

Croydon Council Housing Questionnaire – LB Croydon

1. How many homes do you currently operate?

Croydon currently owns and/or manages a variety of different properties types. These are:

- **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)** – social housing properties owned and managed by the Council. Rental income is ring-fenced to be spent on tenancy management and maintaining these properties. Subject to Right To Buy legislation.
- **Croydon Affordable Homes** – properties purchased and owned through the LLP to provide additional affordable homes. Not subject to Right To Buy legislation.
- **Croylease** – homes leased to the Council by private landlords for use as social housing. Not subject to Right To Buy legislation.
- **Extended Temporary Accommodation** – properties owned by the General Fund for use as short term tenancies. Not subject to Right To Buy legislation.
- **Leased and Managed Properties** – three blocks acquired on a long term lease for the use as extended temporary accommodation. Not subject to Right To Buy legislation.
- **Leaseholders** – homes within HRA blocks that have been purchased under the Right To Buy scheme. A proportion of maintenance and improvement costs are borne by the leaseholder.
- **Relocatables** – temporary houses within the HRA, currently earmarked for demolition and re-development.
- **Service Tenancies** – homes linked to other Council assets that are owned by the General Fund, caretakers’ lodges in parks. Not subject to Right To Buy legislation.

MANAGEMENT TYPE	NO OF HOMES
CROYDON AFFORDABLE HOMES	96
CROYLEASE	203
EXTENDED TEMPORARY ACCOMODATION	144
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	13504
LEASED AND MANAGED PROPERTIES	339
LEASEHOLDER	2389
RELOCATABLES	16
SERVICE TENANCIES	16
Grand Total	16707

2. What are the different types of tenure that you have within your stock?

There are a number of different tenure types managed by LB Croydon. These are:

- **HRA General Rent** – standard allocation of a lifetime or fixed period tenancy agreement within the HRA.
- **HRA Sheltered** – age restricted allocation of a lifetime tenancy agreement within the HRA.
- **HRA Special Sheltered** – restricted allocation of a lifetime tenancy agreement based upon age or vulnerability.
- **Croylease** – temporary tenancy agreement.
- **Extended Temporary Accommodation** – temporary tenancy agreement.

- **Service Tenancies** – standard allocation of a lifetime tenancy agreement within the General Fund.

3. How much do you spend on maintenance on average per property?

4. Can you summarise your housing stock maintenance programme/expenditure

The annual responsive repairs budget within the HRA is £11.658m.

An additional budget of £750k, excluding support costs, is available for non-HRA properties.

5. Can you summarise your housing stock investment (major works) programs.

LB Croydon currently has an annual investment and maintenance programme within the HRA of £26.771m. This is split across six main contractor partners:

- General building works
- Electrical
- Mechanical
- Lifts
- Windows
- External decorations

In addition, there is an annual cyclical servicing programme of £1.2m to ensure compliance with legislative requirements, i.e. gas servicing.

6. How many new homes have you built over the past ten years in Croydon?

To date, Brick by Brick has planning approval for 1,036 new homes of which 156 will be affordable rent and will be sold to the council's LLP. This figure excludes the properties as part of the Fairfield development.

The Suburban Housing Capacity Study is reviewing HRA properties for intensification and development opportunities.

7. How many homes have you planned to build over the next ten years in Croydon?

See 6 above.

8. What are the average net rents on your new build homes in Croydon?

The Brick by Brick developments are currently in progress so no net rent or service charge information is available.

9. What are the average service charges on your new build homes in Croydon?

See 8 above.

10. How many homes have you sold under Right to Buy?

In the last full financial year, 2017/18, 88 properties were sold under the Right To Buy scheme. In total the council has sold 10,016 properties under the right to buy.

11. Regarding your properties in Croydon, how has your organisation responded to the events of Grenfell Tower?

<https://wp.croydon.gov.uk/newsroom/croydon-and-birmingham-join-forces-over-fire-sprinkler-funding-call/>

12. What types of tenancies do you offer your tenants?

Tenancies offered are set out in the Council's Tenancy Strategy

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Tenancy-Strategy.pdf>

The default tenancy offered to new tenants is a five year fixed term tenancy.

Secure (lifetime) tenancies are granted in certain circumstances as set out in the strategy.

13. What is your response to London and Quadrant's recent actions to phase out fixed-term tenancies?

14. What are the average rents for your relet properties?

The average Rent is £108.57

15. What are the average service charges for your relet properties?

The average Service Charge is £10.18

16. How many tenants have you evicted from your properties over the past ten years, and why?

No. evictions and reasons :

April 17/18 = 45 total

(tenancy 7; income 27; ASB 5; Fraud 2; ETAs 2; Disrepair 2)

17. What support do you offer to residents who are experiencing financial difficulties?

Financial support – Council funds 3 welfare benefit advisors and 18 Income officers across the borough providing range of financial support, ensuring maximisation of income, support vulnerable clients who struggle with capacity to cope, make recommendations to Gateway for Discretionary Housing Payment and CDS schemes, provide tailored budgeting advice, refer to support agencies, help residents to claim UC and HB, targeted referrals to Gateway Employment and Support teams,

18. What support do you offer to vulnerable residents?

19. What support do you offer to residents who are experiencing domestic violence?

20. Can you share with us your resident satisfaction information for your tenants, shared owners, and leaseholders please?

Tenant overall satisfaction with housing services 72% (STAR survey 2016)
This is the combined figure for sheltered and gen needs tenants.

21. Which parts of your services get the most complaints?

The responsive repairs service receives the most complaints.



**BUILDING HOMES
MAKING PLACES
ENHANCING LIVES**

Presentation to Croydon's Streets, Environment and Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee

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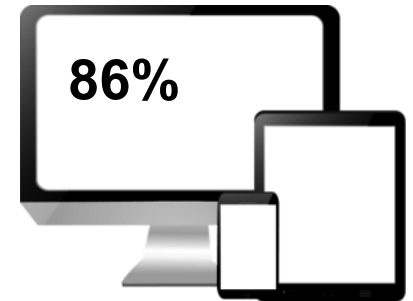
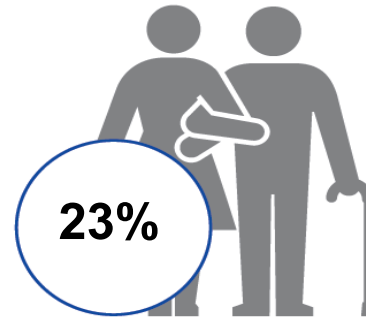
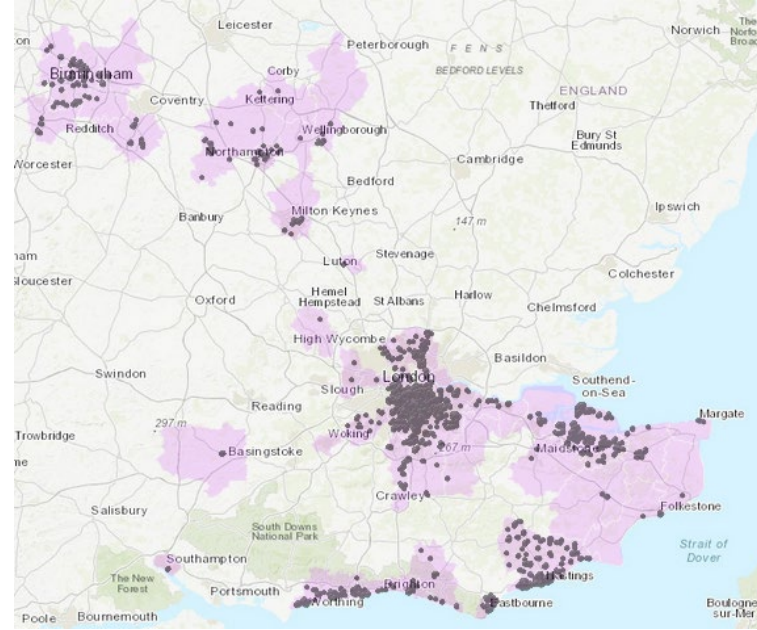
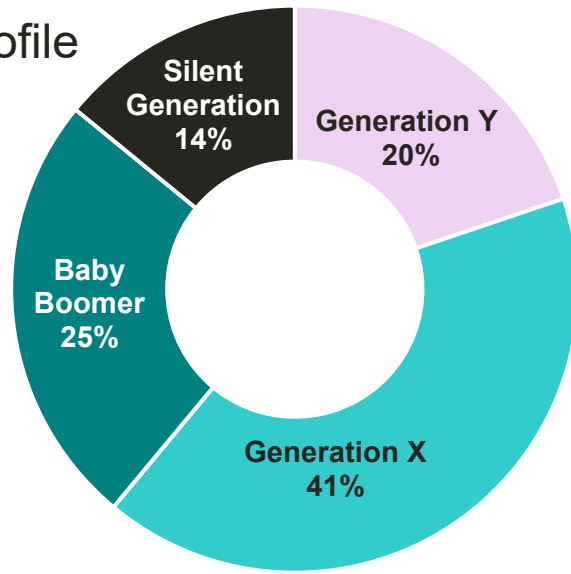
**Jane Porter
Chief Operating Officer
Optivo**

Who are we?



- ◆ Over 90,000 residents
- ◆ 43,000 homes
 - 68% General needs
 - 9% HOPs/ Retirement
 - 12% Homeowners
 - 8% Commercial (student, keyworker)
 - 3% Supported Housing

◆ Resident profile





Overview of our work in Croydon

Optivo homes in Croydon



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		General Needs	Homes for Older People and Supported	SO/ Leasehold	Total
Self-Contained	Bedsit	13	2	6	21
	1 Bed	403	57	311	771
	2 Bed	988	2	612	1,602
	3 Beds	626	0	83	709
	4 Beds	250	0	7	257
	5 Beds	13	0	0	13
	6 or more Beds	1	0	0	1
	Self-Contained	2,294	61	1,019	3,374
Non-Self-Contained	Room	0	31	0	31
	Non-Self-Contained	0	31	0	31
		2,294	92	1,019	3,405

Building affordable homes for Croydon residents



- Optivo is a major builder of new affordable homes in Croydon
- We're building nearly 1,000 homes in Croydon between now and March 2023
- Our schemes include a range of new homes for rent and affordable home ownership
- We're building London Living Rent homes for the Mayor, including 30 on our Cairo New Road scheme
- We're also investing in community facilities – our Canterbury Road scheme includes a nursery
- Keen to work more closely with Croydon Council to bring land into use for affordable homes

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Addiscombe Grove, Croydon – Optivo's joint project with Pocket Living



Reflections on our work with Croydon Council

Strengths



Strong joint working between Optivo and Croydon Council to support residents:

- We're partnering to provide homes for the Housing First pilot
- We're investing heavily in financial inclusion and debt advice
- New Tenancy Sustainment team to provide dedicated support to residents facing difficulties
- Good joint work on anti-social behaviour
- Positive outcomes being delivered for residents on jobs and skills
 - Croydon Works job brokerage - supply chain jobs like Chequers Cleaning
 - Supporting The Croydon Partnership (LB Croydon, Westfields, Hammersons) as partner sponsor on Whitgift Centre Pop-up business school. 100 + people into micro-enterprise / practice trading annually
 - Love London Working - Local delivery on flagship GLA/ESF funded programme - 212 local people into jobs to date!
- Development plans to build 1,000 new homes in the borough

Weaknesses



There are a number of challenges where, in partnership, we could build a stronger shared approach:

- Both Optivo and Croydon Council have been through major staff restructures. We need to ensure that new staff establish strong working relationships
- We need to continue to strengthen partnership working to tackle serious anti-social behaviour cases
- All partners have been hit by budget cuts. There's an opportunity to develop a stronger asset-based approach to draw on the collective resources of everyone working in Croydon on housing
- We work with the Council and the Police to re-house Croydon residents fleeing gang violence. But, there's a need for a stronger London-wide approach to support vulnerable families who move with advice and moving costs.

Opportunities

- **More investment in Croydon** - As one of the Mayor of London's Strategic Partners, we have secured an additional £145m to invest in affordable homes. We want to work in closer partnership with Croydon Council to find sites to invest some of this new funding in the borough.
 - **More homes at lower rents** – our Mayoral funding includes homes at London Affordable Rent and London Living Rent. We can offer more genuinely affordable homes to local residents.
 - **More jobs in the heart of Croydon** - Croydon was chosen as the location for the national head office for our merged organisation. This has brought an extra 150 jobs to central Croydon.
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Threats



Housing association finances are now very stretched

- While the Mayor and Government have given Optivo additional funding, the grant per home remains much lower than the cost of building.
- We get £70k grant for London Affordable Rent homes, but land and construction can cost £300k-£400k per home. This is stretching our ability to fund affordable homes through cross-subsidy to the limit.

Reductions in public services continue to affect vulnerable tenants

- Our tenants report multiple challenges, including finding it more difficult to access mental health services, secure support from the police and other agencies.

Welfare changes are very challenging for our tenants

- Continued uncertainty over benefit arrangements will continue to place financial pressure on tenants

Brexit

- 50% of construction workers building homes in London are from the EU. Unless there is a transitional deal to maintain access for these workers, affordable home building could be very badly affected.
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We strongly value our partnership working with Croydon Council.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council more closely to:

- Build new affordable homes in Croydon
- Provide stronger support to vulnerable residents
- Pool expertise and resource to strengthen Croydon's communities

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