

Intensive Tenant Engagement

Street Properties Focus

October 2024

Camden

Project aims

Our vision for Camden is that everyone has a place to call home. And that the neighbourhoods which surround homes feel connected to each other and can take pride in their areas.

To achieve this vision, working together and collaborating with residents will be at the heart of what we do, ensuring no one gets left behind. The challenge is how we bring these residents who ‘make Camden’ together to achieve our vision for homes and neighbourhoods.

After COVID-19, our residents felt that our services were not quick enough to get back out to our estates and neighbourhoods, resuming face-to-face work and community engagement. This contributed to a low level of tenant satisfaction, with a downward trend since 2013.

We know we need to be more inclusive and transparent to residents to respond to the tricky challenges we face as a borough. This means bringing services closer to the people and places they serve and having open and honest conversations with our residents.

In response, in July 2023 we initiated an ambitious door-knocking and action days programme to our 20,000 Camden households, across different estates and the neighbourhood properties surrounding them. Talking and meeting with residents helped to build our understanding of our residents, communities, and the issues they face. It also helped us realise we need to radically change the way we work with and involve residents for the future.

Project objectives



Establish a new relationship with tenants, meeting a commitment to speak to every tenant within a year



Fulfil our requirement to the housing regulator to report and improve on levels of tenant satisfaction



Test out new approaches to estate-based and neighbourhood working and engagement, improving our services by bringing them closer to the people and places they serve



Gather feedback to inform long-term improvements and transformation across housing services

Street property profile

Our Camden street properties consist of smaller dwellings, mostly period properties, with some listed in conversation areas. These properties are geographically spread wide across the borough in clusters, typically on high terrain, and commonly with less than a handful of properties per road, or within small blocks.



Residents share their communal spaces and often gardens, which they are responsible for their upkeep. Caretaking is generally not provided, and sound insulation is not as good compared to those living on estate blocks.



Street properties may hold preservation orders, and aging properties may require specialist skills and techniques for cyclical maintenance and repair, This may cause potential issues for simple repairs, due to the design of the dwelling, and access to certain parts of the building.

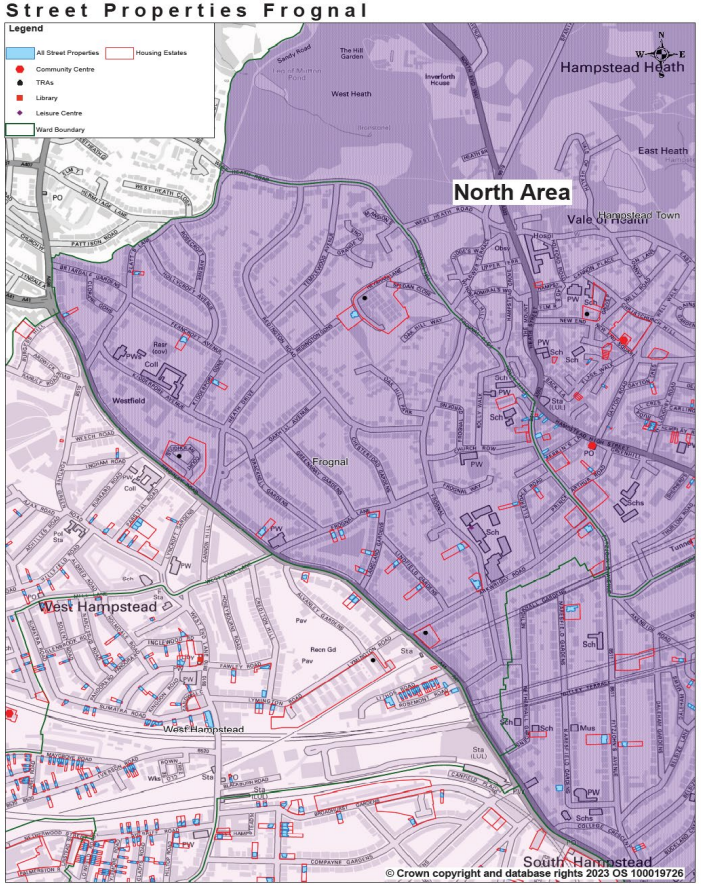


Street property pilot – Frognal Ward

How we delivered this?

During March 2024, we decided to pilot door knocking on our 46 street properties within the hilly terrain of Frognal Ward.

- We wrote to street property tenants, advising them that the engagement team would be door knocking. An email address was given for those who may be unavailable, to contact us with any issues or help they need from our services.
- Project Managers visited in pairs and knocked on tenants' doors and held face to face conversations and delivered leaflet resources, signposting tenants to various services. Advice was given to the number of ways which help can be sought to access council services.
- Tenants were asked if they thought holding an action day would be useful.



Emerging themes

Across all the conversations we had with tenants in Frognal Ward, these are some emerging themes...

...issues in our home



Ongoing leaks with roofs



Damp and mould



Windows rotting

...wanting to improve our homes



Communal area



Grounds maintenance and refurbishment



Maintaining gardens for vulnerable tenants



Storage for gardening equipment needed



Broken Walls & Steps

...help to build connections



Elderly & vulnerable support



Accessing help

- 542 doors knocked
- 29% tenant's home
- 11% tenant engagement

Forecasting

Due to resourcing issues and identifying that we were exhausting our current supply of volunteers and were now at risk in delivering our ambitious door-knocking programme to our 20,000 Camden households.

In Spring 2024, we adjusted the model and worked hard to deliver 5 more Action Days for the 12,927 tenanted households left in Camden. We delivered one Action Day per neighbourhood: North, South, East, West and Central.

We sent tenants a letter with leaflets enclosed (signposting to essential services) and provided our tenants with a dedicated email and telephone number for those who are unable to make it, but still required help and support, as tenants indicated they would like more opportunities to engage with the council.

	Total Properties Remaining	Shifts (2 Pairs / 30 Properties)	Volunteer Required
Central	3325	111	222
East	4307	144	287
North	1093	36	73
South	2422	81	161
West	1780	59	119
Total Properties	12927	431	862

Learning: Themes, trends and commonalities - Street properties



Damp and mould, heating and leaks, windows.



Area, Neighbours.



Cleanliness, lighting, grounds maintenance.



Communal spaces, activities, support for the elderly.

Repairs; Tenants not always report their repairs. Outstanding repairs not always fully completed. Issues with leaking roofs, rotting windows and sills, broken steps and cyclical repairs delays. Vulnerable tenants struggle to use online reporting system, and often unable to articulate themselves to explain the repair, highlighting the importance of identifying vulnerable tenants and why face to face conversations are so necessary.

Living in the community; Tenants were generally happy in the arears they lived, and their relationships with their neighbours.

Improving the area; Tenants wanted gardening for shared back gardens and over-grown front gardens, trimming of trees in streets, and regular rubbish collections in some areas due to dumping.

Building connections; Tenants wanted more opportunities for tenants to connect and meet with Council services locally at an Action Day.

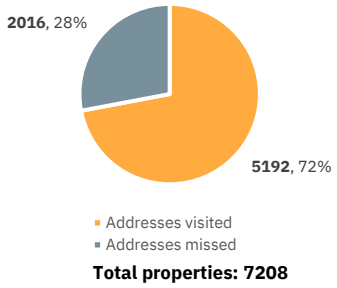
Learning - Street property tenants experiences



Project achievements – level of engagement

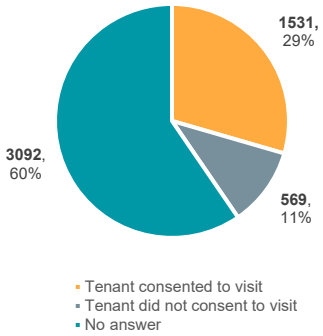
Estates

Properties visited:



Total properties: 7208

Tenant engagement:

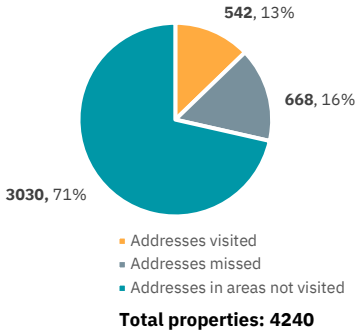


Total visited: 5192

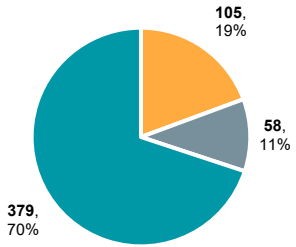
Total engagement
Of all addresses:

21% of total tenants engaged

Street Properties



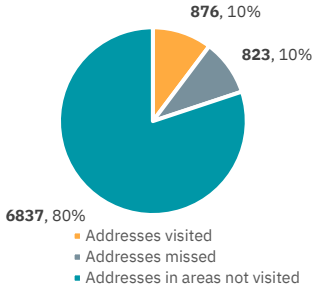
Total properties: 4240



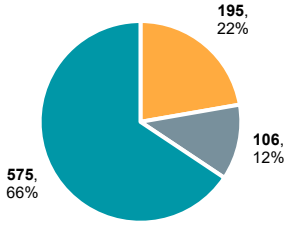
Total visited: 542

9% of total tenants engaged

Non-street properties



Total properties: 8536



Total visited: 876

11% of total tenants engaged

Learning



Sentiment analysis by dwelling and district

Only **15% and 18%** of comments made by tenants living at estates and non-street properties, respectively, were positive, compared with **31%** of comments made by tenants living at street properties.

Only **6%** of comments made by tenants living in the Central district were positive, while **28%** of comments made by tenants living in the North district were positive.

Tenants in the Central and South districts made the highest proportion of negative comments, with **70%** and **69%,** respectively.

Project achievements

30	Traditional estates and 2 neighbourhood areas (West and North) of street and non-street properties visited.
65%	Tenants doors were knocked within the areas visited (**39**% of tenants were in, of which **71**% consented to engage). **18% of tenants overall engaged with the programme.**
300	Volunteers were recruited to help door-knock and hold conversations with residents. **Senior officers heard directly from residents** on their doorstep, bringing them closer to the experiences on the frontline.
27	**Action days** were held and **5 Neighbourhood area action days**. Services **worked collaboratively** to deliver positive outcomes for residents at Action Days. Working with community centres and secured venues for little or no cost.

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