



Safer Homes and Neighbourhoods

Recommendations for local authorities, social housing providers and the police

Help communities to connect

1. Improve access to community centres and affordable spaces.
2. Bring together older and younger residents
3. Make the move to digital work for communities
4. Invest in programmes that bring the whole community together

Tackle the roots of crime and support young people

5. Tackle poverty
6. Value young people
7. Support families
8. Communicate about crime with care

Build trust and improve accountability

9. Create inclusive forums for residents to be heard
10. Centre co-design in decision-making
11. Skill up residents to participate
12. Take a joined up approach to tackling safety issues
13. Become responsive

Help communities to connect

Our research has highlighted that many residents in Tower Hamlets believe having more connected communities will lead to safer, thriving neighbourhoods.

1. Improve access to community centres and affordable spaces.

To improve safety, **local authorities** should make sure every area has a community centre where residents can socialise, participate in activities, get help from services and speak to decision-makers. Working together with **social housing providers**, businesses and charities, they should also map where there is free or cheap local space that can be booked by locals to run community activities and to make sure every resident has a local free or affordable space.

2. Bring together older and younger residents

Local authorities and social housing providers should provide opportunities for young people to get involved in community projects and spend time alongside older residents taking part in activities or working on local issues. To be safe and accessible, older and younger residents need to work together to design these projects.

3. Make the move to digital work for communities

Social housing providers and local authorities should increase support for residents across Tower Hamlets to be digitally connected and confident using technology.

This work should focus on neighbourhood level initiatives to improve digital connectivity and skills, bringing a range of stakeholders together to work on affordable or free internet access for low-income households, as well as support with IT skills and accessing devices.

4. Invest in programmes that bring the whole community together

Local authorities and social housing providers should create more opportunities, for residents to meet others from different backgrounds. Providing financial incentives to support participation in these projects will help improve the diversity of residents involved.

Tackle the roots of crime and support young people

Tackling the root causes of crime and safety issues was seen as key for many residents in our research. This ranged from tackling poverty, structural inequality and stigma to increasing support and opportunities for young people.

5. Tackle poverty

Though outside the remit of this project, our [Tower Hamlets Poverty Review](#) details resident-led research into how to tackle poverty in the borough, including our local authority community to community wealth-building approaches.

6. Value young people

Local authorities and social housing providers must invest in youth programmes that are youth-led and designed with young people. It is important that they create accessible opportunities for young people to speak directly to decision-makers. This includes working with young people to identify what kind of employment is meaningful to them and increasing

those employment opportunities in the borough. The local authority also needs to identify what is blocking young people from entering employment within the borough.

7. Support families

Local authorities and social housing providers should work to support parents to access affordable social and cultural activities for themselves and their children where they can connect as families. This would help family members to talk to one another, and build the trust needed to talk about difficult or taboo subjects. This would also help parents to identify when their young people need support earlier.

8. Communicate about crime with care

The police, local authorities and social housing providers should take greater care over their communication around the causes and perpetrators of crime, particularly the language used. The demonisation of young people, rough sleepers and people with substance addiction should be avoided, with a focus instead on underlying issues; for example the impacts of living in poverty, trauma and how young people are often groomed into drug dealing and crime.

Build trust and improve accountability

Overall, residents felt there needed to be better channels of communication with the police, the council and housing associations. Often the forums to voice concerns around safety work for people who are better off, speak English and are not scared or mistrustful of the police. Residents argued that to improve trust and accountability, public authorities need to meaningfully engage them in decision-making processes.

9. Create inclusive forums for residents to be heard

Local authorities, social housing providers and the police should work to create forums where everyone feels welcome and confident enough to participate in community-wide discussions and input into decision-making.

This could include hosting public meetings in community centres or mosques, use of interpreters, bringing food and providing childcare support, and working with trusted community workers or leaders. This could be achieved through adoption of co-designed TRA's or Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels. It would also help to design communication strategies with the Londoners you are trying to reach who are not currently engaging.

10. Centre co-design in decision-making

Local authorities, police and social housing providers should meaningfully engage with residents to co-design services, policies and forums to help ensure they are accessible to, and work for, all residents. This could include working with women on a strategy to ensure people feel safe travelling through the borough at night; co-designing communications with residents to ensure it is clear and accessible, including using multiple formats and community languages; agreeing with residents what success looks like and how to measure it in areas such as tackling poverty, housing and community safety, to improve accountability.

11. Skill up residents to participate

Local authorities should coordinate with social housing providers and local charities to support training for residents to self-organise around safety. This could include event organisation, conflict management, and community organising.

12. Take a joined up approach to tackling safety issues

Safer Neighbourhood Partnerships should take a multi-agency approach to public Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel meetings, to help ensure that the agendas of these meetings match the priorities and concerns of local residents; particularly around structural inequalities, the need for more affordable community spaces and activities, particularly youth clubs, and more support for young people within schools.

13. Become responsive

Local authorities, social housing providers and the police should evaluate their current policies around responding to reports and concerns around anti-social behaviour and to take action necessary to ensure that the public is adequately reassured that action is being taken based on their concerns.