectionality

The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

LGBTQ+

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning). The "plus" represents other sexual identities including pansexual and Two Spirit.

Mental Health Alliance

Collaborative brings together people using services, providers and commissioners to create ideas and plans for improving mental health services and support.

SEND

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities



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Shared Lives placements

This is a scheme that provides care and accommodation for people with support needs. A family or individual can provide accommodation and support for people who need some help to live the lives they choose. It allows people who use the service to maintain a level of independence or to develop skills and independence in order to maximise the quality of their life.

Sheltered Accommodation

Sheltered accommodation is specifically designed for older people (or younger disabled people) to allow them to live independently. It usually consists of self-contained flats with communal facilities. In most cases, it is available to people aged 60, or in some other schemes it may be open to those over 55 years old.

Smart Homes

A home equipped with lighting, heating, and electronic devices that can be controlled remotely by smartphone or computer.

Worktrain Greenwich

Worktrain Greenwich is delivered in partnership with Unity Works, Advocacy in Greenwich, Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB) and the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Unity Works is a charity that supports people with a learning disability to gain skills, achieve qualifications and secure jobs, so they can reach their full potential.

Support for Specific Housing Needs

The Royal Greenwich is a vibrant borough with a growing diverse population. We share an ambition to create a fairer, safer, accessible and inclusive borough where everyone feels they belong, has a voice and an equal opportunity to succeed and thrive.

The consultation on this strand was different to the other strands in our Housing and Homelessness Strategy, as even though we had already identified groups that we believe may be marginalised or need support; we did not want to be restricted by this scope and wanted to learn more from our engagement to identify more groups and adapt to their feedback too.

It was important that the voices of our residents were heard, and our plans fully shaped by what they have told us. Prior to consultation we previously identified the following groups as the focus of this strand, as they may find it harder to access or sustain general needs accommodation:

- People with learning disabilities and/or autism
- Communities and ethnic groups at risk of marginalisation
- People with physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments
- People with mental ill health
- Older people

However, during the consultation we widened our engagement to the following organisations representing; parents with children with Special Educational Needs (SEND), Metro-Gavs (representing the LGBTQ+ community), Metro-Gavs (representing people with disabilities) and the Royal Borough of Greenwich's tenants and leaseholder residents.

By broadening the engagement, it improved on our original plans and made us recognise that there are crossovers in the difficulties our residents experience, as well as ones that just affect them.

Residents also identified that they can be marginalised in more than one way, this is often described as intersectionality. For example, they can be affected by both their age and their race, or their faith and their gender. Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression and we must consider everything and anything that can marginalise people, be it gender, race, class, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc.

The different groups identified the below themes that can affect more than one group; and we recognized by targeting and resolving these problems we could support more people.



Lessons learnt and improving resident engagement

COVID-19 has forced us all to find innovative solutions to engage with residents outside of traditional face-to-face methods, making sure people's voices and views are heard. In June 2020, Cllr Anthony Okereke, Cabinet member for Housing, launched a new (DLC) Digital Listening Campaign to reach tenants, leaseholders and clients using our housing services from across the borough.

The feedback from the campaign helped to inform what services worked well and what needed improvement, while also highlighting how residents working in partnership with the council is crucial to achieve real change.

Also, for us to embrace 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper' to ensure that residents in social housing are listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong.

Through this campaign, we have achieved more significant engagement and diversity levels than we have seen before at previous face-to-face meetings.

We reached out to residents often under-represented in the typical in-person meetings. Nearly half of the attendees were from a BAME background in comparison to only 14% at our housing panels held between Sept 2019 and January 2020.

Given the success of the DLC, we will continue to use this approach and have set ourselves the challenge of revising estate inspections over the next 12 months, so residents can engage with us both in-person and digitally.

The benefit of digital engagement is the flexibility it provides for residents, e.g. parents with young children. They have been able to attend virtual meetings from the comfort of their home, at work or whilst out.

This method was vitally important when we met with the parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), who's feedback was insightful and informative. Parents emphasised we need to understand and be aware of the living and housing requirements of a SEND child. Some children are affected by noise, heat and sound and that we need to be mindful of this impact on the child, family and neighbours when allocating properties. Many families are wrongly accused of noise nuisance or anti-social behaviour due to the misconception of a child's disruptive behaviour.

Parents also voiced improvements to be made to temporary accommodation when placed there with a child with SEND needs. Many families identified the need for a holistic housing assessment in order to plan that child's journey and establish the appropriate housing for the family, putting the child at the centre

We also recognise the need for greater engagement with Travellers. We have placed dedicated officers on the Traveller site in the borough and plans to develop a working group with the aim of improving conditions on their site.

Having listened to our resident's concerns, makes us even more committed to ensure that residents have appropriate, accessible long-term homes and to have a voice in shaping the delivery of services tailored to their needs.

Themes Identified in Consultation

- Equal access to housing services
- Supporting and sustaining people to live independently
- Suitable and specific accommodation

Our approach to addressing the housing challenges for potentially-vulnerable or marginalised people has been informed by our targeted consultations to incorporate the lived experiences of these residents into our plans.

To deliver on our aims, all Council services will work in partnership with registered providers, private landlords, health and social care providers and employment support services.

Supporting our most vulnerable and marginalised residents to lead independent, safe and active lives is our commitment to help individuals and families sustain their accommodation.

It is vital:

- Our services are built on respect and empathy
- That there is equal access to services and inclusivity
- We help people live independently
- That we design inclusively e.g. dementia-friendly, wheelchair-accessible, futureproofed for adaptations
- That we take into consideration in the recovery from the COVID pandemic and lockdowns that there has been disproportionate impact on identified groups
- That we have an Equality and Equity Charter

In October 2020, we agreed an Equality and Equity Charter and a new set of Equality Objectives for the period of 2020-2024. The Charter and Objectives have been developed through extensive consultation with staff, trade unions representatives, local voluntary and community groups, partner organisations and residents. Consultation started internally in January-March 2020 and then externally in July-August 2020.

In support of our Equality and Equity Charter and pledge for equality in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, we consulted with our residents and listened to their feedback.

This strategy sets out our commitment to support the residents of the Royal Borough of Greenwich in accessing and living in good quality housing that improves their health and wellbeing. We acknowledge the importance of working together with as a Council and our partners in order to respond effectively to the needs of those who may need specialist support.

Equal access to housing service

Our Commitments



- Sign up to Houseproud to understand the issues faced in Council housing by LGBTQ+ residents and work better with LGBTQ+ communities.
- Continue to support and raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant among all council staff and the general public.
- Support the Nepalese community through targeted engagement, public health initiatives and improving housing conditions in HMO properties.
- To lobby for the provision of dedicated refuge places for transgender women and gay men experiencing domestic abuse.
- Review our commissioning of specialist refuges.
- Review how we monitor access to housing to understand the barriers and improve engagement.
- Review the accessibility of our digital channels and ensure people with disabilities are not disadvantaged.

We are committed to ensuring that residents have appropriate, accessible long-term homes. To achieve this, we want residents to have access to the necessary information, advice and support to live independently in their homes for as long as possible.

Through targeted engagement, we are also supporting the Nepalese community and their housing needs in conjunction with public health initiatives. We will take action to eradicate unfair and illegal treatment by landlords of marginalised communities, particularly non-English speaking tenants. Our enforcement team will take the necessary enforcement action to improve the living conditions in HMO properties and make tenants aware of remedies available to them

To assist the armed forces community, the Royal Borough of Greenwich signed the Armed Forces Covenant on 8 February 2012 and renewed our

commitment to it in 2019. We will continue to support the Armed Forces community and any changes implemented by the Armed Forces Bill 2021, which will come into effect in 2022. To help prevent potential disadvantage faced by the Armed Forces community they and their families, are put into a priority band on our housing waiting list. We also provide support to help them navigate the housing application process and help to sustain their tenancies

According to our data for the financial year 2018/19, 0.7% of homeless case decisions were for people who identify themselves as gay or lesbian. 0.8% of people identified as other and 40.7% did not state their sexual orientation. From staff feedback we ascertain the reluctance for people to identifying as LGBTQ+ is due to the negative experiences they have encountered.

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Our service aims to support these groups to confidentially access the support from specialist service providers and be sensitive to their needs. LGBTQ+ people can face discrimination when they access housing or homelessness support. We are actively engaging with LGBTQ+ residents to gain a better understanding of their experience of our services and to work jointly on improving services. We will also be signing up to Houseproud, which requires specific staff training on LGBTQ+ to engage and work better with specific communities.

We will also lobby for the provision to widen the inclusivity of other groups who also experience domestic abuse. Likewise the need for hostels for the LGBTQ+ community requiring emergency accommodation pending rehousing

We will review and use more inclusive language in communications and official material such as application forms and surveys should be more inclusive to the LGBTQ+ and other marginalised groups.



Supporting and sustaining people to live independently

Our Commitments

- Pilot a move-on protocol for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to access general needs Council housing with floating support from Health and Adult Services.
- To develop a multi-agency project to build recovery, address health inequalities, supporting better outcomes and independence for people with mental ill health
- We will target funding on measures such as fuel poverty and energy efficiency work, security or crime prevention initiatives for older People
- Reduce admissions for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to residential and care homes by flexible access to accommodation provision where it can prevent high care costs
- Expanding the Handyman service to provide more minor adaptations to vulnerable clients, to people with learning disabilities and/or autism and those with physical disabilities and or sensory impairments; and streamline our processes for residents who are to receive an adaption in their home to reduce waiting times.
- Explore opportunities to use new technologies to help older residents live independently for as long as possible, improve their health and connect with their communities.
- Work with partners to implement the Mental Health Alliance model which aims to reduce the rate of residential and supported living placements and increase the rate of independent accommodation.



Regardless of a person's health, disability or age, a quality home helps provide the basis for a fulfilling and independent life and to be an active participant in their community.

We want to reduce admissions to residential and care homes by flexible access to accommodation provision where it can prevent high care costs. The

Handyperson service and home improvement and adaptation services are central to this. There are Disabled Facilities Grants available to pay for any major adaptations that have been recommended by an occupational therapist so that residents, or their child with disabilities can live more independently and allow them to remain in their homes.

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We have an ageing population in Greenwich and with this we acknowledge there are different requirements for different stages of old age that need to be provided for.

Our future plans for older peoples housing design will consider:

- Intergenerational housing, smart homes, homes for life and other innovations.
- Reflect on the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic and the future of what a pandemic-proof model of older people's housing should look like.

We are setting up an evidence-based survey of older people's needs in the borough to fully understand the types of housing required for different stages of old age including their support needs and health needs.

We need to have robust local knowledge along with the Census 2021 data, to provide a proper insight and analysis to help inform our delivery of services and housing for older people.

We will proactively encourage and promote service users with a learning disability and /or autism to live in more independent settings such as Extra care accommodation, Shared Lives placements, sheltered accommodation and their own front doors with minimal or floating support.

We are currently drafting a new vision for Health and Adult Services, which includes the priority of working with residents to live as independently as possible.

There is clear evidence that people are living longer but in poorer mental and physical health. Fifty percent of over 65's already live with a degree of frailty or living with multiple long-term conditions and with more complex needs. The pandemic has also had a major impact on our older residents. All older people day services were closed throughout the pandemic and at least 9,000 residents were shielded,

increasing social isolation, food insecurity and mental ill health.

Our ambition is to help residents improve their health, connect with their communities, live independently and provide a modern service which best meets the needs of our tenants and residents.

The Council is committed to assisting older people, people with physical disabilities and learning disabilities to remain living independently in their own home for as long as it is appropriate through measures including aids and adaptations and ensuring new homes are built to lifetime home standards.

To assist more service users to live independently, we have created a pilot move-on protocol for people with a learning disability. The pilot program gives clients access to the Council's general needs housing with floating support from Health and Adult services. This will assist more service users to live independently and free up supported accommodation for those who no longer require this type of accommodation.

Our partnership with Worktrain Greenwich will also provide support to over 100 people with a learning disability to find and sustain employment. Having employment will enable them to sustain their housing tenancies with the support from Worktrain. They also provide support to young people under the age of 25, who have autism and or a learning disability to gain support in finding employment.

To assist more service users to live independently, we will also be reviewing our commissioning contracts which supports residents in receiving specialist accommodation and set out our procurement intentions. This is underpinned by the new Vision for our Health and Adult services.

Suitable and specific accommodation

Our Commitments

- Review current commissioning contracts for the support that people with learning disabilities and/or autism receive in specialist accommodation and set out our procurement intentions.
- Engage with specialist housing providers to encourage additional developments that are wheelchair accessible, with consideration for proximity to local amenities and are amenable to increased use of assistive technology as required.
- Prioritise the delivery of 20 units of supported living accommodation for people with mental health support needs who are stepping down from in-patient or high-support settings.
- To reduce the rate of residential and supported living placements for people with mental ill health and increase the rate of independent accommodation.
- Work with SEND parents to help inform the design of housing and develop services.
- Secure the delivery of an additional 30-40 units of extra care housing to help meet the immediate needs of residents.
- Increase our engagement with the Traveling Community in the Borough and continue to improve conditions and safety on our permanent Traveller's site
- Continue to support vulnerable young people through our commissioning services.



We aim to ensure that there is an adequate supply of specialist housing to those in need, such as extra care housing, and aspire for new homes to meet lifetime standards so that people are not forced to move because of their changing needs.

Learning Disability Services will be commissioning a new supported housing service on the Royal Hill car park site, providing 9 units.

Community Learning Disability Team will place 18 service users into more independent settings.

A newly created protocol has recently been agreed and established between Housing and Health and Adults Service to provide a 'move-on' priority, for rehousing people with learning disabilities and/or autism into mainstream general needs accommodation. Floating support will be provided to clients by Health and Adults service.

The success of these initial moves will be reviewed and may result in 'move-on' quotas going forward. The introduction of this scheme enables Health and

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Adult services to free up supported accommodation for those who no longer require this type of accommodation, whilst providing customers with safe, independent living solutions within the community, within the council managed stock.

We will identify additional opportunities to expand extra care provision for people with low level dementia.

The Sheltered Housing team continues to assist with meeting the needs of older people who have specific housing requirements. The borough has 15 Sheltered Housing schemes, 3 Extra care sheltered housing schemes and plans for one new Dementia Friendly Extra Care sheltered scheme. We are supporting our older tenants living in sheltered accommodation by making £857,624 upgrades to five sheltered housing schemes and one extra care sheltered home. The upgrade is for replacement warden call and fire safety renewal works.

The consultation highlighted that for many parents of SEND children they want a home that will adapt with their children's growing needs as they transition from child to teenager to adulthood.

We will work with parents to develop services by reviewing the housing suitability assessment process at the allocation stage, post allocation support services and housing related information for parents with children of special needs and disabilities.

A range of commissioned services will assist young people and care leavers, as we work in partnership with Children services. We will provide a supported lodgings scheme for young people as well as supported housing specifically for young homeless parents.

We also recognise that we need to have greater engagement with Travellers when aiming to improve conditions on their site.

