

Report Title: Housing Issues affecting Children and Families

Report for: Children's Scrutiny Panel

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Report authorised by: Sara Sutton, Assistant Director, Partnerships and Communities / Jahedur Rahman, Operational Director of Housing Services and Building Safety

Lead Officer:

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** For information.

1. Recommendations

That the report be noted.

2. Describe the issue under consideration.

2.1 This report sets out the overarching picture of Housing Demand and homelessness in Haringey and provides the Scrutiny Panel with details of the key housing issues affecting Haringey's children and families in temporary accommodation and social housing and the measures being taken to address these.

2.2 The issues and themes explored in this report are not exhaustive but focused on key topics that include the level of housing need generally indicated by the housing register, families housed in temporary accommodation, damp and mould in social housing, housing adaptations, tackling domestic abuse and other measures to support vulnerable families.

3. Housing Demand

3.1 The allocation of social housing is governed by part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended. Housing authorities are required to have an allocations scheme, which must give 'reasonable preference' to certain groups of people:

- People who are homeless
- Those living in insanitary or overcrowded housing, or otherwise unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- Those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds

- Those who need to move to a particular locality within the district where it would cause hardship if they were unable to do so.

3.2 Haringey's Allocations Policy uses bands to prioritise applicants. Bands are A,B and C.

- Band A - Care leavers, under occupiers, critical medical or welfare issues, management transfers due to violence,
- Band B - Homeless household in TA, serious medical or welfare issues, severely overcrowded social housing tenant (lacking at least 2 bedrooms)
- Band C - Moderate medical or welfare issues, overcrowded social housing tenant (lacking one bedroom), severely overcrowded private sector tenant, homeless household who aren't owed a duty

3.3 At the end of July there were 13,585 households on the Housing Register, 795 in Band A and 3224 in Band B. 7063 are in need of family sized accommodation, 3174 are in Bands A or B.

Band	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	7 Bed	Total
A	1	541	158	53	28	9	4	1	795
B	0	303	1141	1291	382	90	13	4	3224
C	0	5677	2353	1313	184	25	12	2	9566
Total	1	6521	3652	2657	594	124	29	7	13585

3.4 In recent years due the shortage of social housing, no lets have been made to Band C applicants. The table below shows the length of time on average that a household had waited before they were offered social housing in 2022/2023. Homeless families in temporary accommodation, with a 3 or 4 bed housing need waited on average over 12 years.

Bedroom Need:	1	2	3	4
Band A - Average Wait Time	1 year 5 months	5 years 3 months	4 years 1 month	3 years 2 months
Band B - Average Wait Time	2 years 7 months	8 years 9 months	12 years 8 months	12 years 6 months

3.5 Work is currently being undertaken to develop a New Housing Allocations Policy and through the consultation process there will be an opportunity to contribute to its development. Examples of considerations for families may include;

- Gardens &/or street properties prioritised to those with young children (e.g. <12) or those with a need for private outdoor space e.g. a child with autism.

- Properties with a parking space attached prioritised to those who need it (and possibly those with young children)
- Homes with 3 double bedrooms prioritised to those with at least 3 possibly 4 children.
- Maximum floor level (1st floor) to where a family includes a child with autism.

3.6 Homelessness

3.6.1 In 2023/24 4715 households approached the Council for help because they were homelessness or threatened with homelessness, (this was just over 200 more than in 22/23). Projections indicate an increase of 13% in demand by the end of the year.

3.6.2 Wherever possible helping residents remain in their homes is the priority and when this is not possible support to secure alternative accommodation to relieve their homelessness is provided. Homelessness Prevention and relief activity is strong (successful prevention of homelessness for 1,134 households in 23/24) – exceeding the annual target and higher than last year (1,059). While prevention and relief is more challenging due to changes in the private sector market and fewer affordable private sector properties being available, performance in the first quarter indicates we are on track to meet this year target of 849 preventions.

3.6.3 Demand for temporary accommodation is also likely to increase by 8% in 2024/25, although due to a significant number of new build housing developments due to become available this year, while there may be a small increase in the number of families in TA, the overall number of households in temporary accommodation is not likely to change significantly by year end.

3.7 Profile of Families in TA

3.7.1 As at 6th August 2024, there were 2,655 households living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council. 2,005 households are families with dependent children under 18, with a total of 4,067 children within those households compared with 4,155 Children in TA (2,028 households) at the same time last year. The number of children proportionately per household is also broadly the same. Of these, 1,829 (91.3%) are in long term self-contained homes and 175 are in accommodation where the family need to share either a bathroom and/or cooking facilities. There are a further 8 households without dependent children recorded as currently expecting a baby in 24/25. Currently:

- 40% of households include 1 child,
- 31% include 2 children,

- 20% include 3 children and
- 9% include 4 or more children.

A brief breakdown of households is provided below:

Description	Number of children u 18 in household							Total	Pregnant
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Couple with dependent children	162	178	123	55	19	6	3	546	
Lone female parent with dependent children	594	421	266	72	23	7	2	1385	
Lone male parent with dependent children	44	22	5	3				74	
Total (households with children U18)	800	621	394	130	42	13	5	2,005	
Total Number of Children U18	800	1242	1182	520	210	78	35	4,067	
Couple with non-dependent children									2
Lone female person household									6

3.7.2 Of the 4,067 children, 87% are of school age with 14% in Key Stage 4 preparing for GCSE's and 12% in 6th /7th form:

*Start and end ages in each key stage overlap	Age	No of children	% of all Children	% per key stage
	0	77	1.9	
	1	143	3.5	
	2	164	4.0	
	3	159	3.9	13
Reception	4	171	4.2	4
Key Stages 1 & 2	5	206	5.1	
	6	223	5.5	
	7	241	5.9	
	8	300	7.4	
	9	241	5.9	
	10	243	6.0	36
Key stage 3	11	296	7.3	
	12	288	7.1	
	13	265	6.5	21
Key stage 4	14	278	6.8	
	15	276	6.8	14
6th form	16	263	6.5	
	17	233	5.7	12
Total Children		4067		100%

3.8 Temporary accommodation allocations

- 3.8.1 Haringey Council's TA Placements Policy sets out our approach to the placement of households in temporary accommodation, both in and out of the borough, on the periphery of London and when required further afield. It covers both interim placements made under Section 188 Housing Act 1996 ("HA96"), while homelessness enquires are undertaken, and longer-term temporary accommodation placements for households accepted as homeless under Section 193 HA96.
- 3.8.2 The Policy (Appendix A) takes into account the statutory requirements on local authorities in respect of the suitability of accommodation, including the Suitability of Accommodation Orders, the Homelessness Code of Guidance 2006, and Supplementary Guidance issued in 2012. It has also been formulated having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as required by section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Haringey TA placements policy sets out the way in which households are prioritised for in borough TA, neighbouring borough placements and transfers.
- 3.8.3 Pending a wider review, a recent addition to the policy has been approved which relates specifically to Suitability Order requirements on the use of Hotel accommodation and supporting the provision of cots to prevent co-sleeping for families with babies. See Appendix B.
- 3.8.4 When offering temporary accommodation, the council will consider the suitability of the offer, taking into account:
- The location, size and condition and facilities of the accommodation
 - Health factors of household members
 - Education - some priority will be given to special educational needs and students who are close to taking public examinations in determining priority for placements in the borough.
 - Employment – for applicants, who are in paid employment, to reach their normal workplace from the accommodation that is secured. This will include having a regard to both travelling time and the costs associated with this travel
 - Proximity to services - proximity to schools, public transport, primary care services, and local services in the area in which the accommodation is located
 - The need to safeguard and promote the welfare of any children in the household
 - Any other special circumstances
- 3.8.5 In addition to case level collaboration with CYPS, we have also started conversations with health colleagues about how we may be able collaborate and better support families in TA.
- 3.8.6 We are also we are currently developing a flagging system on our housing database which will discretely flag any households including a

looked-after child, a child in Need, or a child with a Protection Plan, to ensure that negative housing decisions, moves and evictions from TA are not actioned until we have liaised with the relevant CYPS colleague assigned to the case.

3.8.7 The flag will not provide any information but will direct officers to refer to their manager before any action is taken. The manager will then be able to identify the reason for the flat and the relevant CYPS colleague to contact. In all cases involving children, where we do not have CYPS colleague details and a negative outcome is pending, a referral will be made to CYPS in advance on the decision.

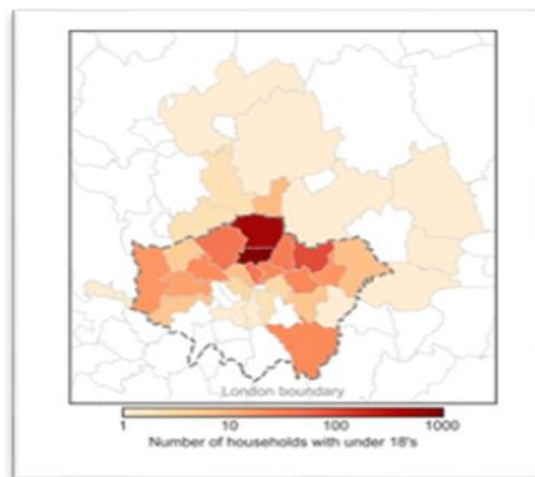
3.8.8 Of the 4,067 children currently in TA, 65 are a recognised as a Child in Need, 16 are a looked after child and 5 have child protection plans.

3.9 Temporary Accommodation Geography and Types

3.9.1 Wherever possible we aim to accommodate families within the Haringey Borough or in neighbouring boroughs when nothing in Haringey is available. The post pandemic market changes has however led to a lack of available affordable TA supply and has meant securing TA further afield has been necessary.

3.9.2 Currently just over half (51.5%) of households with dependent children are accommodated within Haringey. 35 % are in Enfield and other neighbouring boroughs. 12.5% in other London boroughs and 1% are out of London.

Area – Out of London -Aug 2024	No Of Households
Basildon	1
Broxbourne	9
Chelmsford	1
East Hertfordshire	1
Epping Forest	1
Hertsmere	2
North Hertfordshire	1
Slough	1
Thurrock	1
Welwyn Hatfield	2



3.9.3 Compared with the same time last year there are significantly fewer TA Households in Haringey (-79), Barnet (-24), Enfield (-17) and Hackney (-15) and increases in Redbridge (+61), Barking and Dagenham (+17) and Bromley (+24). This is a direct result of market conditions and the ability to secure affordable temporary accommodation more locally

3.9.4 Families are accommodated in various types of temporary accommodation. Just under 16% are in Council Owned accommodation. 27% of TA is leased (typically for 3 years at a time) from the private sector either by the Council, Homes for Haringey or a Housing association. 57% (Annexes 52%, B&B 5% and PSHMO 15%) are secured as and when they become available dependent on demand.

3.9.5 Fully self-contained temporary accommodation with all facilities makes up 89% of the TA portfolio, the only exception to this is Commercial hotels/B&B's which are self-contained but lack cooking facilities, a small number of Private sector rooms (see below) which have shared cooking facilities and Council Lodges.

SHORT-TERM SHARED FACILITY ACCOMMODATION		175	8.7%
Commercial hotel (B&B)	Last resort when no other accommodation is available, and we have a duty to make a placement. We try to use hotels that we block book but also use commercial hotels, like Travelodge's.	102	5.1%
Council lodge	3 Lodges for families only – Broadwater, Whitehall and Birkbeck. At BWL and WHL families shared bathrooms and kitchens. Birbeck rooms are en-suite but have shared kitchens. Used as first placement when homeless – was intended to be short term – up to 3 months but many stays are now longer.	70	3.5%
Room in a property with multiple occupants (HMO)	Typically, these have an ensuite bathroom but a shared kitchen	3	0.1%
LONG-TERM SELF-CONTAINED HOMES		1,829	91.3%
Council owned hostel	Self-contained homes held in the HRA – some are purpose-built hostels (e.g. Russell Road) and some are very large, converted houses in the West e.g. 3 hostels on Queens Ave).	80	4.0%
Annex (NPA)	Annexe is a historical term for emergency accommodation where landlord fees are calculated on a nightly basis. However, this does not mean residents can be evicted at short notice as these contracts all contain notice periods. The properties are all self-contained and families often remain for long periods of time. The properties are secured through Adam, a dynamic Purchasing Scheme.	1,037	51.7%
Private Sector Leasing (Council)	Private owners lease their properties to the Council usually for 3 years. During that time, we manage them, carry out most of the repairs (apart from the structure) and collect and guarantee the rent.	316	15.8%
Private Sector Leasing (HFH)	As above but the lease is between the owner and HFH. This enables us to charge LHA rents rather than rents limited at TA subsidy levels.	183	9.1%
Section 193	s.193 just refers to the section of the Act under which we are providing the TA. These are Council general needs properties that we are using as TA – most are on the Love Lane Estate pending the redevelopment, but we do also use some other lets as TA when needed e.g. agreement to use one bed lets as TA for small families.	167	8.3%
Housing Association Leases	This is the same as our leases, but the arrangement is between the owner and a Housing Association, and the HA then allow us to nominate to them	47	2.3%
All		2,005	100%

3.10 Issues in TA

3.10.1 There are currently just over 300 households in TA that are approved for a transfer to alternative temporary accommodation, however lack of suitable supply means a significant delay before families move to a new home. Where there is an immediate risk to a family and no alternative accommodation is immediately available, a hotel placement is offered to ensure their safety.

3.10.2 TA transfers are prioritised in the following order:

Priority Band 1 - Households who must move from their temporary accommodation

- 1) Based on the severity of their situation the following will be prioritised for transfers:
 - a) Households who need to move urgently because of a critical medical or welfare need, having regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.
 - b) Households who need to move due to critical safeguarding concerns.
 - c) Households who need to move urgently because of domestic abuse
 - d) Management transfer, eg harassment or hate crime where there is no other resolution to their housing
 - e) Households living in a property with acute disrepair or deemed uninhabitable or with Category 1 hazards where works cannot be carried out in occupation.
 - f) Households with children or who are pregnant who have been living for over 5 weeks in shared facility accommodation (but excluding households in Council run shared facility accommodation)
Where there is an overriding interest to move the household, for example to fulfil an urgent statutory or legal need.
- 2) Accepted homeless households in short stay hostels
- 3) Properties to be handed back

Priority Band 2

Based on the severity of their situation and the suitability of the available alternative property:

- a) Households who need to move because they have been assessed as having a serious medical or welfare need. This would include:
 - b) Where the household has a serious medical condition, and their current housing has a serious detriment to their health and where a move would have a positive impact on their health.
 - c) Where there is a serious welfare need, normally due to a household's vulnerability where a move would have a positive impact on their health.
 - d) Households in accommodation who are severely overcrowded (at least two fewer rooms than their need)

- e) Households where there is disrepair but with no imminent risk/ danger.
- f) Households living in temporary accommodation which is costly to the Council.

Priority Band 3

- a) Households who need to move because they have been assessed as having a moderate medical or welfare need which is impacted by their housing. This may include chronic conditions where they would benefit from a move.
- b) Households living in overcrowded accommodation (by one room).

3.10.3 The table below provides the breakdown of the current approved transfers. These do not include households in B&B in priority band 1(f) above as these are automatically prioritised.

Row Labels	Priority Band 1	Priority Band 2	Priority Band 3	Grand Total
Crit/serious safeguard	8	2		10
Critical medical/welfare	6			6
Disrepair	11	6	1	19
DV	11			11
Expensive TA	1	3	1	5
Landlord TA Hand back request	36	161		197
Management transfer	4	10		14
Moderate medical	2	2		4
Overcrowded	2	4	3	11
Serious medical/welfare	1	1		2
Serious Safeguarding	1	1		2
Severely overcrowded	2	6		8
TA uninhabit/cat 1 hazard	6	1		7
Under-occupying	2	2		4
Unsuitable after review	8	3		11
Grand Total	100	202	6	311

3.10.4 Until June 2022, commercial hotels and B&Bs had not been used to accommodate Haringey homeless families for over a decade and almost all temporary accommodation (TA) was self-contained.

3.10.5 Although some block booked hotels used by the Council have cooking facilities, typically commercial hotels and B&Bs do not have cooking facilities or separate living areas, only a bedroom and bathroom, and therefore long-term use has an impact both on families mental and financial wellbeing. Under The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003, the use of commercial hotels and B&B accommodation is permitted, however, this should only be in

exceptional circumstances and for families with dependent children and pregnant females, for no more than 6 weeks.

3.10.6 In a recent release from London Councils reported:

- The number of households living in TA in April 2024, reported by 32 councils, increased 9.8% to 60,959, in comparison to the same month of 2023 for which 55,524 households were reported, increasing by 5,435 households.
- The data continues to show a rise in the number of London households living in Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation, including those living in B&Bs for longer than six weeks. 27 authorities reported 2,249 families living in B&B accommodation in April 2024, up 24.7% on a year earlier. Over the same period 28 authorities report 1,613 families living in B&Bs beyond the six-week limit, an increase of 41.2% from 1,142 the year before (an additional 471 families).
- The composition of TA used by councils continues to contain a significant proportion of B&B accommodation, but efforts by councils to reduce this have seen some success. In April 2024, 27 authorities reported the number of B&B units in use was down by 3.2%, a reduction of 207 units. At the same time 26 authorities reported the number of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation units in use as TA increased by 6.6% (up 1,841 units) on a year earlier. The number of notices to quit received by 22 councils for TA accommodation has increased substantially. There were 623 notices in April 2024, 76.5% more than the same month a year earlier.

3.10.7 In April 61% of Haringey families in B&B were living in B&Bs beyond the six-week limit (compared with 72% of London Councils reporting).

3.10.8 While the use of B&B has not reduced, movement out of temporary has been consistent with over 300 moves out of Hotel/shared rooms up to the end of May 24. At the end of July, the average length of stay for families in this type of accommodation was 13 weeks.

3.11 Temporary Accommodation Supply and ending the use of B&B

3.11.1 The lack of supply of affordable temporary accommodation and increased demand is a London wide issue and has led to continued use of B&B accommodation. In Haringey the supply challenges are exacerbated by a heavy reliance on the private sector with many TA landlords serving notice to recover their properties. The cost of alternative forms of private sector temporary accommodation is also on the increase.

3.11.2 Following on from the development of the B&B Elimination Plan (contained within the report to Housing, Development and Planning Scrutiny on 18th December 2023), The Council has approved the Reduction of TA and B&B elimination as a Priority A project. The key Priorities for the group are set out in the table below and have been organised within four work streams, Conversions, Purchasing, Income and Prevention. Progress will be overseen by a Programme Board which will report up to the Council's Change Delivery Board.

3.11.3 All of the work streams are underway and are at various stages. Initial sprints have taken place for each workstream which defined and agreed the activities needed to achieve the key deliverables. Regular sessions are in place to progress these actions.

Projects	Scope	Key deliverables / benefits
Buying more properties for use as TA	To increase the numbers of properties purchased by the Council for use as TA, increasing the supply of available TA and reducing the need for B&B use.	Higher numbers of properties purchased at affordable, sustainable rates. Reduced usage of B&Bs.
Converting more existing buildings already within the Council's control	To identify and convert buildings already within the Council's portfolio with the potential to be used as TA, increasing the supply of available TA and reducing the need for B&B use.	Increased numbers of units available for TA. Reduced usage of B&Bs.
Increasing levels of TA income collection	To increase levels of TA income collection (91% last year) to at least 95.4% (level needed to meet bad debt provision).	Increased levels of TA income collection.
Implementing further improvements in homelessness prevention processes	To increase numbers of residents effectively prevented from needing homelessness support through improvements to service processes and practices	Reducing numbers of residents entering temporary accommodation. Reducing levels of need for TA and usage of B&Bs.
Reduce the number and time taken for TA voids	To reduce the number of voids within the system. The project will link connect and draw on ongoing voids improvement work taking place within the service area.	Reducing the number of voids across the Council from 500 to 150 or lower, enabling greater TA supply to be released and preventing the use of B&Bs.

3.12 Housing adaptations

3.12.1 In both the private and public sectors are crucial for meeting the specific needs of children, particularly those with disabilities or special

requirements. These adaptations help ensure that children can live safely and comfortably in their homes, supporting their development and well-being.

- 3.12.2 Families in private housing may face different challenges when seeking adaptations for their children's needs. Laws protect tenants' rights to make reasonable adaptations to rented homes. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits landlords from unreasonably refusing requests for disability-related adaptations. However, there may still be limitations, especially for extensive modifications. Adaptations in private homes may include structural changes like widening doorways, installing ramps, or creating accessible bathrooms. However, the scope of what can be done may be limited by the landlord's approval or the building's structure.
- 3.12.3 Adaptations in public housing are often funded through government grants or local authority budgets. In the UK, the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) provides funding for essential adaptations like installing ramps, widening doorways, or creating accessible bathrooms. These grants are available to families in both public and private housing, but local authorities often manage the process for public sector homes.

3.13 New Housing developments

- 3.13.1 In 2018, we started a new era of council home building in Haringey. We have already completed and let 482 new Council homes; by 2031, we will have completed more than 3,000. The high number of Haringey children living in temporary accommodation or overcrowded conditions means that there is a pressing need for new family-sized homes: in spite of the considerable financial challenges presented by delivering larger homes, 184 of the 482 completed new council homes have two bedrooms, 101 have three, and 13 have four bedrooms. Building work is already underway on site for another 1590 council homes. Of these, 40% have two bedrooms, 22% have three bedrooms and 7% have four bedrooms. The shortage of council homes for larger households is particularly acute, so between 2024 and 2029 we will work towards our new Housing Strategy's target that half the council homes we start developing during the period will have three or more bedrooms.
- 3.13.2 We also ensure our new homes meet the needs of children with disabilities and other special needs. As well as aiming to deliver 20% of our new council homes as wheelchair adaptable, through our Bespoke Homes Programme we are designing and building council homes around the individual requirements of specific families with disabilities and other additional needs. So far, 60 new council homes have been delivered with bespoke design and adaptations.

4. Tackling damp and mould in council properties

- 4.1 In October 2021, the Housing Ombudsman published its' [Spotlight on Damp and Mould](#) report. This report heavily criticised the way a number of social housing landlords failed to listen to and effectively act upon reports from their tenants and leaseholders about incidents of damp and mould in their homes. In November 2022, following the inquest into the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, the coroner's report was published, which found that he died from a respiratory condition caused by long term exposure to mould in his social housing Rochdale home.
- 4.2 Following this, social landlords were requested by the Housing Ombudsman to self-assess against the 26 recommendations made in its 'Spotlight' report, which includes having a dedicated damp and mould policy in place. Haringey's Housing Damp and Mould Policy was subsequently agreed by Cabinet 24 April 2023. The policy applies to council tenants, leaseholders and temporary accommodation within our own stock, and leased accommodation.
- 4.3 The policy's key objectives are to:
- provide and maintain dry, warm, healthy homes for our tenants and leaseholders.
 - ensure that the fabric of our homes is protected from deteriorating and damage resulting from damp and condensation.
 - ensure that tenants never feel blamed and always be treated with dignity and respect
 - ensure every visit count so all staff visiting a tenant's home are able to identify the early signs of damp and mould.
 - reduce both landlord and tenants' cost associated with damp and mould.
- 4.4 It is structured around three clear stages:
- prevention: ensuring that homes are not susceptible to conditions leading to damp and mould, for example by ensuring that they are well heated and ventilated.
 - identification: ensuring that the Council, both via data analysis and stock condition surveys and by equipping officers, identifies cases of damp and mould, and that residents are able to report cases quickly, easily and confidently.
 - treatment: dealing with cases of damp and mould quickly and decisively and prioritising the most severe cases.
- 4.5 There is a dedicated project between the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Haringey's Repairs Service to share information and prioritise vulnerable families who are living in properties affected by Category 1 (the most severe cases) and Category 2 damp and mould

hazards, as defined by the Government's Housing Health and Safety Rating System [HousingHealthSafety.qxd \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/HousingHealthSafety.qxd).

4.6 As of 20.8.24 the Repairs Service have progressed the following actions in relation to Children's Services referrals:

Children and Social Care Damp and mould cases

Total number of cases referred from Children's Services	Total cases with CAT 1 Status	Total cases with CAT 2 Status	Total Cases closed to date	Total cases remaining / under investigation/ works underway
18 ¹	0	15	7	8

4.7 Of the 8 cases still to be completed:

Case 1	Repairs on hold at resident's request as awaiting roofing repairs to be actioned/ completed. Roofing leak identified as the contributing factor to the damp and mould in the property. Roofing inspection booked and confirmed with the resident for 04/09/24. The damp and mould team will follow up on completion of the roofing repair to apply mould treatment to the affected area
Case 2	Damp suspected to be as result of leak from the balcony walkway above or the internal rainwater pipe. Arranged for CCTV of internal rainwater stack to identify the cause. Quote for this work received, currently awaiting approval.
Case 3	Surveyor's report received on 12th June. The property has been identified as CAT 2 status and a number of repairs identified. During the inspection, the resident would not allow access to the bedroom. The surveyor provided information to the resident on how to manage damp and mould in the property. An initial appointment was arranged to apply the mould treatment to the affected area on 12/08/24. This has had to be rearranged due to no access. New appointment booked for 13/09/24.
Case 4	Surveyor's report received 21/05/24. The property has been identified as CAT 2 status. At the time of inspection, there was no damp and mould found in the property. However, remedial repairs were booked to remedy a leak in the bathroom, this was completed on 25/06/24. A follow up appointment has been booked for 18/09/24 to renew damaged skirting and bath panel. The operative who attended to address the leak recommended a roofer to inspect the gully/balcony leaking around drain. An appointment to inspect this has been made for 16/10/24
Case 5	Repairs to this property have been assigned to a contractor to complete. The contractor's report/survey was received on 06/06/24 and is currently being reviewed by senior management before an order is raised with the contractor to progress works
Case 6	Unable to gain access to the property to action the mould treatment required. Resident has cancelled on 2 separate occasions. This has been referred to Tenancy Services to investigate. Mould wash has provisionally been booked for 16/09/ 24 and a letter has been sent to the tenant to confirm the appointment date.

¹ 3 referrals were for properties not owned by Haringey Housing Services

Case 7	Mould wash completed to property on 21/02/24. The resident has made a complaint following the completion of works. This relates to matter outside of the remit of the repairs service but this is being investigated to ensure that we are following our process correctly.
Case 8	CAT 2 status given following inspection, no damp and mould issues recorded at the time of inspection. Roofing leak identified; roofing works scheduled for 29/10/24.

4.8 As part of our internal continuous improvement workstreams we are looking to manage the process of dealing with Damp and Mould as efficiently as we can. We have implemented a new business process following on from the launch of the new policy and we are reviewing our customer relations system to identify solutions which will make it easier for our customers to report new cases and for us to monitor the response and resolution for such cases.

5. Tackling domestic abuse and other measures to support vulnerable families

5.1 Following the insourcing of Homes for Haringey in June 2022 the Council immediately began a process of reviewing that service provision and in April 2023 adopted a comprehensive Housing Improvement Plan backed by significant financial investment. Amongst many other commitments, that plan committed to review housing management policies. In July 2023 the Housing Ombudsman published a Special Report on the London Borough of Haringey that amongst other recommendations asked the Council to review the vulnerability and safeguarding policies used by its housing management services to ensure they are up-to-date and relevant. Two new policies have since been written and approved by Cabinet in July 2024, responding in full to the Ombudsman's recommendation and help the Council meet the Social Housing Regulator's consumer standards.

5.2 Amendments in February 2024 to the Social Housing Regulator's consumer standards require that from 1 April 2024 all social landlords publish clear and accessible policies which outline their approach to tenancy management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions, and set out their policy on taking into account the needs of those households who are vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness, and households with children. The Housing Strategy and Policy team has therefore undertaken a review of both policies and then the drafting of new policies.

5.5 The review and redrafting process included a thorough review of other housing providers' policies and of best practice, and engagement in an interactive process of policy development with key stakeholders across the Council and externally, including through Haringey's Safeguarding Adults' Board. Council tenants and leaseholders were engaged in the design of both policies from an early stage with broad outlines taken in November 2023 to the Resident Voice Board for discussion.

- 5.6 The new Vulnerable Council Tenants and Leaseholders Policy looks to a definition of vulnerability that includes anyone who currently experiences difficulties with everyday living and, in order not to be disadvantaged by those difficulties, needs either additional support or service adaptation to access our landlord services, or additional support to sustain their tenancy. The new policy also takes a holistic view of tenancy sustainment, recognising that supporting people to live well in the community is a key factor in preventing homelessness and is therefore a core housing management task.
- 5.7 The new Safeguarding Council Tenants and Leaseholders Policy sets out how the Council's housing management services will work to prevent abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults in its own housing stock. The newly drafted Safeguarding Tenants and Leaseholders Policy aims to ensure that the Council's overarching Safeguarding Policy is embedded and delivered specifically through our housing management services to ensure that we actively safeguard children and vulnerable adults in the homes of our Council tenants and leaseholders. The policy is clear that safeguarding is a core responsibility for everyone working in any capacity in or with any of its housing management teams.
- 5.8 Both of these policies were approved at Cabinet in July 2024. At its heart, the new Vulnerable Council Tenants and Leaseholders Policy focuses us not on defining vulnerability but on how we can adjust our services to make sure that everyone can access them on an equal basis, sustain their tenancy, and live a good life. The new Safeguarding Council Tenants and Leaseholders Policy will help ensure that all our landlord services focus on that responsibility and protect our most vulnerable residents more effectively.
- 5.9 In addition to the work around vulnerability and safeguarding, work to improve our response to Domestic Abuse is required and has a direct link into the new Vulnerability and Safeguarding policies. Domestic Abuse also has a renewed focus in the Neighbourhood and Community consumer standard from the Regulator of Social Housing. Housing Services and Housing Demand have therefore initiated the work required to obtain a Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.
- 5.10 Home is often the most dangerous place for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and housing continues to be one of the primary barriers to those leaving the abuse and the leading cause of homelessness amongst women and children. The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 now means that children and young people are recognised as victims. Previously identified as the hidden victims, children are now able to access the protection and support needed to recover.
- 5.11 Around 1 in 5 children and young people are exposed to Domestic Abuse and living in households where this is present can have a serious impact upon a child or young person's mental and physical wellbeing, as well as

their behaviour. This can continue after the adults' relationship has come to an end, and post-separation abuse and coercive controlling behaviours can continue to remain a factor in the child's life. The impact can last into adulthood affecting perceptions on healthy relationships and how you treat people physically and emotionally, therefore prolonging the trauma and having a devastating impact.

- 5.12 DAHA's mission is to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and an accreditation process. This is a cross-cutting project which not only addresses the policies and procedures needed but puts an importance on culture. This culture should demonstrate that all staff are aware of domestic abuse and its impacts upon survivors, children and young people, promoting a believing and survivor-led approach and also empowering families to be able to thrive and have confidence that they will receive the right response through their housing provider.
- 5.13 Obtaining DAHA accreditation is also reflected within the Corporate Delivery Plan for 2024-26, and work includes introducing two new policies, consisting of a new staff policy and a separate residents Domestic Abuse and VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) policy, implementing a training programme, reestablishing sanctuary scheme works, and exploring case management systems. Overall, this work intends to strengthen our response to domestic abuse, ensuring that a believing and caring approach is at the heart of all interactions of survivors, and in turn will have a positive impact on them, children, and families.

6. Housing Sub Group

- 6.1 In recognition of the wide ranging issues affecting vulnerable residents, a Housing Subgroup has been set up with the overarching purpose to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable children and adults and to gain assurance that safeguarding arrangements are effective across the housing sector and provide assurance to Haringey's Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (HSCP) and Haringey Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) regarding matters arising in relation to Housing and Safeguarding
- 6.2 Issues with the quality of the housing provision, overcrowding or risk of homelessness are all matters that could meet the threshold for Local Authority interventions and should be the subject of information sharing or a formal referral.
- 6.3 The Housing sub-Group has established a committed group of representatives to meeting to fulfil their responsibilities to safeguard adults and children and to give housing a voice on the HSCP & HSAB. Over the last year it has:

- Developed a work programme to address the issues facing the cohorts of needs deemed vulnerable
- Supported the priorities in the Draft Housing Allocations Policy
- Ensured data is effectively shared to enable rapid response to families living with damp and mould and children with special educational needs (SEND) living in temporary accommodation
- Supported the Service Level Agreement between Early Help , Safeguarding for Children’s Services and Housing to address high risk safeguarding accommodation needs, provide early intervention for families struggling with rent arrears

Its work has helped the Council and its Safeguarding partners to:

- speak with other providers, including Registered providers and others active in the Borough, to ensure that SEND children are prioritised in their allocation of suitable accommodation affording geographical priority to maintain the circle of support
- adapted policies to seek to avoid lengthy travel distances for SEND children in their journeys to School and other key locations including GP and Hospital support where appropriate.
- created a Task Force which will react, within 48 hours of a report being submitted indicating a SEND child at risk of damp and mould in an allocated property, to secure suitable alternative accommodation, or, prioritise repairs to eradicate the health and safety risks
- Worked to ensure that property allocations enable the best available and suitably specified, safe accommodation for SEND children at risk of SUDI (sudden unexpected deaths in infants).
- Committed to; acute urgent cases (life threatening) are prioritised for near-immediate move AND will prioritise households with dependents over multi-adult (non-dependent) households .

7. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

Not required on the advice of the Principal Scrutiny Officer.

8. Procurement

Not required.

9. Head of Legal & Governance

Not required.

10. Equality

The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

11. Use of Appendices

Appendix A – TA Placements Policy

Appendix B – Additional Text – TA Placements Policy

12. Background papers - none