

Improving Our Housing Services

Regulator of Social Housing – Progress Update (April 2026)

Ipswich Borough Council is continuing to make improvements to housing services following feedback from the Regulator of Social Housing.

This update explains:

- What has been done so far
- How things are improving for tenants
- What will happen next

Our focus is on safe homes, clear communication, respect, and listening to tenants.

Making Homes Safer

We are checking every council home to make sure it is safe and in good condition.

Progress so far

- 78% of homes have been inspected
- All serious safety issues identified have been fixed
- No homes checked so far have any outstanding serious hazards

What this means for tenants

- Homes are safer and healthier
- Problems like damp, mould and electrical risks are identified earlier
- Repairs are better planned, not just emergency fixes

What happens next

- All homes will be checked by 31 July 2026
 - Clear safety information (gas, electrics, fire safety, damp and mould) will continue to be monitored and reported
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Clearer and More Respectful Communication

Tenants told us that some letters were:

- Too long
- Hard to understand
- Too full of jargon

What we've done

- Rewritten letters using plain English

- Introduced a Language and Terminology Guide
- Asked tenants to review important letters before they are used
- Developed Easy Read versions where helpful

Examples

- Repairs and maintenance letters updated
- Fire safety letters reviewed with tenants
- Housing Annual Report redesigned to be clearer and easier to read

What happens next

- All key letters will follow the same clear style
 - New letters must be checked before they are sent
 - Tenants will continue to help shape our communications
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Tackling Stigma and Promoting Respect

Some tenants told us they experience unfair assumptions or disrespect because they live in council housing.

What we're doing

- Joined the Stop Social Housing Stigma campaign
- Held workshops with tenants and staff
- Used tenant experiences to shape training and communications

What's changed

- Staff training on respectful language and behaviour
- New videos being co-created with tenants
- A growing glossary of plain-English words to reduce jargon

This work helps make sure everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Improving How We Use Tenant Information

Understanding tenants' needs helps us provide better support.

Progress so far

- Information collected from 56% of households
- Data helps identify where extra support may be needed (for example health, language or financial support)

What happens next

- Information will be securely added to our housing system
 - Officers will continue updating records when they speak to tenants
 - More information will be available in different languages when needed
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Stronger Tenant Voice

Tenants play a bigger role in shaping housing services.

What's changed

- Clearer roles for tenant panels
- "Tenant Rep" is now Tenant Voice Member
- Tenants help review safety, complaints and performance

What happens next

- A refreshed Tenant Engagement Plan through to 2028
 - More opportunities for tenants to challenge and influence decisions
 - Clear evidence showing how tenant feedback has led to change
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Complaints: Learning and Improving

Complaints help us improve services.

What tenants asked for

- More transparency
- Clear explanations of what went wrong
- Proof that lessons are learned

What's now in place

- A tenant-led Complaints and Scrutiny Panel
 - Full breakdowns of complaints and themes
 - A focus on key areas like antisocial behaviour
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Reaching All Tenants

Not everyone can access information online.

What we're reviewing

- How often tenants are contacted
- Whether phone, post or email works best

- How to support tenants who are digitally excluded

What's being considered

- A targeted printed Tenant Times
 - More direct mail where needed
 - Better use of tenants' preferred contact methods
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In Summary

- Homes are being made safer
- Serious hazards found so far have been fixed
- Letters are clearer and more respectful
- Tenant stigma is being challenged
- Tenants have a stronger voice
- Complaints are leading to real improvements

We will continue to publish updates and be open about our progress.

Our commitment:

To provide safe homes, treat tenants with respect, and keep improving our services with tenants at the heart of everything we do.