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London council residents to go on service charge strike

NEWS 15.04.25 11.25 AM **BY GREG PITCHER**

A group of residents of a council-owned block in east London are refusing to pay their full service charge until “urgent” issues are resolved.



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Residents of Pitcairn House have written to Hackney Council (picture: Google Street View)

X London council residents to go on service charge strike #UKhousing

X A group of residents of a council-owned block in east London are refusing to pay their full service charge until “urgent” issues are resolved #UKhousing

Thirty-two inhabitants of Pitcairn House wrote to Dawn Carter-McDonald, chief executive of Hackney Council, declaring their intention to withhold half their fees from 1 May.

Backed by the Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC), the group said it had been “left with no choice” but to withhold payment after “18 months of renewed and diverse attempts to engage with the council”.

The signatories said they would pay in full once a series of problems have been “fully resolved” at the local authority’s own cost.

SHAC recently released research which found that [more than two-thirds](#) of tribunal cases in 2024 reduced or removed service charges.

London council residents to go on service charge strike

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The residents' letter set out three waves of works that are required in Pitcairn House on St Thomas's Square near London Fields, which was designed by architect Eric Lyons in the 1960s and now houses a mix of council tenants and leaseholders.

By the end of June, the residents want:

- Two "malfunctioning" lifts replaced
- "Ongoing" leaks and mould sorted
- Automatic doors fixed
- Windows on landings to be easier to open and close
- Action to prevent "condensation and flooding of the stairwell"
- "Block filth" to be addressed through better cleaning that prevents "ants, rats, mice and cockroaches"

Further works to tackle general repairs, plumbing, security and noise issues are to be completed by 30 September, the residents said.

By June 2026, another raft of activity is required to trigger full payment of service charge. This includes installing a second fire escape and upgrading front and back gardens.

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arged the on spending watchdog in March to investigate alleged service charge abuse by landlords.



The residents' letter added: "Decades of underinvestment has meant that the situation in Pitcairn House is fluid, and repairs and other issues not mentioned above come to the fore on a regular basis.

"We therefore reserve the right to add to the above list as appropriate. Residents need to be consulted on all these issues and provided ongoing information about progress.

"We see these improvements as the beginning of much-needed investment to bring the quality of Pitcairn House up to habitable living standards.

"We want to feel proud and safe in our homes, and we expect Hackney Council to take its responsibilities as our landlord seriously and to fulfil its responsibilities as required by law. We are happy to engage with the council on these matters, but we cannot allow our current living conditions to continue any longer."

Hackney Council has been contacted for a response.

Around two years ago, guidance from the Housing Ombudsman outlined what it expects from landlords in the [administration of service charges](#).

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