

Housing Annual Report for North Yorkshire Council Tenants



1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025

Welcome to your Housing Annual Report

Hello! We're the tenant editorial panel – a group of tenants who helped shape this report.

That means everything you read here has been edited by tenants, for tenants.

This report covers the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. It looks at how the housing service has performed across the three main areas where the council owns homes – Harrogate, Richmond and Selby.

This report also takes you through the council's improvement journey - where they were, where they are now, and what's planned next.

You'll also find a summary of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures - these help make sure the council's performance is clear and open – so we, as tenants, can hold them to account.

We hope you find the report useful and easy to read.

Your Tenant Editorial Panel



Tenant involvement update

Tenant involvement is about making sure your voice is heard when decisions are made about your home, your safety, and your community. This year, North Yorkshire Council has made some important changes to how tenants can get involved. In May 2024, a small group of tenants helped create a new Tenant Involvement Strategy. The goal was to make sure every tenant could find a way to take part-whether that's through a formal meeting, a community event, or even online. The new strategy offers more flexible and informal ways to get involved, so it's easier for more people to share their views.

We also launched a new magazine called Open Door in December 2024. It's sent to all tenants and leaseholders every three months. New groups have been set up, including a tenant scrutiny panel and a tenant voice forum.

These groups help us review policies and improve services. Community action days have been another success. These events bring tenants and staff together to make improvements in local areas -and the feedback has been very positive.

Whether you want to join a group, attend an event, or just read the magazine, there's now a way for everyone to get involved. The range of improvements have been welcomed by tenants including Kim McBride, who is part of the scrutiny panel.

Kim said: **"It no longer feels like involving tenants is a chore that has to be done, it's not just a tick box exercise or anything like that."**

It now feels like the council really is invested in tenant involvement – staff want to hear our views and take them on board."

Landlord review of the year: Making homes safer and better

In 2023, North Yorkshire Council reviewed how well it was meeting new social housing rules. We found areas needing improvement and told the Regulator of Social Housing. In May 2024, they agreed and issued a formal notice requiring action.

What needed fixing?

- We lacked good data on the condition of many homes.
- Some health and safety rules weren't being met.
- We didn't fully understand tenants' needs.
- Tenants had limited chances to give feedback.

What's changing?

We've made progress in improving housing services to better meet your needs:

Home inspections: We're checking the condition of all homes, with 4500 by March 2026, and the total by October 2026 - with priority given to those affected by damp and mould.

Safer homes: Homes being re-let must now meet our Lettable Standard. This reflects the Government's Decent Homes Standard. We've created clear plans to tackle seven major safety issues and improved how we track them.

Easier reporting: You can now report damp, mould and repairs more easily, including through an online form.

Repairs upgrade: A new repairs system is in place and the new repairs standard has been adopted, to ensure consistent service and clarify who's responsible for what.

Energy efficiency: 150 homes have already been upgraded, and funding is secured to improve 1,664 more by March 2028.

Adaptations made easier: A new policy makes it simpler to request changes like handrails or ramps.

Smarter services: Better data collection will help us tailor services to what tenants really need.

Policy updates: Key policies have been refreshed, covering housing allocations, domestic abuse, tenancy rules, repairs, and anti-social behaviour.

Better complaints handling: More staff, training, and a revised policy mean your concerns will be dealt with more effectively.

Rent: An internal audit is underway to ensure we comply with the Rent Standard.

Sheltered housing: We are consulting with tenants to ensure homes meet residents needs.

What does this mean for you?

We aim for your homes to be safer, warmer, and better maintained. We want you to have more say, quicker responses, and fairer treatment - helping make your experience as a tenant better than ever.



Listening, learning and improving from tenant complaints

Over the past year, North Yorkshire Council has seen a big increase in tenant complaints - it shows tenants are more aware of how to raise issues. We are also confident that we are capturing more complaints correctly. If you're unhappy with our service, you can make a complaint. We'll acknowledge it within 5 working days and let you know when to expect a response.

Stage One

We'll investigate and respond within 10 working days. If it's more complex, we'll let you know and respond within 20 days. Our reply may include an explanation, apology or solution. We'll tell you if your complaint is upheld, partly upheld or not upheld. If you're not satisfied, you can ask us to move to Stage Two.

Stage Two

A senior manager will review your complaint and our Stage One response. They may change the outcome or confirm our original decision. This will be our final response. If you're still not satisfied or feel we haven't responded properly, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman for independent advice. In 2024/25 there were 342 complaints, with most (306) at stage one. That's a 203% rise from the previous year. We are using the valuable information provided by the complaints to inform our service improvements.

Case study - David's winter warmer

David, 77, lives alone in his bungalow while his wife receives care in a nursing home. Recently, his home received a series of improvements to make it warmer, safer, and more energy-efficient. These included extra loft insulation, solar panels, a new heating system with room-by-room controls, roof repairs, modern fire and smoke alarms, and ventilation upgrades in the kitchen and bathroom. New doors and windows were also fitted to keep the warmth in.

What you are telling us:

Repairs delays (31%) and **building condition** (22%) were the top concerns. Other issues included **damp and mould** (12%), **staff or contractor conduct** (8%), and **communication problems** (8%). These reflect long-standing challenges, but the council is responding faster-69% of stage one and 77% of stage two complaints were answered on time, a big improvement from last year. Importantly, **67% of complaints were upheld or partly upheld**, showing the council is listening and taking action. Only one case led to a finding of maladministration by the Housing Ombudsman.

Learning from feedback:

- Workshops with housing managers helped identify service quality and care as key issues.
- Early phone contact with tenants is helping build trust.
- Regular team meetings are encouraging staff to take ownership of complaints.
- The tenant scrutiny panel is established - this enables tenants to hold us to account.

What's next:

- A new complaints system is coming in 2025/26 to improve tracking and fairness.
- Staff are being trained to help us handle complaints better.

We are committed to listening, learning, and making real improvements to housing services.

David couldn't be happier. "Before, it was cold and draughty. I used to worry about heating costs. Now, I can warm just one room and keep an eye on my smart meter. My first bill was £69-before, I was paying £143!" David's story shows how small changes can make a big difference. If you're offered similar upgrades, don't hesitate—they could make your home warmer, safer, and more affordable too.



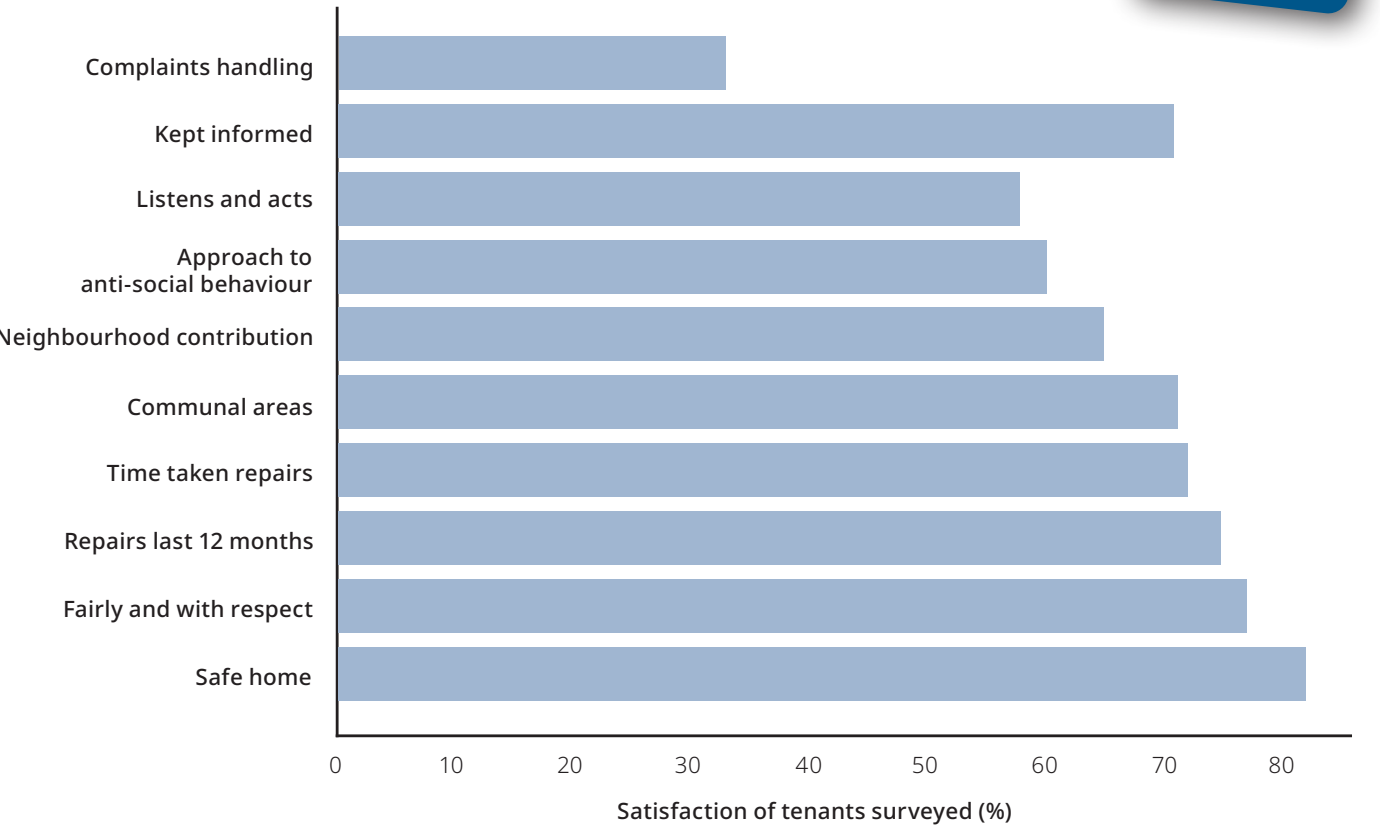
Your voice matters - tenant satisfaction surveys

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we surveyed 600 tenants with the help of Acuity (an independent market research company and housing consultant) to assess satisfaction with housing services. Overall satisfaction was 69%, slightly down from 70% the previous year, but still strong compared to other councils. Of the tenants surveyed, they were most pleased with feeling safe at home (82%), being treated fairly (77%), and repairs (75%). Improvements were noted in communal areas, neighbourhood contribution, anti-social behaviour handling, and tenant communication-all up by around 10%. However, satisfaction is lower for complaints handling (33% satisfaction), listening to and acting on tenant views (58%), and our approach to anti-social behaviour (60%). The top five factors influencing satisfaction were: well-maintained homes, fair treatment, responsiveness to tenant views, ease of dealing with the council, and feeling safe.

Cost-of-living concerns are high, with 77% of tenants worried and 44% very concerned. We are exploring support options like flexible payments and budgeting advice. Damp and mould affected 37% of tenants surveyed. We are working to improve inspections and prevention. Tenants praised quick repairs and friendly staff but highlighted delays and poor communication. NYC's performance exceeds national averages, especially in safety and communal areas. Future priorities include improving our repairs service, communication, and support for complaints and anti-social behaviour.



Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024-25



Housing service performance: A year of progress

In 2024–25, we made progress in improving housing services, despite challenges in working with data from different systems. We are working to ensure that the data we have is reliable which in turn, means that we can give you clear information about our performance.

Safety First:

- Gas safety** remains good, with over 98% of homes certified - our target is 100%.
- Electrical safety** is improving, with new technology helping digitise old paper records.
- Fire safety** assessments have increased from 56% to 91% of all homes assessed.
- Asbestos** is being better managed and removed when identified, meaning more of our homes are asbestos-free internally.
- Water and lift safety** are fully compliant across all buildings.

Repairs and damp reporting:

All repairs found during planned inspections were completed on time. Tenants can now report damp and mould and reapirs easily via online forms:
www.northyorks.gov.uk/dampandmould and www.northyorks.gov.uk/housing-repairs

Empty homes (voids):

We take a little longer to re-let empty properties because we spend time on improvements and making them more energy efficient. Between April 2024 and March 2025, a total of 467 void properties were successfully upgraded and re-let to tenants, representing more than five per cent of our housing portfolio.

Tenant wellbeing:

Anti-social behaviour reports follow seasonal patterns, with few hate crimes. A new case management system is helping us understand and respond better. Rent arrears have stabilised thanks to improved management. A team of Tenancy Support Officers is available to help tenants claim the benefits they are entitled to and provide a range of support. We also have a duty to support our tenants by training our staff to identify domestic abuse and respond. We recognise that there are many barriers to disclosing domestic abuse - any concerns raised by tenants will be met with an empathetic and appropriate response.

Looking ahead:

Regular performance meetings are helping us focus on key areas like electrical safety, tenant needs, and making sure we are compliant with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards. These efforts are all part of delivering safer, better housing services for tenants.

Case Study - void properties

Audrey, 59 and Ricky, 63, have been council tenants for nearly four decades and wanted to downsize. They heaped praise on the housing team who helped make what could have been a stressful time as easy as possible. Audrey said: “It was so straightforward – the council really went above and beyond to make sure the inside and outside of the property was of a good standard. We’ve had to do nothing – it was ready to move in there and then, which takes a huge amount of pressure off as a tenant because moving house can be a stressful time.

As a tenant, one of the biggest things is having the peace of mind to know that the house you’re moving in to is of the best quality it can be – even if that means you have to wait a little longer.”



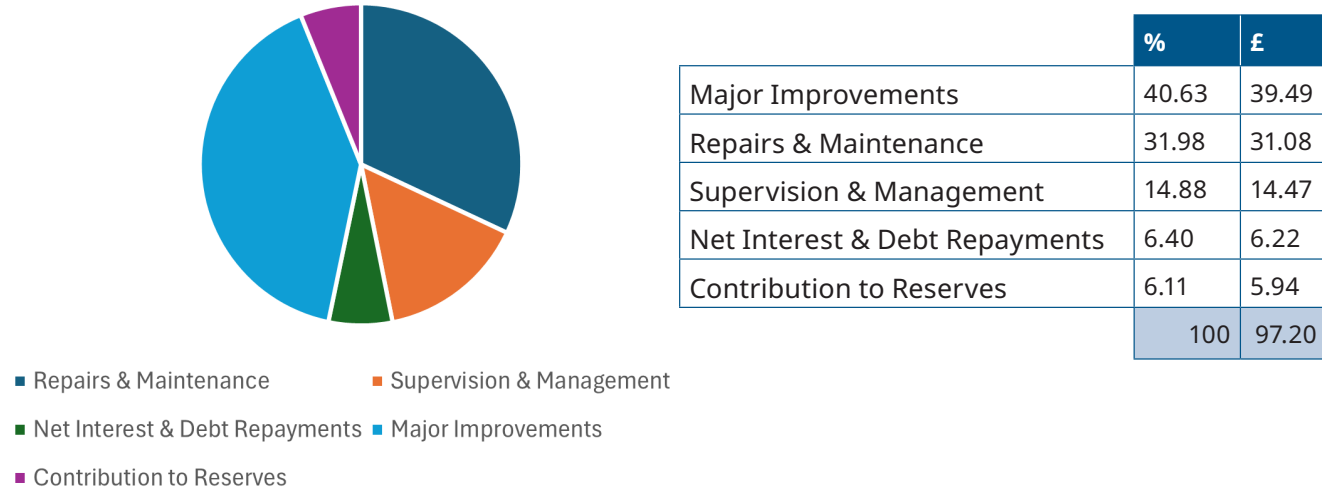
How your rent was spent

We do our best to make sure your money is spent sensibly and that we are providing value for money - getting the best possible service for you using the resources we have available. We received £41.763 million in income from dwelling rents last year which is used to cover the costs of your homes. Any surplus is invested straight back into the housing service to fund things like major works and refurbishments. Rents for our properties are calculated on a national formula which aims to standardise rent between council-owned properties and those run by housing associations.

The average weekly rents for general needs social housing in 2024-25 were:

Bedsit	£70.04
1 Bed	£86.17
2 Bed	£97.20
3 Bed	£107.73
4 Bed	£119.12
5 Bed	£130.80

This is how your rent is used, based on a 2 bed council house average weekly rent of £97.20



What does this mean?

- Repairs and maintenance:** Fixing things in your home and keeping it safe.
- Supervision and management:** Paying staff who manage your housing and support services.
- Major improvements:** Big upgrades to homes, like new kitchens or heating systems.
- Net interest & debt repayments:** Borrowing costs for debt held by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) minus the allocated share of investment income earned by the council.
- Contribution to reserves:** Funds set aside to pay for future costs.

Dear Tenant,

Thank you for reading our report.

The past year has brought both challenges and progress. The council has been working hard to create a clear and consistent way of managing housing services. This has been more difficult than expected due to different ways of recording information, changes in staff, and the loss of some experienced team members.

Despite these hurdles, the council remains committed to providing the best service possible. Most tenants have given positive feedback, but there are still areas that need improvement. Going forward, the council aims to use better data and insights to make improvements and ensure good value for money.

The housing service is in a position where it can invest in improving homes. A full survey of all housing stock is helping to identify what needs fixing now and in the future-especially around safety, quality, and compliance.

The council has also worked closely with the Regulator of Social Housing to address past issues. It has learned from these and is making careful, lasting improvements. With a new action plan and better oversight in place, the council is focused on becoming a top-quality social landlord, as set out in its Housing Strategy for 2024-2029.



Cllr Simon Myers
August 2025

Complaints and compliments

We want you to be happy with the services you receive but there will be times when we get things wrong or when you are not satisfied with the service we have provided. If you're unhappy with our service or feel something has gone wrong, we want you to let us know. Complaints help us to learn and we will always investigate and do our best to put things right. You're also welcome to share a compliment about a team member, letting us know when we have got things right. Your feedback, positive or negative, is how we improve the services that we deliver.

You can make a complaint in the following ways:

by telephone – call our Customer Service Team on **0300 131 2 131** (please say 'housing' when prompted).

Online using the form here www.northyorks.gov.uk/complaints

In writing: North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Northallerton
North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

In person: to North Yorkshire Council housing staff

Or, via a third party/representative.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our complaints handling you can contact the Housing Ombudsman:

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk or call 0300 111 3000



Scan the QR code
to share feedback.

Do you need this report in a different format such as easy read large print, or in another language?

Please email myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk or call us on 0300 131 2 131 (please say 'housing' when prompted).



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