

# Measuring the social impacts of regeneration in South Acton: results of the fourth social sustainability assessment

Research for Acton Gardens LLP

April 2025





# About this report

This report describes the findings of a research project exploring how the Acton Gardens regeneration programme is affecting people living in South Acton in Ealing, West London. This is the fourth round of this research, building on previous social sustainability assessments in 2015, 2018 and 2020

The research was commissioned by Acton Gardens LLP - a joint venture partnership between Countryside Properties and L&Q. The aim has been to explore the social impacts of regeneration as the development progresses, to capture change over time for people living in different circumstances and different parts of the estate, and to understand how local priorities and needs can influence future phases of planning, design and management.

The research took place between November 2023 and April 2024.

The project uses a research framework and set of indicators for measuring the social sustainability of new housing and mixed-use developments originally developed for The Berkeley Group, by Social Life and Professor Tim Dixon of the School of the Built Environment, University of Reading in 2012 and adapted for this project with the permission of The Berkeley Group.

The report was written by Mena Ali and Nicola Bacon, with research and analysis by Mena Ali, Larissa Begault, Simeon Shtebunaev and Alix Naylor

The online and door to door survey were carried out by Face Facts, using questions developed by Social Life.

**Social Life** was created by the Young Foundation in 2012, to become a specialist centre of research and innovation about the social life of communities. All our work is about the relationship between people and the places they live and understanding how change, through regeneration, new development or small improvements to public spaces, affects the social fabric, opportunities and wellbeing of local areas. We work in the UK and internationally.

[www.social-life.co](http://www.social-life.co) @SL\_Cities



# Foreword from Acton Gardens LLP

Acton Gardens is one of the capital's largest estate regeneration projects. In partnership with L&Q, Countryside and Ealing Council, this scheme will see the comprehensive redevelopment of the former South Acton Estate - a £800 million investment creating 3,463 new mixed-tenure homes. We have been working here for more than 10 years and have been running Social Life Surveys for almost as long.

The Joint Venture partnership between L&Q and Countryside, as well as close collaboration with Ealing Council, has made Acton Gardens a unique estate regeneration scheme. Placemaking, community involvement and wellbeing are central to the programme for the delivery partners, and this is evident in the significant investment locally: from supporting local groups through Community Chest grants, to a busy programme of events and range of community facilities.

Since the last Social Life Survey Report was published, in 2020, Acton Gardens LLP have been working hard to action the recommendations outlined and create positive change for residents.

We have sought to harness and build on the community spirit revealed by the local response to the pandemic in numerous ways.

**Supporting local events:** We continue to organise regular events, such as summer and winter parties and “Meet the Neighbour” family fun days. We have also focussed on events aimed at raising awareness of local and global issues, through our Earth Day and Mental Health Awareness events. These events allow us to promote fantastic local organisations as well as supporting community interaction. We are excited to continue our events programme and provide opportunities for residents to shape them.

**Improving safety locally:** Our Community Board provide an invaluable voice for residents, raising key concerns at a senior level for actioning. We work closely with the Safer Neighbourhood Team and other local stakeholders on safety concerns across Acton Gardens, such as installing additional lighting and organising bike marking events.

**Harnessing resident involvement:** Our Community Board have reviewed their constitution and devised measurable aims and objectives, which align with the recommendations in this report. Members are diverse and energetic and bring a range of skills to engage their neighbours in the regeneration project.

**Investing in local initiatives:** We continue to promote the Community Chest fund and encourage new projects to support residents impacted by the pandemic. Since the last survey, we celebrated funding our 150th Community Chest project, providing over £500,000 to projects since its inception in 2011.

Further details of how we have responded to each of the recommendations are outlined in appendix 3.

We will endeavour to build on this work following this latest Social Life survey, with L&Q's regeneration team already in the process of creating a Community Development Plan. This will specifically target the key recommendation areas and ensure that community building and placemaking continue to be at the forefront of the regeneration of the South Acton estate.



## Statement from a member of the Acton Gardens Community Board

My name is Janet Coker and I've lived in Acton all my life and South Acton since January 1975. I'm a social tenant at Acton Gardens, having moved across from the former South Acton Estate. I have been on the Community Board from its commencement in 2010 and was the first Chair.

I have witnessed numerous changes over the years, and during the 1980s when councils were rate capped and maintenance especially to communal areas almost ceased, the area became very rundown. We had many promises, but nothing much changed. South Acton wasn't perfect, but it wasn't as bad as its reputation was outside of the estate; for us living there, it was an area with a strong sense of community identity.

I had always gone to resident groups within our block and the estate in general, so when I was advised that things were changing, I joined the steering group for regeneration. I was hesitant at first about the density, but we embraced it and as residents, we strove to gain things like a balcony or patio area for all flats, with open plan living, utility cupboards to keep washing machines out of the way, and as much storage space as possible. Nearly 20 years on these are now standard. I've gone to other regeneration sites across London with the Community Board, and our density isn't anywhere near as intense as some later developments.

The positives in my opinion are that the mixed tenure has made outsiders look on the estate differently, more positively, and the soundproofing and insulation in the properties is far superior to that in the old buildings. The properties are designed for lifetime living and have generous size proportions. They are also tenure blind.

My aspirations for the Community Board are that it will continue to strive to work for the community, to sponsor projects to draw all residents in, to support residents and promote cohesion. Service charges etc are important, but what is more important is to work together to build a viable community open to all residents when Acton Gardens LLP move off the estate and we're on our own.



Janet Coker  
South Acton resident and Community Board member



# Contents

Summary .....	4
Section 1: Introduction .....	12
Section 3: Who lives in South Acton? .....	20
Section 4: How does South Acton compare to other places? .....	24
Section 5: Feelings about the estate regeneration.....	30
Section 6: Social and cultural Life .....	40
Section 7: Voice and influence .....	65
Section 8: Amenities and social infrastructure .....	71
Section 9: The impact of the cost of living crisis .....	85
Section 10: Other priority issues .....	89
Conclusions and recommendations .....	92
Appendix 1: Data tables.....	95
Appendix 2: Method for assessing social sustainability .....	97
Appendix 3: Updates from Acton Gardens LLP .....	100



# Summary

This report describes the findings of a social sustainability assessment of the regeneration of the South Acton Estate. It explores how the regeneration programme is impacting people living in the older estate and new homes. The purpose of the research has been to explore the social impacts of regeneration, to better understand local priorities and needs, and to influence the planning, design and management of future phases of development. The findings are a snapshot of how residents are experiencing regeneration over halfway through the programme, when new housing has been developed at scale and the remaining blocks of the older estate are now only a small proportion of the homes.

This assessment was commissioned by Acton Gardens LLP - a joint venture partnership between Countryside Partnerships and L&Q - and took place between October 2023 and April 2024. It follows assessments using the same approach in three earlier rounds of research, in 2015, 2018 and 2020.

This research took place against the backdrop of the cost of living crisis and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings need to be put in the context of the time. As in 2020, when our research took place in the middle of the pandemic, our findings give valuable insight into residents' experiences of daily life in difficult times and how relationships, social networks and the work of different agencies supported resilience and helped people get by.

The project uses a framework for measuring the social sustainability of new housing and mixed-use developments originally developed for The Berkeley Group by Social Life and Professor Tim Dixon of the University of Reading in 2012. Acton Gardens LLP intends to continue to repeat this assessment every two to three years throughout the regeneration programme.

## The assessment

Between October and December 2023, **564 people** living in South Acton and its surrounding areas were surveyed. They were asked about their feelings about their neighbourhood and community life, their opportunities to influence or be involved in decision making and their priorities for the regeneration programme.

- **402 people** took part in a face-to-face survey. **92 people** completed an online survey.
- **59 people** lived in the older South Acton Estate; **343** lived in new homes on Acton Gardens.
- **162 people** living in neighbouring areas were also interviewed.

**In-depth interviews with 11 stakeholders** living and working in the area were carried out in autumn 2023 and early 2024. Some of these individuals and organisations also took part in the research in 2015, 2018 and 2020; other agencies were new to the area.

**An independent site survey** was carried out by Social Life researchers with architecture training, assessing the quality of the built environment and the provision of community facilities.



## South Acton in 2023

The fourth social sustainability assessment of the South Acton regeneration paints a picture of an area recovering from the COVID pandemic but facing new stresses through the cost of living crisis.

The former South Acton Estate has become a mixed area in terms of housing tenure and housing design. Only 444 households remain on the original council-owned estate. Approximately 50% of former council tenants have become L&Q secure tenants and a number of leaseholders have moved into homes that are privately owned, shared ownership or shared equity. More people now are living in privately owned or rented homes than in social rented or subsidised homes. These changes have the potential to alter the dynamics of the estate, people's sense of identity and belonging and relationships between people from different backgrounds.

A strong majority of residents interviewed in 2024 were positive about the regeneration plans and feel that they are improving quality of life, this has increased since previous years. Knowledge about the regeneration is lower than in previous years. Although some key indicators of community strength are recovering since 2020 such as sense of influence, belonging and neighbourliness, these are not as strong as they were before the pandemic.

In this assessment we see that the gap between the experience of people living in new blocks and in the remaining older estate continues to widen. People living in the new development have fewer concerns about safety, they have stronger wellbeing and are less likely to struggle financially. They feel better served by facilities and by the community centre and have a stronger sense of influence over local decisions. However, people living in the older estate still report higher levels of neighbourliness and belonging.

The views of council tenants in the older blocks and social housing tenants who were formerly council tenants, now rehoused in Acton Gardens, have also diverged. On several key issues, including perceptions about the regeneration, safety, wellbeing and being able to have influence, the views from council tenants are more negative than those of housing associations tenants.

Residents report feeling safer compared to 2020, however safety is now residents' highest priority for regeneration. Almost all the regeneration priorities were less important for residents than in previous years - it is possible that as the regeneration progresses residents are giving less attention to the detail of the scheme.

There are concerns about affordability of facilities, shops and businesses, rents and service charges. Wellbeing has been undermined by the aftereffects of the pandemic and the ongoing difficulties of the cost of living crisis. Although people reported fewer concerns about managing financially than in 2020, food bank use had increased across tenures. Residents attribute their worsening financial situation to increased costs of utilities, food and housing. This experience is shared by residents living in the old estate and new development.

Stakeholders describe positive relationships between neighbours, and a well-integrated community. There were some concerns that neighbourliness had been impacted by the disruption of regeneration, and about divides between "old" and "new" residents as well as concerns about repairs and communications.

People living in neighbourhoods surrounding the estate were surveyed to explore how their views compare to people living in South Acton. People living in new homes on Acton Gardens have views that are in many ways similar to people living in the neighbouring areas. This includes the level of knowledge about the



regeneration, satisfaction with the local area, planning to remain resident, feeling safe walking at night and life satisfaction. On key neighbourliness indicators however, people living in the old estate scored higher than both the new development and some or all of the neighbouring areas. Perceptions of being able to influence local decisions are stronger on both the older estate and in the new development than in neighbouring areas.

## Who is living in the regeneration area?

The residents survey gives us a snapshot of the estate and its residents. The increase in home ownership and the decline in the proportion of people in social housing have altered the demographics of the estate.

The proportion of white British residents has gradually increased over the four rounds of research (from 21% to 40%), and the proportion of Black or Black British residents has decreased (from 35% to 19%). Compared to 2020 and 2018, in 2023 a smaller proportion of residents were on very low incomes under £14,000 a year, however, the proportion of residents on high incomes - over £69,000 - remains broadly the same as in 2020. These trends are reflected in ONS (Office for National Statistics) 2021 Census data.<sup>1</sup>

### Tenure change from 2015 to 2020 in Acton Gardens

In 2015 there were 310 new homes on the new development at Acton Gardens (including Catalyst Housing homes), by 2018 this had increased to 2,186 new homes.

In 2015 there were 68 social rented homes in the new development at Acton Gardens, and 639 by 2023.

In 2015 there were 19 shared ownership homes on Acton Gardens, in 2023, 250.

In 2015 80 homes on the new development on Acton Gardens had been built for private ownership, in 2023 there were 1,074.

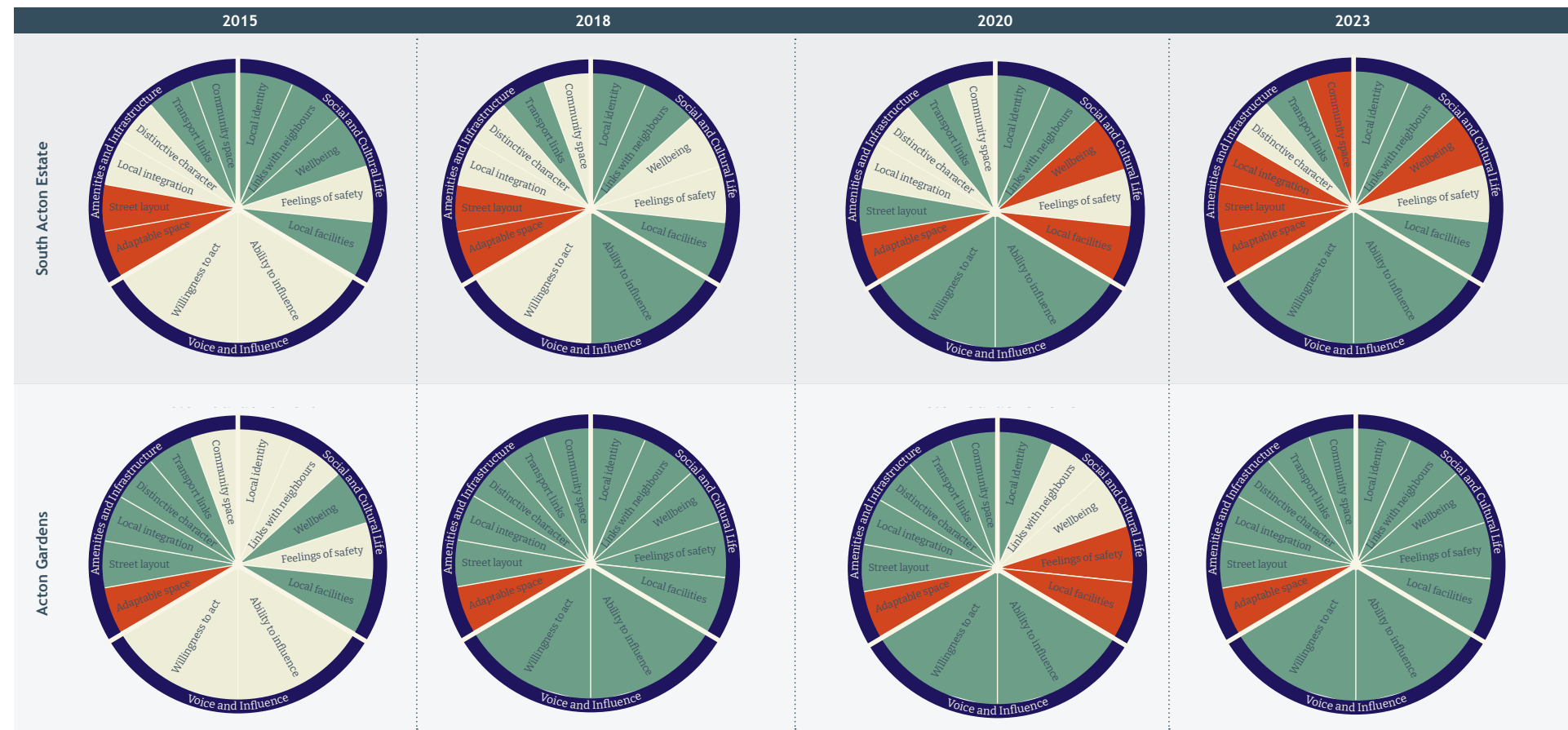
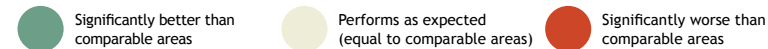
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/search?topics=9731,6646,3845,9497,4262,4128,7755,4994,6885,9724,7367&filter=datasets>

# The social sustainability assessment

## Social sustainability RAG wheels for 2015, 2018, 2020 and 2023

Scoring explained:



Change over time



- The 2023 assessment shows that social and cultural life on the new development has strengthened since 2020. All indicators are now scoring higher than in 2020. Feelings of safety and perceptions of local facilities have increased the most.
- On the older estate however while scores for local facilities have improved, wellbeing stays the same (significantly worse than in comparable areas) and safety also remains stable (still as expected when compared to comparable areas)
- In 2015 South Acton Estate received a more positive assessment than Acton Gardens for Social and Cultural Life. By 2018 there had been an improvement in these scores for Acton Gardens, with local identity, links with neighbours indicators and feelings of safety scoring better than comparable areas. These improvements proved fragile in the face of the pandemic, while the more longstanding neighbourly relationships on the old estate continued to be an asset supporting residents. However, in 2023 we see how the impact of the physical disruption of demolition and the cost of living crisis has affected people living in the older estate, with weaker scores for wellbeing and safety.

### **Voice and influence**

- Residents' sense of influence remained strong in 2023, as in previous years. In the new and older areas, willingness to act strengthened, from expected to stronger than expected. These indicators describe how residents feel about how they can influence local decision-making, and their willingness to work with other people locally to improve the neighbourhood.

### **Amenities and social infrastructure**

- The Amenities and Social Infrastructure scores for Acton Gardens are higher than for the South Acton Estate, as in 2020, reflecting improvements to housing design and the public realm.
- Acton Gardens is only given a negative assessment for one indicator, adaptable space.
- The scores for the South Acton Estate have fallen reflecting the state of demolition and rebuilding, and the number of blocks standing empty, in late 2023 when the assessment was carried out. Scores are weaker than would be expected for all indicators except transport links which scores positively, and distinctive character which scores as expected.

### **Views of the regeneration**

- Over two thirds of residents interviewed were positive about the regeneration plans, this has increased since previous years. Overall, a strong majority of respondents said they felt that the regeneration is improving quality of life, this has increased from 2020 but is lower than 2018. Knowledge about the regeneration is lower than in previous years.
- Fewer residents living in the older estate felt the regeneration was succeeding in improving their quality of life.
- Residents priorities for the regeneration have changed since the last survey. In previous surveys, improving community safety, housing affordability and improving open spaces were in the top four priorities. However, in this assessment safety has become the top priority.
- Almost all the regeneration priorities were less important for residents than in previous years.
- Residents living on the older estate were more likely to prioritise housing issues. People living in the new development prioritised safety, street layouts and lighting, and open spaces.

## Recommendations for Acton Gardens LLP

A short set of recommendations for Acton Gardens LLP and its partners have been developed drawing on the findings of the research. These focus on areas where there is most potential for the agencies involved in the regeneration to take action to improve residents quality of life and everyday experiences.

1. Increase the quality of life and perception of safety for the remaining residents living on the old estate through meanwhile investments and small-scale place-making initiatives in open spaces.
2. Continue to support residents who are struggling financially, by funding the foodbank and other supports, such as baby banks, a food coop, a sharing library and financial and employment advice.
3. Provide open space for young people to feel they have a place to hangout that is theirs. Consider setting up a co-design process to shape the space.
4. It is important to maintain the current strong sense of belonging and neighbourliness. Different events from events to community planting can help bring people together from different backgrounds.
5. As in 2020, there continues to be a need to develop a long-term strategy for the provision of social infrastructure that meets the needs of the entire community, balancing activities to reflect demand and cater to local needs as these change over time.
6. It is important to continue to progress regeneration plans at pace, to provide the remaining council residents with new homes.





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# Background to the research



# Section 1: Introduction

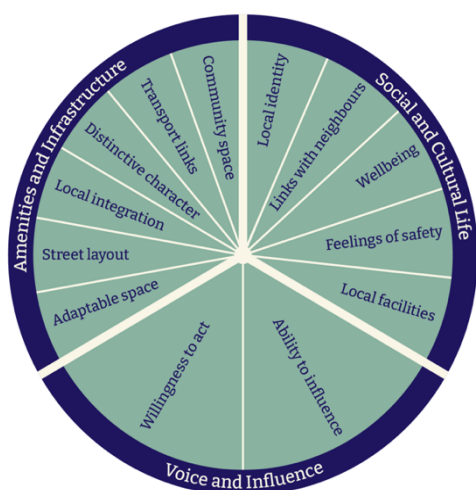
In 2014, Social Life was commissioned by Acton Gardens LLP to carry out a social sustainability assessment of the regeneration. The first assessment took place in 2015. This was repeated in 2017-18, and again in 2020, to explore the impact of regeneration over time. The fourth round of research began in November 2023.

This assessment aims to understand what South Acton is like as a place to live, the experience of people living on the South Acton Estate and the experience of residents across tenures moving into newly developed homes.

This assessment took place against the backdrop of the cost of living crisis and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. It documents the neighbourhood's recovery from the pandemic. The 2020 assessment was carried out at the end of the first lockdown while restrictions were still in place. At the time, the social and health impacts of COVID-19 were affecting residents in different ways. Many were vulnerable because of their economic and social situation; others were vulnerable to the virus's impacts on health but were socially and economically stable. The experience of the pandemic heightened many fragilities within London's communities. The 2020 report predicted that "the social and economic aftershock of the pandemic will be felt for a long time and will cast a shadow over life in the city's neighbourhoods for many years to come."<sup>2</sup>

The assessment uses the concept of social sustainability as a way to bring together and measure a wide range of factors that are proven to influence local quality of life and the strength of a community now and in the future. The research draws on previous work, by Social Life and Professor Tim Dixon in 2012, to devise and test a social sustainability measurement framework for The Berkeley Group.<sup>3</sup>

The Berkeley Group framework organises these factors into three dimensions: Social and Cultural Life; Voice and Influence, and Amenities and Social Infrastructure. Thirteen indicators are used to assess social sustainability within this framework.



## The social sustainability framework

<sup>2</sup> Nicola Bacon (2021) Measuring the social impacts of regeneration in South Acton: results of the third social sustainability assessment. Social Life: London [http://www.sociallife.co/publication/social\\_impacts\\_regeneration\\_S\\_Acton\\_assessment\\_3/](http://www.sociallife.co/publication/social_impacts_regeneration_S_Acton_assessment_3/)

<sup>3</sup> Berkeley Group (2012) Creating strong communities

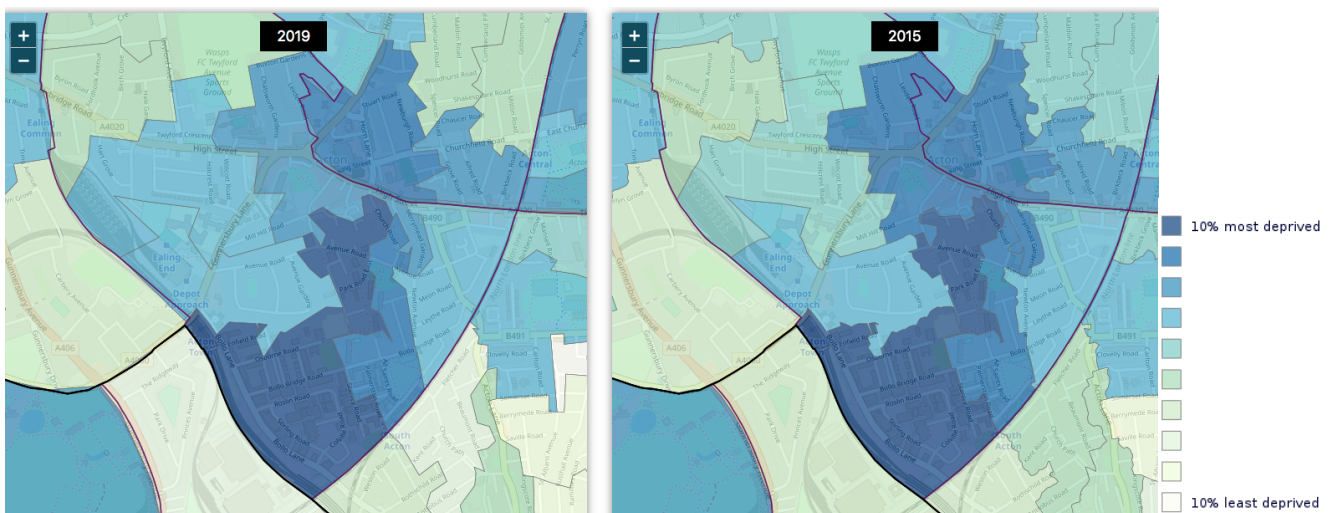
## 1.1 The South Acton Estate in 2024

South Acton Estate before redevelopment was the largest estate in Ealing with over 2,000 homes. It was made up of a series of housing developments loosely connected to each other, stretching over 52 acres between South Acton overground station, Acton Town underground station and Acton town centre.



The older South Acton Estate

South Acton is one of the most deprived areas within Ealing and the estate sits within a much more affluent wider area. Between 2015 and 2019 the IMD score (an assessment of a combination of deprivation indicators) stayed stable in South Acton while improving slightly in some areas to the north and south.

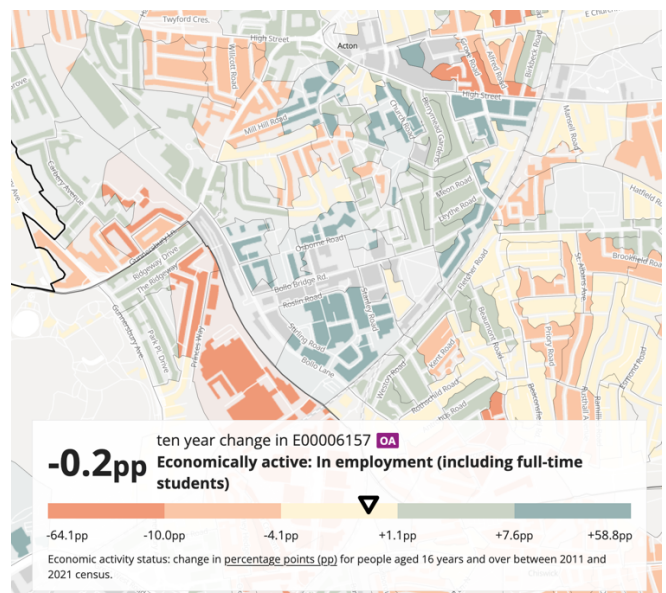
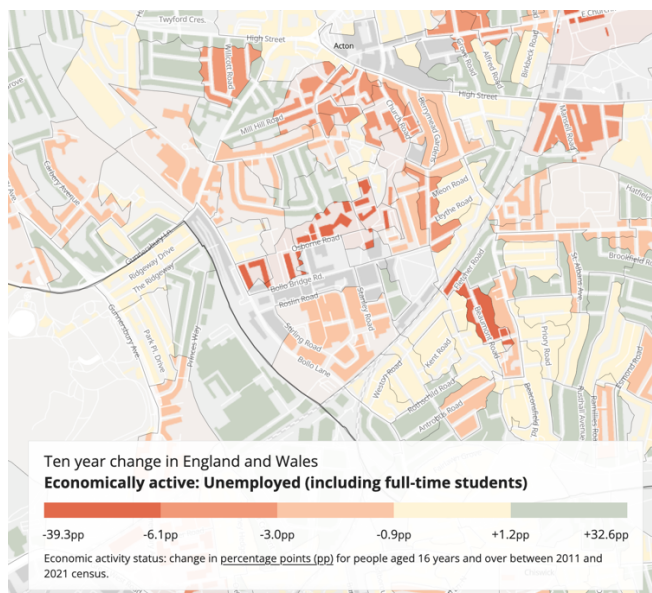
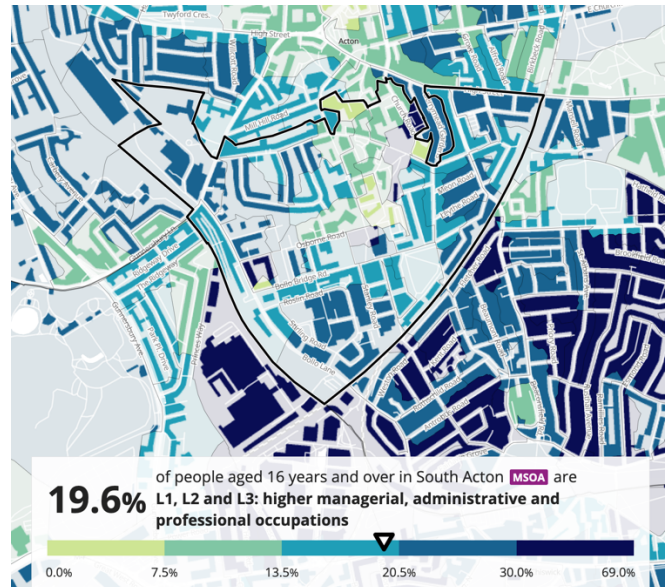
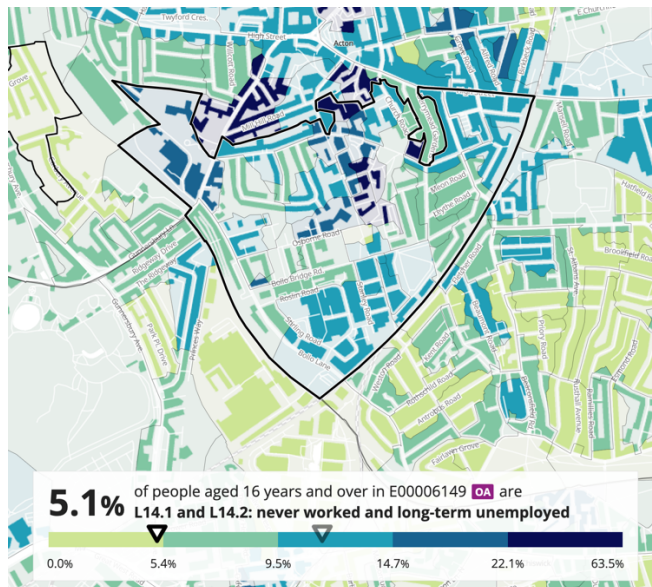


Index of multiple deprivation scores 2015 and 2019. Source: MHCLG<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [https://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod\\_index.html#](https://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html#)



Census data shows the change in economic status of residents from 2011 to 2021, and how different social groups are represented in different parts of the area. In this period the proportion of people who were economically active grew, and the number of people who were unemployed decreased. The maps make visible how, in 2021, people who have never worked or are long term unemployed were still concentrated in the former Ealing Council properties. It also shows an increase in the numbers of people with higher status jobs - although worklessness is lower and higher status jobs are more common in the areas around South Acton.



Census data showing employment trends: proportion of unemployed individuals (top left) and higher status jobs (top right), alongside a ten-year change in unemployment and employment rates (bottom) over time. Source: ONS<sup>5</sup>

In 1999, Ealing Council began a major regeneration programme at South Acton following consultation with the community. The decision was taken to comprehensively regenerate the estate, which was seen as the best way to meet residents' and the council's wish to transform and improve the area. Catalyst Housing

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/change/work/economic-activity-status/economic-activity-status-4a/economically-active-in-employment-including-full-time-students>



Group initially developed 254 new homes, and in 2010 L&Q and Countryside Properties were appointed to carry out the bulk of the regeneration work. A joint venture, Acton Gardens LLP (a partnership between L&Q and Countryside) is taking this forward.

The South Acton masterplan, revised and updated in 2018, includes the redevelopment of all the older homes. The aim is that most secure tenants will be able to move straight into their new homes once they have been built. The revised 2018 masterplan increased the number of homes to 3,463. It proposes a higher density of development than the former scheme, including six buildings of 12 stories or more spread across the area. It is based on a courtyard block apartment typology, replacing the mixture of architectural typologies in the older estate.

The new development set out to create five parkland neighbourhoods, a new community hub including youth, community and retail facilities, and improved access to the surrounding area. The majority of these facilities are now in place, with the exception of two parks and additional retail space which will be included in the forthcoming phases.

In winter 2023 2,025 new homes had been completed. 532 of the estate's original properties remain. South Acton has passed the tipping point where more homes have been built since 2015 than the number remaining in the older estate. This changes the nature of the area, what has been a council estate for the last half century is now an area of mixed tenure and mixed ownership. It still has some coherent visual identity and sense of place, however the increasing dominance of new housing is likely to affect residents' sense of local identity and of belonging as well as their social relationships, factors that are explored in this assessment.

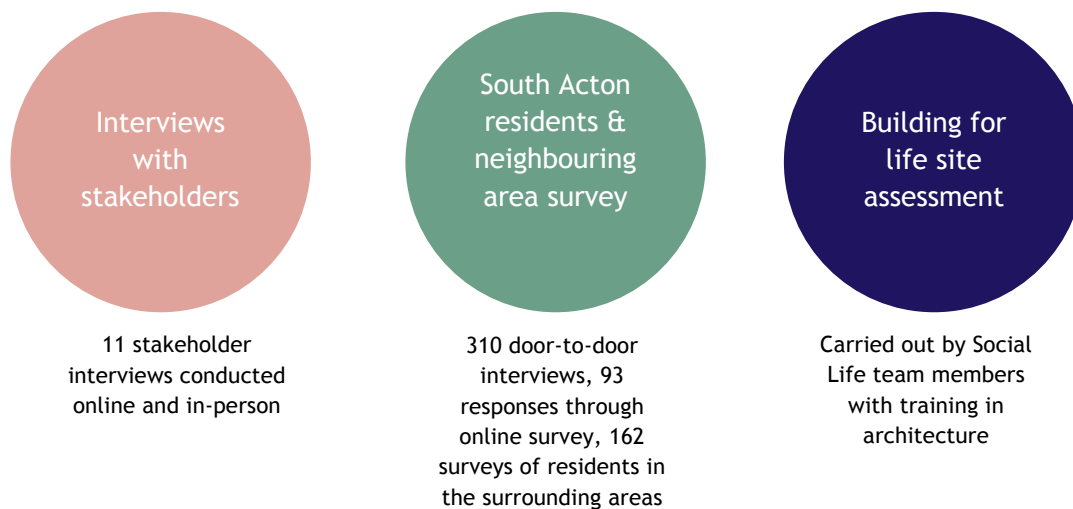


Acton Gardens masterplan

## 1.2 The assessment

The data that populates the different indicators in the social sustainability framework was collected in three ways:

- a residents survey was carried out both online and door-to-door in the new and old estate, residents of neighboring areas were also surveyed in person
- in-depth interviews with local organisations and stakeholders in the area
- an independent site survey of the new build area and the older estate.



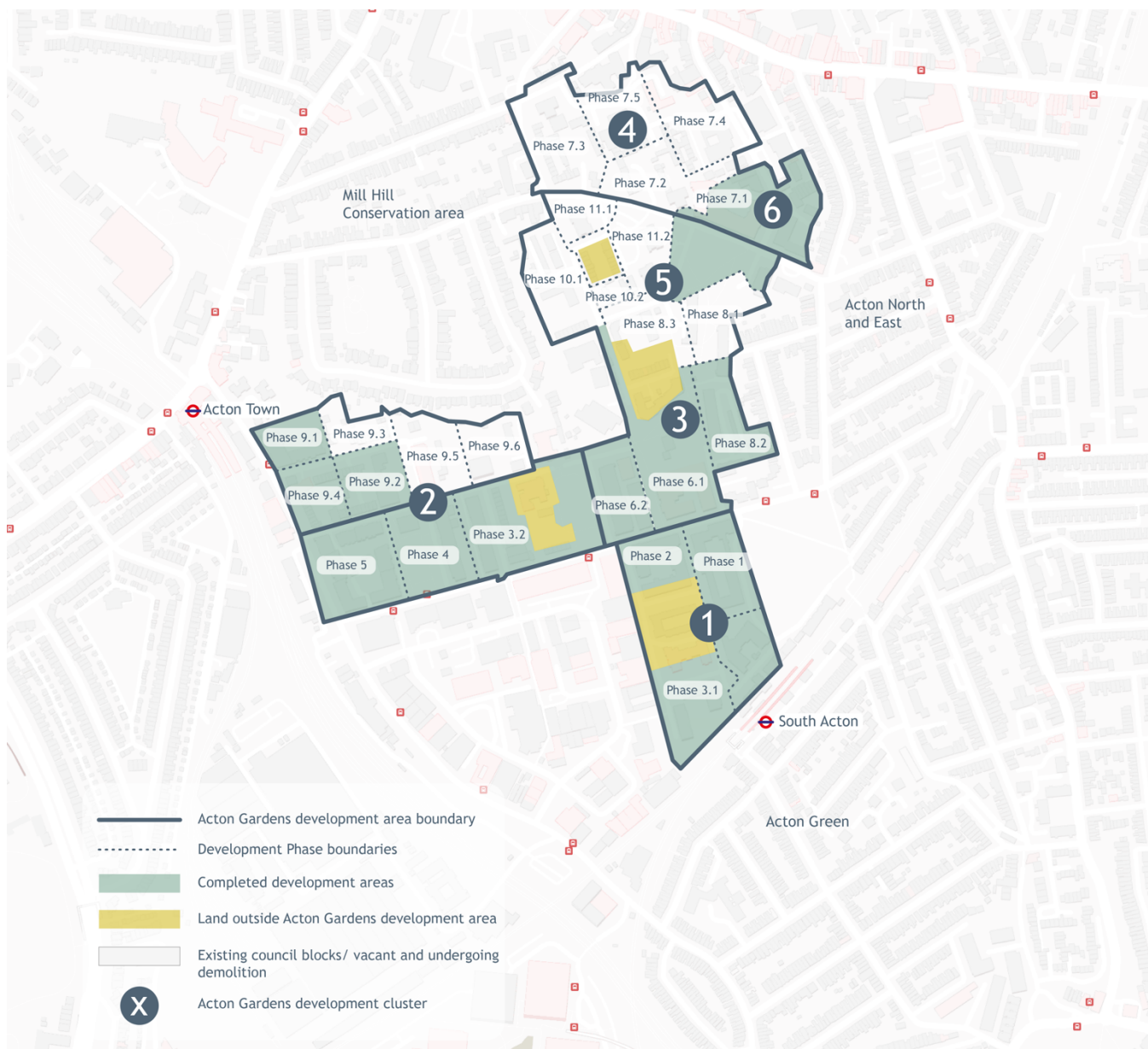
### Our approach, the fourth social sustainability assessment

#### South Acton residents survey

The approach to the residents survey has evolved since 2015. In 2015 and 2017 a door to door survey of the old and new buildings on South Acton were commissioned from an independent survey organisation. In 2020 this method was not appropriate, given the pandemic restrictions, and instead data collection was primarily online, with a small number of face-to-face surveys where homes had external front doors. This enabled data to be gathered in difficult circumstances, but meant that the precision of sampling used in 2015 and 2017 could not be repeated. In the survey, Ealing Council secure tenants were under-represented, because of difficulties contacting council tenants by text. A disproportionate number of people living in temporary housing were included in the survey.

Some residents gave feedback that they had appreciated the online survey's convenience. For 2024, different options were assessed and a hybrid approach was agreed. This would gather the majority of data through a face-to-face survey (aiming for 75% of the total target number of responses) with an online top up (aiming for 25% of responses). The aim was to achieve 350 interviews, the same number as in previous years.

The online survey and face-to-face questionnaire contained the same questions: focusing on the dimensions of the social sustainability assessment and the regeneration programme. Several questions were added in 2018 and 2020 including questions on financial wellbeing and on social infrastructure and some were removed, either because they were less useful, or because the national data used for benchmarking have changed.



## Cluster areas used to structure the surveying and the analysis, 2023

The door to door survey was sampled by the same method as in previous years. Sampling was by tenure, and by small areas or “clusters” within the estate. Clusters were updated from 2020 and designed to include residents living in similar housing build around the same time, differentiating between the older estate and new build homes.

The online survey and the face-to-face survey were carried out in November and December 2023. Responses were encouraged through a newsletter and flyers. Texts were sent to residents by L&Q and Ealing Council. A £5 incentive was offered to everyone completing a survey. This had not been offered in previous years, however Social Life’s experience, like other research organisations, is that it has become more difficult to engage people in surveys over the past few years.





## Acton Gardens 2023 Social Life research

Social Life is back in South Acton to look at the impact the regeneration is having on residents and the local community.

Your voice matters, please take part in our 10-15 minute survey!

**How:**

- **Take part in person** - researchers will be carrying out a door-to-door survey in November - December 2023.
- **Take part online** - follow the QR code below and tell us what it is like to live in the area.



**Open the online survey here!**



**Who can participate?**

All households on the estate and in Acton Gardens have been invited to take part.

Every household who completes a questionnaire will receive a £5 voucher. Vouchers for the online survey will be limited to the first 80 respondents.

**For more information or questions:**

Email: [hello@social-life.co](mailto:hello@social-life.co)  
Phone: 0207 703 9630  
Website: [www.social-life.co/](http://www.social-life.co/)






<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/JC2L8JV>



### Flyer used to publicise the survey

93 people responded to the online survey; 310 people were interviewed through the face-to-face survey. Both surveys exceeded their targets. The online survey was kept open although the number of £5 incentives offered for completing the survey online was limited to 80; the face-to-face survey exceeded its target in order to achieve the tenure targets.

Across South Acton, we oversampled people living in shared ownership and, to a lesser extent, social housing, and under sampled people living in Catalyst Housing Association properties. The hybrid data collection approach - using online and face-to-face surveys - meant that the numbers of residents interviewed within a cluster do not necessarily match the proportion of homes in the area or tenure samples as it was not possible to control who chose to complete the online survey. There were not enough responses to the online survey to weight the data. The impact is that responses may be skewed towards people who are more confident with digital technology.

### South Acton Estate

Interviews were carried out with 59 people living on the older council owned homes in the South Acton Estate - this number has fallen in each round of assessment, reflecting the demolition of council blocks. In 2015, 252 council tenants or leaseholders living in this part of the area were interviewed.

### Acton Gardens

Interviews were carried out with 343 people living in Acton Gardens. In 2015 only 41 people were interviewed who lived on Acton Gardens, reflecting the small scale of new build at that time.

### **Continuity between the 2018 and 2020 surveys**

Interviewees were asked whether they had taken part in the 2018 or 2020 surveys. Eight percent of people interviewed living on Acton Gardens or the South Acton Estate recalled having been interviewed before, this was four percent of the people interviewed face-to-face and 22% of the people who completed the survey online. The surveys did not collect the personal data needed to identify the residents interviewed in 2015 or 2018 which would enable tracking of any changes of views over time.

### **Neighbouring areas survey**

As in 2015 and 2018, the survey was extended to three neighbouring areas: Mill Hill Conservation Area, Acton Green and Acton North and East. These areas were not surveyed in 2020. This was because data collection was difficult during the pandemic and survey resources needed to be focused on people living in the regeneration area. The neighbouring areas survey was replicated in 2023, 162 people were surveyed. Sampling was by tenure, with targets based on 2021 census data.

### **Interviews with local organisations**

A series of 12 contextual interviews with people living and working locally were carried out in 2024. Like the contextual interviews conducted in the three earlier rounds, these conversations explored local perceptions about how South Acton functions as a community and how people feel about regeneration. The aim was to capture a range of perspectives and insights that could add depth to the random household survey.

The semi-structured, 30- to 90-minute interviews were carried out either face-to-face, on the telephone or online. The interviews included conversations with community activists (mainly long-term residents) and local organisations and service providers based in, or supporting people living in, South Acton. Some of the people interviewed were also interviewed in previous rounds - indicated by an asterisk (\*).

Eleven contextual interviews were carried out with:

- Bollo Road Youth Centre\*
- Acton Gardens Community Centre/Manor House Development Trust\*
- South Acton Children's Centre\*
- All Saints Church, St Mary's Church Acton
- Independent residents' advisor
- Acton Youth Association
- Four residents active in the community, two are active on the Community Board, and two were interviewed as part of previous assessments.

### **Independent site survey**

A site survey was carried out by Social Life staff with architectural training. This was an assessment of the quality of the built environment and the provision of local community facilities on the South Acton Estate and in Acton Gardens. It was based on CABE's Design for Life survey.<sup>6</sup> Buildings that were empty because of the decant and demolition process were not assessed in the site survey.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/Building%2520for%2520Life%252012\\_0.pdf](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/Building%2520for%2520Life%252012_0.pdf)

## Section 3: Who lives in South Acton?

The population of the area covered by the South Acton Estate and the new homes in Acton Gardens is changing as new residents move into the area and longer-standing residents of the South Acton Estate either move to new homes in Acton Gardens or to other homes outside of the development.

Across the footprint of the South Acton Estate regeneration programme, the total number of homes on the estate has grown. In 2015 there were 1,471 homes; in 2018 1,843 homes; and summer 2024 there were 2,599 homes in total. This is an increase of 77% since 2015. The proportion of social housing tenants fell from 73% to 36% of total homes, and the absolute number of social housing units fell by 123. 45% of all homes are privately owned or rented in 2024, compared to 26% in 2015.

A national criticism of the standard approach to estate regeneration is that residents living in the housing that is demolished, usually council tenants or leaseholders, are not able to move into the new homes that are built.<sup>7</sup>

In 2020 nearly two thirds (62%) of Ealing Council secure tenants had moved to new homes on Acton Gardens. The most recent estimate for 2024 from Ealing Council however is that 50% of council tenants who needed to move because of the regeneration have moved to Acton Gardens, a decrease from the previous figure. Ealing officers estimate that around 40 to 45% of the residents who did not move to Acton Gardens were rehoused in other Ealing Council properties. The remaining five to 10% moved to a different housing association or out of the borough. The council believe that this could be a result of delays in completion of recent phases, reducing the number of options for residents or causing them to look for options elsewhere.

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<sup>7</sup> Tim Dixon, Nicola Bacon et al. (2019) Measuring the Initial Social Sustainability Impacts of Estate Regeneration: A Case Study of Acton Gardens, London. Journal of Sustainability Research. 2019;1:e190002 [https://sustainability.hapres.com/htmls/JSR\\_1012\\_Detail.html](https://sustainability.hapres.com/htmls/JSR_1012_Detail.html)



Tenure breakdown, 2024								
	Cluster 1 AG - South	Cluster 2 AG -West	Cluster 3 AG - Centre	Cluster 4 SAE - Redbrick	Cluster 5 SAE - Centre	Cluster 6 - AG North	TOTAL	% of total housing
<b>Total homes*</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>2599</b>	
Social housing plus temporary tenancies	128 (21%)	308 (32%)	116 (32%)	107 (72%)	201 (76%)	87 (36%)	947	36%
Shared ownership/equity	21 (3%)	146 (15%)	68 (19%)			15 (6%)	250	10%
Private (leasehold /freehold, rent)	248 (40%)	507 (53%)	176 (49%)	42 (28%)	63 (24%)	143 (58%)	1179	45%
Other (Catalyst)	223 (36%)		0			0	223	9%
Tenure breakdown, 2020								
	Cluster 1 AG - South	Cluster 2 AG -West	Cluster 3 SAE - West	Cluster 4 SAE - Redbrick	Cluster 5 SAE - Centre		TOTAL	% of total housing
<b>Total homes*</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>604</b>		<b>2305</b>	
Social housing	352 (56%)	153 (31%)	114 (67%)	223 (53%)	323 (53%)		1165	51%
Shared ownership/equity	43 (7%)	83 (17%)	9 (5%)	21 (5%)	28 (5%)		178	8%
Private (leasehold /freehold, rent)	231 (37%)	225 (52%)	46 (27%)	146 (35%)	134 (22%)		812	35%
Sheltered housing	-	-	-	31 (7%)	59 (20%)		90	4%
Temporary council tenancies	-	-	-	-	60 (10%)		60	3%
Tenure breakdown, 2018								
	Cluster 1 AG - South	Cluster 2 AG -West	Cluster 3 SAE - West	Cluster 4 SAE - Redbrick	Cluster 5 SAE - Centre		TOTAL	% of total housing
<b>Total homes</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>531</b>		<b>1855</b>	-
Social housing	271 (50%)	71 (32%)	179 (81%)	273 (81%)	438 (82%)		1089	59%
Shared ownership/equity	42 (8%)	39 (17%)	-	-	-		81	4%
Private (leasehold /freehold, rent)	227 (42%)	113 (51%)	43 (19%)	66 (19%)	93 (18%)		542	29%
Tenure breakdown, 2015								
	Cluster 1 AG - South	Cluster 2 AG -West	Cluster 3 SAE - West	Cluster 4 SAE - Redbrick	Cluster 5 SAE - Centre		TOTAL	% of total housing
<b>Total homes*</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>635</b>		<b>1471</b>	-
Social housing	68 (41%)	-	213 (84%)	258 (62%)	531 (84%)		1070	73%
Shared ownership/equity	19 (11%)	-	-	-	-		19	1%
Private (leasehold /freehold, rent)	80 (48%)	-	40 (16%)	158 (38%)	104 (16%)		382	26%

## Tenure breakdown of occupied homes, all years (cluster areas are on map on p17)

\* Catalyst Housing blocks not included in 2015 survey

### 3.1 Who did we speak to?

The residents survey gives us a snapshot of the estate and who is living there. The increase in home ownership and decline in the proportion of people in social housing has altered the demographics of the estate. Newly arrived homeowners are more likely to come from different socio-economic backgrounds than longstanding social housing tenants. Over the four rounds of research, the area has become more affluent and the demographic mix has changed.

- Among the residents interviewed, the proportion of those identifying as White British residents has gradually increased over each of the four rounds of research, and the proportion of Black or Black British residents has decreased in each round.
- Compared to 2020 and 2018, a smaller proportion of residents surveyed in 2023 were on very low incomes (under £14,000) however, the proportion of residents on high incomes (over £69,000) remains around the same level as in 2020.
- Compared to earlier years, fewer people live in larger households, fewer people are under 25 or over 65, and fewer people consider themselves to have a disability.
- People living in the old estate tend to be older than people in the new development and fewer are under 25. They are living in smaller households and are more likely to be employed. They also have higher household incomes.
- There are more older people and younger people living in the three neighbouring areas and a larger proportion of residents describe themselves as having a disability. There are also more people on higher incomes.
- Neighbouring areas have larger white and Black populations than the older estate, however they include smaller numbers of people describing themselves as Asian than the older estate or the new build.
- Overall, people living in the new development are more similar to people living in neighbouring areas than to people in the older estate.



2023

# OF PEOPLE  
INTERVIEWED | 403



2020

# OF PEOPLE  
INTERVIEWED | 232



2018

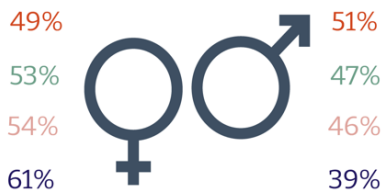
# OF PEOPLE  
INTERVIEWED | 353



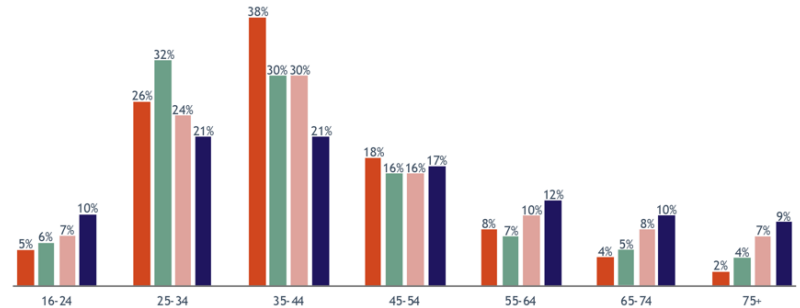
2015

# OF PEOPLE  
INTERVIEWED | 293

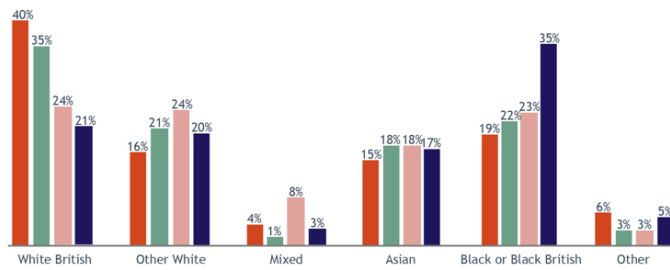
## Gender



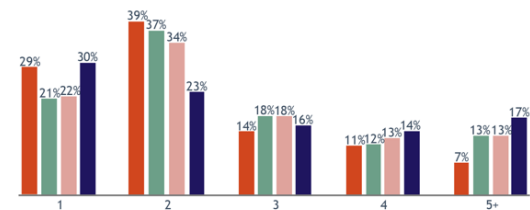
## Age



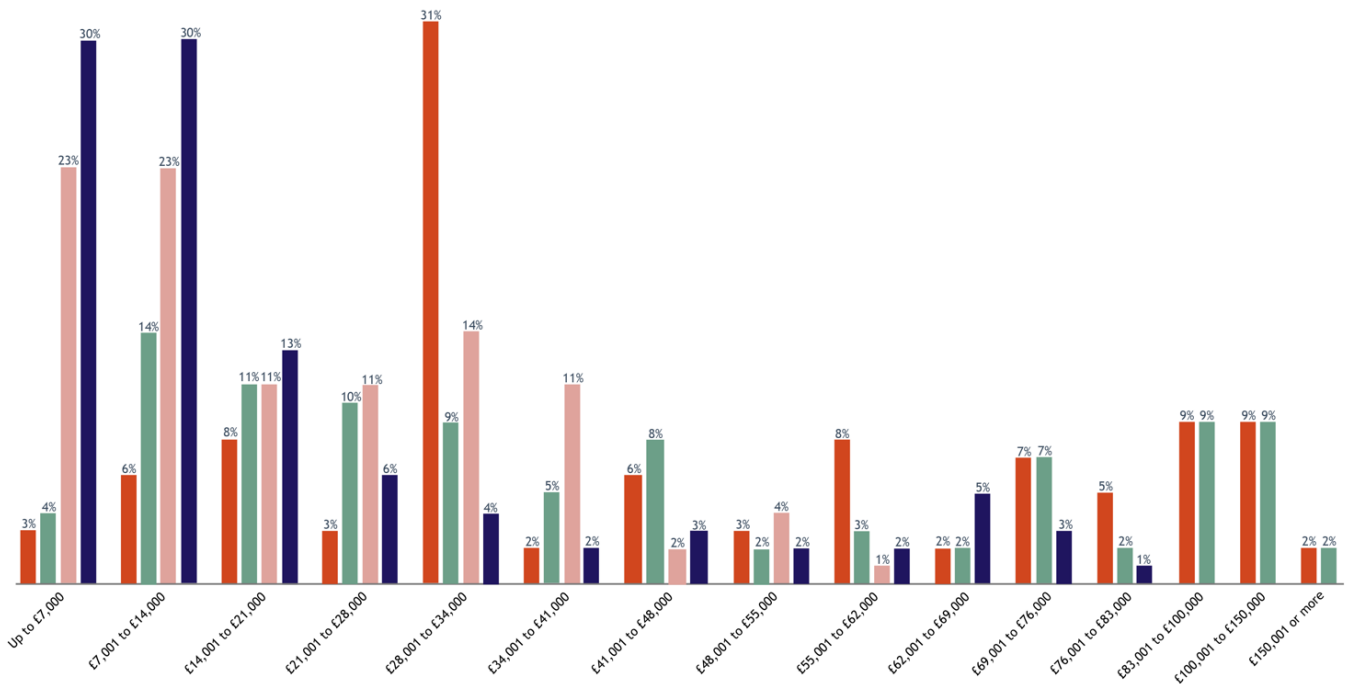
## Ethnicity



## How many people currently live in your household?



## Annual income







The research findings

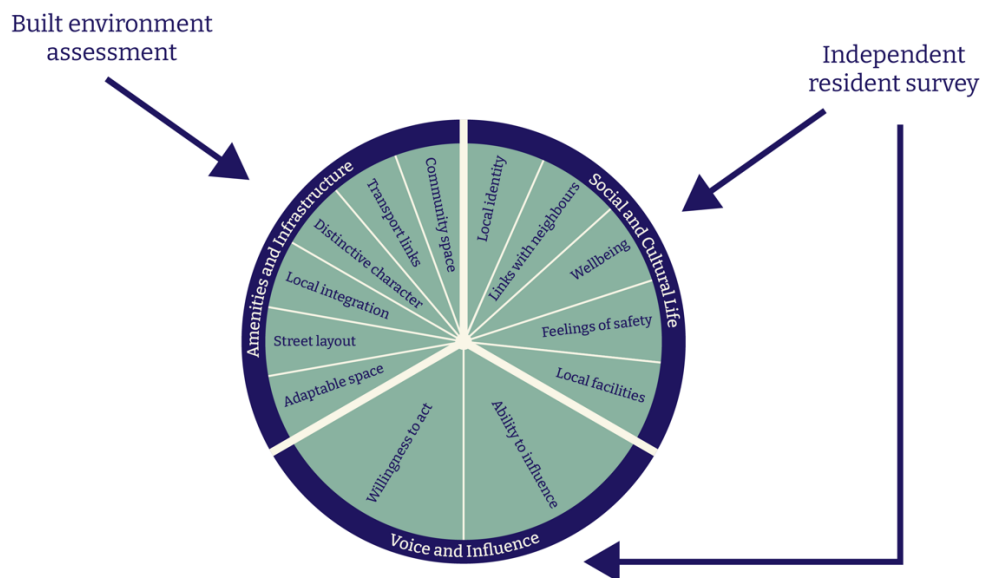


## Section 4: How does South Acton compare to other places?

This section describes how the views of residents who took part in the survey compare to people living in similar neighbourhoods, looking at the three dimensions of the social sustainability framework: Social and Cultural Life, Voice and Influence and Amenities and Social Infrastructure.

The framework used was first developed for The Berkeley Group in 2012, drawing on Social Life's social sustainability framework<sup>8</sup>. The approach measures quality of life, wellbeing and the strength of local communities in local areas.<sup>9</sup>

The assessment has two elements: first, comparing the results from the survey of households on the South Acton Estate and in Acton Gardens against the results of national surveys that ask the same questions; and secondly, assessing the results of the independent site survey using an adapted version of the Building for Life survey<sup>10</sup>. More about this approach is included in the appendix.



### The Social Sustainability framework

#### 4.1 Comparable area benchmarks

Central to this method is comparison of survey results to data from two large-scale national surveys Understanding Society, the UK's largest, longitudinal household panel survey, supported by research

<sup>8</sup> Living on the Aylesbury Estate 2017 [http://www.aylesburynow.london/web/uploads/files/content\\_54\\_1.pdf](http://www.aylesburynow.london/web/uploads/files/content_54_1.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Bacon, N. et al (2012) Creating strong communities: how to measure the social sustainability of new housing developments. London: The Berkeley Group

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/Building%2520for%2520Life%252012\\_0.pdf](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/Building%2520for%2520Life%252012_0.pdf)

councils and government, with 40,000 participating households<sup>11</sup> and Community Life, an annual government survey based on approximately 6,000 face-to-face interviews.<sup>12</sup>

To do this questions from the national surveys were replicated in the South Acton survey. National survey data can then be matched to responses from the residents survey using the Office for National Statistics Output Area Classifications<sup>13</sup> (OACs) to identify the responses for areas that share the same OAC profile.

Results of the household survey are subject to statistical testing. Responses that are significantly more positive than the benchmark are reported in green. Responses that are significantly less positive than the benchmark are reported in red. Responses that are the same as the average, or that show statistically insignificant change, are reported in yellow.

The local facilities indicator is not benchmarked against national survey results because there is no appropriate data for comparison. Instead it is compared to the results of Social Life's other assessments and to change over time.

Acton Gardens LLP intends to repeat this research survey at regular intervals over the coming years, using the findings to understand how changes are affecting residents' satisfaction with their lives and the area, and feelings about the neighbourhood.

## 4.2 Site survey assessments

The results of the independent site survey use the Building for Life scoring method. Each of the questions is given a value of 1, 0.5 or 0:

- 1 = there is sufficient evidence that the design meets the criteria
- 0.5 = a specific part of the design meets the criteria, but others do not
- 0 = there is not enough evidence that the design meets the criteria, or the evidence shows that the design does not meet the criteria.

The scores for each question within an indicator are combined to provide an overall indicator score.

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<sup>11</sup> [www.understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk)

<sup>12</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey)

<sup>13</sup> for more information on area classifications see

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/geographicalproducts/areaclassifications/2011areaclassifications/abouttheareaclassifications>

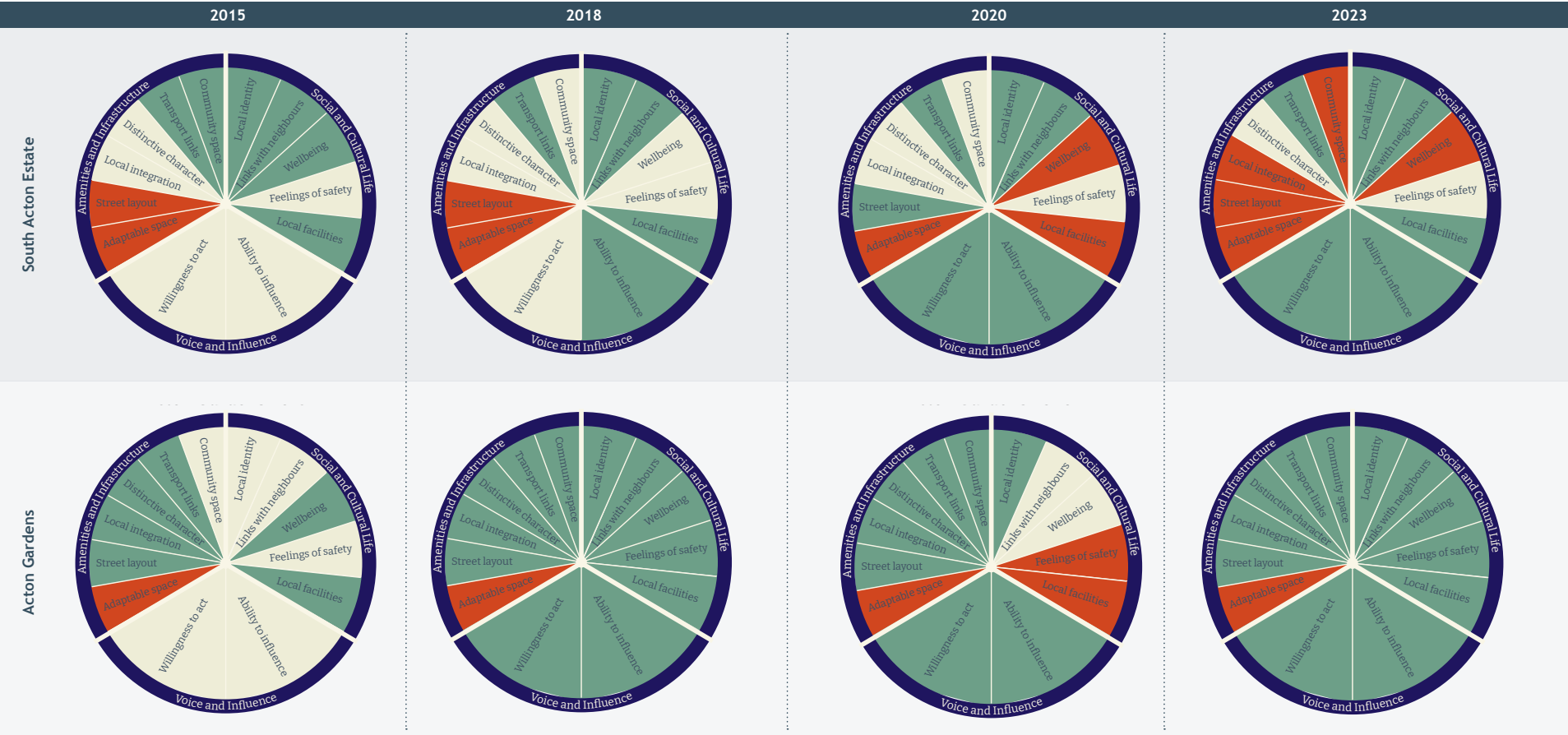


### 4.3 Benchmarking over time

Social sustainability RAG wheels for 2015, 2018, 2020 and 2023

Scoring explained:

- Significantly better than comparable areas
- Performs as expected (equal to comparable areas)
- Significantly worse than comparable areas



Social sustainability scores 2015, 2018, 2020 and 2023

#### **4.4 Social and cultural life**

In 2023, the assessment shows that social and cultural life on the new development has strengthened since 2020. All indicators are now scoring significantly higher than in 2020. Feelings of safety and perceptions of local facilities have increased the most.

On the older estate however while scores for local facilities have improved, wellbeing continues to be worse than in comparable areas and safety is still as expected - neither have improved.

In 2015 the South Acton Estate received a more positive assessment than Acton Gardens for Social and Cultural Life. By 2018 there had been an improvement in these scores for Acton Gardens, with local identity, links with neighbours indicators and feelings of safety scoring better than comparable areas. These improvements proved fragile in the face of the pandemic, while the more longstanding neighbourly relationships on the old estate continued to be an asset supporting residents. However in 2023 we see how the impact of the physical disruption of demolition and the impact of the cost of living crisis has affected people living in the older estate, with weaker scores for wellbeing and safety.

#### **4.5 Voice and influence**

Residents' sense of influence remained strong in 2023, as in previous years. In the new and older areas, willingness to act strengthened, from expected to stronger than expected. These indicators describe how residents feel about how they can influence local decision-making, and their willingness to work with other people locally to improve the neighbourhood.

#### **4.6 Amenities and social infrastructure**

The Amenities and Social Infrastructure scores for Acton Gardens are higher than for the South Acton Estate, as in 2020, reflecting improvements to housing design and the public realm.

Acton Gardens is only given a negative assessment for two indicators street layout and adaptable space. In 2020 street layout was positive, it is now negative. Adaptable space remains unchanged from 2020.

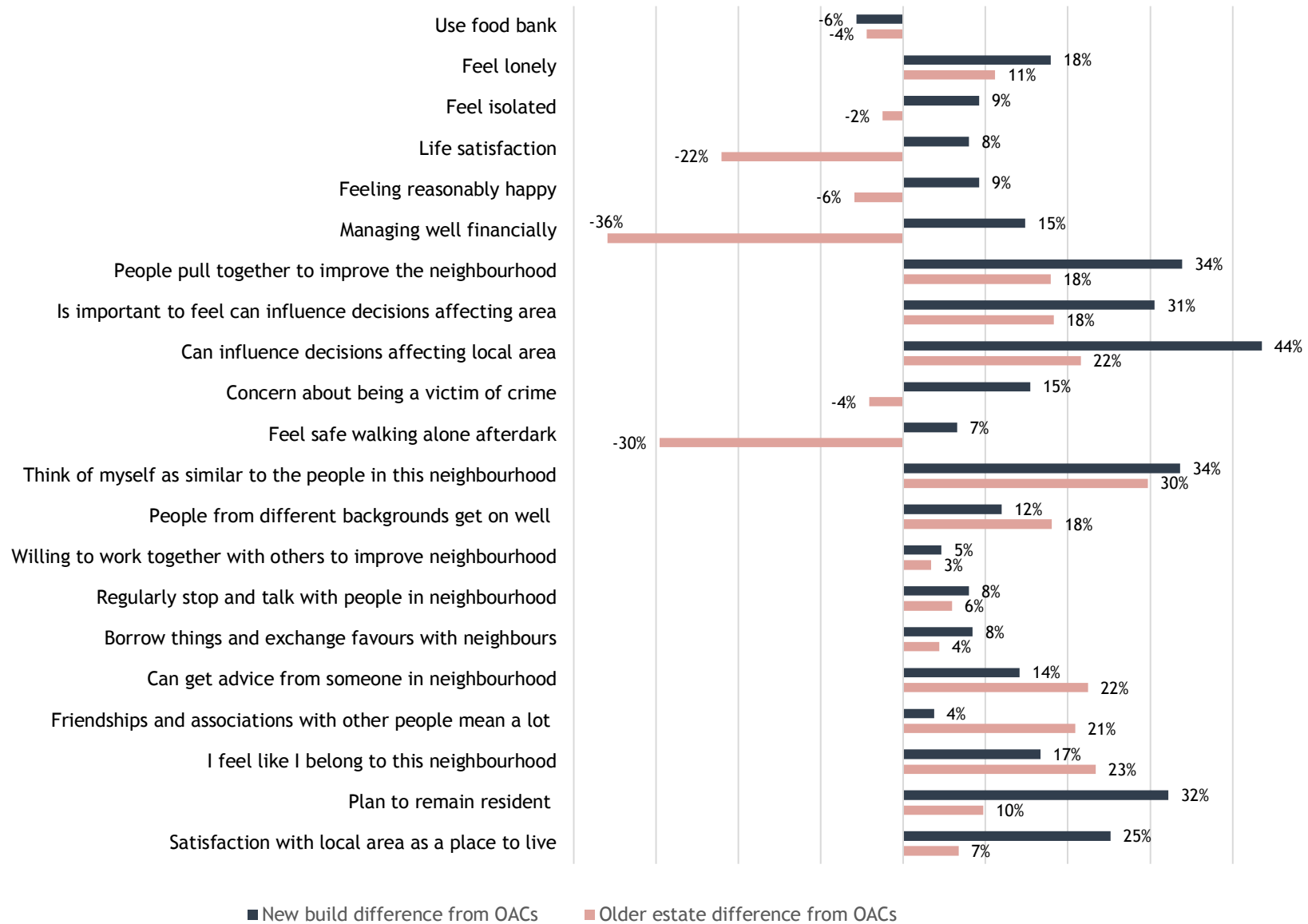
The scores for the South Acton Estate have fallen reflecting the state of demolition and rebuilding, and the number of blocks standing empty, in late 2023 when the assessment was carried out. Scores are weaker than would be expected for all indicators except transport links which scores positively, and distinctive character which scores as expected.

#### **4.7 Broader indicators**

As well as the social sustainability indicators, data from questions on loneliness, isolation and financial wellbeing were compared to national data.

Loneliness and isolation can be damaging aspects of everyday life, low scores suggest lower levels of neighbourly support. The survey found that people living in new homes were less likely to be lonely and isolated than people living in comparable Social sustainability scores 2015 and 2018 areas, and people living in the old estate scored as expected.

The survey also asked how well people felt they were managing financially. This question is often badly answered as people can be unwilling to discuss their financial position with strangers, however when asked over time it is a useful indicator of people's sense of financial security. In 2023, residents of the older South Acton Estate were more likely to report financial difficulties than in comparable areas, however people living in the new development were less likely to be struggling than was expected. Food bank use was significantly higher than expected among people living in the new homes.



Key questions compared to comparable areas, for the older estate and new development. 0 is average for comparable areas  
 N= 333-343 (new build), 53-58 (older estate)



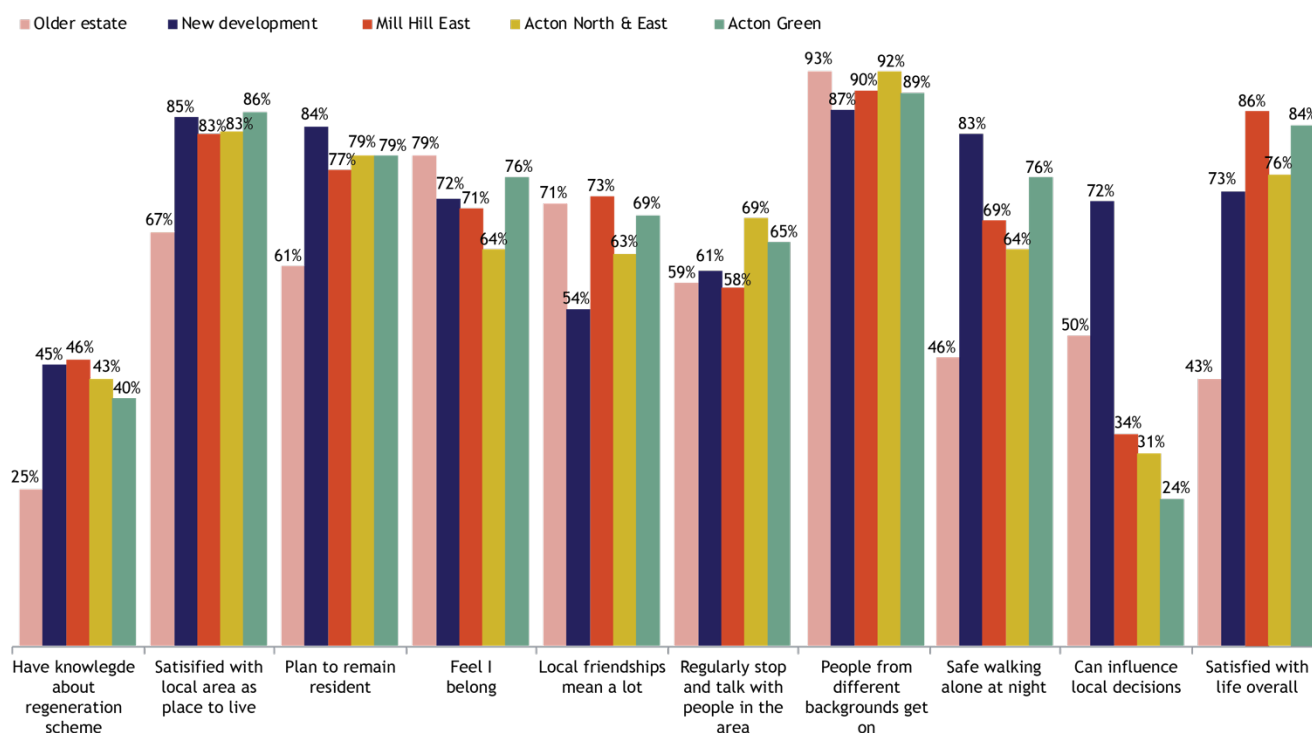
## Comparison with neighbouring areas

The survey of three areas adjacent to the South Acton Estate has been repeated in 2015, 2018 and 2023. It was not carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic as it was difficult at the time to find residents to complete surveys online or face-to-face, and resources needed to be concentrated in the actual regeneration area. In 2024, the survey focused on a small number of key questions used in the main residents survey.

The results show how the older estate and the new build compare to neighbouring areas, helping us to understand to what extent the survey results are particular to the regeneration, and how the changing South Acton is merging into its wider context.

In 2024 we found that:

- The new development was in some respects more similar to the neighbouring areas than to the old estate. This includes the level of knowledge about the regeneration, satisfaction with the local area as a place to live, planning to remain resident, feeling safe walking at night and life satisfaction.
- On key neighbourliness indicators however, including belonging, the value placed on local friendships and perceptions that people from different backgrounds get on the old estate scored higher than both the new development and some or all of the neighbouring areas.
- Perceptions of being able to influence local decisions are stronger on both the older estate and in the new development than in neighbouring areas.



Neighbouring areas compared to old estate and new development  
N=41-60

## Section 5: Feelings about the estate regeneration

This section describes how people in South Acton feel about the Acton Gardens regeneration programme. People were asked what they know about the scheme and how satisfied they are with it to date.

This section is based on the results of the residents survey and compares the responses of people living on the South Acton Estate to people living in Acton Gardens. In the residents survey a number of open-ended questions were asked about how residents feel about the regeneration plans. Relevant findings from the contextual interviews are also included.

This section covers:

- What do people know and how much influence do they have?
- How do people feel about the regeneration plans?
- The experience of moving into Acton Gardens.
- What is contributing to quality of life and what to residents want to see?

### Key findings

- Almost all the regeneration priorities were less important for residents than in previous years. As the regeneration progresses and areas within Acton Gardens are completed it is possible that regeneration has less impact on daily life and that residents are giving less attention to the detail of the regeneration plans.
- Over two thirds of residents interviewed were positive about the regeneration plans; this has increased since previous years. A strong majority of respondents said they felt that the regeneration is improving quality of life. This also has increased from 2020 but is lower than 2018.
- Knowledge about the regeneration is lower than in previous years. It is higher in neighbouring areas than in the old estate.
- Fewer residents living in the older estate felt the regeneration was succeeding in improving their quality of life. Council tenants were less positive than housing association tenants in their views of the regeneration, its impact on quality of life and their knowledge about plans.
- Residents priorities for the regeneration have changed since the last survey. In both years improving community safety, housing affordability and improving open spaces were in the top four priorities, however safety has become the most important priority.
- Residents living on the older estate were more likely to prioritise housing issues. People living in the new development prioritised safety, street layouts and lighting, and open spaces
- Residents report that cleanliness and safety as well as access to local facilities, particularly shopping contribute most to their quality of life in the neighbourhood. A smaller proportion of residents mentioned “community” and “neighbours” than in previous years.

- Stakeholders acknowledged the positive impact of the regeneration in terms of the physical appearance of the area and the design of the buildings. Stakeholders recognised how the physical transformation has positively impacted the areas image. However, issues with housing management and the quality of the homes were raised, as were concerns about housing affordability, and the impact of other developments in the area on local facilities and services.

## 5.1 How do people feel about the regeneration plans?

### Questions

From what you know about the regeneration plans, what do you think about them?

What aspects of the regeneration project are most important to you?

Overall, what three factors about living in this neighbourhood contribute most to your quality of life?

The survey results indicate that support for the regeneration is high. The majority of people gave views that were “overall positive” (67%) and far fewer people voiced “mixed views” (7%) compared to 2020. Fewer people also voiced “overall negative” views (8%) compared to 2020. Residents living in Acton Gardens were asked what their views were of the regeneration before moving into their new home and the majority of respondents expressed “overall positive” views (65%).

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*“It's positive that the area is being invested in but it's important that those who live here already are taken care of.” – Resident (freeholder)*

*“The new regeneration program in this housing area is truly remarkable and holds immense potential for positive transformation...the regeneration program has created a vibrant, environmentally conscious, and socially cohesive neighbourhood that enhances the quality of life for all residents.” - Resident (L&Q shared ownership)*

*“I think it's great plan it will be great to see improvement to the area and new facilities added.” – Resident (affordable rent)*

Worries about the loss of the community were articulated in the survey responses. Repairs and maintenance were also mentioned as were affordability and densification and parking.

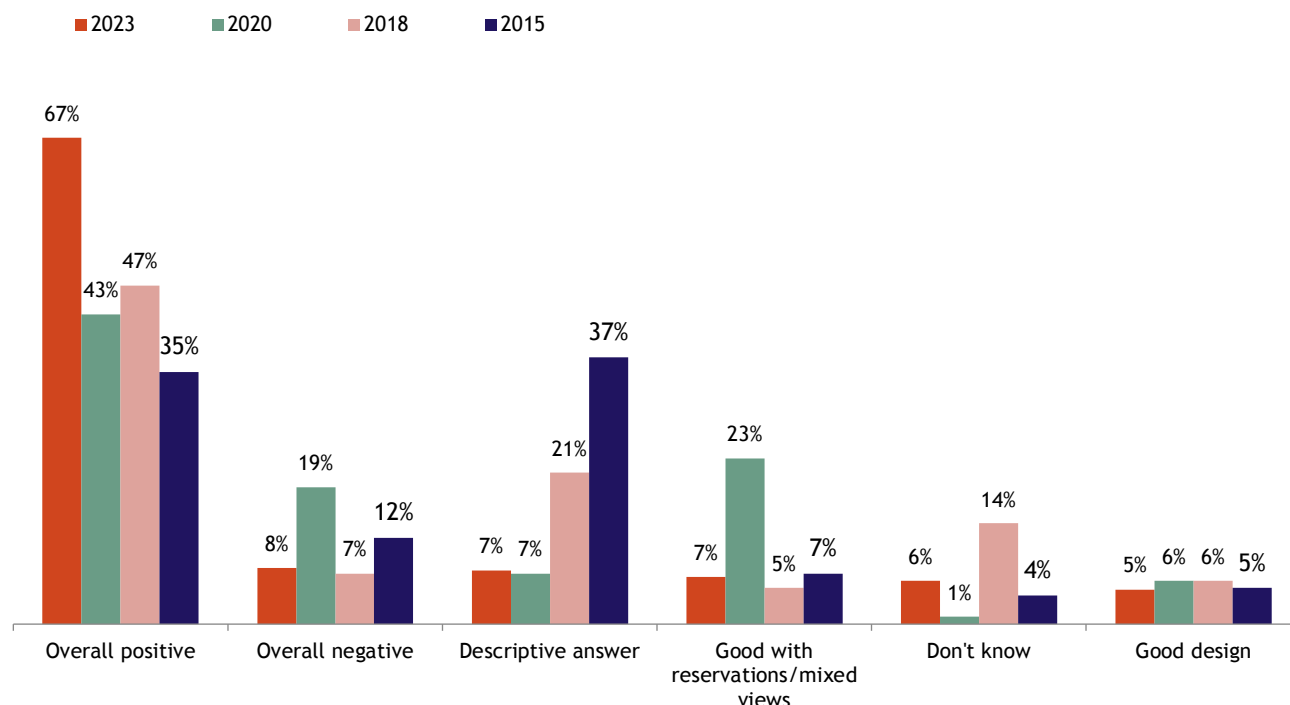
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*“It seems more about making money than trying to maintain the community. A lot of us long term residents are being pushed out of the area by this development.” – Resident (secure tenant)*

*“The lack of car parking is really annoying.”- Resident (secure tenant)*



*“I think the estate has been made much too overcrowded there is too many people living here now and the blocks are way too close together there is no privacy. The feel of the estate has disappeared, and the community has disappeared.” -Resident (secure tenant)*



### Views on regeneration plans by year

N= 335 (2023), 219 (2020), 280 (2018), 266 (2015)

### What is most important to residents

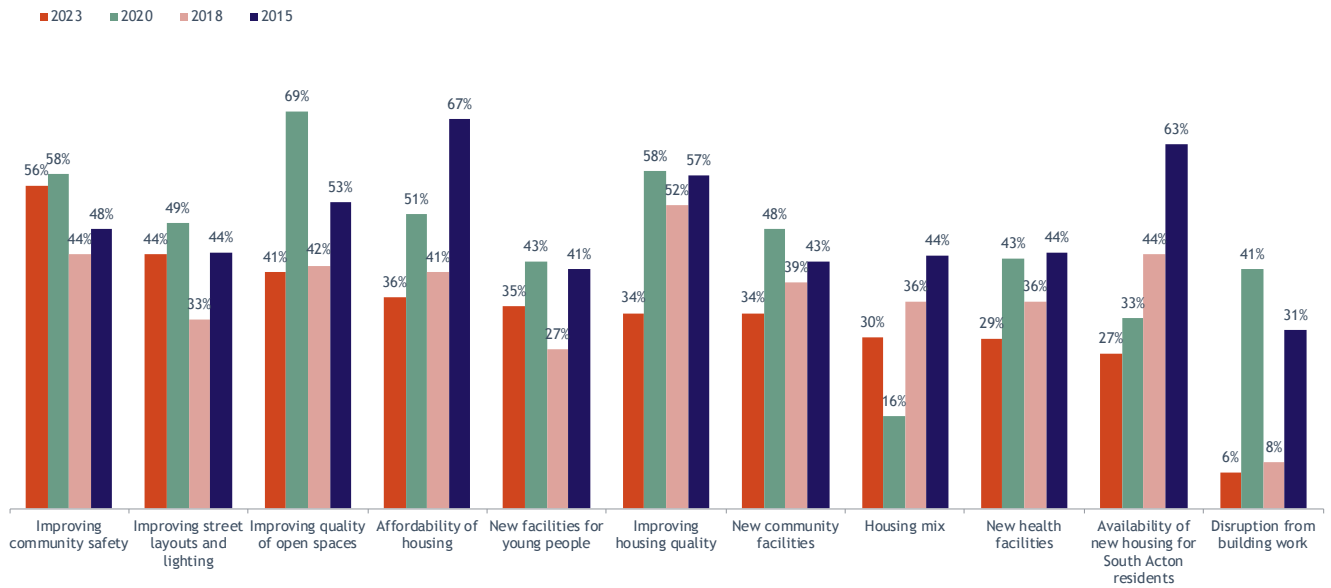
There are some differences in residents' priorities for the regeneration since the last survey. In 2023 the four top priorities in order of importance were “improving community safety”, “improving street layout and lighting”, “improving quality of open spaces” and “affordability of housing”. In 2020 the comparable list was “improving the quality of open spaces”, “improving housing quality”, “improving safety” and “affordability of housing”. “Disruption from building work” and “improving quality of open spaces” were far lower priorities in 2023 compared to 2020, while “housing mix” was a higher priority respectively.

Almost all the issues were lower priority for residents than in previous years. The only issue which had risen in priority was “housing mix”. As the regeneration progresses and areas within Acton Gardens are completed it is possible that regeneration has less impact on daily life and that therefore residents are giving less attention to the detail of the plans.

Residents living on the older estate were more likely to prioritise improving housing quality, affordability of housing and availability of new housing for South Acton residents. People living in the new development prioritised improving community safety, improving street layouts and lighting, and improving the quality of open spaces.



Phase nine construction underway



### What is most important in the regeneration?

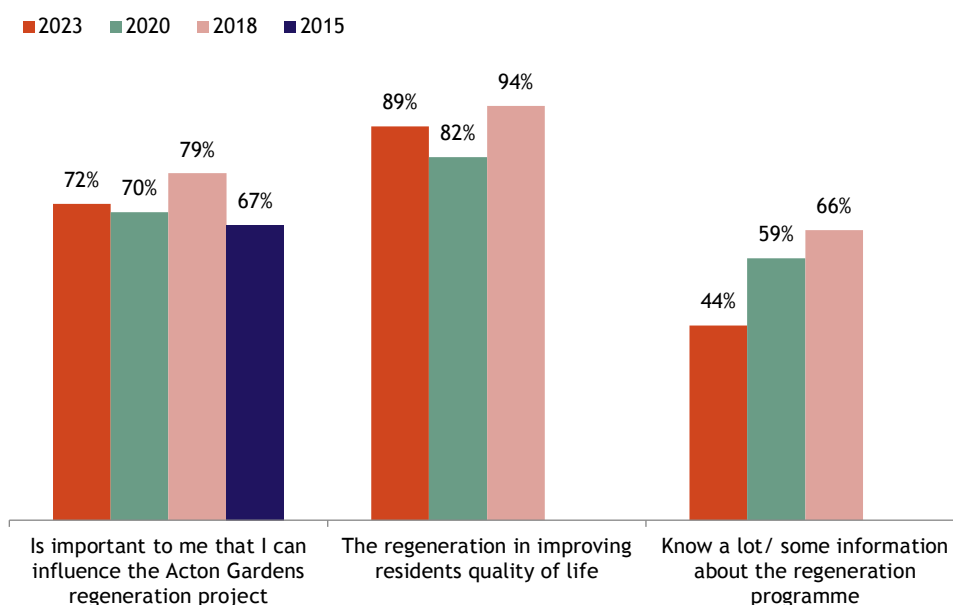
N= 403 (2023), 232 (2020), 353 (2018), 293 (2015)

## 5.2 Knowledge of the regeneration and sense of influence

### Questions asked in the survey

- How successful is the South Acton Estate regeneration in improving residents' quality of life?
- How much do you know about plans for Acton Gardens to regenerate the South Acton Estate?
- Have you received the Acton Gardens newsletters about the regeneration in the past 12 months?
- Have you read this newsletter in the past 12 months?
- Have you attended any meetings or events at South Acton or Acton Gardens in the past 12 months?
- How important is it for you personally to feel that you can influence decisions about the Acton Gardens regeneration project?

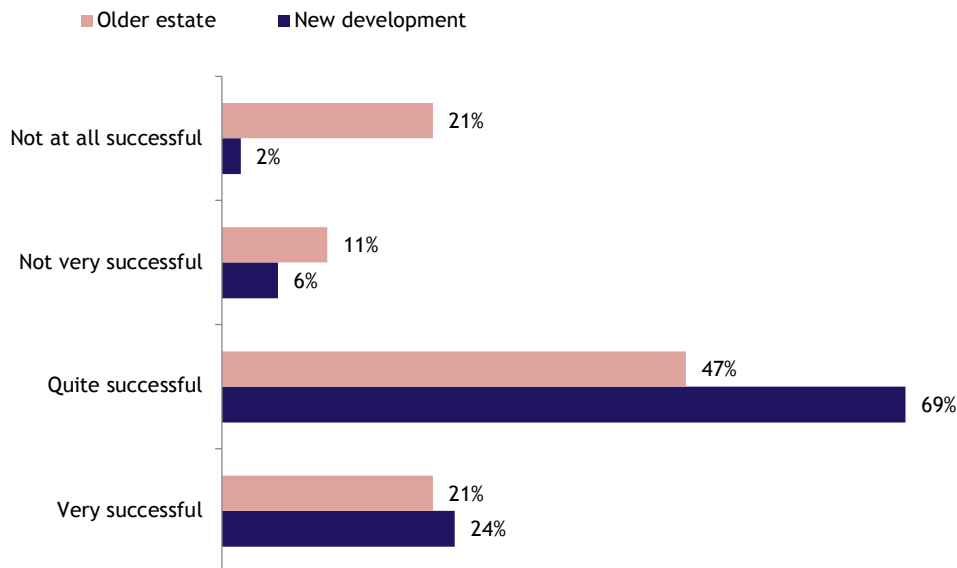
Residents interviewed were more likely to report that the regeneration is improving their quality of life than in the previous assessment - 89% reported this in 2023 compared to 82% in 2020. Their knowledge about the regeneration has fallen, the number saying they feel knowledgeable about the regeneration has fallen from 59% in 2020 to 44% in 2023. The importance they place on being able to influence the regeneration plans is stable. For all these questions however results were more positive in 2018 than in either 2020 or 2023.



### Attitudes to the regeneration over time

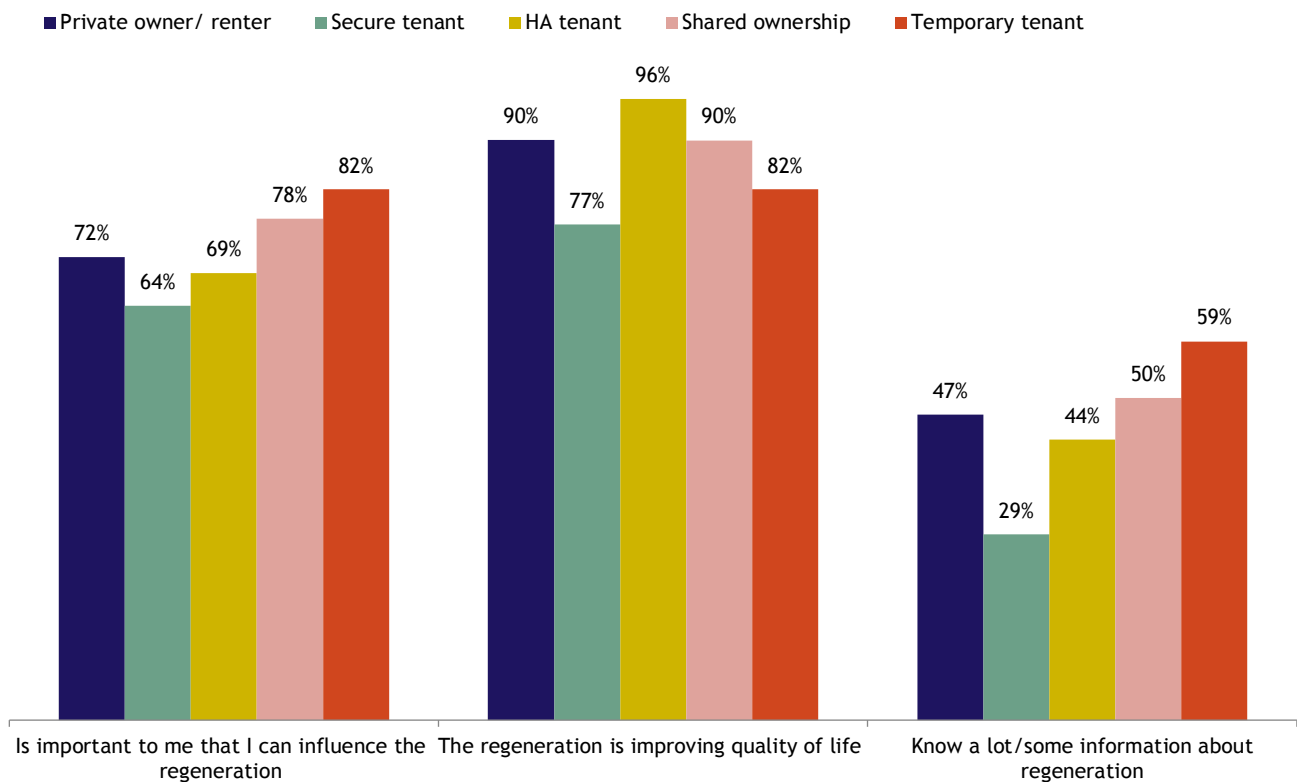
N= 366-389 (2023), 198-229 (2020), 316-348 (2018), 251 (2015)





### Has the regeneration improved resident's quality of life?

N= 366



### Attitudes to the regeneration by tenure

N= 171-324

Council tenants have less positive attitudes towards the regeneration than people living in other tenures. 77% of council tenants felt the regeneration is improving quality of life compared to housing association tenants (96%) and private tenants (90%). Fewer council residents (64%) felt it was important to influence the regeneration, however 82% of temporary tenants valued the importance of influencing the regeneration.

Only 29% of council tenants reported that they know a lot or have some information about the regeneration, compared to 59% of temporary tenants, 47% of private owners or renters and 44% of housing association tenants.

The majority living in the regeneration area said they have received the Acton Gardens newsletter; this is similar to previous years. More residents in 2023 reported that they had read it. Slightly fewer residents reported attending meetings in the past 12 months than in 2020.



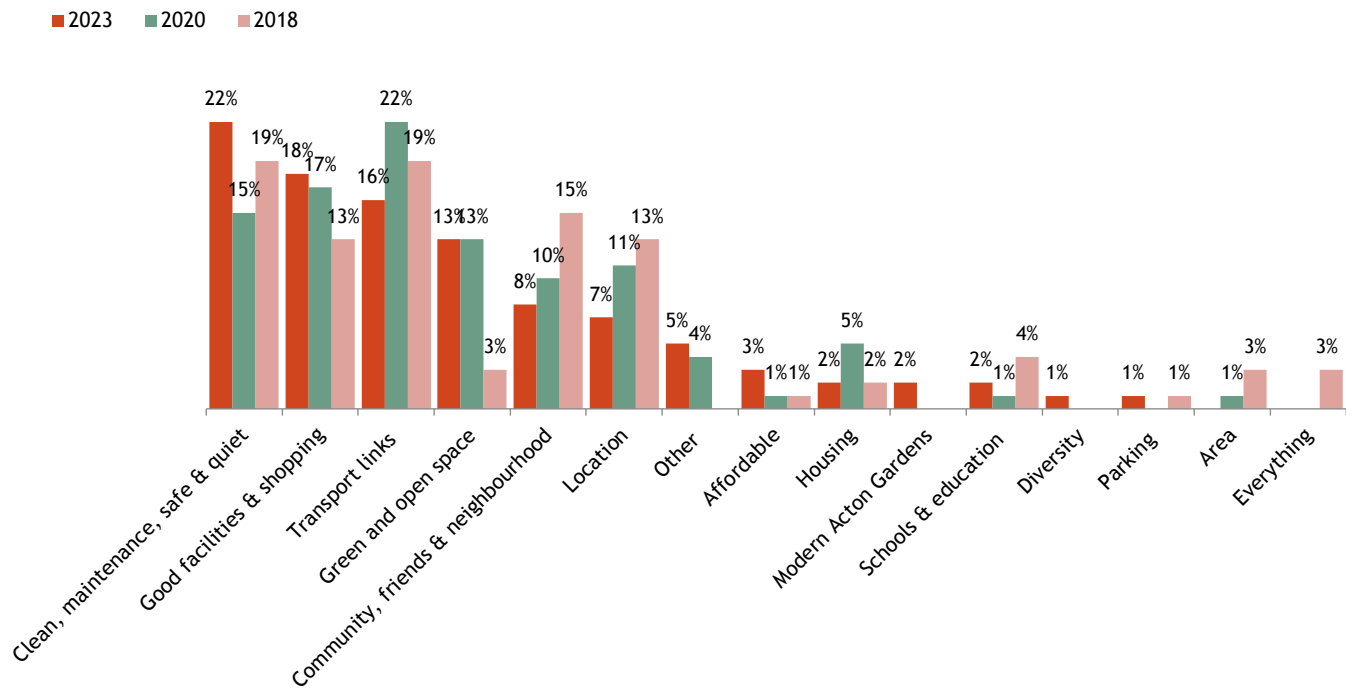
**Children's playground in the new development**

People interviewed living in neighbouring areas reported more knowledge about the regeneration plans than those interviewed who were living on the older estate. Their level of knowledge was similar to that of people living in the new development.

The survey asked what three factors about living in the neighbourhood contribute to your quality of life. There was a strong focus on cleanliness and safety (22%) as well as access to local facilities (18%), particularly shopping. Both these issues were seen to be more important to quality of life than in earlier years. Transport links continue to be important to residents, as do green and open spaces. Affordability was mentioned more compared to other years which could reflect residents' experiences with the increased cost of living. A smaller proportion of residents mentioned community and neighbours compared to previous years.

For this question, residents were able to state their own priorities rather than responding to a list of options. The way that this sort of question is answered in an online survey may be different to the way that the question is answered in a door-to-door survey - the online survey gave people more time to consider their responses and to be more nuanced in their views.





**What three factors are important to your quality of life, over three years**  
 N= 1015 (2023), 525 (2020), 889 (2018)



West Park in phase five

### 5.3 Stakeholder views of regeneration

Stakeholders acknowledged the positive impact of the regeneration in terms of the physical appearance of the area and the design of the buildings.

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***“People don’t mind coming down here [South Acton] ...the regeneration, in my opinion, has lifted the area.” - Stakeholder***

Stakeholders recognised the physical transformation that the area has undergone has positively impacted the area's image, restoring it from a previously notorious estate to an attractive and desirable place to live. However, issues with housing management and the quality of the homes were raised repeatedly.

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***“I honestly don’t think these are going to last as long as the old flats. They have lots of issues and one of the biggest issues that comes up on the residents Facebook page quite often is the hot water.” – Stakeholder***

Stakeholders reported a lack of consistent communication and responsiveness from L&Q housing management regarding reporting repairs and maintenance issues. They explained that this was an issue for all residents across different tenures living in the new development.

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***“When it comes to reporting communal issues like a broken lift...the service is exceptionally slow and you’re lucky if you get a reply to an email. And if you do, there’s no time scale to when something will be fixed, if it will be fixed at all.” - Stakeholder***

The high service charges were raised in several conversations with stakeholders. Some longer standing stakeholders expressed preference for Ealing Council as the landlord, explaining the council had a more proactive approach to repairs and maintenance, along with better communication. It was mentioned that residents living in the older Ealing Council blocks are considering their options about future housing, and whether to move to Acton Gardens homes, given the increase in rent and service charges and their concerns about maintenance.

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***“What’s the point of regenerating everywhere if you’re going to let it fall into disrepair?” - Stakeholder***

In addition, most stakeholders brought up concerns around affordability of the new homes, drawing attention to the broader socio-economic challenges within the community. Stakeholders mentioned that some residents feel that the new homes are not affordable for them, reporting that residents have seen their rent increase as they move from council-owned properties to L&Q properties. This has had a big impact on residents on lower incomes.



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*“We’ve seen this happen before, you know, throughout the post-war period with slum clearance... [regeneration has led to] upwardly mobile working class moving in, and some of the more vulnerable people not actually being able to live here.” - Stakeholder*

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*“Honestly, I think now it feels a little bit disjointed, there’s a real mix. You’ve got people living in containers and then you walk less than three minutes and you’ve got people living in really expensive, really nice mortgage properties...It’s all very disjointed at the moment, none of it really makes any sense, and I think people feel that way.” - Stakeholder*

Finally, some concerns were raised about densification in the area and across the borough, with two stakeholders mentioning concerns about the potential impact of other developments in the area on local facilities and services.



Remaining blocks on the older estate

## Section 6: Social and cultural life

This section outlines how people feel about the social and cultural aspects of the neighbourhood. It looks at local social networks and relationships, the area's local identity, sense of belonging, wellbeing and feelings of safety. It also explores perceptions of different social supports and facilities.

This section is based on the results of the household survey and compares the responses of people living on the South Acton Estate to people living in Acton Gardens. Relevant findings from the contextual interviews are also included.

This section covers:

- 6.1 Links with neighbours
- 6.2 Local identity and belonging
- 6.3 Feelings of safety
- 6.4 Wellbeing and satisfaction
- 6.5 Satisfaction with community facilities

### Key findings

- In 2023 people who took part in the survey reported stronger relationships with their neighbours than in 2020, however this was lower than in 2018.
- People living in the older estate were more likely to agree positively with neighbourliness indicators compared to people living in the new development.
- Neighbourliness and belonging were reported to be higher in the old estate than in the three neighboring areas. People living in the new development gave similar responses to these questions to those interviewed in the neighbouring areas.
- Stakeholders generally reported positive relationships amongst neighbours, and a well-integrated community. There were some concerns that neighbourliness had been impacted by the disruption of regeneration, and about divides between “old” and “new” residents.
- There were more positive responses to the three belonging questions in 2023 than in 2020, but scores were lower than 2018 and 2015.
- People reported feeling safer at night in 2023 than in 2020. People living in the new development were more likely to feel safe after dark and have fewer concerns about being a victim of crime. Council tenants felt noticeably less safe than people living in other tenures.
- All measures of wellbeing rose slightly from 2020 to 2023; however overall satisfaction with life - an important indicator for individual wellbeing - was still lower than in 2018 and 2015.
- Wellbeing was higher among those living in the new development. Council tenants reported lower wellbeing.

- Life satisfaction was higher in the neighbouring areas than in the older estate, but only slightly higher than in the new development.
- Wellbeing has been challenged by the aftereffects of the pandemic and the ongoing difficulties of the cost of living crisis.
- Compared to 2020, fewer people felt isolated from others, or lonely. Residents living on the old estate were more likely to report feeling lonely and isolated than people in new homes.
- Satisfaction with facilities has improved since 2020 overall. More people reported satisfaction with schools and safe outdoor play facilities for children.
- More residents than in previous years report that their child or children have a safe place to play.
- Generally, residents living in the new development were more satisfied with facilities. Satisfaction with housing choices and sport and leisure facilities was lower for residents living on the older estate.
- Residents interviewed felt more comfortable in parks and green spaces than other facilities; community centres and community activities scored lowest when residents were asked whether facilities “cater to people like me”. People living in the newer development were more likely to agree that community facilities “cater to them”.
- Around two thirds of residents interviewed had not used the community centre; this is unchanged since 2020. One in five interviewees were unaware of the activities at the centre.
- Residents in neighbouring areas valued green and open spaces followed by shops and retail. The café, health facilities and sport and leisure facilities were also mentioned as important facilities to people living in these areas.

## 6.1 Links with neighbours

### Questions

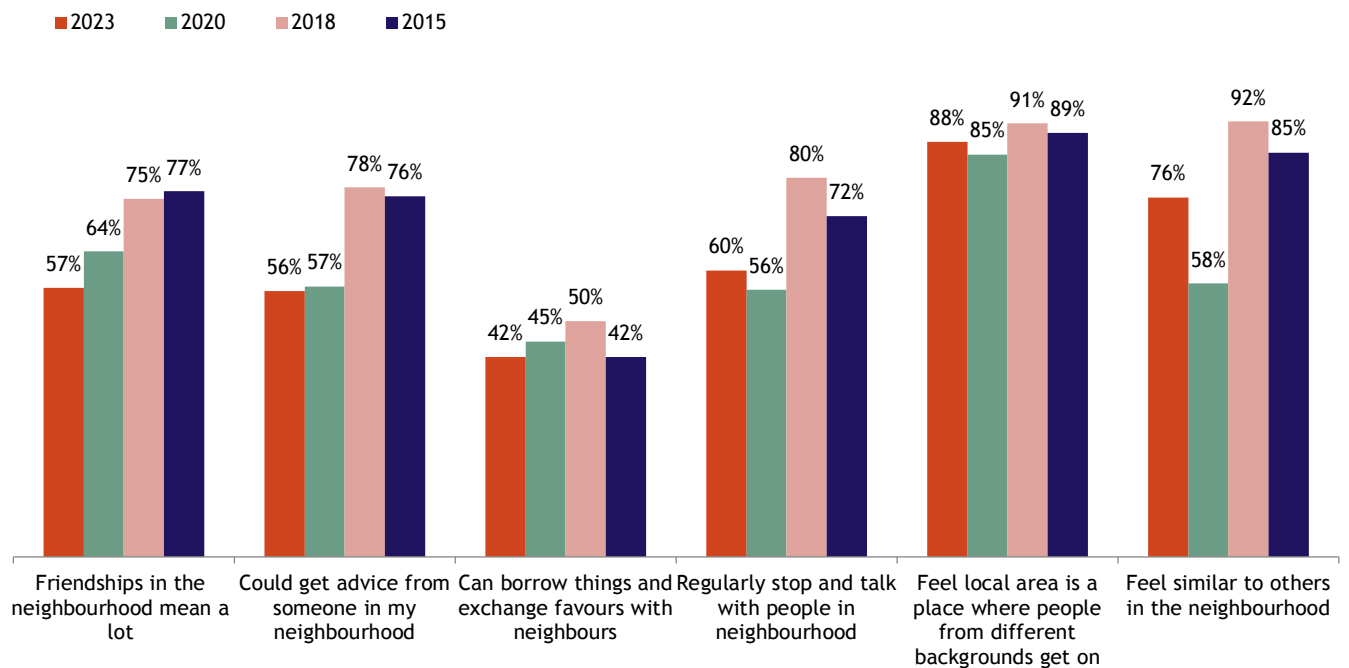
- If I needed advice I could go to someone in my neighbourhood
- I borrow things and exchange favours with my neighbours
- I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighbourhood
- Friendships in my neighbourhood mean a lot to me
- People from different backgrounds get on well
- Do you agree or disagree that you are similar to the people that live in this neighbourhood.

### Neighbourliness

In 2023 the people who took part in the survey on average reported stronger relationships with their neighbours than in 2020, however relationships were reported to be stronger in 2018. As in the 2018 assessments, the relationships people had with their neighbours was higher than across comparable areas.

One neighbourliness indicator had increased noticeably since 2020 - feeling similar to the people in the neighbourhood. However across all indicators neighbourliness was relatively stable. Two indicators increased slightly - regularly stopping and talking with people in the neighbourhood and agreeing that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get along. Three indicators declined slightly in 2023 - friendships and associations mean a lot, could go to someone in my neighbourhood for advice and borrowing things and exchanging favours with neighbours.

People living in the older estate were more likely to agree positively with the neighbourliness indicators compared to people living in the new development.



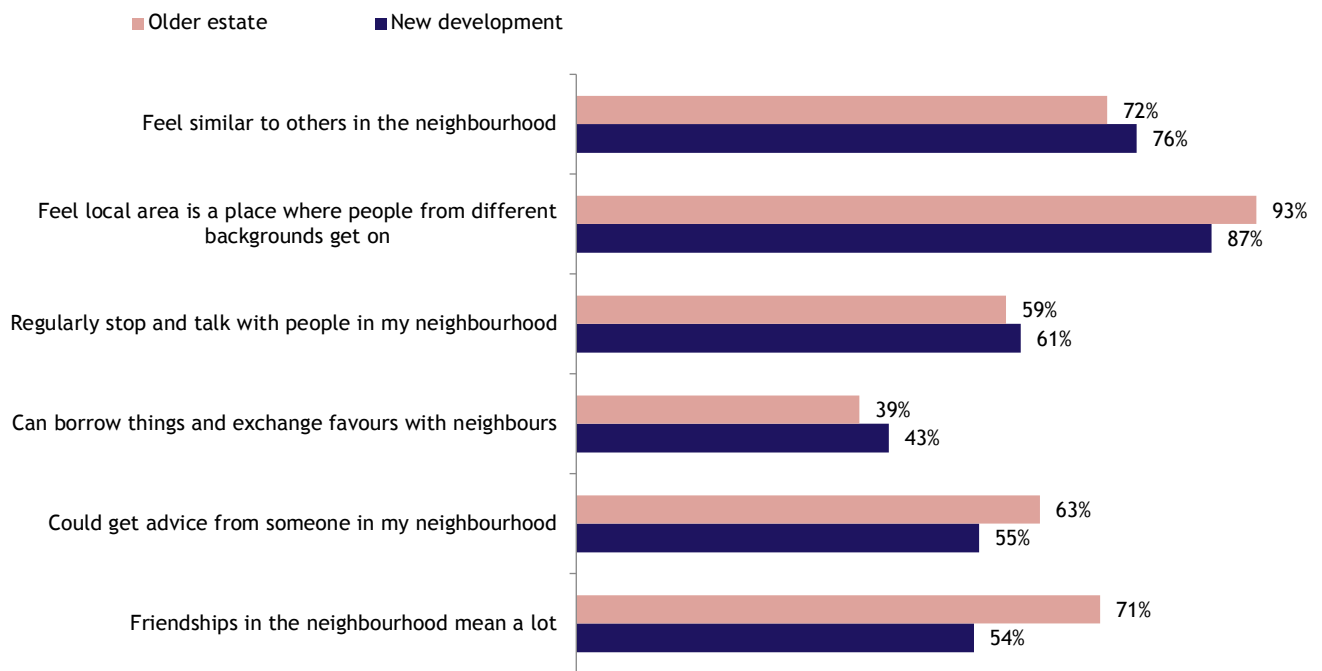
### Neighbourliness, change over time

N= 395-401 (2023), 217-231 (2020), 347-352 (2018), 273-291 (2015)

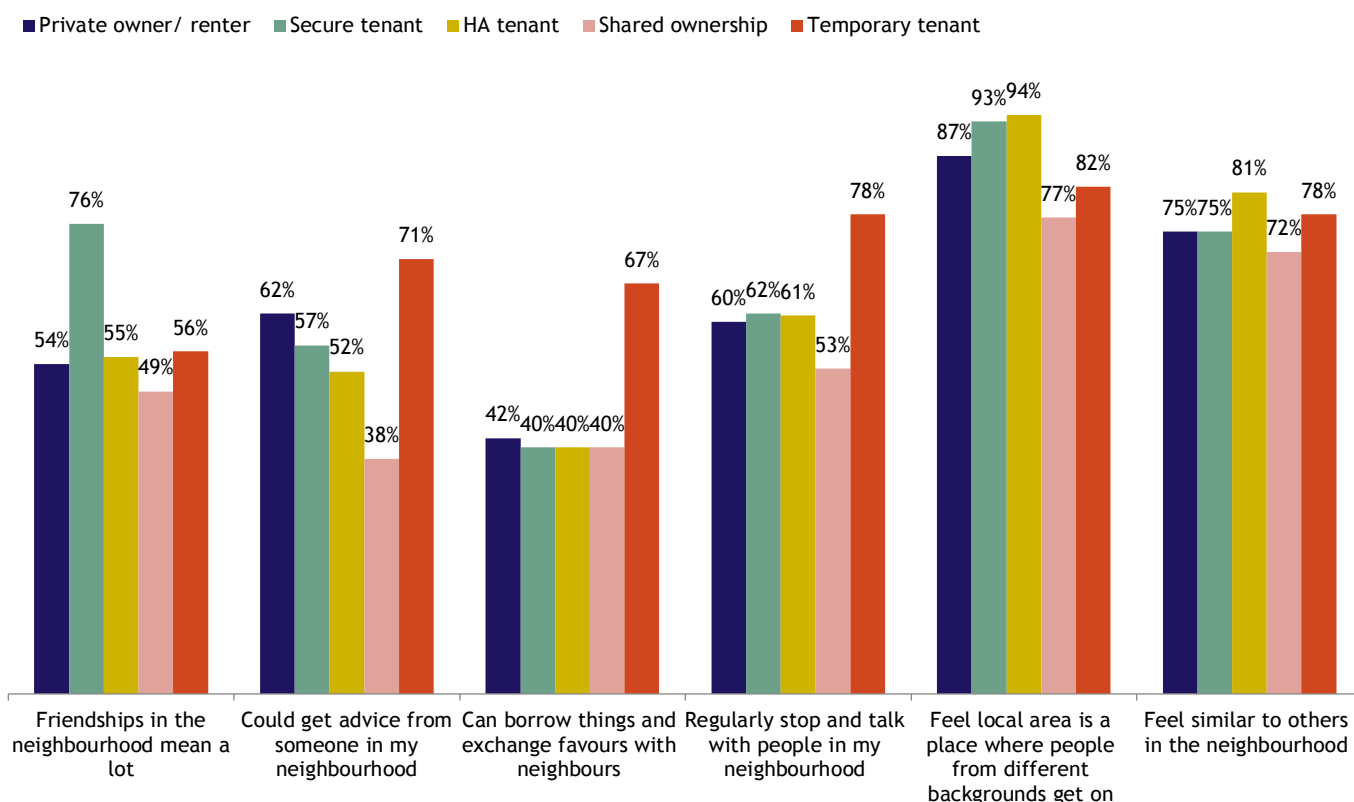




**'The People's Throne' sculpture by Adébayo Bolaji located in Central Plaza**



**Neighbourliness, old estate and new development**  
N=384-401



### Neighbourliness, by tenure

N=165-335

When broken down by tenure, neighbourliness scores showed a mixed pattern. Shared owners interviewed tended to give more negative responses, temporary tenants were more positive. Council tenants, housing association tenants and private owners and renters gave broadly similar responses. However, a higher number - 76% - of council tenants agreed that the friendships and associations in the local area mean a lot to them, compared to people living in other tenures.

Neighbourliness responses were similar or higher for the older estate than for the three neighbouring areas. For example 93% of people interviewed who lived on the old estate felt that people from different backgrounds get on, compared to 87% to 82% of people interviewed in the three neighbouring areas.

### Stakeholder views: Neighbourliness

Stakeholders generally reported positive relationships amongst neighbours, with examples like neighbours collecting one another's parcels if needed. Examples were given of residents and neighbours supporting one another, looking out for those with mental health issues and learning difficulties. However there were descriptions of a change in neighbourly relationships, resulting from the regeneration.

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*“Doesn't seem to be lots of neighbour conflicts ... I have a Somali family next to me and we're really friendly with each other. We get on well and when I was in hospital, one of the girls is a midwife there and she came to see me, and her sister came the next day.” Stakeholder*

*“When my eldest two were teenagers, they could walk through the estate quite happily. We would know so many people and I knew they would always be safe because we knew everybody...this was partly down to the makeup of the blocks, so the blocks kind of face each other, your front door is always on an open balcony, so you will always see your neighbours passing your kitchen window all the time. You know, when you were walking on your balcony it would look outwards on to like a courtyard. So, you were always mixing with your neighbours and seeing people on the street, whereas now all the blocks have been built in such a way that you kind of go up a staircase or in a lift and it's all enclosed your doors...I've lived in my block [new building] six years now and I still haven't met two of neighbours on my floor.”*  
**Stakeholder**

### **Relationships between different groups**

Stakeholders described the area as diverse with a well-integrated community. A link was made between tenure mix and social integration.

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*“There's quite a nice mix of residents that were previously living here...they stayed on and moved into some of the new builds. Then there's the new people...we're quite a mix, but I think everyone generally gets on.”* - Stakeholder

Stakeholders mentioned some cultural shifts as a result of demographic changes, including those triggered by the regeneration and those associated with different groups moving into the estate. There were mentions of the presence of the Somali community as well as an increase of people from Arab backgrounds.

Community events and activities were described by all stakeholders as successful means to bring the community together and fostering greater community cohesion.

Increasing tensions between the youth and the youth club, and older residents, were reported. Stakeholders mentioned that young people that gather outside the community centre can cause disturbances with neighbours. This issue was highlighted in the 2020 assessment as well. In addition, a recent incident between young people highlighted the growing issue with postcode rivalries, suggesting the area is territorial.

There were mentions among stakeholders of divisions between old and new residents, and a growth of a social divide resulting in an “us versus them situation”. Stakeholders also described a disconnect between the older estate and new development, associated with anti-social behaviour and issues with asset management and maintenance in the remaining blocks of the older estate. The lack of investment in the older estate was seen as potentially fuelling resentments and deepening disparities between groups.

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*“I don't think the new residents expected the challenges that exist in the area, which exist in many poorer areas like that.”* - Stakeholder





View of Jerome Tower from Acton Gardens

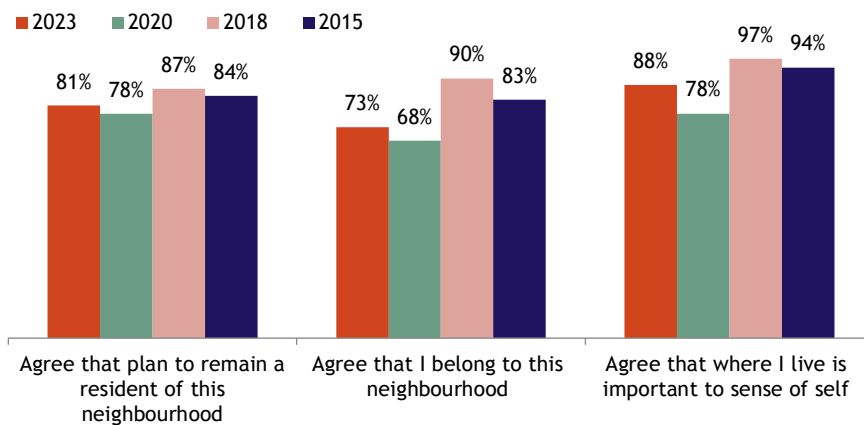
## 6.2 Local identity and belonging

### Questions

- I plan to remain a resident of this neighbourhood for a number of years
- I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood
- How important or unimportant is where you live to your sense of who you are?

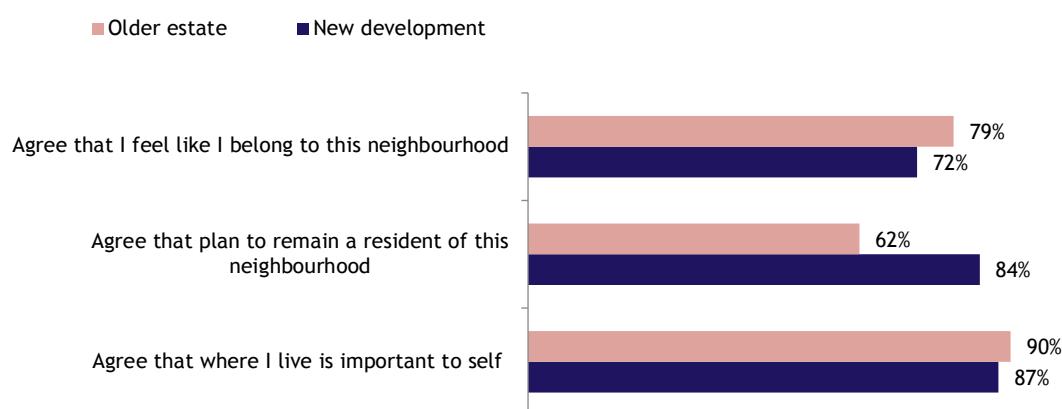
There were more positive responses to the three belonging questions in 2023 compared to 2020, but these scores were still lower than 2018 and 2015. Sense of belonging was slightly higher among people living in the old estate, however more people in the new development intend to remain resident in the area more (84%) than people living in the old estate (62%). Feelings of belonging and planning to remain resident in the area are lowest among private owners and renters.





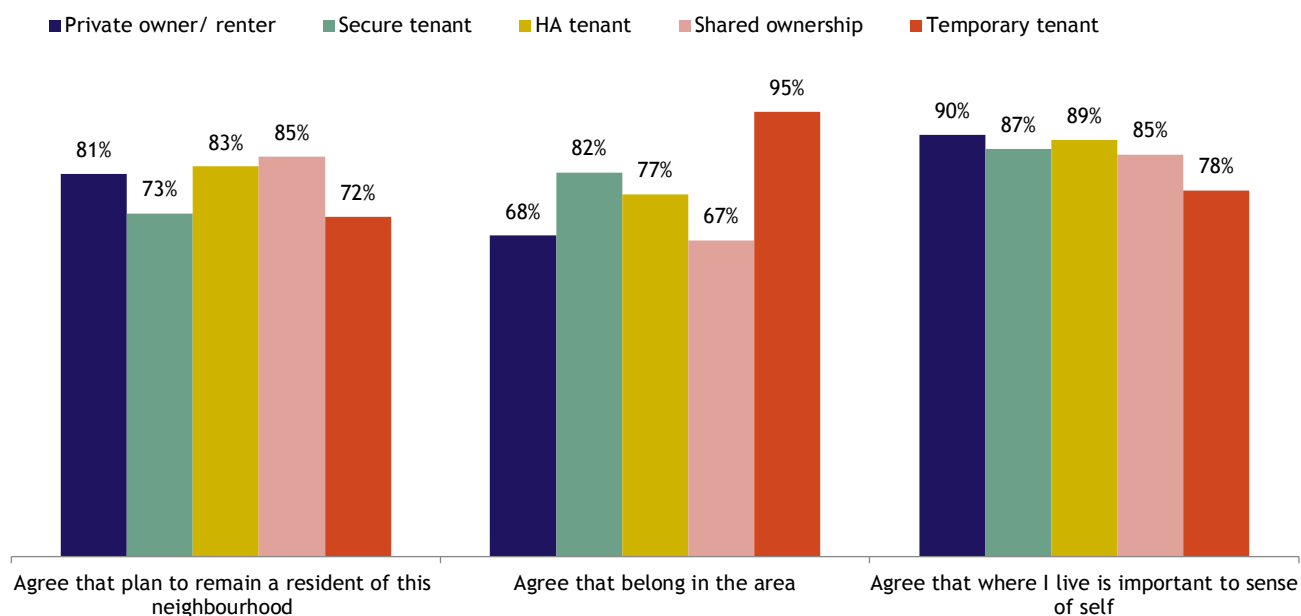
### Belonging indicators, by year

N= 397-399 (2023), 216-228 (2020), 349-352 (2018), 274-288 (2015)



### Belonging indicators, new development vs old estate, 2023

N= 397-399



### Belonging indicators, by tenure 2023

N= 290-318

Feelings of belonging were higher in the older estate than for the three neighbouring areas. 79% of people

interviewed who lived on the old estate felt that they belonged in the area, compared to 64% to 76% of people interviewed in the three neighbouring areas.

### Stakeholder views

While physical changes have taken place across South Acton, there is a general consensus amongst stakeholders that the sense of community has largely remained intact due to the transfer of old residents into new buildings. The community was described as “close knit”.

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*“I get the impression that people have been living here for a long time, so probably moved in when their family or household were much younger” explained one stakeholder.” - Stakeholder*

*“People say good morning to one another and good afternoon and I think that says what a close community it is. That is always reinforced when there’s a community event...it’s a whole mixture of the community coming together.” - Stakeholder*

However, the community was also described as “transient” with people moving through the area, eroding the community as people do not feel as rooted or invested in the long-term. The demographic composition of the area was mentioned.

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*“Acton in the ’90s had a lot more West Indians, Jamaicans...then there were a lot of Somalis and Africans...now it’s changing... the majority is Arabs – Syrians, a lot of young English people because they work in central London.” - Stakeholder*

*“I would like to see more activities...having things like the winter event, the summer event, trying to do things that brings people together.” – Stakeholder*

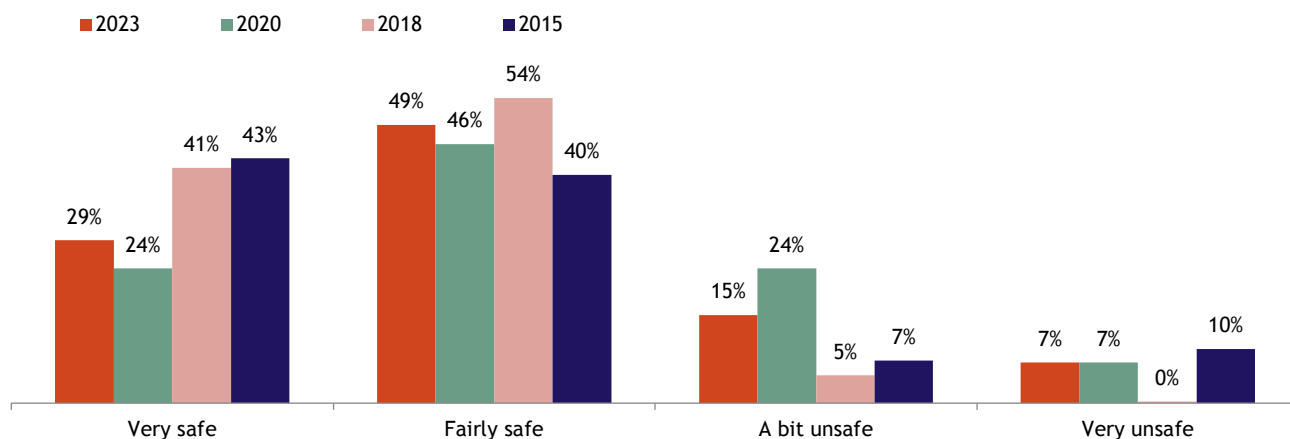


New Central Plaza

## 6.3 Feelings of safety

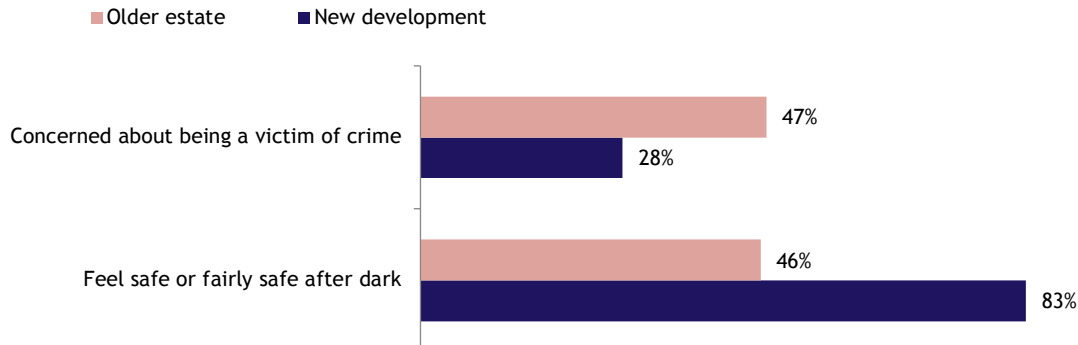
### Questions

- How safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?
- Are you worried about you or someone you know being a victim of crime?



### Feelings of safety after dark by year

N= 397-399 (2023), 216-228 (2020), 349-352 (2018), 274-288 (2015)



### Feelings of safety, new development vs older estate, 2023

N= 386-395

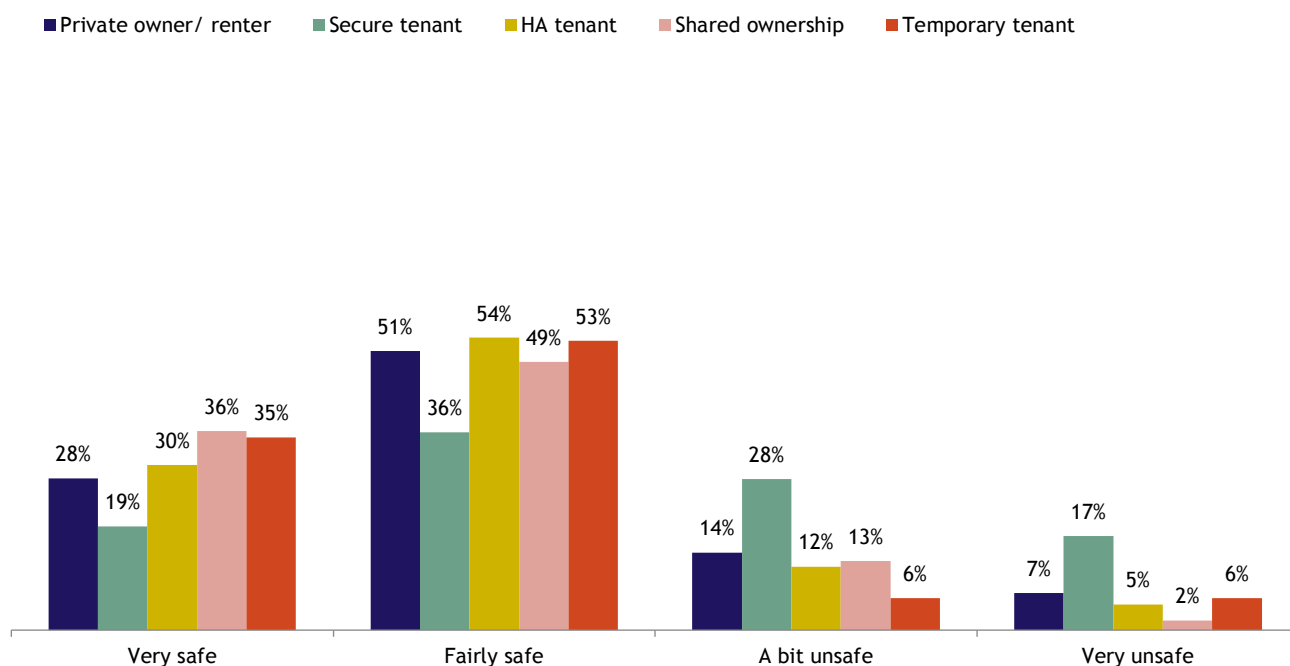
People reported feeling safer at night in 2023 than in 2020. People living in the new development were more likely to feel safe after dark (83%) in comparison to those living in the old estate (46%). The same pattern was reflected when residents were asked whether they are concerned about crime. Residents in the old estate (47%) were more concerned about being victims of crime than people whose homes were in the new development (28%). Council tenants felt noticeably less safe than people living in other tenures.

Perceptions of safety after dark were more positive in neighbouring areas (64% to 76%) compared to responses from people living in the older estate (46% felt safe). Residents interviewed in the new

development felt safer than people interviewed in the three neighbouring areas - 83% reported feeling safe walking along after dark.

Residents in the new development were more concerned about being a victim of crime than in 2020 (57%) and a smaller proportion felt safe after dark (66%). On the older estate a broadly similar number in 2020 and 2023 (42% and 44%) felt safe after dark, however concerns about being a victim of crime increased over the three years.

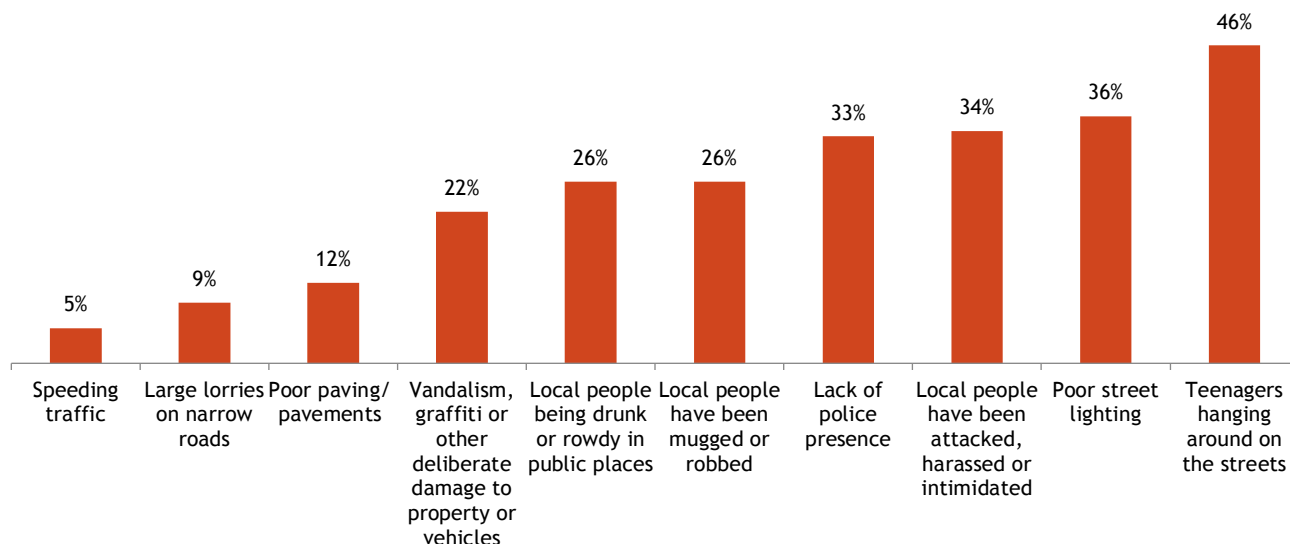
When asked why they feel unsafe, respondents noted the top three reasons as: teenagers hanging around on the streets (46%), poor street lighting (36%) and local people have been attacked, harassed, or intimidated (34%). Areas where residents felt most unsafe were Bollo Bridge Road (45 mentions), Hope Gardens (19 mentions) and around the community centre/ Youth centre (22 mentions).



### Feelings of safety, by tenure, 2023

N= 392





### Reasons for feeling unsafe, 2023

N= 137

### Stakeholders

The majority of stakeholders mentioned that the area has become safer and more accessible. However, concerns related to safety came up in several conversations. These included issues around drug dealing, gang rivalry, and anti-social behaviour. There were particular concerns around youth-related crime. Several stakeholders mentioned that criminality is perceived as being imported onto the estate from external areas, rather than originating from local residents. Stakeholders highlighted the need for proactive measures such as facilitating youth activities to foster a safer and more engaging environment for young people.

Specific areas were identified where issues of safety are most prevalent. This included the lack of lighting in South Acton Park and along Church Path, an overpass that connects South Acton to Acton Green. Difficult social dynamics within the housing, particularly where there are pockets of anti-social behaviour in Hope Gardens and the older redbrick blocks were also reported and concerns were raised about these issues reaching out to other parts of the development.

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*“Some of the blocks that have been left empty or almost empty. And certainly, the containers have brought with them a level of undesirable [people]. Not all of them, because lots of them had families in. It was a real split of lovely families with children and then undesirable tenants that were causing absolute awfulness for their fabulous families that we live in there.” - Resident*

*“There’s a bit of crime wave going on.” - Stakeholder*

A recent knife incident that took place outside the community centre was mentioned as the second stabbing in the space of a few months within the regeneration area. Residents and stakeholders also mentioned incidents such as break-ins to bike stores, parcels being stolen, threats made to the concierge and drug dealing. Stakeholders reported there is a lack of coordinated response when it comes to tackling issues of crime and safety, claiming agencies and housing management need to take a proactive approach to address these issues.

## 6.4 Wellbeing

### Questions

- Have you been feeling reasonably happy?
- How dissatisfied or satisfied are you with life overall?
- Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?
- How well would you say you yourself were managing financially these days?
- How often do you feel lonely?
- How often do you feel isolated from others?

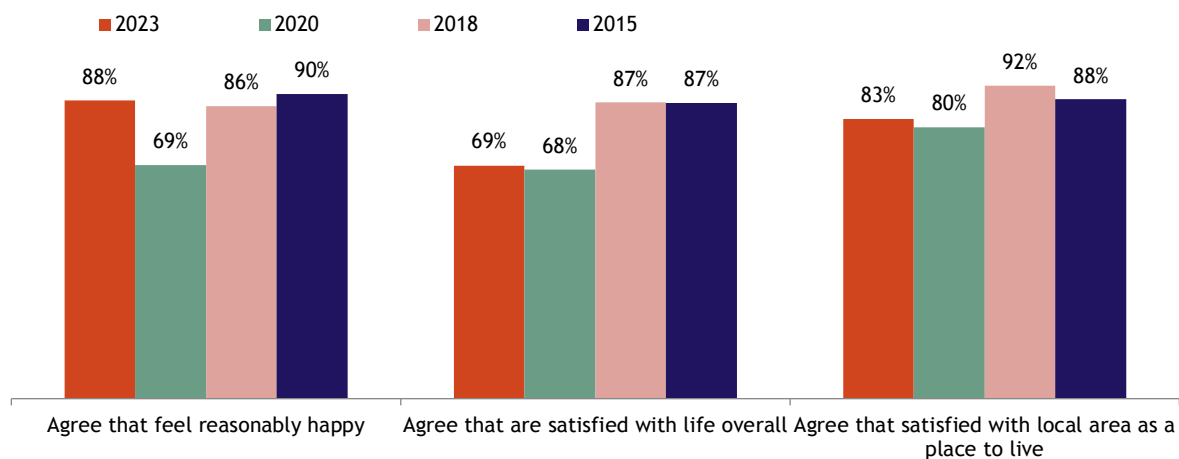
All measures of wellbeing rose slightly from 2020 to 2023; however overall satisfaction with life - which is recognised as important indicator for individual wellbeing - was still lower than 2018 (9% lower) and 2015 (5% lower). All measures of wellbeing were higher among those living in the new development in comparison to the old estate, with life satisfaction being significantly higher (30%) within the new development.

Wellbeing has been challenged by the lingering aftereffects of the pandemic and the ongoing difficulties from the cost of living crisis. National data reflects the trends in South Acton, ONS wellbeing statistics show that life satisfaction scores were lower in March 2023 (the date of the most recent data available) than in 2019 before the pandemic. This data also shows that nationally wellbeing fell between March 2022 and March 2023.<sup>14</sup>

Life satisfaction and satisfaction with the area as a place to live was broadly similar among people interviewed living in the new development and in the three neighbouring areas. People interviewed living in the older estate reported lower life satisfaction (for example only 43% of people living in the older estate described positive life satisfaction, compared to 73% in the new development and 76% to 86% in the three neighbouring areas).

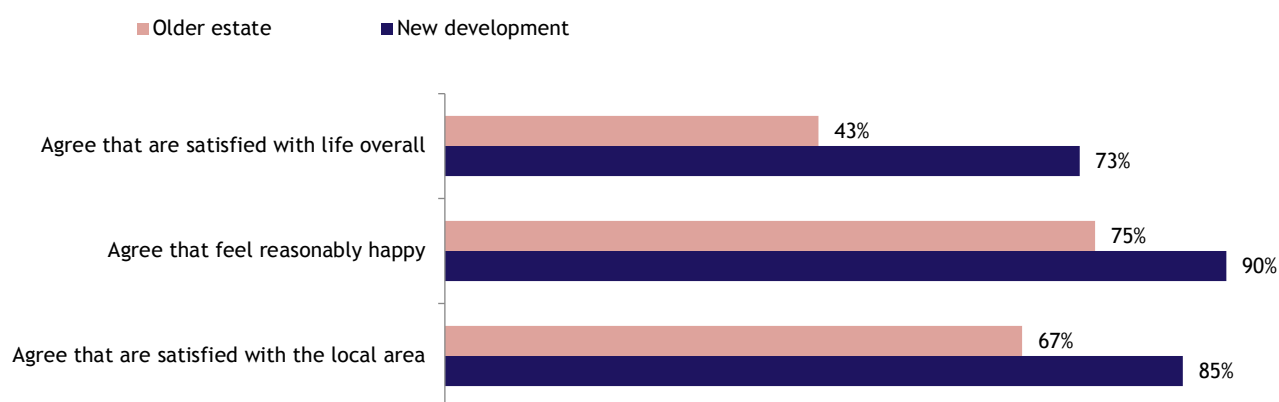
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<sup>14</sup> Office for National Statistics, Personal well-being in the UK: April 2022 to March 2023  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/april2022tomarch2023>



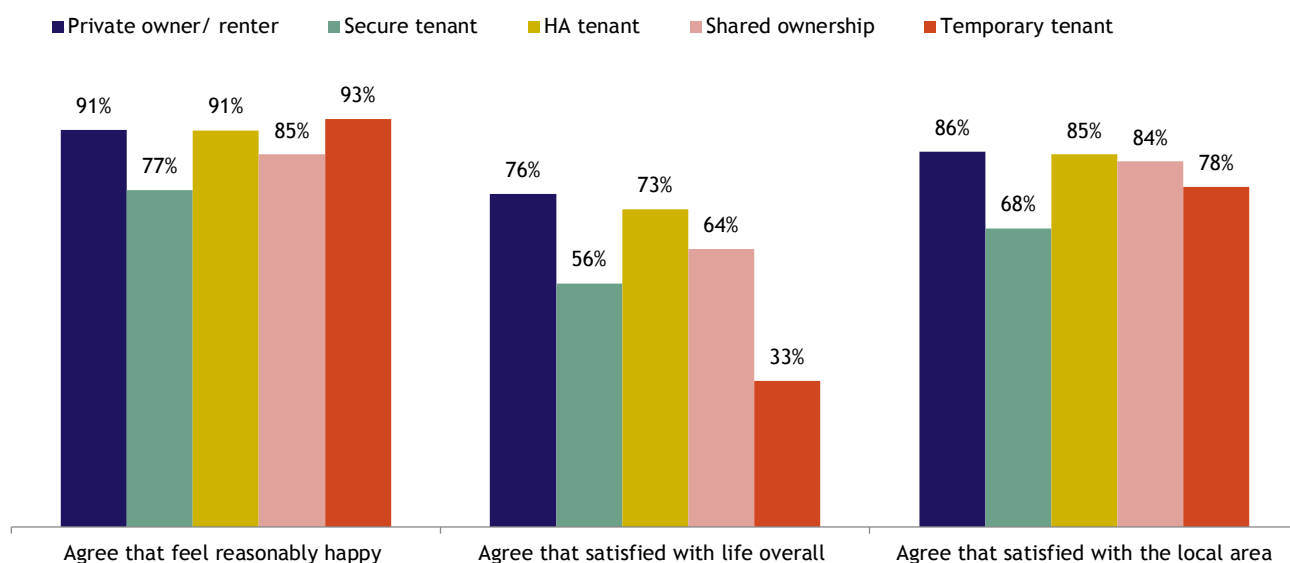
### Wellbeing indicators, by year

N= 392-401 (2023), 225-232 (2020), 351-352 (2018), 282-293 (2015)



### Wellbeing indicators, new development vs older estate, 2023

N=392-401

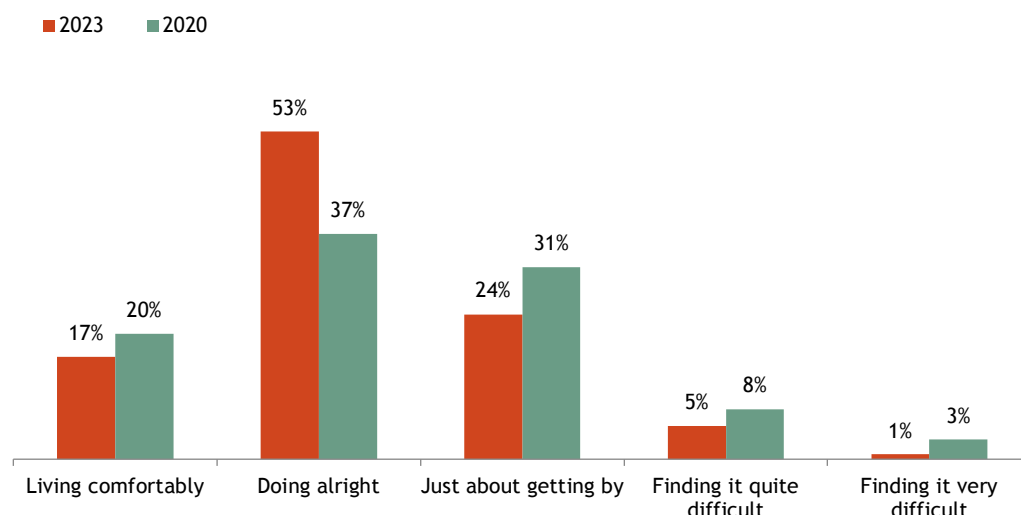


### Wellbeing indicators, by tenure, 2023

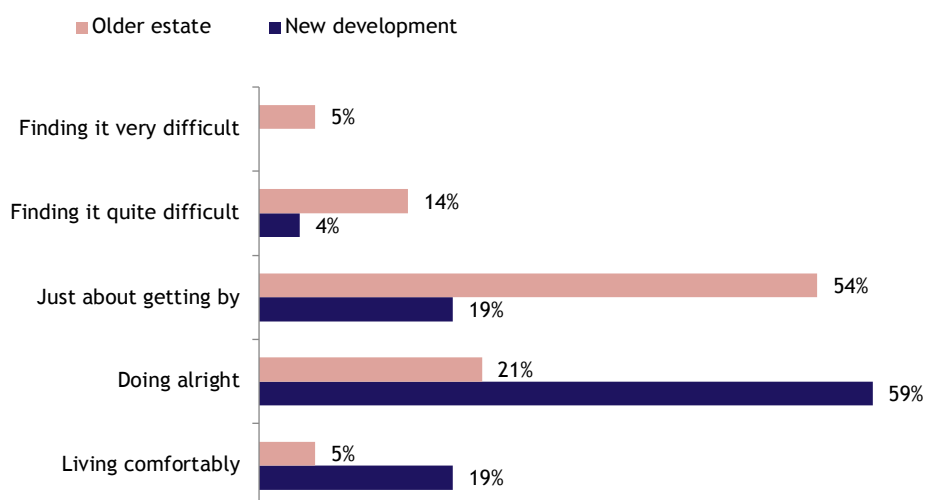
N=273-342

Council tenants reported lower wellbeing across the three wellbeing questions. 46% of temporary council tenants reported feeling satisfied with life overall compared to 76% private tenants. Temporary tenants interviewed described particularly low life satisfaction (33%).

The survey asked how people felt they were managing financially. Slightly fewer people feel they are “living comfortably” and a greater proportion of people feel they are “doing alright” than in 2020. Fewer people felt they were finding it quite or very difficult managing financially. 16% more people living in the older estate reported they were finding it very or quite difficult; considerably more residents living in the new development reported that they feel they are “living comfortably”.



#### Perceptions of managing financially by year N= 389 (2023), 220 (2020)

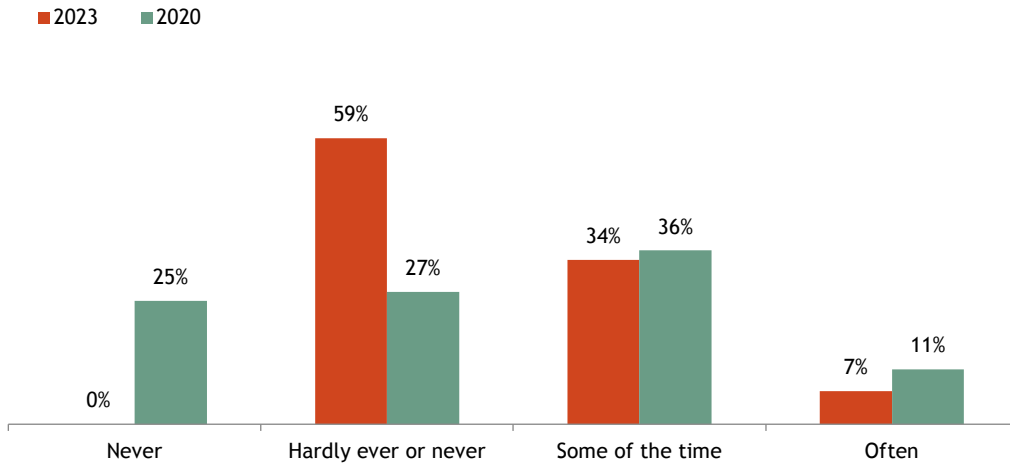


#### Perceptions of managing financially, new development vs older estate, 2023 N= 389

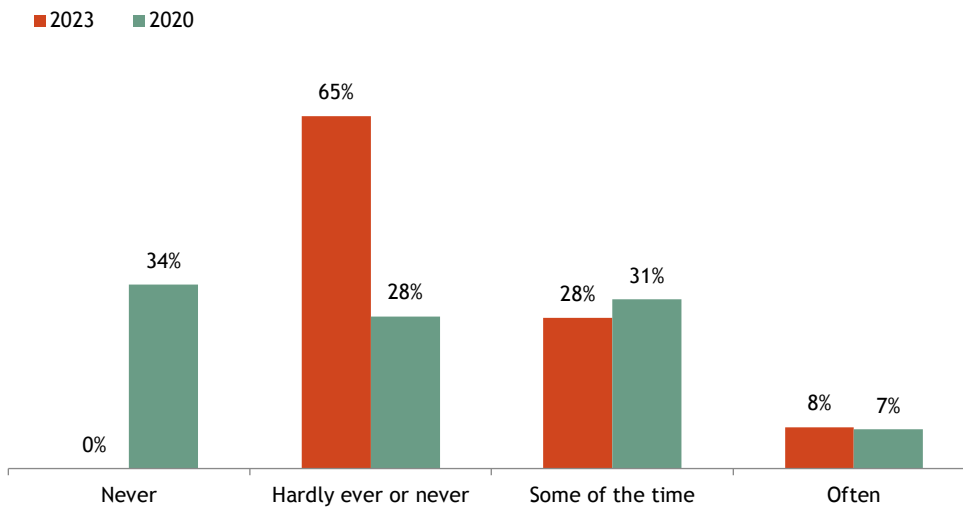
#### Loneliness and isolation

Compared to 2020, fewer people felt isolated from others, or lonely. Residents living on the estate were more likely to report feeling lonely (41%) and isolated (51%) than people in new Acton Gardens homes (39% and 34% respectively).

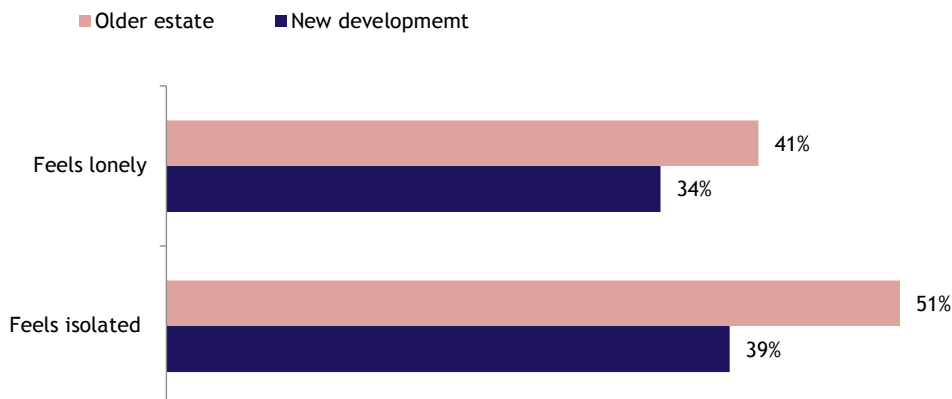




**Feelings of isolation by year**  
N= 394 (2023), 220 (2020)



**Feelings of loneliness by year**  
N= 394 (2023), 222 (2020)



**Feelings of loneliness and isolation, new development vs older estate**  
N= 394 (2023)

### Stakeholder perceptions: wellbeing

Stakeholders highlighted specific issues affecting wellbeing around affordability and financial strain. The rising cost of living, increasing service charges and rent increases, were identified as challenges to wellbeing. These socio-economic pressures have resulted in increased demand for support services, as evidenced by the unprecedented number of people using the food bank in the community centre. Links were made between increasing financial pressures and increasing difficulties accessing mental health services.

Stakeholders mentioned that isolation is a challenge on the estate, particularly amongst older residents who do not have a space to meet unless they are attending a specific activity at the community centre. Parks and open spaces across the development were deemed to be overly prescribed, only serving families and children, limiting access for young people and older people.

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*“I think especially when COVID hit, a lot of the families and people that live by themselves were really isolated.” - Stakeholder*



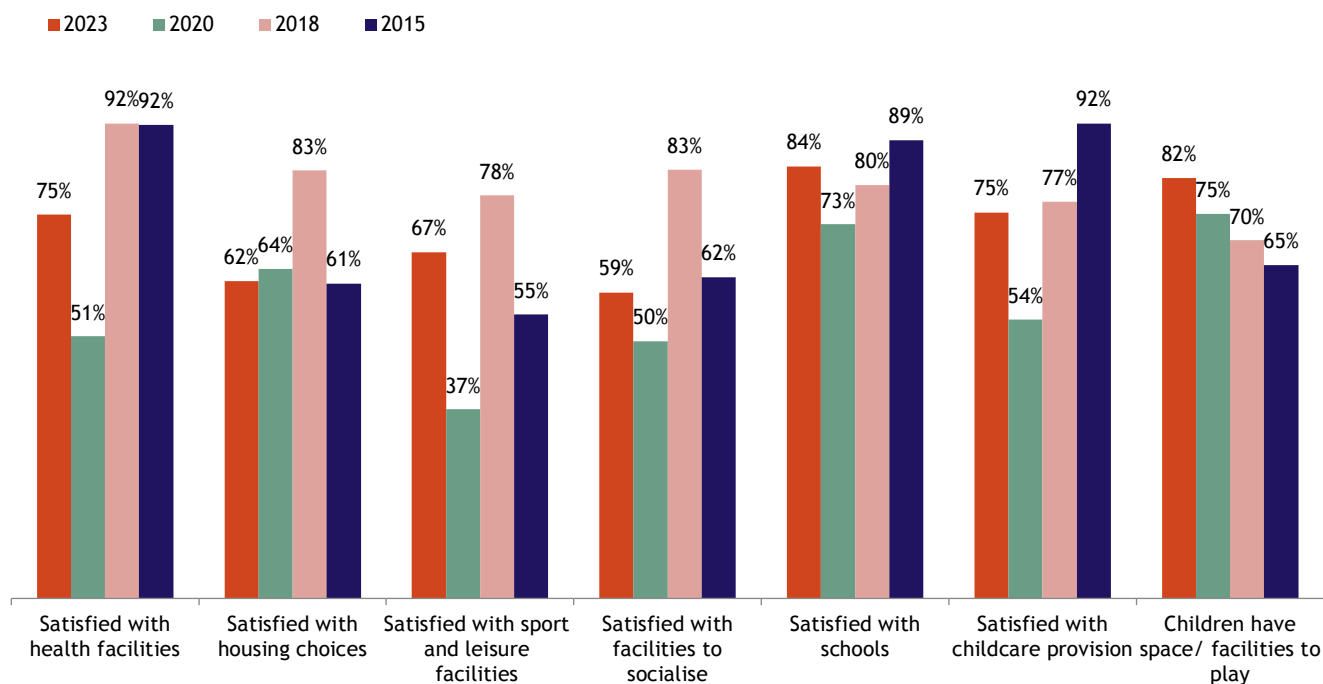
Temporary accommodation in Meath Court, Hope Gardens

## 6.5 Satisfaction with community facilities and supports

This section focuses on resident satisfaction with local community facilities such as health, housing, social spaces and sports and leisure facilities. It also looks at provision for children and young people of different ages.

### Questions

- How satisfied are you with the quality of health facilities in your local area?
- How satisfied are you with the housing choices in the local area?
- How satisfied are you with the quality of sport and leisure facilities in your local area?
- How satisfied are you with the facilities in your local area to socialise with friends and family?
- How satisfied are you with schools in the local area?
- How satisfied are you with childcare provision?
- Does your child/do your children have an outdoor space or facilities where they can play safely?
- How satisfied are you with the quality of facilities for children and young people in your local area?



### Satisfaction with community facilities by year

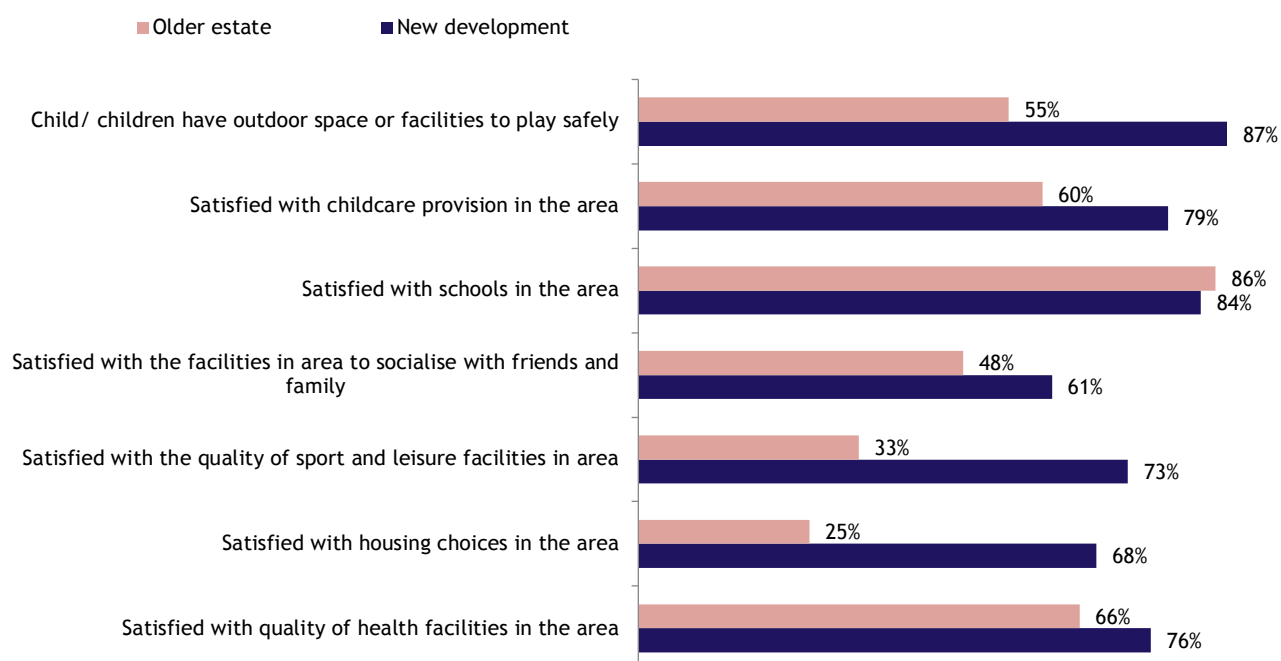
N= 52-393 (2023), 24-226 (2020), 61-350 (2018), 39-286 (2015)

Satisfaction with facilities has improved since 2020 for almost all the questions asked, particularly for health, sport and leisure and childcare. There was a slight decline in satisfaction with housing choices. More people reported satisfaction with schools and safe outdoor play facilities for children, these were the strongest performing indicators and scores were higher than in 2018.

Generally, residents living in the new development were more satisfied with facilities in the local area. Satisfaction with housing choices and sport and leisure facilities was considerably lower for residents interviewed living on the older estate than people living in the new development.



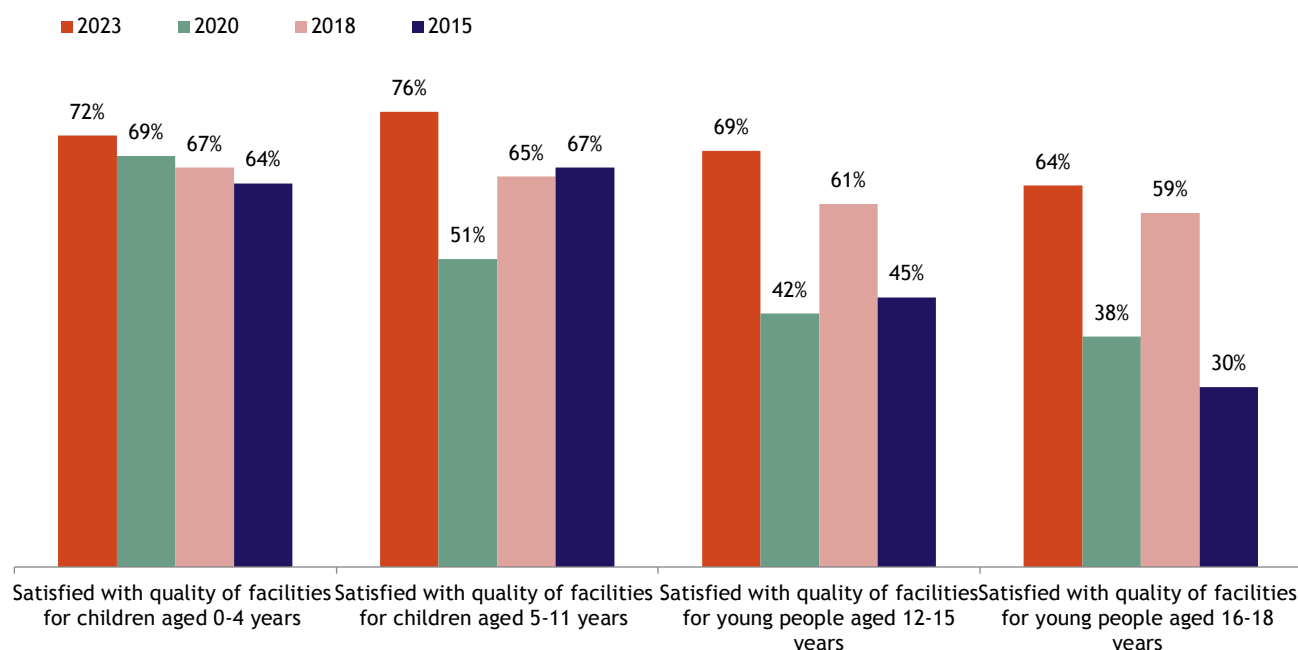
Families in Bollo Brook Park



Satisfaction with community facilities new development vs older estate, 2023  
N=52-393

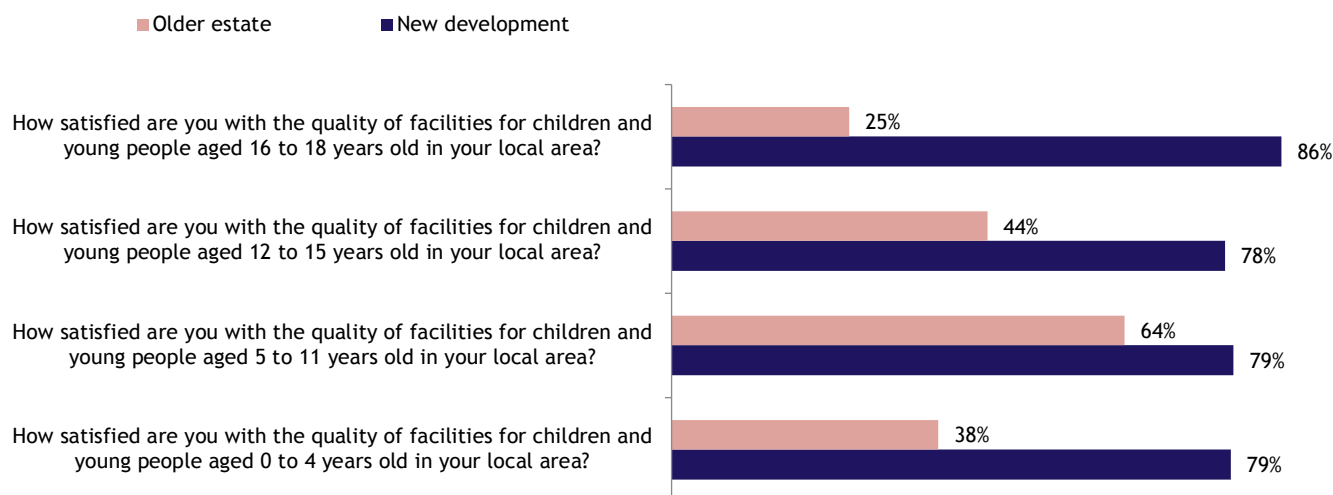


Satisfaction with provision of facilities for children across different age groups increased overall in 2023 compared to previous years. Residents in the newer development felt more satisfied with the quality of facilities across different age groups.



#### Satisfaction with children's' facilities for children, by year<sup>15</sup>

N= 11-54 (2023), 13-35 (2020), 22-66 (2018), 20-50 (2015)



#### Satisfaction with children's' facilities for children, by new build and older estate<sup>15</sup>

N=11-54

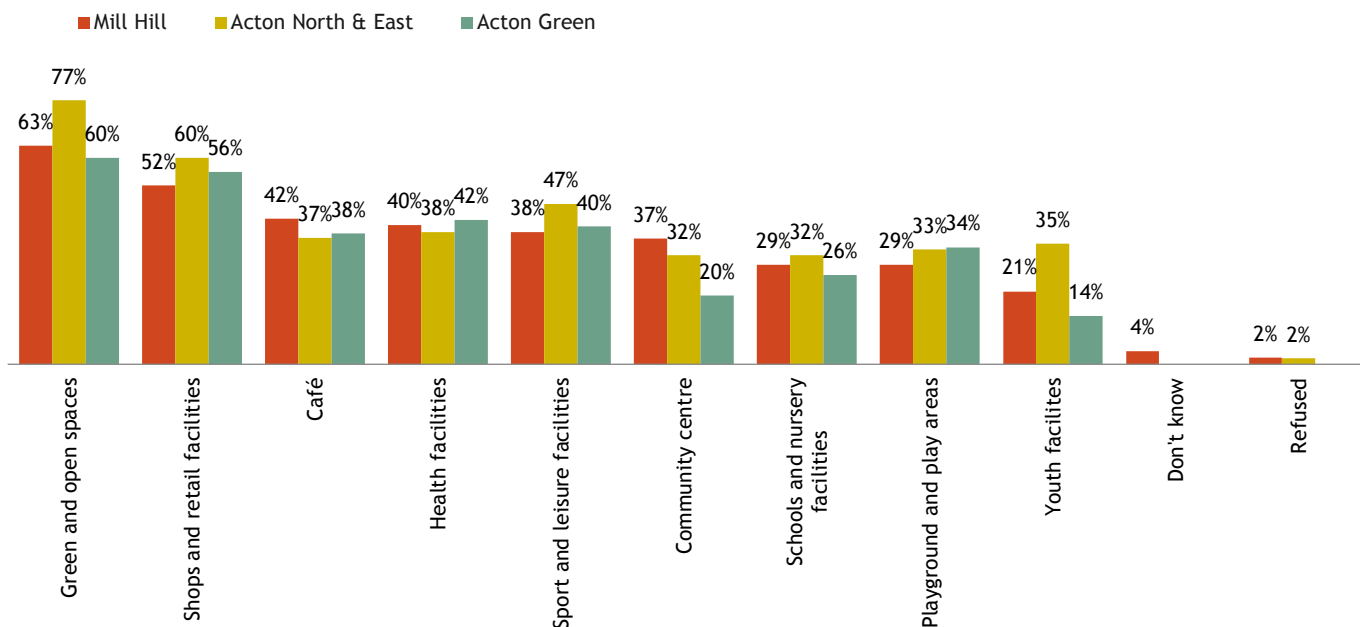
Residents interviewed were more positive about the availability of outdoor spaces or facilities. They were asked if your child/do your children have an outdoor space or facilities where they can play safely? In 2023 82% agreed. This is an increase over all previous years: in 2020 75% agreed with this statement, in 2015 70% agreed. People living on the older estate were less likely to feel their children had a place to play (57%) than people in the new development (87%)

<sup>15</sup> These figures should be treated with some caution, because of the low number of response rates to these questions (they were only asked to people with children) - meaning that this data is less reliable than other questions.



Acton Gardens Primary School

People interviewed who lived in the three neighbouring areas were asked what facilities or services in Acton Gardens are most important. Green and open spaces, followed by shops and retail were the most important, followed by the café, health facilities and sports and leisure facilities. This has similarities to responses from residents living in Acton Gardens and the older estate, however support for the health facilities and the café were not mentioned by residents in this context.



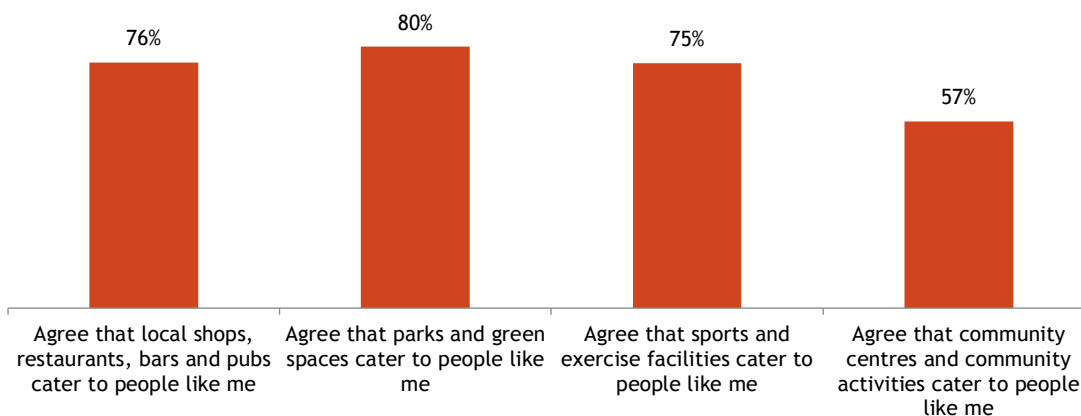
What facilities or services in Acton Gardens are most important to you?

N=41-60



Mint Café located in phase 6.1

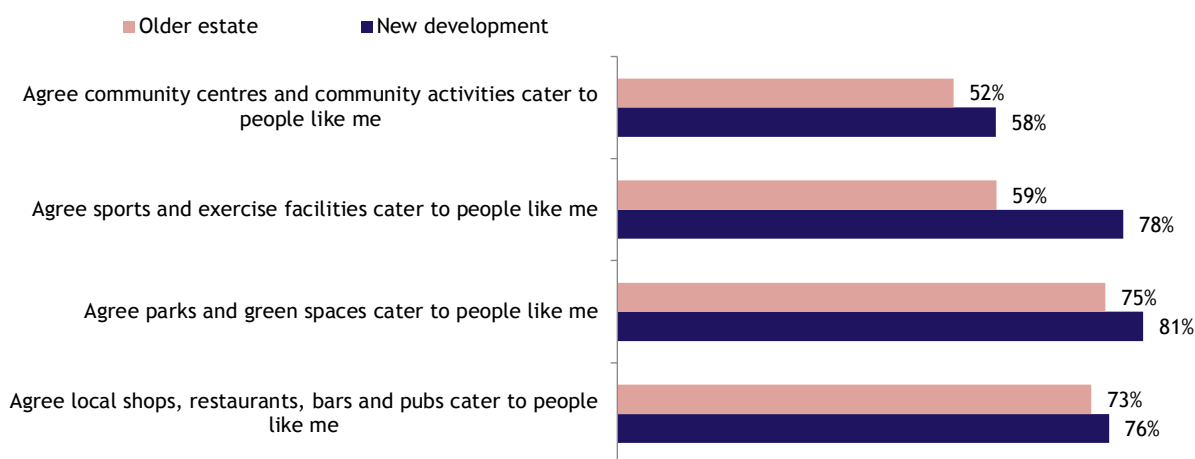
This year the survey asked whether residents responding felt that community facilities in the local area cater to “people like them”. Parks and green spaces were the spaces that people reported to feel most comfortable using; community centres and community activities scored lowest, only 57% of people interviewed said that they “cater to people like me”. People living in the newer development were more likely to agree that community facilities cater to them compared to respondents living in the older estate.



**Feel that facilities cater for “people like me”**

N= 350-397





### Feel that facilities, cater for “people like me”, by new build and older estate

N= 350-397

#### Stakeholder views: facilities

Generally, there was consensus amongst stakeholders that the area is “self-sufficient” with a range of facilities and services within walking distance, including schools, medical and leisure facilities. Acton High Street is a short walk away. However, parking was cited as an issue by both stakeholders and residents, with limited parking in the new development.

Since 2020, a café, a gym, a GP practice, a dentist, and a barber shop have opened on the site. While the café appears to be well used, several stakeholders mentioned it is expensive making it inaccessible to some residents. The need for informal community spaces was raised. The loss of green space and open communal areas was mentioned, associated with private courtyards in new blocks.

Stakeholders highlighted a gap in community activities catering to different age groups, especially programmes for older residents, particularly for people who are unavailable during work hours. The loss of traditional social amenities and informal meeting spaces was mentioned, and how the commercialisation of community spaces was detracting from their original purpose as a place for social interaction. The loss of the South Acton Working Men’s Club was mentioned.

Many local service providers highlighted frequent enquiries from residents asking for support regarding employment, CV advice, ESOL classes, housing issues and advice. This indicates a clear gap in provision of these types of services. The community centre can address these needs to work with organisations and deliver comprehensive support. Another stakeholder raised concerns about the loss of flexible green space and open communal areas, particularly due to the development of private courtyards and programmed parks. Finally, another stakeholder mentioned a gap in provision for children aged 8-16, as not all children within this age group feel that the youth club serves them.

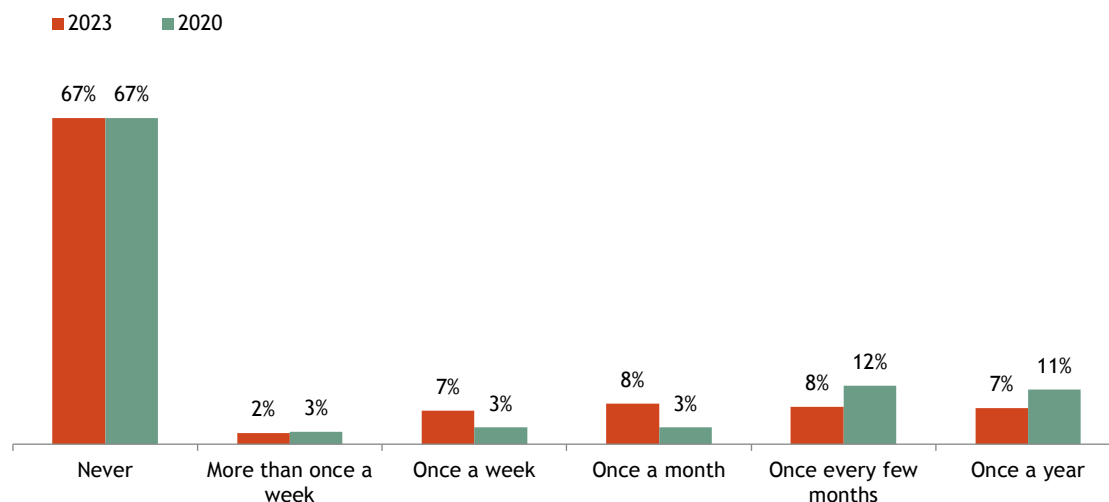
#### The community centre: survey responses

The survey asked whether residents had used the Acton Gardens Community Centre. Overall, around two thirds had not, this has not changed since 2020. More residents use the community centre weekly or monthly than in 2020. The community centre is used by a slightly greater proportion of residents living on the new development than residents living in the older estate, however this difference is minor.

People who go to the community centre on a regular basis (once a week or more) were asked why they go there, the majority described how they go to activities and programmes as well as to socialise. People

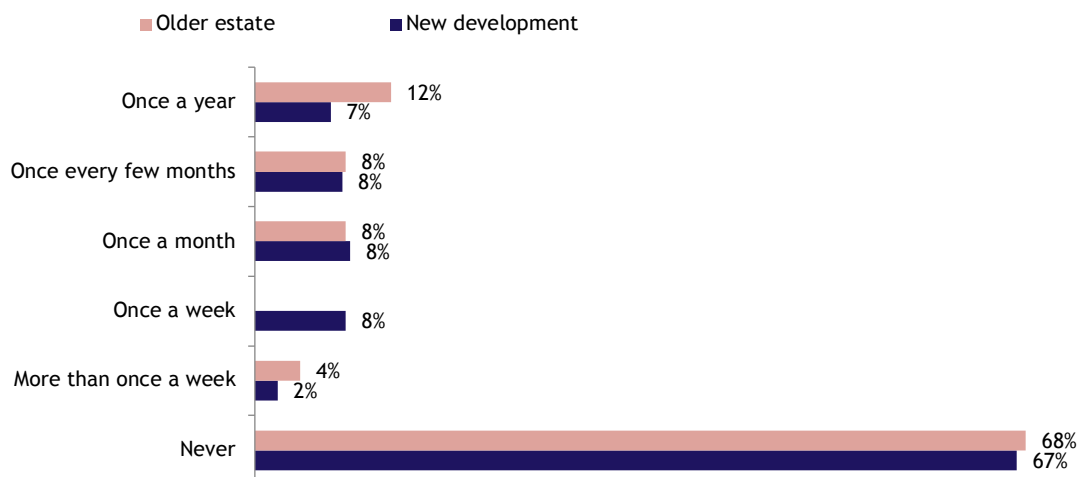


who do not use the community centre regularly (never, once a year, once every few months, once a month) were asked what would make them use the community centre more. 35% of respondents would go to the community centre if there were activities and programmes that they felt were tailored to them. However, 21% were not aware of the activities and programmes that take place at the community centre.



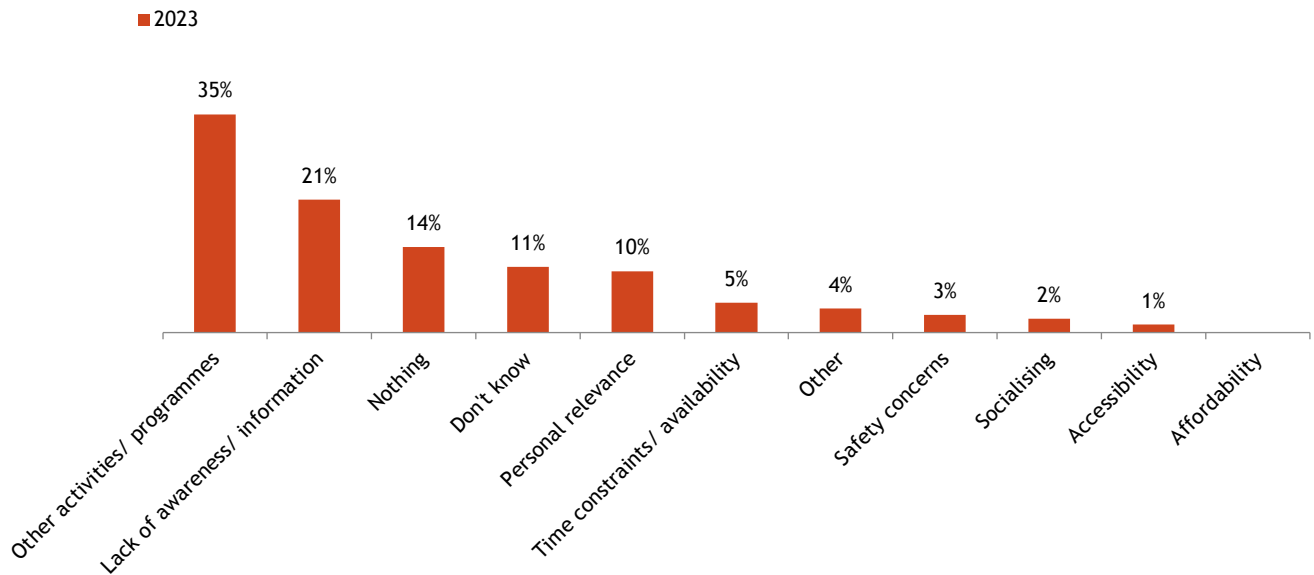
### Use of Acton Gardens Community Centre, by year

N= 349 (2023), 232 (2020)



### Use of Acton Gardens Community Centre, new development vs older estate, 2023

N= 349 (2023)



### What would make you use the community centre more?

N= 314 (2023)

#### Stakeholder views: the community centre

The Acton Gardens Community Centre serves as a versatile space, offering various rooms and facilities for hire while accommodating for a wide range of activities such as meetings, parties, training sessions and community groups and activities. It also offers shared workspace and a home for local community organisations.

A diverse range of groups and activities take place in the community centre suitable for various ages and interests. This includes RollaDome's skate club, ballet, taekwondo, yoga, an elderly lunch club hosted by the United Anglo Caribbean Society, sewing club by Acton Youth Association, a baby and toddlers playgroup, knit & knatter club, and Descendants—an arts-focused educational program for children and young people of African and Caribbean descent. Additionally, the Acton Gardens Community Fridge, in partnership with the Felix Project, works to tackle food waste and food poverty in the community.

Stakeholders mentioned the need for more affordable spaces to host community events and gatherings. Some people consider the cost of renting rooms in the community centre to be unaffordable.

## Section 7: Voice and influence

This section describes the extent to which people living and working in South Acton feel they have a say and can influence decisions affecting their local area. Voice and Influence is divided into two indicators: Willingness to Act and Ability to Influence.

This section is based on the results of the household survey and compares the responses of people living on the South Acton Estate to people living in Acton Gardens. Relevant findings from the contextual interviews are also included.

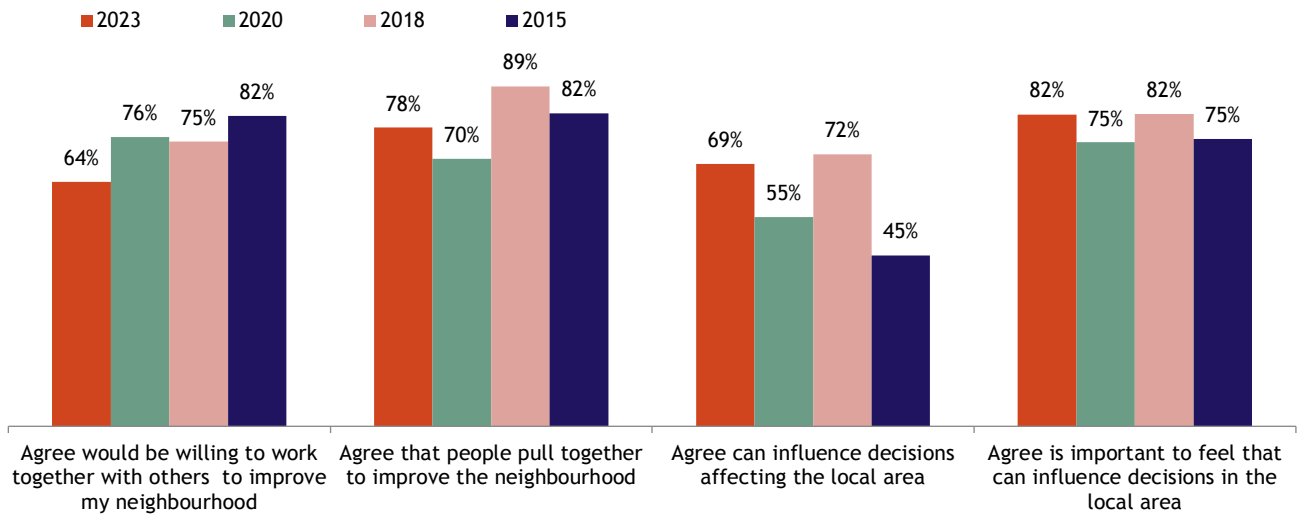
This section covers:

7.1 Willingness to act

7.2 Ability to influence

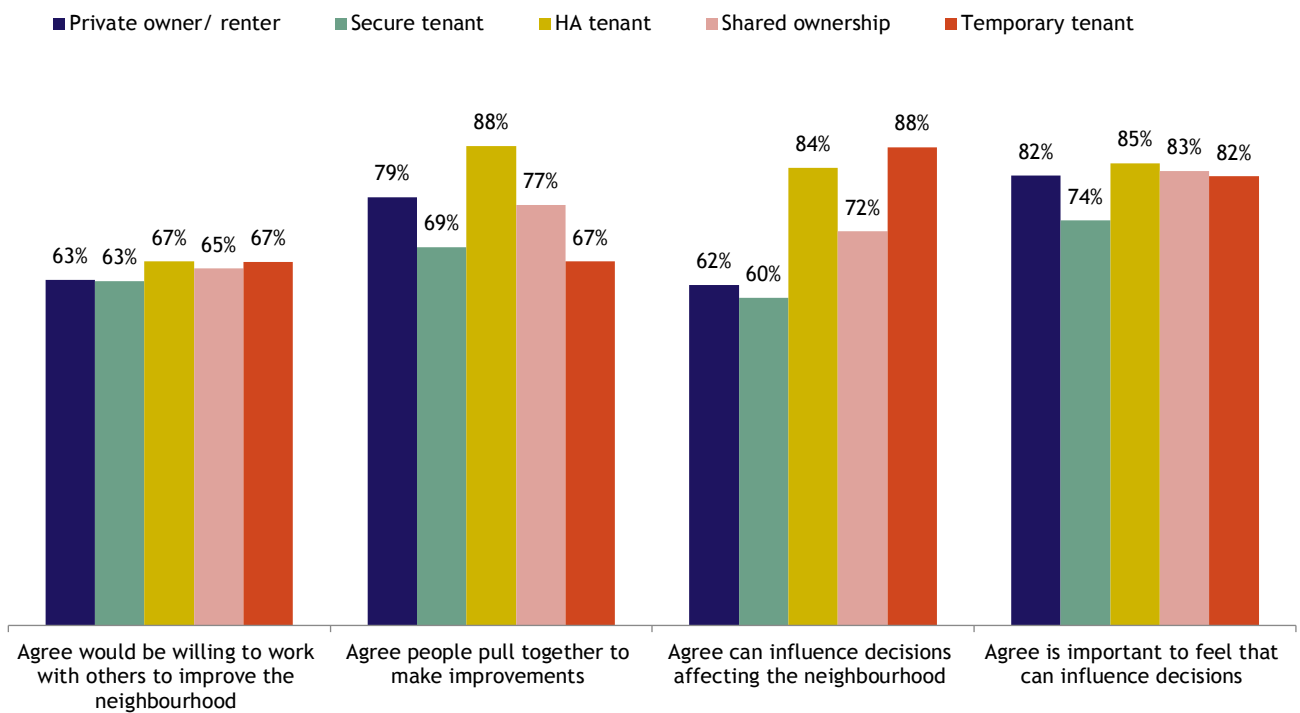
### Key findings

- Compared to 2020, a greater proportion of people felt that they can influence decisions affecting the local area; they also report that it was important to them to feel they can influence local decisions.
- People living in the newer development were more likely to agree that they can influence decisions in the local area, housing association tenants were more likely to agree with this than council tenants.
- Residents interviewed living in both the older estate and in the new development reported stronger perceptions of being able to influence decisions affecting the area than those interviewed in the three neighbouring areas.
- A smaller proportion of people said they would be willing to work together with others to improve the neighbourhood compared to 2020. More residents in the new development felt people in the local area pull together to improve the neighbourhood.
- The Acton Gardens Community Board is recognised as a platform for residents to voice concerns and communicate issues with housing managers and development partners. There were concerns that it is dominated by leaseholders.
- Residents use Facebook groups and WhatsApp to communicate, share information and raise concerns, however this varies between the blocks and building. A wish was articulated for a Tenants and Residents Association which would sit alongside the Community Board to address resident concerns.



### Voice and influence indicators, by year

N= 372-397 (2023), 189-225 (2020), 325-349 (2018), 198-288 (2015)



### Voice and influence indicators, by tenure

N=254-314

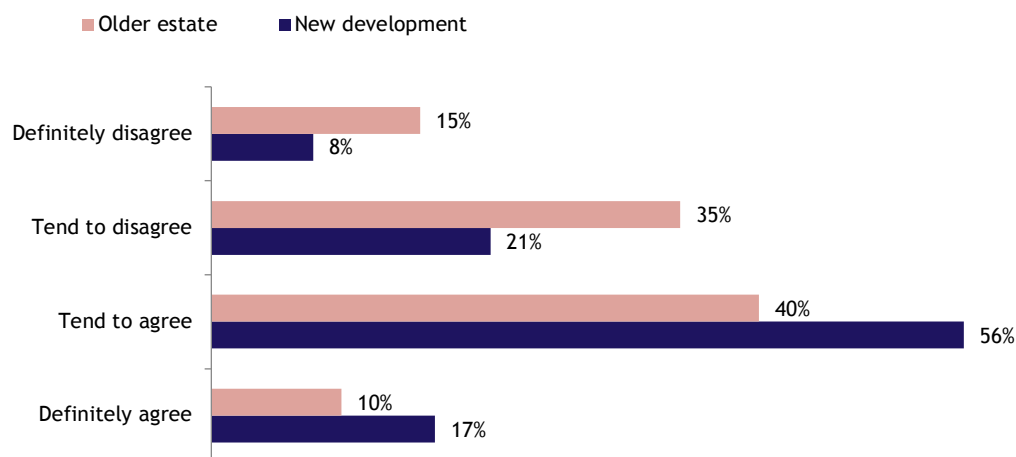
#### 7.1 Ability to influence

##### Questions

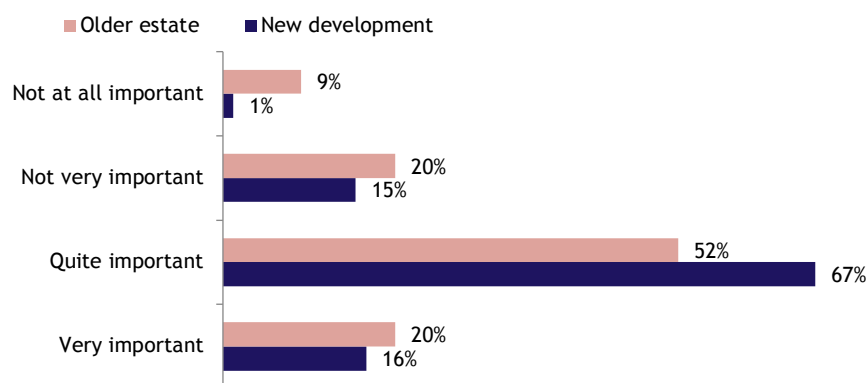
- Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?
- How important is it for you personally to feel that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?



Compared to 2020, a greater proportion of people felt that people in the neighbourhood pull can influence decisions affecting the local area (+10%) and felt it was important to feel they can influence decisions in the local area (+8%). A smaller proportion of people living on the older estate reported feeling that they could influence decisions affecting their local area (50%), this has decreased since 2020. People living in the newer development were more likely to think it is important to influence decisions in the local area (73%), this has increased since 2020.



#### Can you influence your local area, by new build and older estate N= 373



#### How important is it for you personally to feel that you can influence decisions in your local area? by new build and older estate N= 373

Residents interviewed living in both the older estate (50%) and in the new development (72%) reported a stronger perception of being able to influence decisions affecting the area than those interviewed in the three neighbouring areas - in these three areas only 24% to 34% of residents felt that they could influence local decisions.

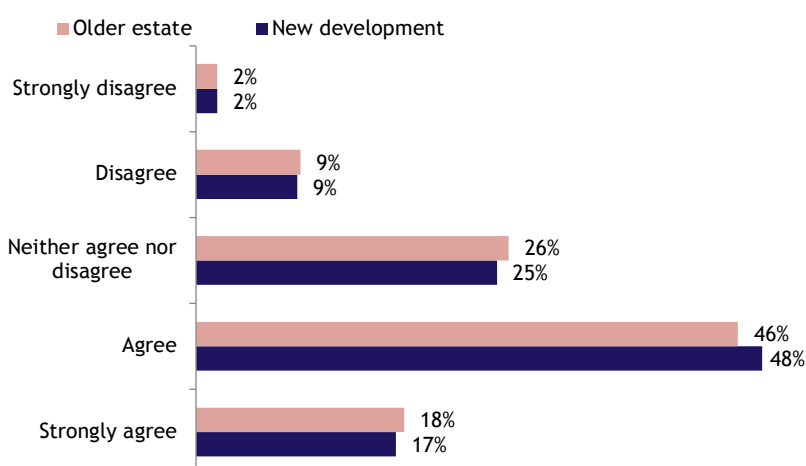
## 7.2 Willingness to act

### Questions

- I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my neighbourhood
- People in this neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood

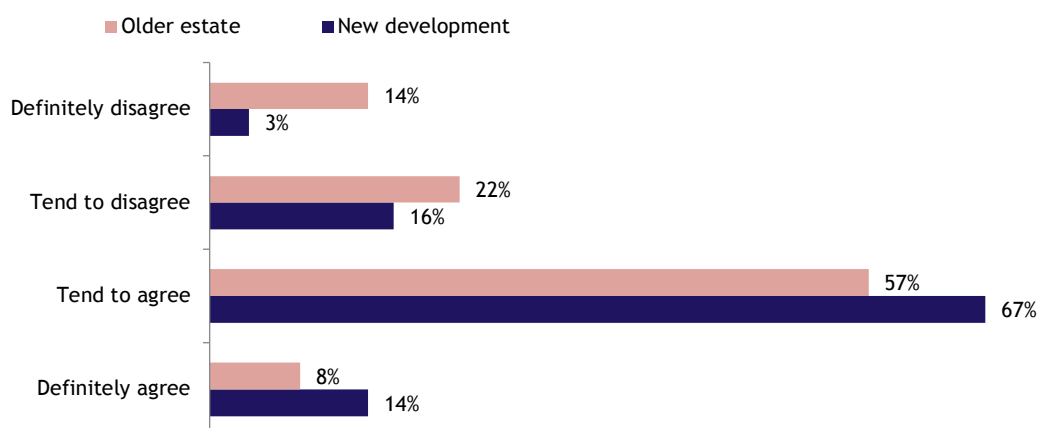
A smaller proportion of people said they would be willing to work together with others to improve the neighbourhood compared to 2020, this was the lowest across the four years.

There were no notable differences between responses from people living on the older estate and those living in the new development when asked about whether people would be willing to work together to improve their neighbourhood. However, a greater proportion of residents in the new development felt people in the local area pull together to improve the neighbourhood.



**I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my neighbourhood, by new build and older estate**

N=397



**To what extent do you agree or disagree that people in this neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood? by new build and older estate**

N=372



Courtyards in phase four

### Stakeholder views: Voice and influencer

The Acton Gardens Community Board serves as a platform for residents to voice concerns and communicate issues with housing managers and development partners. The Community Board is the formal resident involvement structure between the residents of Acton Gardens and South Acton and L&Q, Countryside and Ealing Council. The board's role is to provide feedback on the regeneration, encourage community involvement and participation and to allocate Community Chest funding for local projects. Residents can nominate themselves to become members.

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***"It's good that there is a forum for residents to voice any concerns or raise any issues while speaking directly to relevant parties." - Stakeholder***

Stakeholders spoke positively of the mix of tenures represented on the Community Board which ensures that the views of all parts of the community are reflected. Despite increased diversity on the Community Board, some stakeholders expressed concerns that there are more leaseholders compared to social tenants, and more residents living in the newer development than in the older estate.

Most stakeholders expressed frustrations with housing management, repairs and maintenance. There is a clear sense of frustration with the lack of communication and action from L&Q. Stakeholders linked this to a decline in community engagement and participation, mentioning a fall in the number of members from the community board. An additional concern for residents and stakeholders is related to service charge and rent increases, this appears to be a problem for all residents across all tenures. One resident explained that the Community Board meetings are usually taken up with housing management issues.

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*"It becomes very boring after a while, we're sitting with directors and heads of management, heads of housing, and nothing changes." - Stakeholder*

*"There are currently only six members because so many people have resigned because there's no action from the housing management side." - Stakeholder*

Residents use platforms such as Facebook groups and WhatsApp to communicate, share information and raise concerns, however this varies between the blocks and building. The Acton Gardens resident group on Facebook was described as a platform for reselling unwanted items as well as a platform to raise shared housing issues. Stakeholders mention the need for a Tenants and Residents Association which would sit alongside the Community Board to address resident concerns on a wider level.

Stakeholders expressed concerns about lack of engagement regarding upcoming phases, there were some feelings that consultation processes are tokenistic and there is insufficient community involvement while others were more positive. There were also concerns about reliance on digital communications.

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*"There was a period of time where residents were listened to and were engaged with, and we did play a role, so we would sit with architects and give feedback into plans to do with the next phases that were coming up and we could give feedback on how we experienced our phases ... but there's nothing like that now." - Stakeholder*

*"They've been great with their information, with the newsletters, and there's always an update in there every time ... I wonder how much everybody's being informed now because it's been moved to be in a digital version and I know that lots of us gave our e-mail addresses, but if you've not yet been part of the regen, do they have your contact details?... so, they might not be getting the newsletters and the updates." - Stakeholder*

Specific concerns were raised about the development of community facilities such as the youth hub and two stakeholders mentioned the lack of adaptability within the masterplan, with plans already developed without meaningful input from the community.



## Section 8: Amenities and social infrastructure

This section describes the results of the Amenities and Social Infrastructure assessment. This draws on the contextual interviews and the independent site survey. The site survey is an assessment of the quality of the built environment and the provision of local community facilities on the South Acton Estate and in Acton Gardens.

This includes six indicators:

- Community space
- Transport links
- Distinctive character
- Local integration
- Street layout
- Adaptable space.

Indicators are based on CABI's Building for Life assessment tool, an industry standard for the design of new housing.

### Key findings

- Since 2015 the quality of the built environment on the older estate has remained similar to previous years.
- In Acton Gardens the quality of the built environment in the first phases of Acton Gardens has slightly declined.
- In the older estate, only one indicator scores better than would be expected - transport links - and only one indicator scores as expected - street layout. All other indicators score worse than expected.
- In the new development all indicators score green except for adaptable space.

Indicator	Older estate	New development
Provision of community space	1/3 0.33	3/3 1
Transport links	1/1 1	1/1 1
Place with distinctive character	0.5/1 0.5	1/1 1
Integration with wider neighbourhood	1.5/4 0.25	4/4 1
Accessible street layout and design	1.5/5 0.3	4.5/5 0.9
Physical space of development that is adaptable in the future	0/2 0	0/2 0
Total	5.5/16 0.34	13.5/16 0.84

### Site survey scores 2024

This assessment was carried out on the completed phases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 9.1, 9.2, 9.4 and 8.2.1 as well as the existing blocks that are yet to be demolished.

The assessment is based on a site visits on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024, and a review of documents: Acton Gardens Masterplan documents, Google Maps, TfL's PTAL data<sup>16</sup>, Ealing Council's website and Ealing Council's Development Strategy 2026 DPD.

Photos illustrating the conclusions of the assessment are included at the end of this section.

## Scoring the site survey

The Building for Life scoring protocol was used for scoring. Each of the questions is given a value of 1, 0.5 or 0.

- 1 = there is sufficient evidence that the design meets the criteria
- 0.5 = a specific part of the design meets the criteria, but another does not
- 0 = there is not enough evidence that the design meets the criteria, or the evidence shows that the design does not meet the criteria.

The mean of the scores for each question within an indicator were combined to provide an overall mean score for each indicator. This was RAG Rated:

- $\geq 0.75$  = green
- $\geq 0.5$  but  $< 0.75$  = yellow
- $< 0.5$  = red

<sup>16</sup> sourced from <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/urban-planning-and-construction/planning-with-webcat/webcat>

## 8.1 Provision of community space

This indicator includes three questions about the appropriate and timely provision of community facilities in the development. It captures information about the type, adequacy and timing of provision of facilities, with a particular focus on the proximity to community and outdoor facilities, and whether facilities are appropriate for the whole community.

- Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs or cafés? (What kind? Are the facilities appropriate for the whole community?)
- Have the community facilities been appropriately provided?
- Is the public space well designed and does it have suitable management in place?

### South Acton Estate

*Score - 2015: 2.5/3, 2018: 2/3, 2020: 2/3, 2023: 1/3 = decrease*

The South Acton Estate continues to receive a slightly lower score than in 2020 because of the disruption caused by regeneration to the provision of community facilities. The parks and play areas within the redbrick housing are dilapidated. The north of the site is easily accessible to Acton High Street which provides access to a range of supermarkets, restaurants, and other facilities.

In the existing buildings, there are internal courtyards which are publicly accessible but under-maintained. There are concrete podiums lacking seating, playing areas with under-maintained play equipment and generally overgrown areas.

In the older parts of the estate, the public space is in poor condition and lacks activity. The parks are poorly maintained and do not look inviting for children. Clandon Court includes central terrace which opens up as a public space, however this area is raised with step access on several sides adding physical barriers for wheelchair users. As buildings are being decanted and demolished, parts of the estate have become neglected with waste piling up. These parts of the estate also feel unsafe with poorly maintained landscapes, litter and vandalism negatively influencing perceived safety.

### Acton Gardens

*Score - 2015: 2/3; 2018: 2.5/3, 2020: 3/3, 2023: 3/3, = increase*

Acton Gardens continues to be given a high score because now there are more facilities and playgrounds. The south of the site is served by a Sainsbury's Local and Mint Cafe - both of which priced slightly higher than regular convenience stores and cafés. The Sainsbury's Local continues to be the only convenience shop located within the development area. It is central in the development in phase 6.1. There are empty units in phase 9.2 which could be used as a local supermarket. The next closest food shop to the developments is a Budgens near Acton Town station - a 12 min walk. The north of the estate is served by shops on Acton Vale Road.

The community centre, located in the centre of the development appeared well-used. There was activity on the day of the visit and flyers for mix of activities. The public art in the middle of the plaza was covered on the day of the visit, however, at previous visits was a good addition to the public realm.

Avenue Road Park has been improved and a play area has been provided which seems to be well used and has a prominent and well-overlooked position. The Avenue Road Park, Bollo Brook Park and West Park are equipped with kids playing equipment along with outdoor gym equipment which are in good condition. The parks and public spaces are clean and well maintained and feature lighting, outdoor furniture, presenting a welcoming space to all users. The placement of bins within the public space was inconsistent, which can lead to littering and the need for additional maintenance of the space.

The private courtyards appear well maintained although there was little evidence residents taking ownership for example through planting or putting out play equipment. All have step-free access and where there are instances of level changes within the space, such as at Phase 2 and 6.2, ramps have also been provided. Seating has also been provided in all communal spaces as well as some play equipment in Phases 3.1 and 6.1. All the spaces are adequately overlooked by the surrounding blocks. On the day of visit most of the communal spaces were empty. Phase 7.1 has a small play area and communal space shared with car parking facilities.

The public space in the newer parts of the development is well designed, encouraging sociability and interactions. The public spaces are accessible to wheelchair users and individuals with mobility challenges, with limited steps and limited physical barriers. The space feels safe, lively and well used.

See photos 9, 12, 13, 15, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 34, 44, 46, 47

## 8.2 Transport links

There is one question for this indicator, 'Does the development have easy access to good public transport connections?'

*Score for South Acton Estate - 2015: 1/1, 2018: 1/1, 2020: 1/1, 2023: 1/1 = no change*

*Score for Acton Gardens - 2015: 1/1; 2018: 1/1, 2020: 1/1, 2023: 1/1 = no change*

As in previous years, both areas received a positive assessment because of the strong transport infrastructure in the wider area. The site is well connected with several train stations within walking distance including South Acton, Acton Town, Acton Central, Chiswick Park (all under a mile from the centre of development). It is possible to be in central London in around 20 minutes. The 440 bus route along Bollo Bridge Road takes you from Turnham Green towards Wembley Park. Along Acton High St bus route 70 takes you from South Kensington to Chiswick, bus route E3 takes you from Chiswick to near Greenford. Most of the scheme has a PTAL rating of between three and four which is rated as good and very good. It also takes between 30-45 minutes on average to reach central London.

See photos 60, 63



## 8.3 Place with distinctive character?

This indicator captures information about the design of the built environment, whether it has any significant architectonic value and qualities that relate to the specificities of that particular context, or whether it looks generic, like something that could be found anywhere in the UK.

The question asked in this section is, 'Does the scheme feel like a place with distinctive character?'.

### South Acton Estate

Score: 2015: 0.5/1, 2018: 0.5/1, 2020 = 0.5/1, **2023 = 0.5/1 no change**

The older South Acton Estate follows a typical mid-century modern housing estate typology, with a combination of high-rise tower blocks and low-rise redbrick blocks. The older buildings are very outdated and rundown, for this reason, the score for this indicator is low because of the poor relationship between buildings and public spaces and with the surrounding area.

### Acton Gardens

Score - 2015: 1/1; 2018: 1/1, 2020: 1/1, **2023 = 1/1 no change**

Although the massing of housing varies, the Acton Gardens development as a whole is comparable to most new high-density housing schemes and the appearance of all new buildings is quite homogeneous as a similar design language is used throughout. The scheme incorporates mixed density building types with some high-rise towers and townhouse typologies. The buildings have a brick facade each with some unique detailing using patterns, perforations, and colouring. The balconies also have a distinct character to them, with each building having a unique style and characteristic.

See photos 2, 6, 14, 28, 37, 43, 61

## 8.4 Integration with wider neighbourhood

### South Acton Estate

Score - 2015: 2.5/4, 2018: 2.5/4, 2020: 2/4, **2023 = 1.5/4 = decrease**

This indicator is concerned with the extent to which the built environment promotes social integration with the surrounding neighbourhoods and communities.

There are four questions in this indicator which relate to housing and the design of the site:

- Is there an accommodation mix that reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community?
- Is there a tenure mix that reflects the needs of the local community?
- Does the design of the site enable people from different backgrounds and social groups to share community, shopping, social and leisure facilities like parks and restaurants?
- Does the design of the local environment promote engagement with the wider community?

The design of the existing blocks presents challenges to access and engagement with the wider community, due to closed off courtyards, narrow access points, changes in level, lack of visibility and lack of maintenance, especially in the areas of Cheltenham Place, Clandon Cl, Belgrave Cl. The current demolition works further close off this area to the south of the estate.

### **Acton Gardens**

*Score - 2015: 2.5/4, 2018: 2.5/4, 2020: 4/4, 2023 = 4/4 = increase*

The masterplan replaces 1,800 homes with 3,463 new homes. This will mean there will be twice as many homes on the estate than before. Initially, the masterplan set out to deliver 2,350 new homes but following changes to planning policy many of the later phases have been adapted to accommodate additional homes. The new masterplan offers 50% affordable homes, which is further broken down into 40% socially rented and about 10% shared ownership. This is a 31% increase in the amount of socially rented homes in the estate before. In addition to the affordable homes, 50% of the remaining homes will be private tenure, allowing the estate to break away from having the stigma of being a mono-tenure estate as it was known as before.

The majority of amenities within the masterplan are concentrated within the centre of the development making it easily accessible from all parts of the estate. The level landscaping accommodates for the needs of everyone including those with pushchairs, disabilities and the elderly. This versatility means the public realm can adapt to future social and technological changes. The various facilities including the gym, the community centre, the youth centre, the café, and the supermarket collectively contribute to the economic and social health of the area.

Central Plaza creates a new public space within the heart of the community, the central square also includes a sculpture by local artist and former South Acton resident, strengthening the connection between the place and the community.

The newer parts of the development foster a strong feeling of safety and security with adequate street lighting and good visibility within the public spaces and parks. The older parts of the estate do not foster a strong sense of safety and security, there is poor visibility with many spaces that are disconnected and concealed. While equipped with lighting, the perception of safety feels significantly lower, and this can be particularly exclusionary for women and children.

The park located within Clandon Court has been neglected with the play equipment either in poor condition or removed entirely. This means children and parents within the surrounding blocks must make use of the other parks within the scheme.

See photos 1, 3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 21, 22, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 37, 39, 41

## 8.5 Accessible street layout and design

This indicator is more focused on the physical design of the public realm. The street layout indicator is based on five questions:

- Do the buildings and layout make it easy to find your way around?
- Does the scheme integrate with existing streets, paths and surrounding development?
- Are the streets pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly?
- Are public spaces and pedestrian routes overlooked and do they feel safe?
- Does the design of the local environment adequately support the needs of people with limited physical mobility?

### South Acton Estate

Scores- 2015: 2.5/5, 2018: 2/5, 2020 4/5, **2023: 1.5/5 = decreased**

### Acton Gardens

Score - 2015: 5/5; 2018: 5/5, 2020 5/5, **2023: 5/5 = no change**

It is very easy to become disorientated walking through some parts of the older estate. Many of the blocks look identical, the names of some blocks are not very visible from a distance, some of the smaller street networks lead to dead ends and cul-de-sacs without any throughway to the other side and wayfinding can become confusing. There is a lack of signposting within the development to tell people where to go and where things are located. With the extent of construction currently taking place, it can be challenging for a newcomer to navigate around the scheme. Clear signposting will help people with sight or mobility impairments and can help individuals locate community facilities with ease.

However, there is a coherent language with the new buildings and the streetscape, and the different building designs can help in terms of legibility and wayfinding. This also contributes to the sense of belonging and community cohesion.

Bollo Bridge Road, running through the middle of the estate, is a relatively busy road for traffic compared to the other roads in the development. There are on-street parking spaces provided and many of the old blocks provide carparks, the majority of which were full. Many of the new blocks also provide a carpark with courtyard platform above. The scheme accommodates for additional roads within the area and are well connected to the existing road networks. The reintroduction of through connections has been successful in the completed phase 8.2.

The pavements in the new areas of the development are wide-spanning and well designed. There are dropped kerbs for those with mobility impairments and push-chair users. The roads are wide enough for vehicular access and some allow for on-street parking also, but parking is limited. There are no designated cycle lanes on the site, which suggests the roads are calm enough to be cycle friendly. There are new designated cycling lanes near Phase 7.1 on Church Road. Cycle storage can also be found outside some of the older blocks of the estate such as at Jerome Tower. However, there is no cycle lane on Bollo Bridge Road which is a relatively busy road.

Traffic calming measures are in place along some of the residential roads to slow down the speed of vehicles. All public spaces and pedestrian routes in the new and old areas of the estate appear to be overlooked and feel safe except for a temporary alleyway created by the hoarding around phase 7.2.

All the parks and community facilities also have level access along with many of the entrances to homes. The existing blocks are accessible from the Acton Gardens Plaza via a narrow passage between the hoardings. The North of the estate and remaining blocks are currently blocked from the south and south-east, especially from phase 7.1. There are narrow passages which are not wheelchair friendly.

See photos 5, 8, 18, 26, 27, 30, 38, 45, 53, 60, 62

## 8.6 Adaptable space

The adaptable space indicator includes an assessment of the flexibility and adaptability of external spaces in the development. Academic and applied research about social sustainability has repeatedly identified the importance of adaptability and flexibility to the long-term success of communities.

In practical terms, the idea of adaptability can be interpreted as public spaces that can be adapted for different uses as the community changes, for example, play spaces that can evolve if the average age of children in a community changes; flexible land use planning that leaves space for residents to influence the design and use of public spaces in a development; and scope and flexibility within government and decision-making structures for residents to shape decisions that affect the area.

Questions in the adaptable space indicator:

- Do external spaces in the development provide any scope for residents to propose adaptations, conversions or extensions?
- Do internal spaces in the development provide any scope for residents to propose adaptations, conversions or extensions?

Both areas continue to score poorly on adaptable space, in both the older and the new development.

### South Acton Estate

2015: 0/2, 2018: 0/2, 2020: 0/2, **2023: 0/2** = no change

### Acton Gardens

2015: 0/2; 2018: 0/2, 2020: 0/2, **2023: 0/2** = no change



There is no indication that adaptations, conversions or extensions are possible in the apartment block buildings. We did observe personalisation of outdoor spaces, however. Provided it is allowed in the leasehold agreement, there may be more scope for residents to one day extend homes that are of the terraced house typology, but this would be dependent on planning restrictions. In the courtyards we could not see any indication or evidence that residents are allowed to appropriate share space.

The public realm around the new parts of the scheme fosters spaces for social integration and community cohesion amongst people from different backgrounds and social groups. Benches are placed in parks and Central Plaza to encourage conversations and socialising. The community centre opens up onto Central Plaza which allows for potential outdoor use, particularly during the summer for community parties.

The public realm around the new parts of the scheme is strongly defined and while the design has fostered spaces for social integration, the spaces are very much prescribed, limiting flexible use of spaces. Benches are placed in parks and Central Plaza to encourage conversations and socialising. The community centre opens onto Central Plaza which allows for potential outdoor use, particularly during the summer for community parties.

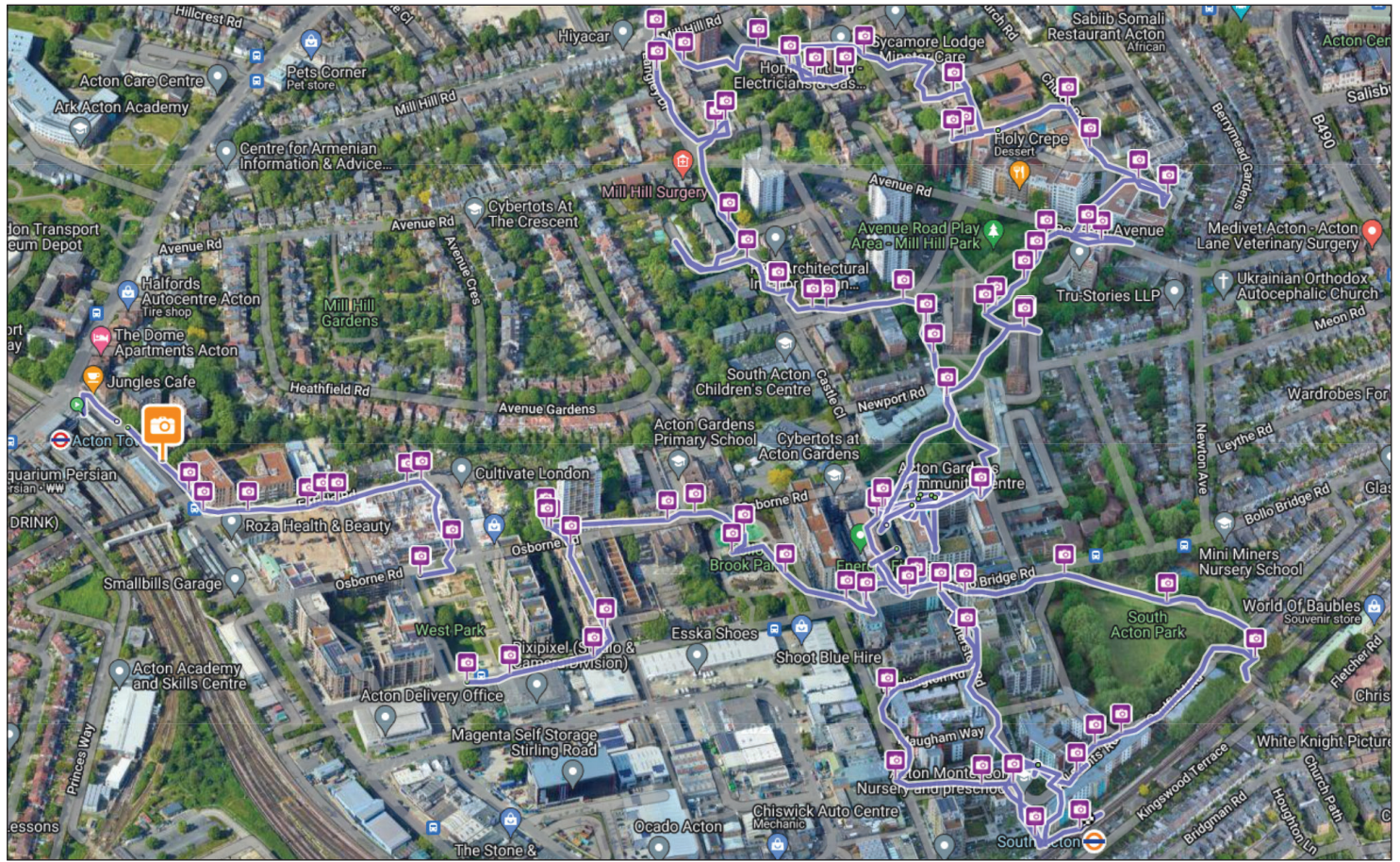
The external communal courtyards and gardens appear to have the scope for resident participation - the communal spaces have been populated by planters, and greenery that residents could maintain or adapt it if they wish to do so. This however, depends on whether the housing manager would allow this to happen.

The allotments appear to be well used and following observations from the site visit.

See photos 5, 8, 17, 36, 49



# Acton Gardens and South Acton Built environment assessment on 09/01/2024



0. Overview of Built Environment Assessment route



1. Phase 9.1



2. Distinctive patterns 9.4



3. Phases 9.4 and 9.2



4. Phase 9.3



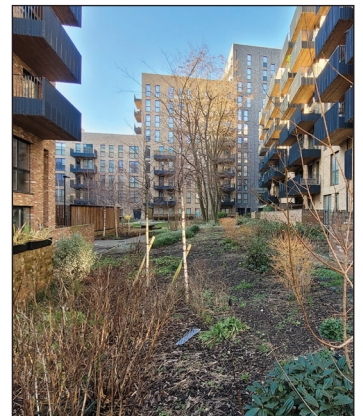
5. Allotments



6. Jerome Tower



7. West Park



8. Courtyard Phase 5



# Acton Gardens and South Acton Built environment assessment on 09/01/2024



9. West Park



10. Jerome Tower



11. Litter in Balcony



12. Pocket playground



13. Bollo Brook Park



14. Art in Bollo Brook Park



15. Brollo Brook Park



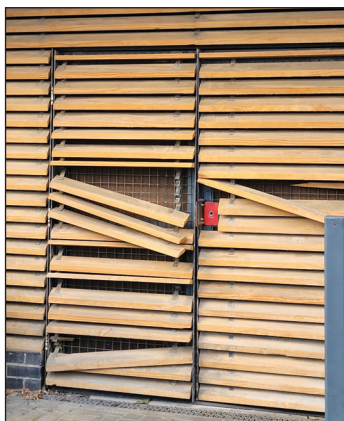
16. Balconies wear



17. Personalisation



18. Walkway between phases 6.1 and 6.2



19. Bin Storage



20. Weep holes and vent



21. Community space



22. Public art covered



# Acton Gardens and South Acton Built environment assessment on 09/01/2024



23. Community Centre



24. Community Centre



25. Community Centre



26. Sainsbury



27. Phase 8.2



28. Phase 1



29. Looking north towards the existing buildings



30. Passage



31. Carisbrooke Court



32. Temporary accommodation



33. Temporary accommodation



34. Play area at Cheltham place



35. Wear on temp accom



36. Improper bins



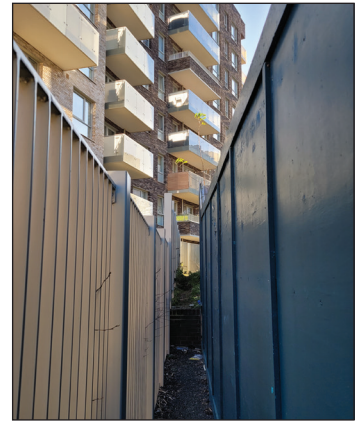
# Acton Gardens and South Acton Built environment assessment on 09/01/2024



37. Existing buildings at Cheltenham Place



38. Podium



39. Narrow paths between hoardings



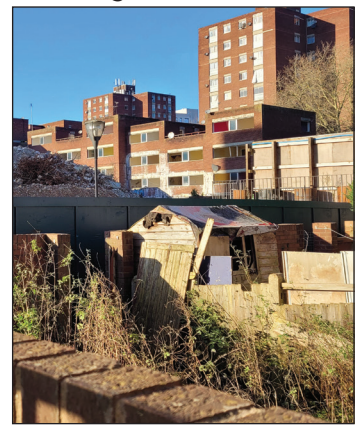
40. Cheltenham Place



41. Demolition in progress



42. Existing residential



43. Existing gardens



44. New residential amenity space



45. Phase 7.1



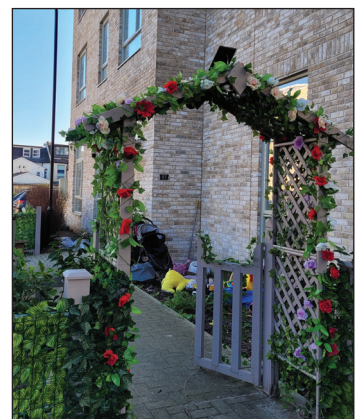
46. Playground at Central Plaza Acton Gardens



47. Avenue Road Play area at Mill Hill Park



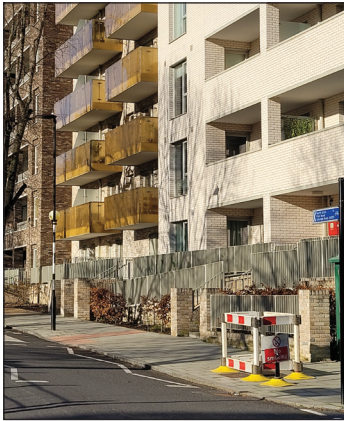
48. Private amenity space at phase 7.1



49. Residents' garden



# Acton Gardens and South Acton Built environment assessment on 09/01/2024



50. Gas leak



51. Phase 7.1



52. Existing buildings



53. Pathways between existing buildings



54. South Acton Park



55. Overpass to South Acton Park



56. Art in South Acton Park



57. Facade replacements



58. Facade replacements



59. Phase 1



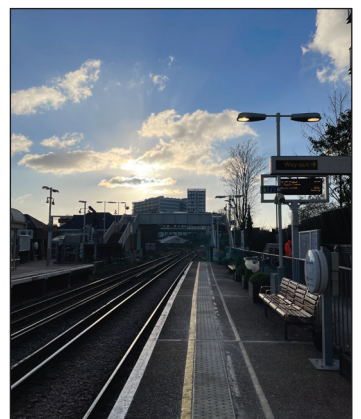
60. Bollo Bridge Rd



61. Stanley Road looking at Phase 2



62. Palmerston Road



63. South Acton station



## Section 9: The impact of the cost of living crisis

This section explores how residents have been affected by the impact of the cost of living. Some of these questions were first introduced in 2020 to account for the impact of COVID-19; others have been added in this round to address the additional financial stresses that residents have been put under in the years following the pandemic.

### Questions

- How well would you say you are managing financially?
- How are you managing your housing costs?
- Has your financial situation changed over the last three years, and if worsened, why?
- Do you use a foodbank?

### Key findings

The rising cost of living is impacting South Acton as it has the rest of London. However, residents do not report as many concerns about managing financially as they did in 2020.

People living on the older estate report that they are facing more difficulties managing their finances generally and coping with their housing costs than people living in the new blocks. They are also more likely to say that their financial situation has worsened in the last three years.

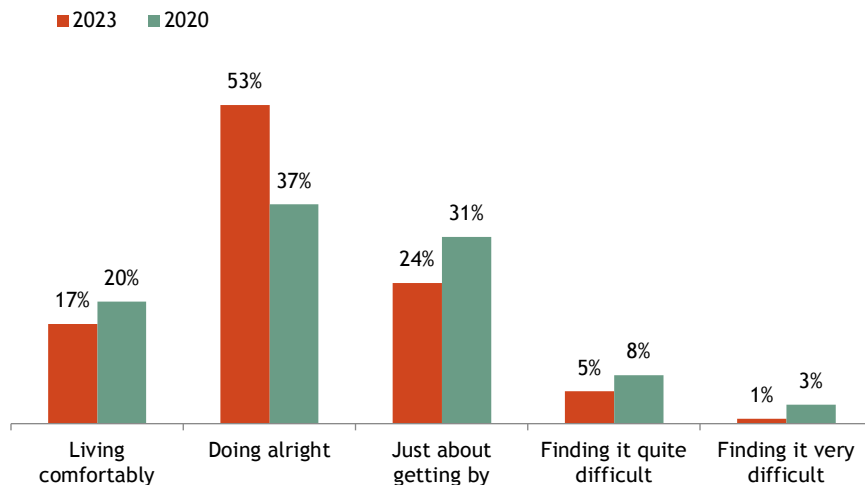
There has been an increase of the number of people using foodbanks on a regular basis compared to 2020. The proportion of residents across the old and new estate that are using foodbanks are similar. Using a foodbank appears to have become more normalised.

A third of people attribute their worsening financial situation to increased cost of utilities and to increased cost of food, housing costs going up is a major issue. This experience is shared by residents living in the old estate and new development.

#### **Managing financially and paying for housing**

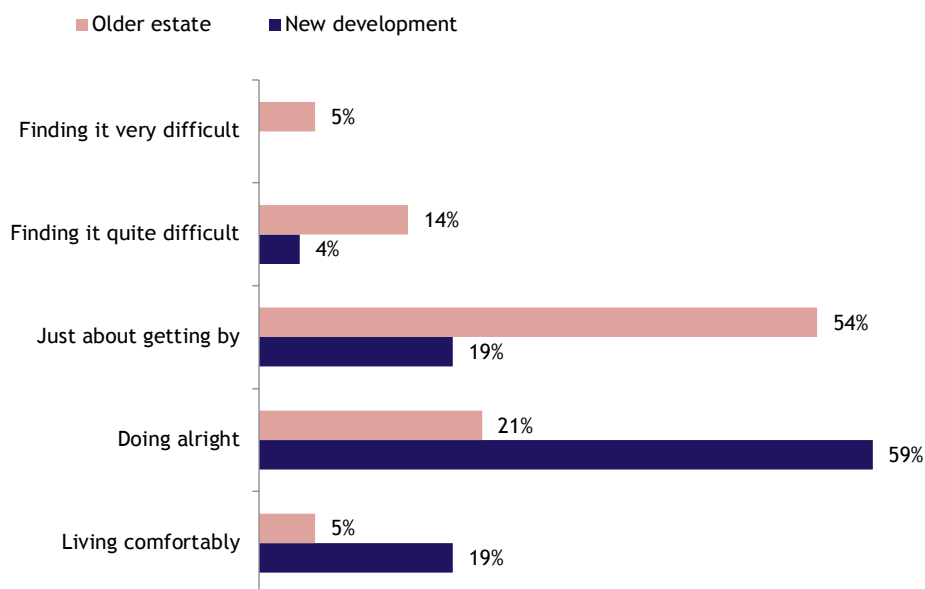
Slightly fewer people feel they are “living comfortably” (17% in 2023 and 20% in 2020), and a much greater proportion of people feel they are “doing alright” compared to 2020 (53% in 2023 and 37% in 2020). 11% of people reported finding it “quite” or “very” difficult to manage financially in 2020, this had fallen to six percent in 2023.

A greater proportion of people living in the older estate reported they were finding it very or quite difficult; considerably more residents living in the new development reported that they feel they are “living comfortably”. Some may be managing a stable financial position while others are struggling. We do not have data from before the pandemic to get a fuller picture.



### How are you managing financially? By year

N= 389 (2023), 220 (2020)



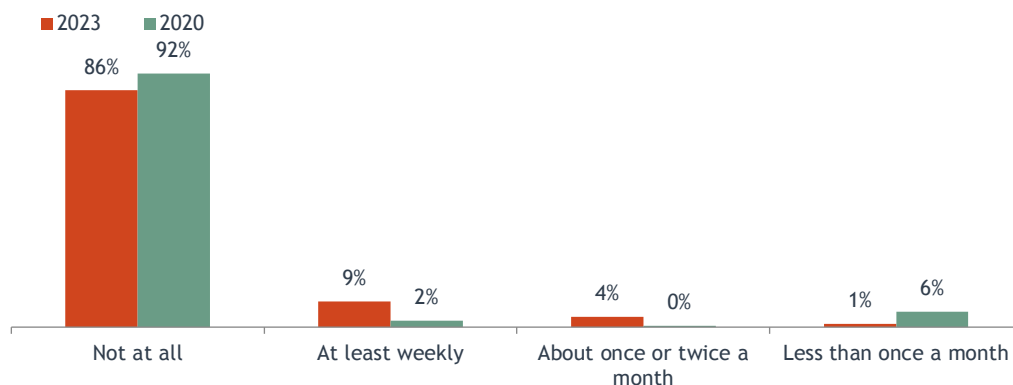
### How are you managing financially? by new build and older estate

N= 389

There has been an increase in the number of people using foodbanks on a regular basis compared to 2020. The proportion of residents across the old and new estate that are using foodbanks are similar. This sits alongside the numbers reporting fewer financial problems - suggesting possibly that food bank use has become normalised and is now a routine way of coping with household financial pressures.

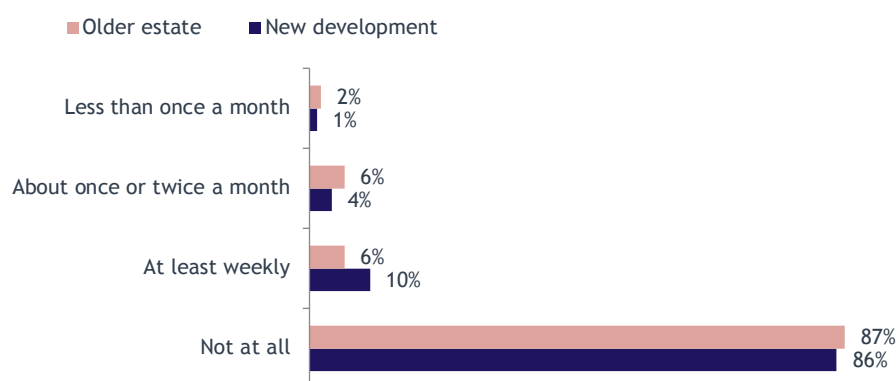
*“It used to be that the families on benefits were affected by the day-to-day cost of living crisis, you know problems with affording food. But it’s not anymore, it’s people with mortgages, people that have brought their properties, they’re affected now...it’s affecting everybody.” - Stakeholder*





### How often has your household used a food bank, or similar service, in the last 12 months?

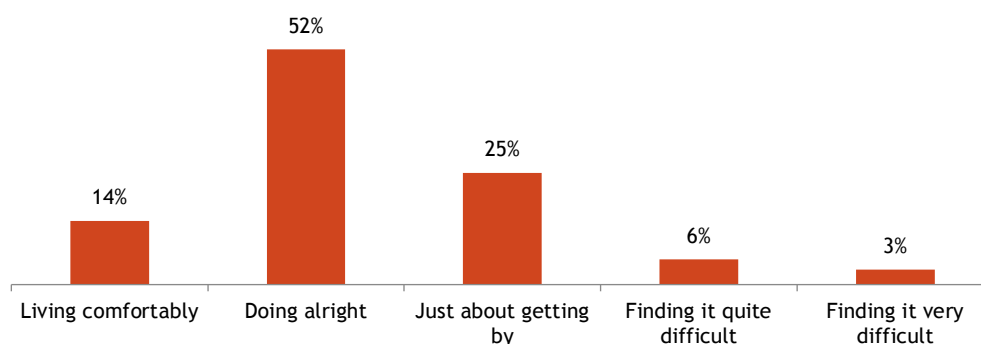
N= 391 (2023), 216 (2020)



### How often has your household used a food bank, or similar service, by new build and older estate

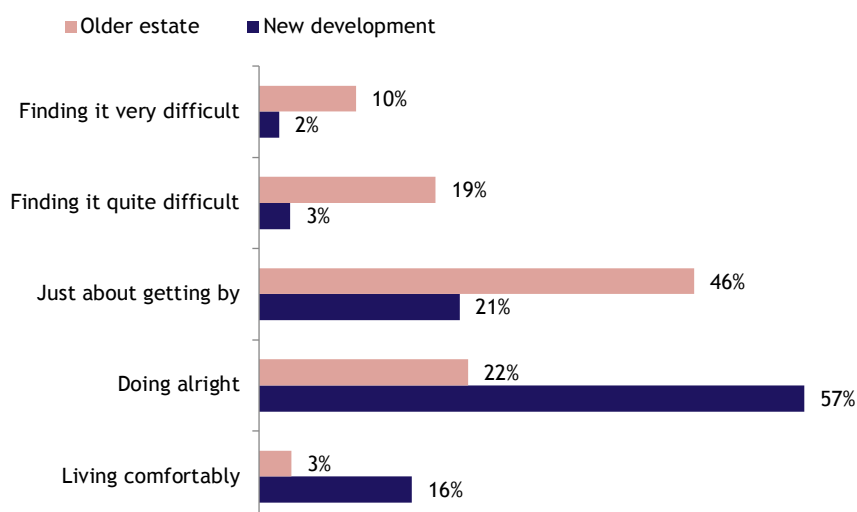
N= 391

To get a better understanding of people's financial situations, new questions were included in the 2023 survey. People were asked how they feel they are managing their housing costs, 52% felt they were "doing alright", however 34% feel they are "just about getting by" or finding it difficult managing housing costs. The data indicates that a greater proportion of residents living in the older estate are struggling with managing housing costs compared to people living in the newer development.



### How are you managing with housing costs? 2023

N= 395



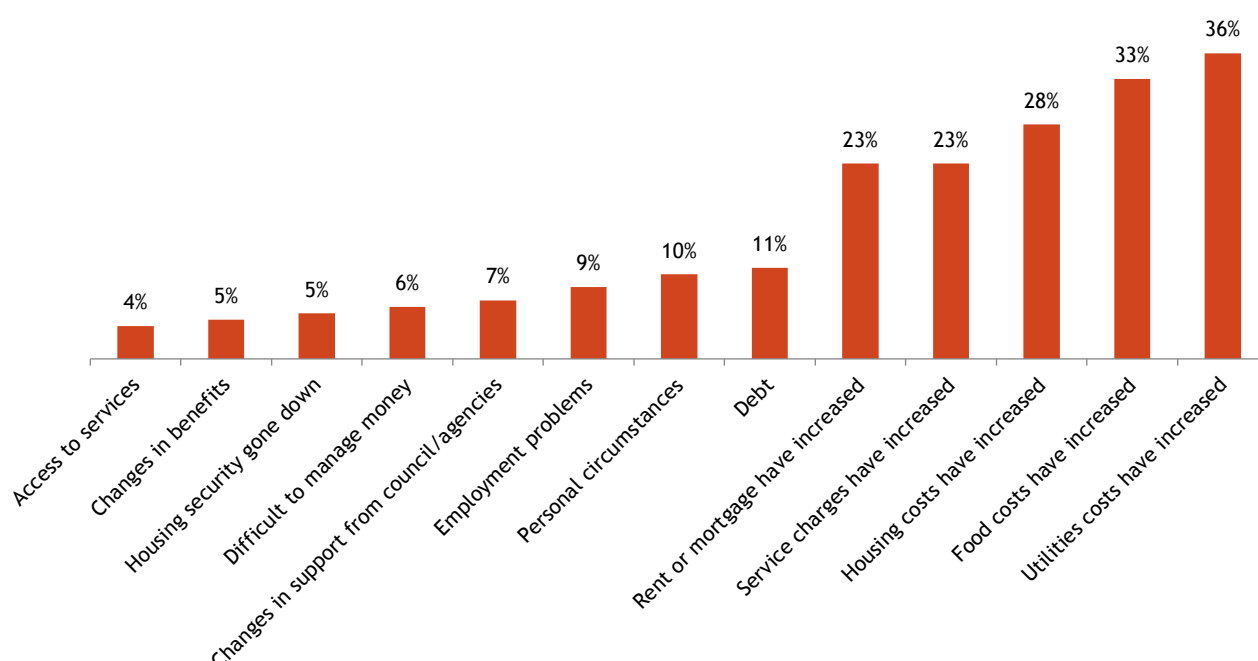
### How are you managing with housing costs? by new build and older estate

N= 395

#### Change over time

The survey asked residents whether their financial situation has changed in the last three years and 14% of respondents reported that their situation has worsened compared to 2020. 51% said it had stayed the same and 34% said it had improved. More residents living in the older estate feel their financial situation has worsened compared to 2020.

Of those people who feel that their financial situation has worsened over the past three years, 36% attribute it to increased cost of utilities, 33% attribute it to increased cost of food and 28% attribute it to rising housing costs. This is mirrored by residents living across both the old estate and new development.



### Why your financial situation worsened over the last three years? 2023

N= 129

## Section 10: Other priority issues

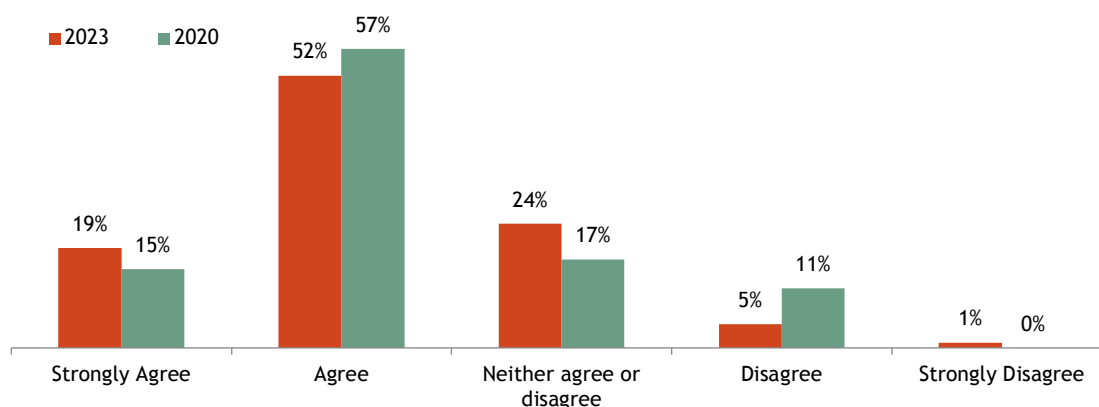
This section explores other priority issues such as physical activity and digital inclusion.

### Questions

- To what extent do you agree or disagree that it is easy to be physically active in Acton Gardens and the South Acton Estate? If agree, why?
- Do you use the internet, if not why?

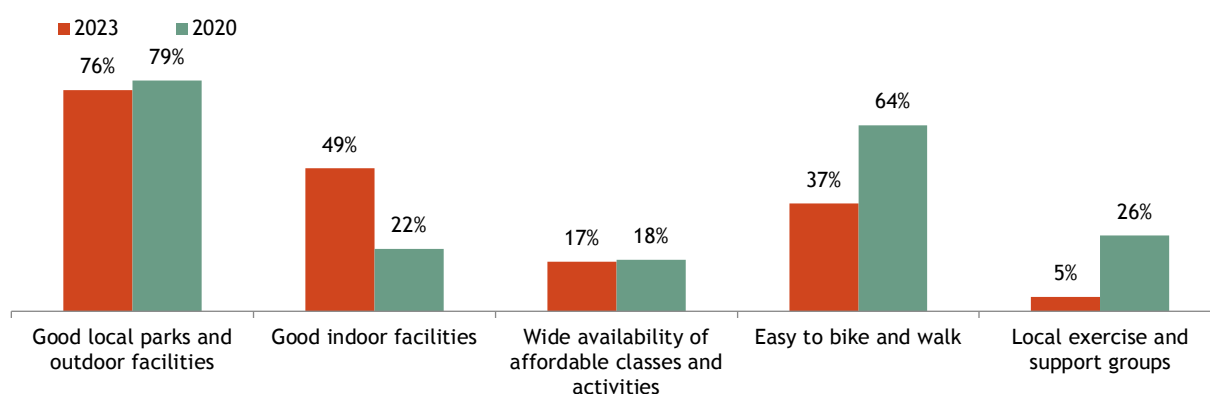
### 10.1 Physical activity

The survey asked residents to what extent it is easy to be physically active in Acton Gardens. The majority of respondents (72%) agree with this statement. Residents living in the newer development were more likely to agree. Of those people who agreed it is easy to be physically active in Acton Gardens, the majority of people attributed it to access to good parks and outdoor facilities as well as access to good indoor facilities.



#### How easy is it to be physically active in South Acton/Acton Gardens, by year

N= 394 (2023), 220 (2020)

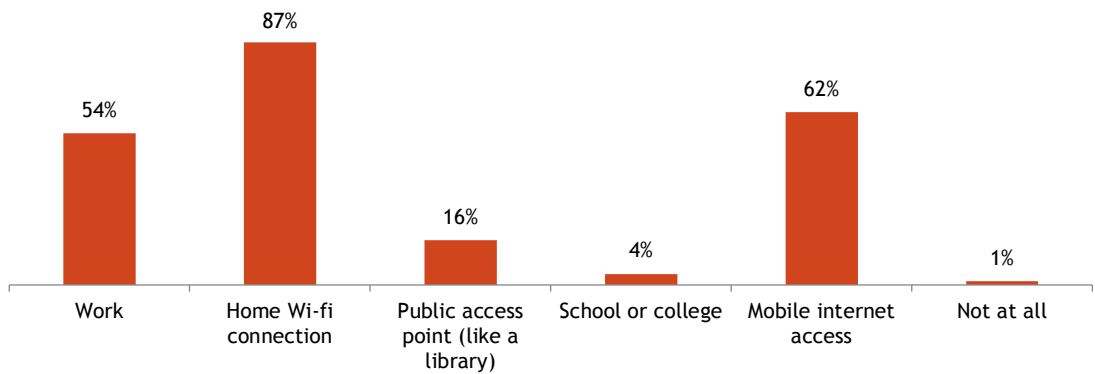


#### Why is it easy to be physically active, by year

N= 279 (2023), 158 (2020)

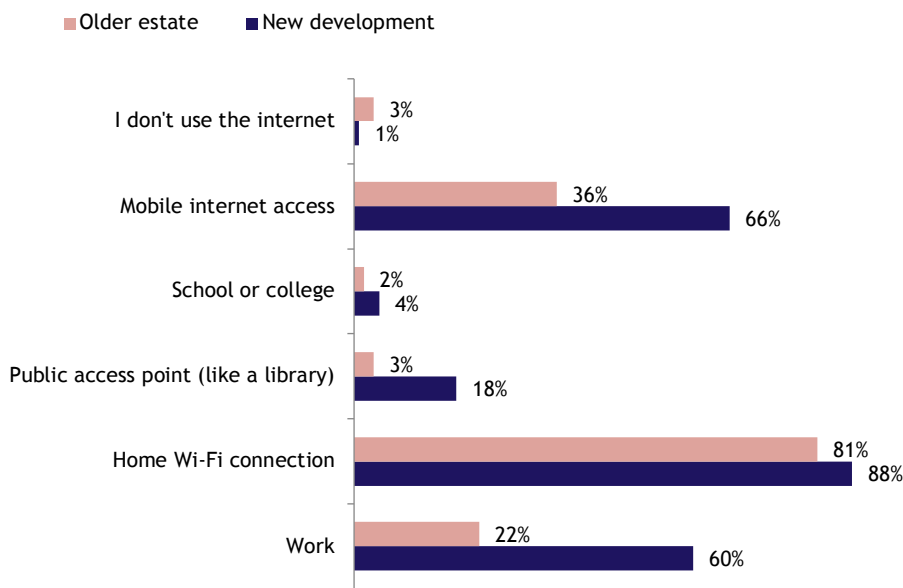
## 10.2 Digital inclusion

The majority of people use internet at home, at work and have internet access on their mobile. Digital inclusion appears to be stronger among residents living in the new development who are more likely to have WiFi at home and access to mobile data. However, there is a small proportion of people who have no access to the internet across the regeneration area.



### Where do you access the internet?, 2023

N=403



### Where do you access to internet, new development vs old estate

N=310 (2023)





# Conclusion



# Conclusion and recommendations

This fourth social impact assessment continues to reveal the detail of the everyday life and attitudes of residents living in an area going through profound change, at a time of acute pressures on household budgets and in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. A strength of the social sustainability method is in the information it captures about the less tangible aspects of local life - people's feelings about the place they call home, about their neighbours, and about their local area.

This assessment shows that residents continue to share strong bonds of support and neighbourliness and feel a strong sense of belonging and connection to the area. The 2018 assessment revealed that residents of the new housing were feeling more comfortable with their neighbours and the area than two years before. The third assessment showed how this neighbourliness and social solidarity has been challenged by the pandemic and how, in the new development, neighbourliness has been put under strain. While measures of wellbeing rose from 2020 to 2023, scores have not reverted to pre-pandemic levels. A gap in everyday experience continues, between social housing tenants and private owners and renters.

In 2023 we see how only a minority of residents remain in the older council-owned blocks, and how the new development is settling into becoming a new stable west London neighbourhood. A critical task for the regeneration programme will continue to be to help newer and longer-standing residents to find a shared sense of community, to interact in their everyday lives and to build common interests and bonds. This will support the longerstanding communities to adapt to change, and new residents to adapt to their new surroundings and develop their own sense of belonging as part of the wider community.

It continues to be important to ensure that the whole of the redeveloped estate - including those living in both the new and older housing - is taken through regeneration positively and that parts are not left behind, and that all start to benefit from the changes that will take place.

## Recommendations

A short set of recommendations for Acton Gardens LLP and its partners have been developed drawing on the findings of the research. Similar recommendations have been made after each round of the social sustainability assessment and Acton Gardens LLP has taken clear actions to progress these. Recommendations focus on areas where there is most potential for the agencies involved in the regeneration to take action to improve residents quality of life and everyday experiences.

1. Increase the quality of life and perception of safety for the remaining residents living in the old estate through meanwhile investments and small-scale place-making initiatives in the open spaces. This could include improvements to lighting, public art, programming, providing planters and temporary moveable gardens.
2. Continue to support residents who are struggling financially, by funding the foodbank and other supports. Additional low-cost supports could be explored such as baby banks, a food coop, or a sharing library. Financial and employment advice is needed by residents who are on low incomes and those who are looking for work, or better quality work.
3. Provide open space for young people to feel they have a place to hangout that is theirs. Consider setting up a co-design process involving both young men and women to participate in shaping the space.

4. It is important to maintain the strong current sense of belonging and neighbourliness. Initiatives like events bringing residents together in a celebration, marking religious and cultural festivals, and providing space that groups of residents can maintain can all build a sense of belonging that brings together people from different backgrounds.
5. As in 2020, there continues to be a need to develop a long-term strategy for the provision of social infrastructure that meets the needs of the entire community, balancing activities to reflect demand and cater to local needs as these change over time.
6. Continue to progress regeneration plans at pace, to provide the remaining council residents with new homes to bridge the gap between the experiences of residents living in the older estate and the new development.





# Appendix



# Appendix 1: Benchmarks. Acton Gardens and South Acton Estate, 2015, 2017, 2020 and 2024

KEY:

SCORES:

-1 = STATISTICALLY WORSE THAN COMPARABLE AREAS (Statistically significant responses below the benchmark = red)  
0 = AS EXPECTED (Responses are the same as or similar to the benchmark, or they are not statistically significant = yellow)  
1 = STATISTICALLY BETTER THAN COMPARABLE AREAS (Statistically significant responses above the benchmark = green)

2015					2017					2020					2024				
SBC CRITERIA: LOCAL IDENTITY																			
Acton Gardens new homes	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1		Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1		Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	
Plan to remain resident of this neighbourhood for a number of years	81%	51%	29%		91%	57%	34%			81%	52%	28%			84%	52%	31.7%		
Feel like I belong to this neighbourhood	61%	58%	3%		92%	61%	31%			63%	58%	6%			72%	56%	16%		
Importance of where you live to sense of who you are	90%	72%	18%					Data not available to benchmark											Data not available to benchmark
I think of myself as similar to the people that live in the neighbourhood				Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark		52%	43%	9%	NEW QUESTION		76%	43%	33.3%		
Older estate	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1		Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1		Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	
Plan to remain resident of this neighbourhood for a number of years	85%	51%	33%		83%	57%	26%			83%	70%	13%			61%	52%	9.4%		
Feel like I belong to this neighbourhood	86%	58%	28%		88%	61%	27%			80%	58%	22%			79%	56%	23.0%		
Importance of where you live to sense of who you are	94%	72%	22%					Data not available to benchmark											Data not available to benchmark
I think of myself as similar to the people that live in the neighbourhood										69%	43%	26%	NEW QUESTION		72%	43%	29.3%		NEW QUESTION
SBC CRITERIA: LINKS WITH NEIGHBOURS																			
Acton Gardens new homes	Total SA_1A	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1		Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0		Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	
If I needed advice I could go to someone in my neighbourhood	51%	43%	8%		88%	45%	42%			49%	40%	9%			55%	41%	14%		
I borrow things and exchange favours with my neighbours	44%	34%	10%		39%	36%	2%			43%	36%	7%			43%	34%	9%		
I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighbourhood	44%	56%	-12%		70%	57%	13%			49%	51%	-2%			61%	53%	8%		
Friendships in my neighbourhood mean a lot to me	51%	51%	0%		67%	53%	14%			57%	50%	7%			54%	51%	3%		
Most people can be trusted or you cannot be too careful with people	39%	38%	1%					Data not available to benchmark											Data not available to benchmark
People from different backgrounds get on well	85%	81%	4%		98%	81%	17%			81%	81%	0%			87%	75%	12%		
Residents in this local area respect ethnic differences between people	89%	87%	1%					Data not available to benchmark											Data not available to benchmark
Older estate	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1		Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1		Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	
If I needed advice I could go to someone in my neighbourhood	80%	43%	37%		71%	45%	26%			76%	40%	36%			63%	41%	22%		
I borrow things and exchange favours with my neighbours	42%	34%	8%		57%	36%	21%			51%	36%	15%			39%	34%	4%		
I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighbourhood	76%	56%	21%		87%	57%	30%			72%	51%	21%			59%	53%	6%		
Friendships in my neighbourhood mean a lot to me	81%	51%	31%		82%	53%	29%			80%	50%	30%			71%	51%	21%		
Most people can be trusted or you cannot be too careful with people	12%	38%	-26%					Data not available to benchmark											Data not available to benchmark
People from different backgrounds get on well	90%	81%	9%		87%	81%	5%			93%	81%	11%			93%	75%	18%		
Residents in this local area respect ethnic differences between people	92%	87%	5%					Data not available to benchmark											Data not available to benchmark
SBC CRITERIA: WELLBEING																			
Acton Gardens new homes	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1		Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0		Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	
Have you recently felt that you were playing a useful part in things?	93%	81%	11%		99%	85%	14%			77%	82%	-5%							Data not available to benchmark
Have you been feeling reasonably happy?	95%	84%	12%		92%	86%	6%			69%	82%	-13%			90%	81%	9%		
How dissatisfied or satisfied are you with life overall?	93%	65%	28%		90%	71%	19%			76%	69%	7%			73%	65%	8%		
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?	90%	77%	14%		96%	70%	26%			79%	70%	8%			85%	60%	25%		
Older estate	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0		Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	-1		Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	
Have you recently felt that you were playing a useful part in things?	86%	81%	5%		66%	85%	-19%			63%	82%	-18%							Data not available to benchmark
Have you been feeling reasonably happy?	89%	84%	5%		83%	86%	-4%			69%	82%	-13%			75%	81%	-6%		
How dissatisfied or satisfied are you with life overall?	86%	65%	21%		85%	71%	14%			49%	69%	-20%			43%	65%	-22%		
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?	88%	77%	12%		90%	70%	20%			83%	70%	13%			67%	60%	7%		

2015					2017					2020					2024				
SSC CRITERIA: FEELINGS OF SAFETY																			
Acton Gardens new homes	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	-1	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1			
How safe do you feel walking alone in this area during the day?	100%	96%	5%		92%	96%	4%					Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
How safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?	95%	64%	31%		98%	76%	21%		66%	76%	-11%		83%	76%	7%				
Compared to the country as a whole do you think the level of crime in your local area is...	46%	52%	-6%		71%	30%	41%					Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
Do you worry that you or someone who lives with you may be a victim of crime									43%	54%	-11%	NEW QUESTION	72%	57%	15%				
Older estate	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	-1			
How safe do you feel walking alone in this area during the day?	97%	96%	1%		99%	93%	6%					Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
How safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?	81%	64%	17%		93%	76%	16%		76%	76%	0%		46%	76%	-30%				
Compared to the country as a whole do you think the level of crime in your local area is...	42%	52%	-10%		29%	26%	-3%					Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
Do you worry that you or someone who lives with you may be a victim of crime									56%	54%	2%	NEW QUESTION	53%	57%	-4%				
V6I CRITERIA: WILLINGNESS TO ACT																			
Acton Gardens new homes	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1			
I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my neighbourhood.	66%	70%	-4%		77%	64%	13%		79%	62%	17%		64%	60%	4%				
In the last 12 months, have you taken any of the actions on this card to try to get something done about the quality of your local environment? (aggregate)	2%	4%	-1%		15%	32%	-17%	See NOTE 1				Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
Have you taken part in any of these groups? (aggregate)	7%	10%	-3%					Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
People in this neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood	78%	54%	24%		99%	49%	50%		71%	49%	22%		81%	47%	34%				
During the last 12 months, have you done any voluntary work?	10%	18%	-8%					Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
Older estate	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1			
I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my neighbourhood.	84%	70%	14%		73%	64%	9%		67%	62%	5%		63%	60%	3%				
In the last 12 months, have you taken any of the actions on this card to try to get something done about the quality of your local environment? (aggregate)	6%	4%	3%		16%	32%	-17%	See NOTE 2				Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
Have you taken part in any of these groups? (aggregate)	7%	10%	-4%					Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
People in this neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood	83%	54%	29%		82%	49%	33%		68%	49%	19%		65%	47%	18%				
During the last 12 months, have you done any voluntary work?	10%	18%	-8%					Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
V6I CRITERIA: ABILITY TO INFLUENCE																			
Acton Gardens new homes	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total Acton Gardens	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1			
In the last 12 months, has any organisation asked you what you think about (sporting facilities, cultural facilities, environmental facilities)	2%	6%	-5%					Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting you local area?	30%	40%	-10%		58%	34%	25%		55%	34%	21%		72%	28%	44%				
How important is it for you personally to feel that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?	87%	73%	14%		66%	64%	3%		80%	64%	16%		84%	53%	31%				
Older estate	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	0	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1	Total South Acton Estate	Comparable area	Difference to comparable area	1			
In the last 12 months, has any organisation asked you what you think about (sporting facilities, cultural facilities, environmental facilities)	2%	6%	-4%					Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark				Data not available to benchmark			
Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting you local area?	48%	40%	8%		80%	34%	47%		54%	34%	20%		50%	28%	22%				
How important is it for you personally to feel that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?	73%	73%	0%		93%	64%	29%		61%	64%	-3%		71%	53%	18%				
NOTE 1					Not possible to test for statistical significance because of aggregation of underlying data, however scored as significant because of size of difference between survey and comparable area														
NOTE 2					Not possible to test for statistical significance because of aggregation of underlying data, however scored as significant because of size of difference between survey and comparable area														

## Appendix 2: method for assessing social sustainability

The research draws on previous work, by Social Life and Professor Tim Dixon (of the University of Reading) in 2012, to devise and test a social sustainability measurement framework for The Berkeley Group<sup>17</sup>. This innovative project set out to understand and measure people's quality of life and the strength of community on new housing developments.

The Berkeley Group's framework is grounded in academic research and evidence from government surveys about social sustainability and its relationship to the built environment, including both physical and non-physical factors. 'Physical factors' include decent and affordable housing, access to opportunities, high quality public services, a good quality and sustainable public realm, good transport connections. 'Non-physical factors' encompass safety, local social networks, social inclusion and spatial integration, cultural heritage, a sense of belonging and identity, and wellbeing.

The Berkeley Group's framework organises these factors into three core dimensions: Social and Cultural Life; Voice and Influence; and Amenities and Infrastructure. Thirteen indicators, based on 45 questions, are used to measure the impact and outcomes of regeneration and development against the three dimensions.



### The social sustainability measurement framework

These questions all replicate questions used in national surveys, so data can be compared to other areas. For the Social and Cultural Life and Voice and Influence dimensions, questions have been taken from national surveys supported by government and research councils. For the Amenities and Infrastructure dimension, questions have been taken from Design Council CABI's Building for Life survey.

### Predicting residents views of their local neighbourhoods

<sup>17</sup> Nicola Bacon et al (2012) Creating Strong Communities, The Berkeley Group for technical appendices see <http://www.social-life.co/publication/creating-strong-communities-2/>



Social Life has developed a methodology for predicting how residents of local neighbourhoods are likely to feel about key indicators, including their sense of belonging, their fear of crime, trust in their neighbours, and wellbeing.

Using data that is openly available, from government and research councils, we can benchmark what we would expect residents to feel about the neighbourhoods they call home. We can test our predictions against the reality of what residents actually think and feel, with data gathered through a residents survey.

The predictive data we use comes from two national surveys: the Understanding Society Survey<sup>18</sup> and the Community Life Survey<sup>19</sup>. These both ask questions about residents' perceptions of the places they live in. We have selected questions from USS and the Community Life Survey that shed light on the social sustainability of small areas.

The sample sizes of these surveys are not large enough to disaggregate responses directly to small local areas. However, we can match this data to small areas using the ONS (Office for National Statistics) "Area Classifications" categories at "Output Area" level. This enables us to see how residents of small areas are likely to feel. This is predictive data, not a robust portrait of the neighbourhood.

### Output area classifications

Area classifications have been developed by ONS to understand social attitudes in local areas<sup>20</sup>. Area classifications can give powerful insights into local areas, which can help inform and imagine place-based projects and interventions. They are based on a range of socio-demographic data for local neighbourhoods, and were first created using 2001 census data and have been updated with 2011 data.

The 2011 area classifications are based on 60 variables from the 2011 census data. These fall into five categories:

- demographic (age, ethnicity, population density)
- household composition (marital status, children)
- housing (tenure and type)
- socio-economic (HE qualifications, car ownership, health)
- employment (unemployment, full-time/part-time, industry)

Area classifications describe broad groupings of areas - or supergroups - and more detailed subgroups. These can be matched to the smallest statistical units used by ONS, "output areas" (the majority of these include between 110 and 139 households).<sup>21</sup>

Matching national survey data to small areas OAC classifications enables us to map survey data to output areas (when it is appropriately coded).

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<sup>18</sup> for more on USS go to [www.understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk)

<sup>19</sup> for more on the Community Life Survey go to [www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey)

<sup>20</sup> for more on area classifications go to [www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/geographicalproducts/areaclassifications/2011areaclassifications](http://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/geographicalproducts/areaclassifications/2011areaclassifications)

<sup>21</sup> for more on output areas go to [www.ons.gov.uk/census/2001censusandearlier/dataandproducts/outputgeography/outputareas](http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2001censusandearlier/dataandproducts/outputgeography/outputareas)



Map of OAC categories in Acton

## Appendix 3: Updates from Acton Gardens LLP

The following section outlines the actions taken by L&Q in response to the recommendations that came out of Social Life's third social sustainability assessment carried out in 2020.

### **Social Life recommendation...**

**The Community Board should be reviewed to explore how it can become more strategic, involve more residents and link more effectively to informal on- and offline networks in both the older estate and within the new development.**

### **Update from the regeneration team...**

We have implemented an Action tracker to ensure that all points raised by the Community Board are formally addressed and followed up by the LLP. We will continue to work with Community Board members and the ITLA to promote the Community Board to residents and encourage involvement from the old and new estates. The Regeneration Team have been more strategic in utilising Community Board specialist knowledge and skills to inform events such as Earth Day and Mental Health Awareness Week.

This year Resident Board members are aiming to increase their engagement with residents on the South Acton estate. To do this, they are taking a more strategic approach to sharing information, utilising resident social media channels and in-person events to promote local activities.

We have also reviewed the Constitution with the Board and devised measurable aims and objectives for 2024 in agreement with Community Board members. Board members have agreed that these are also set with/as measurables focusing on engagement and impact of members. Five new Board member were voted in in February 2024, increased communications around Community Board member elections resulted in more residents being involved in the voting process. Diversity across the Community Board has increased with a greater mix of tenures as well as old and new residents to the area.

### **Social Life recommendation...**

**The energy and commitment revealed by the community response to COVID-19 needs to be nurtured, so new networks and groups can continue to support residents during the pandemic and afterwards. These have the potential to become the foundation of new groups and activities that bring together people from different tenures and backgrounds.**

### **Update from the regeneration team...**

The L&Q Community Chest funding is being widely promoted to encourage new networks and groups to run projects to support residents who have been impacted by the pandemic. Successful bids from local groups aim to deliver projects that encourage mental and physical well-being. Projects that have been approved over the past two years include: Acton Older People's Community Project, The Community Mile, Art Psychotherapy, YARDO and Nutrition Education. Recently this summer, a fitness programme for young people was delivered in open spaces around Acton Gardens.

An audit of previous Community Chest projects has identified several projects that could appeal to new members of the community from different tenures. These include self-defence classes, theatre and arts, health and fitness tailored to different age groups, including the Community Mile and horticultural activities in different locations around the estate.

The food bank in Acton Gardens developed organically because of the pandemic and the support needed in the community. We will continue to support the food bank by arranging fundraising events, helping to



recruit community volunteers, and raising their profile to the wider community. Meet the Neighbour Family Fun Day event took place in summer 2023 to welcome new residents in Phase 8.2. Old and new residents were given an opportunity to meet and raise money for the Acton Gardens Community Fridge.

The regeneration team have made a conscious effort to strengthen relationships with community organisations including those funded by the Community Chest by inviting them to participate/support events in Acton Gardens. These organisations include: YARDO, United Anglo Caribbean Society (UACS), Acton Youth Association (AYA) Cultivate London, Acton Litter Collective and Ealing Circular Economy Team. For instance, Acton Gardens Primary Earth Day 2024 event was delivered in partnership with Acton Gardens Primary School and Acton Litter Collective.

Acton Litter Collective (supported by the Community Chest) has developed a volunteering group on the estate. This group also supports events ensuring the area is clean and safe for use. For Mental Health Awareness Week, L&Q Neighbourhood Housing Leads hosted a football workshop with local children of various ages, which is due to be repeated.

We will continue to review services and groups in the local area to identify gaps and signpost support to residents.

### **Social Life recommendation...**

It is important that Acton Gardens LLP works with partners to address food poverty now, and over the coming months and years while the economic impact of the pandemic plays out; and to understand how financial issues are increasingly colouring the decisions and attitudes of many residents. Over 700 food hampers were delivered to local schools, refuges, sheltered schemes and other local groups in December 2021.

### **Update from the regeneration team...**

The food banks have continued to support the community post-pandemic. The Acton Gardens Community Fridge aims to tackle food poverty and waste. This is run by volunteers and residents can drop in every Thursday for collection. Between April 2023 and April 2024, Acton Gardens Community Centre volunteers, in partnership with the Felix Project distributed around 40 food parcels - both halal and non-halal goods to local residents each week.

Residents can also collect food parcels from Bollo Youth Centre on Friday mornings, another initiative run by volunteers. Articles in the newsletters have been used to promote the food bank to the South Acton community. The team is also promoting Community Chest funding more widely through our networks and encouraging groups that are tackling this issue to apply.

The Community Chest approved a project from the group Nutrition Education, which targets children at Acton Gardens Primary School to eat more healthily and support holistic nutrition education. The Community Chest has also continued to support the Caring for Carers project. The Social Club is ongoing and served as a Warm Hub over the winter and offers advice about the cost of living crisis, how to save money for bills and affordable social events for older adults in the community.

A housing event took place to promote the latest phase (8.2) and support residents by providing financial advice and signposting to other support agencies. Similar events will be held for future phases.

With the support of Acton Gardens LLP, the Acton Gardens Summer Fair has supported the food banks in Acton Gardens. The event has been running for the past two years and has raised £700 for the food bank. Resident board members have voted to keep this as a yearly event.

The winter events in recent years have been well attended by both old and new residents. Activities included Christmas reef and ornament making, biscuit decorating, face painting and henna. Each year, a special guest also handed out presents to the children. Resident Board members have also voted to continue to host this yearly. Events are always made accessible for all including free activities, food and refreshments.

A new project is to be delivered this year with funding from the Community Chest. The LDT Carers Platform project will provide free advice, guidance, training and support to residents to find employment in the post-COVID economy to increase the social and employability chances of participants. We are also piloting the Pound Advice service at South Acton for debt advice and financial capability.

#### **Social Life recommendation...**

There is an appetite to see more retail and social facilities in the development that are used by different demographics; this informal social infrastructure can also help support social integration.

#### **Update from the regeneration team...**

We aim to continue to communicate commercial updates via resident newsletters and on our website. We will look at introducing a forum for residents to submit feedback on these updates for review at LLP meetings.

Since the last report, several retail and social facilities have opened:

- First Class Learning in 2021
- Cyber Tots Nursery in May 2021
- Acton Gardens GP Surgery in 2022
- Energie Fitness opened in February 2023
- Mint Café in May 2023
- Central Plaza Park in October 2023.

Budgens has entered into contract with Countryside in December 2023 and is due to open in Phase 9.2. This came in response to a residents' request for a more affordable alternative retail option to Sainsbury's. Budgens will open in summer 2024.

#### **Social Life recommendation...**

**There is a need to develop a long-term strategy for the provision of social infrastructure that meets the needs of the entire community, balancing activities that are best provided in a central hub and those that are most effective when more dispersed.**

#### **Update from the regeneration team...**

We will continue to promote opportunities to join our Design Sub-Group and encourage more members of the community to get involved with the consultation process. The consultation strategy for Phase 7.4 is being conducted in line with guidance provided by the Mayor of London, to be an example of best practice. This emphasises the need for accessibility options and reaching as many residents as possible, to capture their views to shape future proposals.

Central Plaza, in the heart of Acton Gardens was delivered on the 14th of October. 2023 Central Plaza is a key hub for the community, with green places to sit, play and exercise, and a new children's playground. It has also been used to host community events.

The community centre continues to deliver varied activities, projects and events for the local community. These include some free and low-cost activities such as weekly yoga and community table tennis. The

community centre continues to develop and work in partnership with local organisations, for example welcoming a new Stay and Play group in February 2024 in partnership with Daniel Den.

### **Social Life recommendation...**

It is important to continue to support long-term council tenants and leaseholders, and to be aware of the stress and challenge to their wellbeing that the process of moving can bring.

### **Update from the regeneration team...**

We will continue to support long-term council tenants and leaseholders through the following channels:

- Website: Weekly website checks and uploads by the regeneration team to ensure that all information is up to date
- Leaseholder and Tenant guides up to date and available on our website and in hard copy upon request
- Newsletters: Quarterly regeneration updates distributed to residents and leaseholders via the Newsletter
- Telephone/email: Regeneration contact details are visible on posters, the website, and in the community centre
- Support offered to residents via monthly in-person housing advice drop in sessions with the London Borough of Ealing Regeneration officer and & ITLA
- Team inbox checked daily to ensure that resident queries are responded to in a timely manner
- ITLA: Details of ITLA promoted in residents' newsletters and on the website
- Surveys: Seeking lessons learned from feedback from residents who have recently moved from their council home to their new L&Q home.

The regeneration team are organising events across Acton Gardens for Mental Health Awareness Week 2024 with a key focus on wellbeing following the draft findings of the Social Life report. The events will be run on weekends and during the working week to cater to different groups across Acton Gardens. The theme is 'Movement: Moving more for our mental health'. The calendar was also used to signpost sessions and other activities already going on in the local area that aligned with the MHAW24 theme.



## The research team

The report was written by Mena Ali and Nicola Bacon, with research and analysis by Mena Ali, Simeon Shtebunaev and Alix Naylor. The online and door to door surveys were carried out by Face Facts, using questions developed by Social Life.

## About Social Life

Social Life is a social enterprise, created by The Young Foundation in 2012 to become a specialist centre of research and innovation about the social life of communities. All our work is about people's relationship with the built environment - housing, public spaces, parks and local high streets - and how change, through regeneration, new development or small improvements to public spaces, affects the social fabric and wellbeing of local areas. For more information visit [www.social-life.co](http://www.social-life.co)

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