

# Knowing Our Tenants Annual Report 24-25

**Bury Council**

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## Introduction

Understanding our tenants is essential to delivering services that are tailored, equitable, and impactful. This report draws on insights primarily from our Housing Management System QL to build a clearer picture of who our tenants are, how they interact with us, and what their needs and preferences reveal about their lived experiences. By analysing the data, we can identify gaps in our data that may highlight areas for improvement, and ensure our services are shaped by evidence. This approach supports more informed decision-making and strengthens our commitment to putting tenants at the heart of everything we do.

While this report provides a strong foundation for understanding of our tenants, it is acknowledged that the dataset is incomplete. This presents a risk to the effective and compliant delivery of housing services, particularly in relation to the Consumer Standards 2024 and recurring Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) complaint themes and information governance.

We have a functioning data infrastructure in QL and have the ability to capture key data about our tenants such as disability, language, and tailored service needs. There are opportunities to increase our usage of QL significantly.

The Improvement Progress Tracker outlines targeted actions either already in motion or recommended. These actions demonstrate a proactive approach to closing data gaps and improving service delivery.

Key areas of focus are:

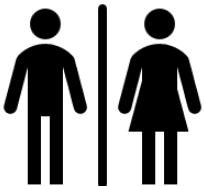
- Establish a comprehensive data management framework with clearly defined processes, roles, and accountability measures.
- Develop and implement a Vulnerable Tenants Policy to ensure consistent, tailored procedures and practices that meet the needs of tenants requiring additional support.
- Cleanse and integrate tenant data across all relevant systems to improve accuracy, accessibility, and operational efficiency.
- Embed consistent data collection protocols at all tenant interaction points to ensure reliability and completeness.
- Provide targeted training for frontline staff on accurate data entry and cleansing practices to enhance data quality and integrity.

## Who Lives in Our Homes?



We currently have **15,794** people living in our tenanted properties across the borough.

41%      59%



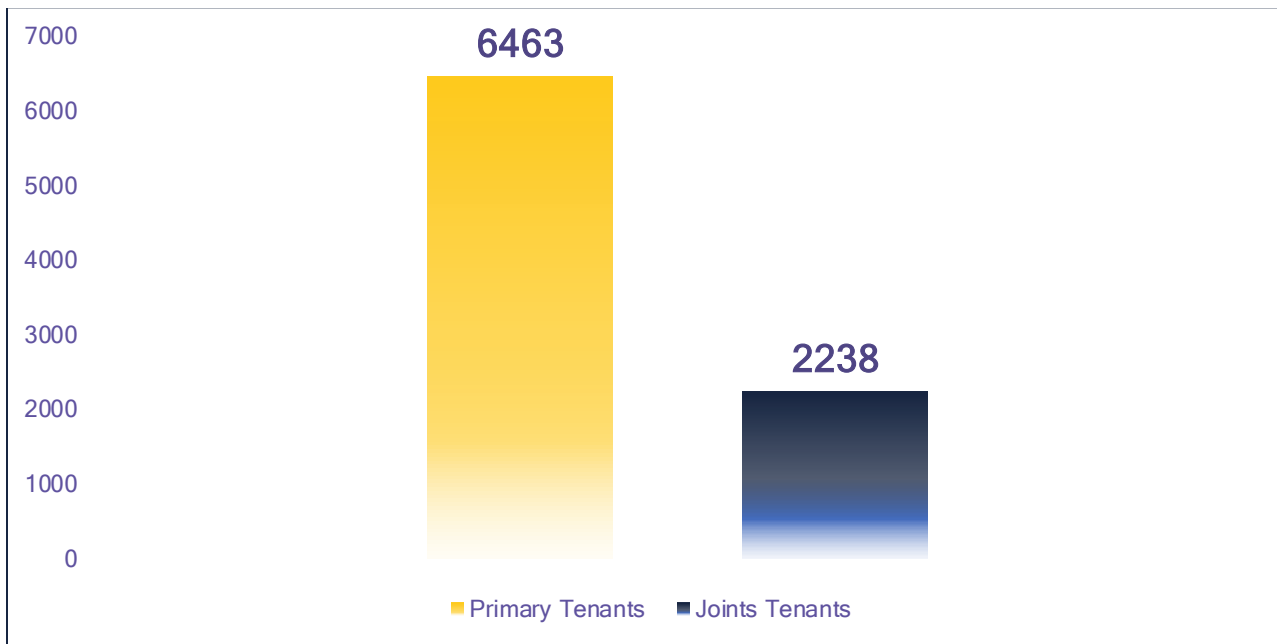
We have a 60/40 split in tenants in favour of women.

Tracking gender helps ensure services are not inadvertently disadvantaging any group and supports compliance with equality duties.

A third of our tenancies are joint tenancies. Understanding household dynamics allows for more inclusive engagement, ensuring both tenants feel heard and supported.

From the census details of 2021 the percentage age group for both males and females are similar to our tenant demographic.





## Occupancy Information

The table below shows the number of people residing in each property by the number of bedrooms:

	Number of Properties											
Number of beds	1 person	2 people	3 people	4 people	5 people	6 people	7 people	8 people	9 people	10 people	11 people	Total
Bedsit	2	1										3
1 Bed	2,693	382	37	15	1							3,128
2 Bed	603	953	559	219	67	23	8	1				2,433
3 Bed	196	292	401	506	299	114	42	9	8	1		1,868
4 Bed	4	11	13	17	16	22	9	6	3		2	103
5 Bed					1	1						2
Total	3,499	1,639	1,010	757	384	160	59	16	11	1	2	7,538

## Under-Occupancy

Using a simplified measure, where a property is considered under-occupied if the number of bedrooms exceeds the number of occupants, we currently identify 1,120 properties as under-occupied. Until we have analysed this data further, we cannot be sure that all of the 1120 properties allocated are under-occupied.

## Overcrowding

Calculating over-occupancy is more complex. It depends on several factors including:

- Whether adults are married or living together
- The age and sex of children
- Family composition and relationships (for example care needs)

Due to these variables, we are not able to present an accurate figure for overcrowding currently. However, a very rough estimate suggests that 309 properties have at least two more occupants than bedrooms, indicating potential overcrowding. Again, this does not factor in family makeup, so the true picture may differ.

A data cleanse exercise to update household occupancy details would provide much-needed clarity. This would allow for more accurate assessments of both under-occupancy and overcrowding, considering the nuances of household composition.

## Tenure type

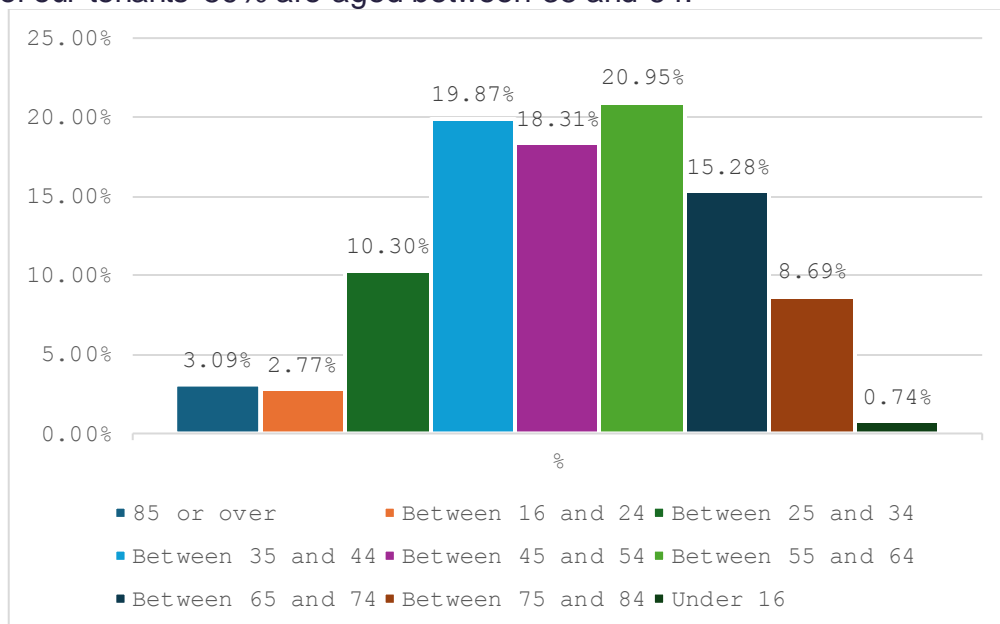
Currently, the data within QL is not consistently accurate enough to reliably represent tenure type. These kinds of discrepancies should ideally be addressed by a dedicated database administrator.

To improve accuracy data governance will need to be implemented. This will become part of the QL transformation project.

In the short term we can implement reporting to identify anomalies within QL, which would support ongoing data quality. These reports could highlight inconsistencies for review and correction, enabling more reliable analysis and decision-making and identify training.

## Age

The majority of our tenants 59% are aged between 35 and 64.



Age data helps forecast demand for different types of housing and support services, enabling better long-term planning.

## Considerations linked to an Ageing Tenant Population (63% aged 44+)

- Increased demand for adaptations, accessible homes, and support services due to mobility and health needs. Existing housing may not meet accessibility needs, risking dissatisfaction.
- Older tenants may struggle with online systems, limiting access to services and engagement.
- Greater risk of loneliness and mental health issues, especially for those living alone.
- Fixed incomes may lead to rent arrears or difficulty managing housing costs.
- Higher need for coordinated support with health and social care services.
- Failing to adapt services could prevent cohorts from accessing services and properties that provide for their needs.

## Demographic differences.

A deeper analysis of age data has identified that there are less children aged 0-4 living in tenanted properties than in Bury as a whole, this may be because of the limited number of family sized properties available.

- 5% aged 0-4 years in the borough
- 2.5% aged 0-4 years in tenanted properties.

The only other age bracket that differs compared to the rest of the borough is 20 - 24-year age range, where there are more people aged 20-24 years living in social housing rather than private or owned. This is likely determined by the stock type available.

See comparison of population pyramid charts. **Appendix 3.**

## Relationship Status

Right now, we do not have relationship status information for nearly 60% of our tenants. Of those we do know:

Relationship status	
Single	29.2%
Married or in a civil Partnership	12.7%
Divorced	5%
Live with a partner	3.7%
Separated	3.3%
Widowed	2.7%

Whilst this data is not critical in the delivery of Housing services it may have implications in certain scenarios when reviewing household composition for things like welfare support or vulnerability safeguarding.

## Religion

- 36% of tenants are Christian.
- 25% have not shared their religion.
- 25% have no religious beliefs.

Religion	
Christian	36%
Muslim	5.4%
Hindu	0.09%
Sikh,	0.14%
Jewish	0.44%
Buddhist	0.20%
Haven't shared their religion	25%

## Ethnicity

- 63.37% White British
- 19.64% of tenants have not shared this information.

Gaps in ethnicity and religion data limits our ability to provide culturally appropriate services, communications, and engagement.

Ethnicity	%	Ethnicity	%
White British	63.16%	Black Other	0.30%
Not Specified	14.24%	Black British	0.27%
Unknown	5.40%	Mixed White Black African	0.25%
White Other	3.21%	Indian	0.23%
Black African	3.16%	Chinese	0.20%
Other	2.60%	Bangladeshi	0.19%
Pakistani	2.21%	Mixed White Other	0.12%
Asian Other	1.04%	Traveller Irish	0.10%
White Irish	0.94%	Mixed White Pakistani	0.07%
Mixed White Black Caribbean	0.82%	Gypsy Roma	0.03%
Refused to answer	0.71%	Mixed White Indian	0.02%
White European	0.36%	Mixed White Bangladeshi	0.01%
Black Caribbean	0.35%		



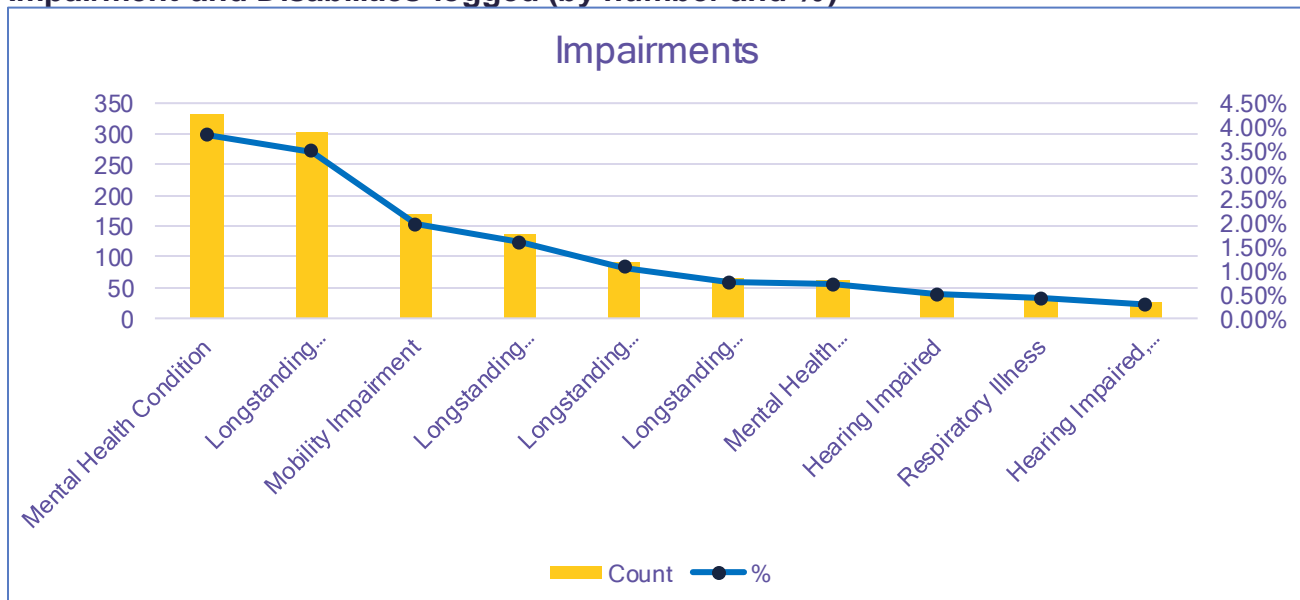
## Language

Currently, 64.44% of tenants have not specified a preferred language, posing a risk to service delivery. Without this information, we may struggle to communicate key tenancy details, leading to missed appointments, confusion, and increased demand. It also limits tenant engagement in service design and scrutiny. This undermines our ability to meet the Consumer Standards 2024, particularly the Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard, which requires landlords to ensure tenants can access and influence services.

Language	
English	32.44%
Polish	0.61%
Arabic	0.42%
Farsi	0.38%
Urdu	0.30%
Ukrainian	0.12%
French	0.3%
Punjabi/Mirpuri	0.3%
Bengali	0.03%
Chinese	0.01%

## Impairments and Disability

### Impairment and Disabilities logged (by number and %)

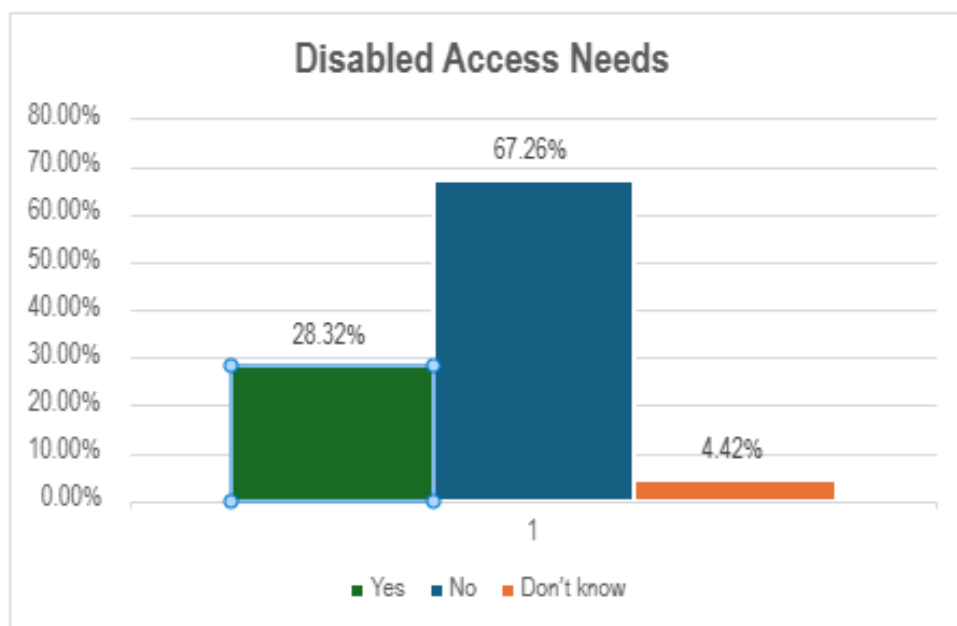


8,701	Total Primary and Joint tenants
2,049	Total tenant with impairments 23.5%
350	Tenant with impairments have a tailored service 17.1%
1,699	Have impairments but no tailored service 82.9%

From system analysis we can see that over 200 entries of impairments have been inserted into incorrectly in the system. This is a training issue that need to be rectified.

## Disability Data Capture at Sign-Up

While CORE data is consistent, it only captures access needs, not broader disability, or impairment information. This is a Limited scope of initial assessment, especially for non-physical impairments. Further information should be captured and documented via the sign- up process.



The Wordnerds-commissioned analysis of tenant feedback across all services for 2024/25 aligns with the data recorded in our systems, highlighting mental health and wellbeing as the most frequently raised concern. Mobility-related issues followed closely, indicating a strong need to address both mental health issues and physical accessibility in our service delivery. **See appendix 2.**

## External Support Services Engagement

331 tenants receive support from the following services All have documented impairments or disabilities within the system:

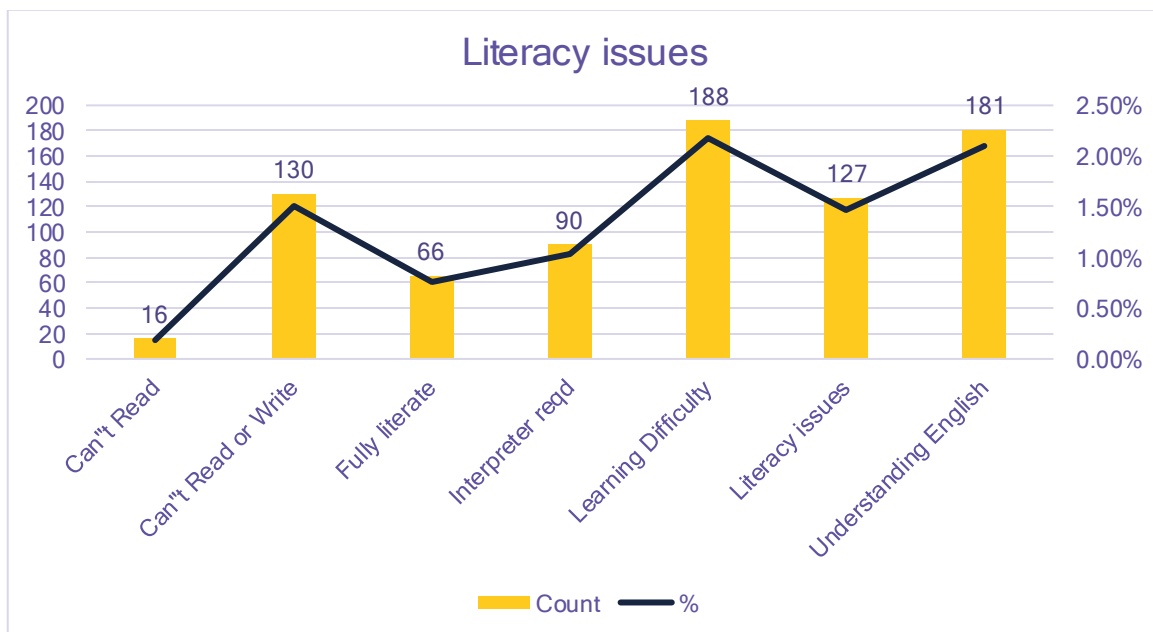
Support	
Social Services	86
Mental Health	51
Family Support	41
Floating Support	44
Alcohol/Drug Support	14
Learning Disabilities	7
Probation	28
Other	60

This data plays a vital role in supporting partnership working and enables us to respond to tenants' needs in a holistic and informed way.

## CORE Data comparison (New Tenants 2024/25)

- Of the 339 new tenants, **67%** said they did not have disabled access needs.
- **26%** said they did, and this is recorded in QL.
- This is similar percentage to the larger data capture in QL.

## Literacy & Understanding



Currently, literacy information is unknown for around 95% of tenants, which presents a significant barrier to effective communication. Understanding tenants' literacy and comprehension needs is critical to tailoring our communication methods appropriately.

Improving this understanding could lead to several positive outcomes, including:

- Better access to services
- Clearer, more meaningful communication
- Improved tenant engagement and satisfaction

Among the small proportion of tenants who have shared information:

- Some cannot read or write.
- Some require an interpreter.
- Others have learning difficulties or struggle to understand English.

By identifying and responding to these needs, we can ensure our services are more inclusive, accessible, and effective.

## Accessibility.

We record accessibility needs or alerts to ensure staff and contractors are aware of specific tenant requirements before visiting.

There are currently **2,299** entries with some form of impairment, included are a subset of tenants with accessibility warnings including examples such as:

- "Takes time to answer the door."
- "Tenant is deaf – please text before visiting."

These notes are logged on the tenant's account to help us deliver a service that works for them.

## Do Not Visit Alone.

**105** Do Not Visit Alone alerts are currently logged within our system. However, this data is not clean and many of the alerts require updating. Data is shared via an automated report for review with the appropriate staff.

There is a procedure in place for review, updating, extending and removal that keeps the tenant fully informed.

Examples of DNVA:

***"Incident 30/05/2025 - Rude and aggressive on phone to OOO- Operatives sent and abusive and threatening behaviour - Had to leave address. Will review in 12 months."***

***"Due to some verbal abuse to Gas and HA. I have added a DNVA for a temp period until we investigate the history and get a better understanding of this customer."***

If this data is not cleansed and updated regularly then we risk placing staff and contractors at unnecessary risk.

Our data must be kept up to date be used only for its intended purpose and it should not be retained longer than necessary. Failure to review or remove outdated alerts could lead to inappropriate decisions or misuse of sensitive information.

Not maintaining accurate accessibility data may result in indirect discrimination, breaching the Equality act 2010, therefore it is imperative that regular reviews and updates are undertaken.

## How We Communicate With our customers.

We aim to contact customers in the way that suits them best, and we record their preferences in our system, however only a small proportion have shared communication preferences. Accessibility needs are recorded for less than 20% of tenants and we may be missing key information about how best to engage with the majority.



**126 prefer email**



**116 prefer letters**



**435 prefer phone calls**



**27 prefer text messages**



**9 prefer home visits**

We use efficient communication tools such as email and text messaging to keep tenants informed. These tools also allow us to track whether messages are received and opened. Over the last year we have sent **6785** communications via the CX communication platform. Currently, **995** were opened and read.

## Engagement and Feedback

**21.5%** response rate for surveys transactional

**14.6%** response rate for perception surveys

## Digital Inclusion

**529** Independent living schemes tenants have been given opportunities to attend a 6-week digital skills session run by Bury Adult Learning with a free tablet as an incentive. All sheltered schemes have had WIFI installations.

CX platform has identified **300** digitally isolated individuals.

We do not have any further documented evidence of digitally isolated tenants which poses the following risks.

- Only **300** individuals are flagged, but this may underrepresent the true scale of digital exclusion.
- Blind spots in service delivery, especially for tenants who rely on analogue methods or are disengaged from digital platforms.
- If services (e.g. repairs, rent, support) are increasingly digital-first, digitally isolated tenants may:
  - Miss communications.
  - Be unable to self-serve.
  - Experience delays or exclusion.

## Tenancy Visits

(April'24 -March'25) – **733** visits were arranged.

- **511** - Completed
- **136** - Unsuccessful
- **86** - Rearranged

There is an objective to complete another 1000 tenancy visits before year end not including attempted and rearranged visits.

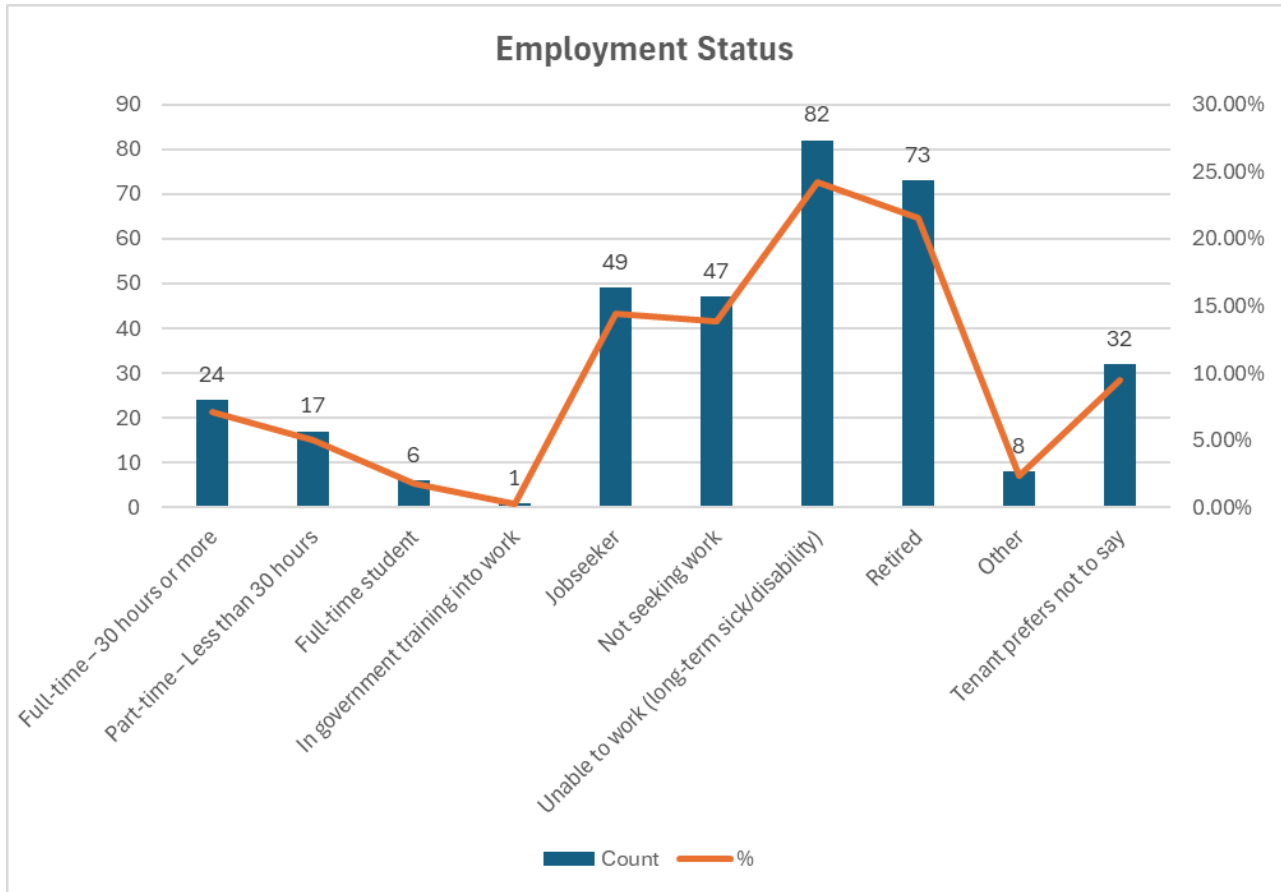
In addition, **565** properties in extra care sheltered schemes re visited every 6 months to update their information and carry out Person Centred FRA where needed.

Tenancy visits are a vital touchpoint—not only for updating tenant information and identifying support needs updating contacts and communication methods, but also for detecting property hazards such as damp and mould. Limited success in these visits restricts our ability to deliver safe, responsive, and person-centred housing services.



## Employment status at let

Other than what is captured at sign-up through CORE, we currently have no up-to-date information on tenants' employment status, household composition, or financial vulnerability. This gap is reflected in the Supportive Collection team's data. This could place tenants at a disadvantage, as we are unable to effectively target and tailor welfare support, advice, and guidance to those who need it most, when they need it.



## Property Lets and Vacations

In the reporting period we have let **555** properties and had **3** evictions.

For further breakdown of new tenancy information and void reasons please see the voids and allocations report. Appendix 5.

## No Access information

- Repairs – **2085** no access logged in the system 24/25.
- Assets – No access is not currently logged in QL, but the process is being developed. Stock condition data had a no access rate of **1365** properties 24/25. However, as this is not flagged for all to see and relies on manual data sharing.
- Neighbourhoods – There have been no 'no access' statuses logged in the system 24/25.

There are risks associated to inconsistent approaches to logging no access data.

High levels of no access can lead to significant tenant dissatisfaction, eroding trust and increasing complaints. This may also result in non-compliance with regulatory standards, particularly the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs),

Operational inefficiencies arise from missed appointments, causing wasted resources and higher costs due to repeat visits and rework. Delays in repairs can worsen property conditions, leading to asset deterioration and increased long-term maintenance costs. Financially, poor repair performance can affect void turnaround times and inflate operational expenses. Additionally, it creates challenges in meeting internal KPIs and managing contractor performance, placing pressure on teams, and potentially impacting morale and service delivery.

## Key Risks Identified

- 64.44% of tenants have not specified a preferred language — risking ineffective communication and service exclusion.
- Impairment/disability status data is limited in its accuracy.
- Low engagement for tenancy visits resulting in missed opportunities to identify needs and property issues.
- No up-to-date data on employment status, household composition, or financial vulnerability resulting in limited ability to target support.
- Communication preferences recorded for less than 20% of tenants — limiting effective engagement.
- Literacy information unknown for 95% of tenants — creating barriers to understanding and accessing services.
- Digital exclusion data limited to 300 tenants — likely underrepresents true scale and risks inequitable access.
- The current management of Do Not Visit Alone (DNVA) alerts lacks regular cleansing and tenant review, resulting in outdated or inaccurate records. This poses several risks:
- GDPR Compliance: Retaining inaccurate personal data breaches legal obligations around data accuracy, purpose limitation, and retention.
- Data management needs to be strengthened.
- Housing Ombudsman Risks: Poor record keeping and failure to act on known risks are common themes in complaints, potentially leading to service failures and reputational damage.

## Strategic Areas for Improvement

### Improve the Housing Management system.

- Many of the issues arising from data collection and accuracy derive from a dated system that is difficult to navigate coupled with lack of staff experience and knowledge or training.
- A new and improved version of the system will provide opportunities for all staff to be trained which in turn should see improved data accuracy, security, and data management. This piece of work will be captured via the digital transformation programme.

### Establish a Robust Data Management Framework

- Develop and implement a comprehensive framework grounded in Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) principles to ensure data is accurate, accessible, and secure.

### Support for Vulnerable Tenants

- Create a dedicated policy that outlines how the organisation identifies, supports, and monitors vulnerable tenants, ensuring their needs are proactively addressed.

### Data Quality and Completeness

- Launch targeted data cleansing and capture campaigns to fill gaps in tenant information, focusing on critical fields such as language preferences, disabilities, and communication needs.

### Holistic Needs Assessment

- Integrate routine assessments at key tenancy milestones (e.g., sign-up, annual visits) to collect and refresh data on employment status, household composition, support needs and financial circumstances.

### Enhanced Tenancy Engagement

- Improve the scheduling and delivery of tenancy visits, incorporating multilingual communication and robust follow-up processes to ensure inclusive and effective engagement.

### Digital Inclusion and Accessibility

- Expand digital inclusion initiatives and align them with communication data to ensure all tenants can access services and information in formats that suit their needs.

### Proactive Accessibility Alerts

- Regularly review and update service alerts and Do Not Visit Alone flags to ensure they are logged consistently, reflect current tenant needs and support compliance with safeguarding responsibilities.

### Tailored Communication Approaches

- Strengthen literacy and comprehension assessments to personalise communication formats and provide appropriate support, ensuring messages are understood by all tenants.

## Actions and Improvements

Priority	Improvement Area	Action Description	Time-frame	Owner/Team	Status
High	Language Preferences	Launch a data capture campaign to collect preferred language for all tenants.	Short-term	Housing Ops / PIA Team	Not Started
High	Disability & Impairment Data	Cleanse and standardise impairment entries across QL, ensuring correct tagging and visibility.	Short-term	Housing Ops / PIA Team	In Progress
High	Do Not Visit Alone (DNVA) Alerts	Review and update DNVA alerts regularly to ensure accuracy and compliance with GDPR.	Short-term	Housing ops/ PIA team	Not Started
High	Literacy & Comprehension Needs	Develop a protocol to assess and record literacy needs during tenancy visits and sign-ups.	Medium-term	Housing Ops / Comms	Not Started
High	Communication Preferences	Embed communication preference capture at all tenant touchpoints and tenancy reviews.	Short-term	All Housing Ops Contact Centre Repairs Neighbourhoods Assets Compliance	In Progress

				Supportive Collection.	
High	Tenancy Visit Completion	Improve scheduling and follow-up processes to increase successful tenancy visits.	Short-term	Neighbourhoods Team	In Progress
High	No Access Logging	Standardise and automate no access logging across Repairs, Assets, and Neighbourhoods.	Short-term	Repairs / Assets / Neighbourhoods/PIA team.	In Development
Medium	KPI dashboard	Create a suite of data KPI' to drive service improvement and better data management.	Medium Term.	PIA Team	Further development & reporting required
Medium	Employment & Financial Vulnerability Data	Integrate employment status and financial vulnerability checks into annual reviews.	Long-term	Supportive Collections / Housing Neighbourhoods	Not Started
Medium	Digital Exclusion Mapping	Expand digital exclusion data capture beyond CX platform to identify hidden needs.	Medium-term	PIA team	Not Started

Medium	Vulnerable Tenants Policy	Develop and implement a policy to identify and support vulnerable tenants consistently.	Medium-term	PIA team.	In Planning
Medium	Data Governance Framework	Establish a formal data management framework with roles, responsibilities, and review cycles.	Long-term	PIA team	In Planning
Low	Religion & Ethnicity Data	Encourage voluntary disclosure through inclusive engagement and reassurance campaigns.	Long-term	PIA team (Engagement Team)	Not Started
Low	Relationship Status Data	Review relevance and determine if collection should be prioritised for welfare assessments.	Long-term	PIA team	Under Review

## Appendices

1. [CORE analytics 2024-2025.xlsx](#)
2. [Wordnerds](#) report
3. [Comparison of Population Pyramids.docx](#)
4. [Nomis - 2021 Census Area Profile - Bury Local Authority, Northwest Region, and England Country](#)
5. [Voids and Allocations Report](#)



