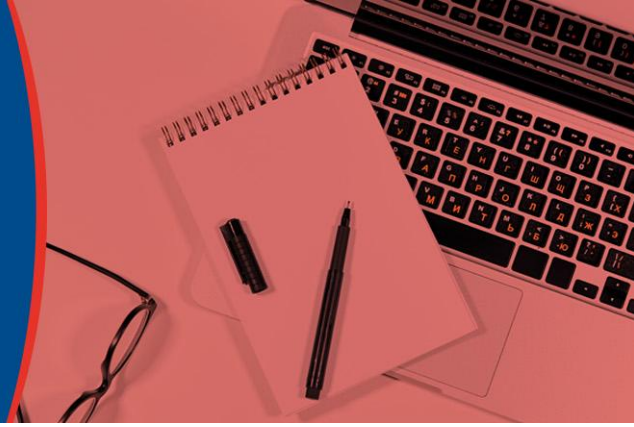
Housing Quality Network

Opinion



5 November 2026

Tell RSH the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!

By Alistair Mcintosh, HQN CEO

Andy Burnham says that he wants to put housing under public control. Not everyone agrees. And his opponents will make hay with the latest flurry of C3 and C4 inspection reports at councils. To be clear, there's no excuse at all for this level of poor performance.

It's true that some councils have bounced back really well. Guildford soared from C3 to C1, Nottingham rose from C3 to C2 and Cornwall recovered from a Regulatory Notice to C2. But we just cannot tolerate C3 or C4 just now. Councils can and must do better.

Just below are the edited highlights of recent poor results. You can see that Haringey had more defects than the others. But that's not the whole story.

The tipping point is when the RSH says to Haringey:

"...during engagement following the publication of a previous Regulatory Notice, we were only provided with information about a specified backlog of fire remedial actions and not the full information about a new and growing backlog of more recent overdue remedial actions."

In other words, when you meet with the RSH tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth! If the RSH thinks you haven't done so – it's C4.

	Haringey – C4	Kingston – C3	Woking – C3	Kirklees – C3	Tamworth – C3
Stock condition	Accurate and up to date	Only 15% of homes surveyed	Good understanding	Up to date information on only 25% of homes	87% survey – but not kept up to date or used to plan improvements – lacks detail on hazards
Non-decency	16%	16% (reduces to 10% with demolition)	12%	Not cited	Not cited

	Haringey – C4	Kingston – C3	Woking – C3	Kirklees – C3	Tamworth – C3
Health and safety	1,400 high risk FRAs overdue	Meeting requirements – must improve oversight	Largely meeting	Generally meeting – but 2,500 FRA remedials overdue (risk level not given)	Serious failings
Repairs service	Serious failings	Meets requirements – must improve communal works	Some weaknesses	Effective, efficient and timely	Efficient, effective and timely but some weaknesses
ASB	Serious failings	Effective	Serious failings	Serious failings	Weaknesses
Tailoring of services	No	Weakness	Further work needed	Not consistent	Not consistent
Tenant influence	No	Tenants feedback influencing services	Meaningful opportunities for tenants to influence – needs to widen out involvement	OK on opportunities to influence – work needed on scrutiny	Limited evidence
Complaints	Poor	Weakness	Learns from complaints – needs to speed up stage one	Learns from complaints – need to speed up to meet deadlines	Not learning from complaints – started to make changes but not yet improving outcomes

How do we prevent C4s and C3s?

Communications: never waste a meeting with the RSH. Share problems and explain what you're doing about these. HQN is hosting a workshop with the RSH that'll explain exactly what they want to know and by when.

Mutual support: can the councils that have scored highly at inspection support others? As always, the context is crucial. There's not one perfect way of doing things. HQN does set up meetings like these and there'll be a big role for the ADoH and NFA.

Cash is king: we often find the councils just have less money to spend than associations. As the RSH reviews its approach to inspection, it might be an idea to test if there's a link between resources and outcomes. And does every council maintain a strict ringfence on the HRA? The RSH should check for this.