ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

Community Programme

involve collaborate for social change

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What is this report about?

This report gives an overview of the first year of the Grenfell Community Support programme (January 2025 - March 2026), focused on people who lived within 500m of the tower at the time of the tragedy or live in the area, delivered by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC). The Grenfell Community Support programme is delivered by the Grenfell Partnerships Team (GPT), which is also responsible for coordinating the council's wider work on Grenfell, including the commitments made in response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

The wider Grenfell Support programme also includes a dedicated service for bereaved and survivors, as well as education and training support for bereaved, survivors and the immediate local community near Grenfell Tower. Separate reports on the progress of these programmes are available to view here:

linktr.ee/independentscrutinyfunction

How is this report structured?

The first part of this report offers reflections from the GPT on the delivery of the Grenfell Support programme overall. This is followed by a focused look at the Grenfell Community Support programme specifically, and the view of the Independent Scrutiny Function (ISF). The job of the ISF is to help ensure the Grenfell Support programme is delivered transparently and effectively in the interests of bereaved and survivors and the immediate community. Further information about the ISF can be found here:

linktr.ee/independentscrutinyfunction

Overall Grenfell Support programme: summary from the Grenfell Partnerships Team

The three Grenfell support programmes began at different times and are now well established. They continue to provide support in line with the models designed with bereaved, survivors and the immediate community and approved by the council's Leadership Team. While delivery has faced some external challenges, the programmes have adapted quickly to ensure support for bereaved, survivors and the immediate community continues. These challenges included:

- **Changes to council finance systems in April/May 2025**, which affected payments such as personal budgets, education and training funding for bereaved and survivors, and wellbeing grants for the immediate community.
- The **cyber-attack which affected the council** in November 2025 and required the three programmes to review and adapt application and payment processes to maintain service continuity.

The main learnings across the Grenfell Support programmes have been about:

ACCESSIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT

Simple, inclusive and flexible approaches help users access support in various ways and participate in programmes more easily.

COMMUNITY VOICE

Involving users in decision-making through steering groups and annual surveys leads to services that better reflect community needs and priorities.

RESPONSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Regular feedback and a flexible approach enable programmes to adapt and improve support over time.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Clear and honest communication helps build trust and manage expectations when challenges or delays arise.

COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT

Strong partnerships and relationship-based support are essential for addressing complex housing, health and wellbeing needs.

Community programme: summary from the Grenfell Partnerships Team

The Grenfell Community Support is a programme for people who live in the immediate area around Grenfell Tower, including those who lived there at the time of the tragedy and those who live there now.

The programme was launched in January 2025 and in its first year offered household wellbeing grants, free leisure centre memberships, access to the Grenfell Community Advocacy Team, and regular communications and engagement. The community activities programme was launched in May 2026 as a pilot agreed with the Operational Steering Group, made up of local residents who are eligible for the programme.

Reach

More than 2,700 applications were received in the first year of the programme, reaching around 53% of households in the immediate local area.

The programme's reach was even greater among certain groups, reaching:

- **72%** of households living in council housing
- **63%** of households renting from a housing association
- **68%** of households identified as being on a low income

This shows the programme has been particularly successful in reaching residents who may benefit most from additional support.

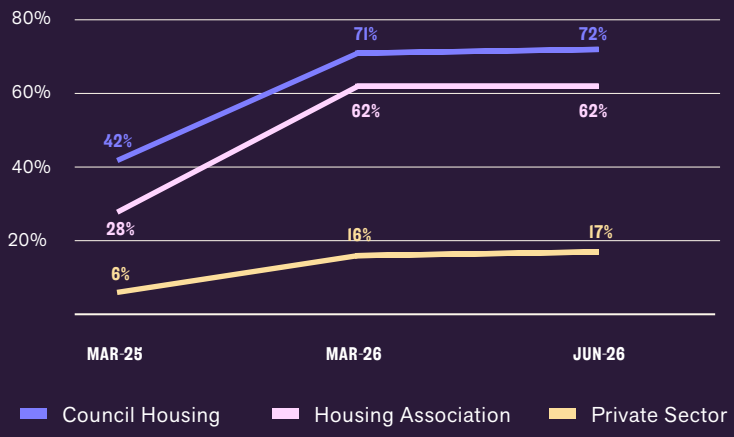
The profile of people applying to the programme is broadly similar to the local population in Notting Dale. This suggests that the programme is reaching a wide range of residents and that there are no major barriers to accessing support. However, men and younger people are slightly underrepresented, partly because women are more likely to submit applications on behalf of their household.

Throughout the first year, we promoted the programme through newsletters, flyers, emails and letters to help ensure residents were aware of the support available. In February and March 2026, we also sent translated communications and information about the deadline for Year 1 wellbeing grants. This helped increase applications from older residents and housing association tenants.

While these communications improved participation from some groups, the overall profile of applicants remained largely unchanged in terms of ethnicity, religion, health conditions and gender.

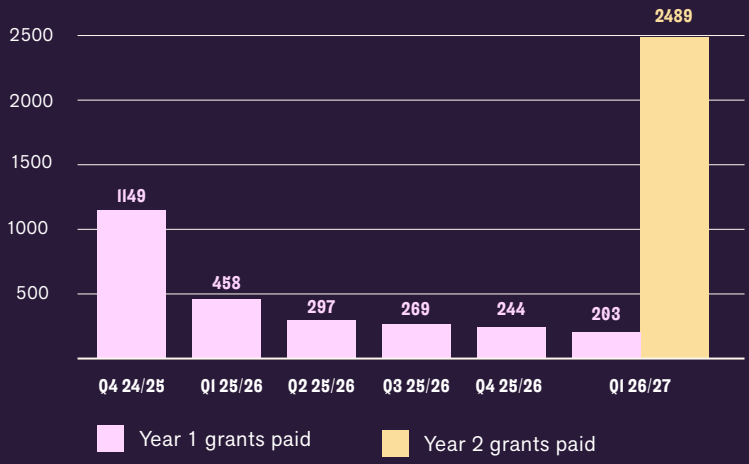
Reach

Reach per type of housing



Delivery

Trend in wellbeing grant payments since the programme launched



Delivery

Since it launched in January 2025, the Grenfell Community Support programme has made progress, despite several challenges. These included changes to the council's finance system, delays in setting up leisure centre memberships, and the cyber incident that has affected council services and community support since November 2025.

Following the cyber incident, the Grenfell Partnerships Team and the Grenfell Community Advocacy Team adapted the way they work to make sure residents could continue to access support. This included:

- Making **wellbeing grant** payments
- Preparing **Year 2 grant** payments
- Processing **leisure centre membership** requests
- Responding to a growing number of **applications and enquiries** from residents

In the first year of the programme:

- **2,620 wellbeing grants** were paid
- **5,073 leisure centre membership** requests were approved
- **3,638 leisure centre memberships** were created

Because the leisure centre membership offer was new and untested, it was initially introduced as a six-month trial. In September 2025, after reviewing costs, considering the very positive feedback from residents, and discussing options with Kensington Leisure Centre, it was agreed that all memberships would be extended until March 2026. A further extension was approved in February 2026, allowing memberships to continue until March 2027.

In July 2025, we also introduced an alternative option for residents who did not feel comfortable using Kensington Leisure Centre. Since then, a small number of people have been supported to access Westway Sports Centre or Portobello Fitness Centre instead.

During its first year, the Grenfell Community Advocacy Team (GCAT) made strong progress in supporting residents facing a wide range of complex and urgent issues. They have supported over 400 residents with casework (approx. 3000 interventions recorded).

The team has built a trusted and consistent presence in the community, developing strong relationships with residents and local organisations.

Overall, the first year has seen:

- **Stronger relationships** between GCAT, residents and local organisations
- **Better partnerships** with local services and organisations
- **More referrals** to support services
- Continued **support for residents** with complex needs
- This has helped ensure that residents can **access the support they need** when they need it most.

In May 2026, 10 community activity projects were launched as part of a pilot programme agreed with the Operational Steering Group, who wanted residents to have access to activities before the summer.

Impact

A review of the programme carried out between August and November 2025 gathered feedback from residents through a survey and workshops. Residents were asked how the different types of support had made a difference to their lives.

Wellbeing Grants

Feedback showed that the wellbeing grant had a positive impact for many residents. People said it helped them:

- Spend more time with family and friends through trips, outings and social activities
- Improve their wellbeing and feel more connected to their community
- Cover essential costs and reduce financial pressures
- Support their physical and mental health, including recovery from trauma
- Meet practical household needs

However, some residents felt that the grants were not distributed fairly or that the amount provided was not enough, meaning the benefits were not felt equally by everyone.

Leisure Centre Memberships

Residents reported that the leisure centre membership had brought significant health and wellbeing benefits. Many said it helped them:

- Be more active and improve their physical and mental health
- Spend quality time with family members
- Feel more connected to their community
- Access activities they would otherwise not have been able to afford
- Build healthy routines into their daily lives

Feedback also highlighted areas for improvement, particularly around communication, support and the membership sign-up process, which could help more residents make full use of the offer.

Leisure Centre Usage

Data from Kensington Leisure Centre shows that use of the memberships has continued to grow. On average, just under 900 residents use the centre each month, and 55% of visitors take part in four or more activities each month. This suggests many residents are using the membership regularly and building it into their routines.

The chart on the following page shows how frequently residents use their Kensington Leisure Centre membership.

Grenfell Community Advocacy Team (GCAT)

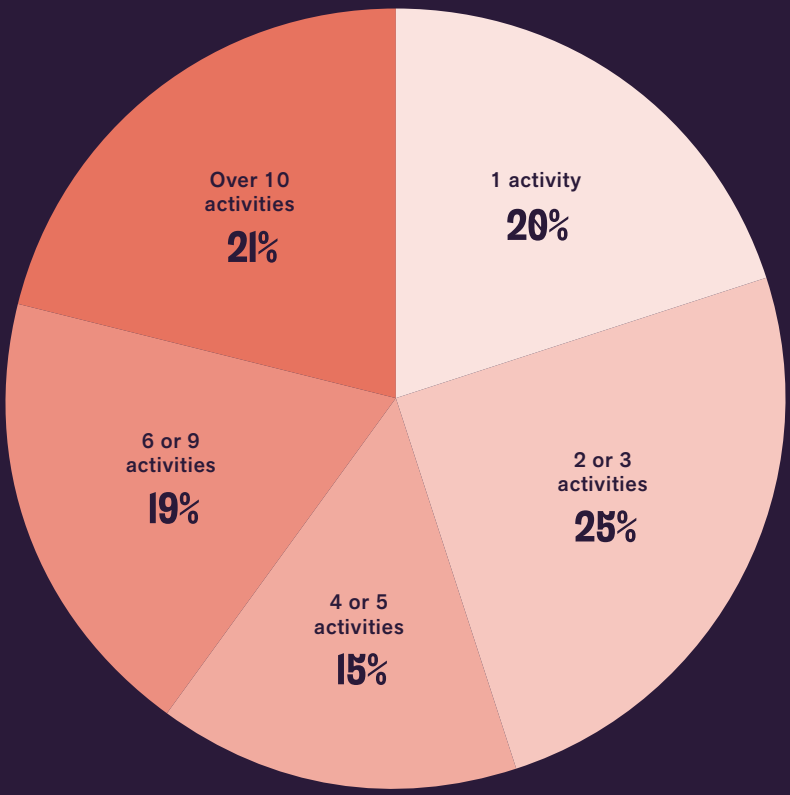
Only a small number of people who completed the annual review survey had received support from the Grenfell Community Advocacy Team (GCAT). However, their feedback shows that they particularly valued:

- General advice, guidance and reassurance
- Help with forms and applications
- Support with complaints
- Being connected to the right council officers and local services
- Help with Grenfell Community Support applications
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health support
- Housing-related advice and advocacy

Throughout the first year, GCAT also shared a range of case studies showing how the team has supported residents facing complex challenges. These examples demonstrate the practical support provided by the team and the positive outcomes achieved for residents.

Leisure Centre Usage

Average number of activities per month per KLC visitor



How community members have shaped the programme:

Operational Steering Group (OSG)

The OSG was set up in March 2025, building on the work of the Implementation Steering Group, which helped shape the final community model. The OSG has played an important role in overseeing the programme and ensuring that residents' experiences and views help inform decisions. During the first year, the group helped to:

- **Shape the first annual review** by discussing options and helping design the resident questionnaire
- **Support the extension of free leisure centre memberships** after the initial six-month trial
- **Suggest new ways to promote the programme** and reach more residents through different communication channels
- **Recommend launching a community activities pilot** so activities would be available before the summer

We have regularly updated residents on the outcomes of OSG discussions and invited new people to get involved.

Participation in the OSG has been strong. Between March 2025 and January 2026, 43 different residents took part in meetings, with between 12 and 25 people attending each session.

Earlier this year, the membership of the OSG was refreshed to support a greater focus on designing the Community Activities Programme. 1:1 meetings were held with interested residents to explain the group's role and agree updated ways of working. This included new terms of reference with a clearer role for the group (including clarity about what the group can and can't influence) and new ground rules.

Since June 2026, OSG meetings have been co-chaired by a Notting Dale ward councillor and the Grenfell Partnerships Team. This has provided greater independence in how the meetings are run and has supported the focus on the design of the community activities programme.

Annual review

From the start of the programme, we recognised that the community support model would need to change over time in response to residents' feedback and evolving needs. To help shape improvements for the second year of the programme, we launched the first annual review in summer 2025.

Residents were invited to share their views through a questionnaire that was developed with the Operational Steering Group (OSG) and informed by feedback received through complaints and other sources. The survey was also updated to reflect recommendations from the Independent Scrutiny Function (ISF).

The survey launched in August 2025, and by 2 November, 417 residents had responded. Two workshops were also held, which were attended by 16 participants. We received more feedback through this exercise than we had through the original consultation in 2023/24. This strong response showed that residents were engaged with the programme and keen to help shape its future.

The questionnaire asked residents for their views on:

- The wellbeing grant
- Options for continuing the leisure centre memberships
- The proposed community activities programme

Following the annual review, residents' feedback was considered, and several changes to the programme were approved by the Leadership Team in January 2026.

These changes included:

- **Increasing the wellbeing grant** from £350 to £550 per household while continuing to provide the same amount to all eligible households.
- **Continuing free leisure centre memberships** for everyone aged 11 and over who lives in the support area.
- Ending eligibility for Kensington Aldridge Academy (KAA) students who do not live in the area, helping to **keep the membership offer affordable and sustainable**.
- Using the annual £**100,000 communications and engagement budget** to help fund the leisure centre memberships for the full four years of the programme.
- **Seeking additional funding** from other organisations, including the council's Public Health grant and the NHS, to support the leisure centre offer in the future.

These changes reflected the views shared by residents and aimed to ensure the programme could continue to provide meaningful support while remaining financially sustainable.

Learning from complaints and feedback

In the first year of the programme, we received 16 Stage 1 complaints, which is a small number compared with the total number of applications received. All complaints were responded to within the required timescales, and none progressed to Stage 2.

The most common concerns raised by residents were:

- Delays in receiving wellbeing grant payments
- Delays in obtaining leisure centre memberships
- Questions about who is eligible for support and the programme boundaries
- Communication when services were delayed or did not go as planned

We also received regular feedback through emails, phone calls and conversations with residents at drop-in sessions. This feedback has been very important in helping us understand residents' experiences and make improvements to the programme.

For example, concerns about waiting times for grants and leisure centre memberships were raised throughout the year. These delays were often linked to factors outside the programme's control, including changes to the council's finance system, the cyber incident and challenges faced by Kensington Leisure Centre in creating memberships.

Clear communication has been a key priority. We have provided regular updates through newsletters and shared information openly when delays occurred. We have also improved our use of our Netcall system to send targeted updates directly to residents.

Feedback, complaints and frequently asked questions have helped us make several improvements, including:

- **Explaining more clearly** in the online application why we ask residents how they plan to use the wellbeing grant.
- Working with other council departments to **obtain eligibility information** directly where possible, reducing the amount of evidence residents need to provide.
- **Strengthening joint working** with Kensington Leisure Centre to help resolve membership issues more quickly and provide better support to residents.
- **Introducing an alternative leisure offer** for residents who do not feel comfortable using Kensington Leisure Centre.

These changes have helped make the programme easier to access and more responsive to residents' needs.

What the Grenfell Partnerships Team has learnt

The programme has generated learning that is relevant beyond the Community Support programme, and it should continue to inform wider service improvements and policy changes at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC):

- **Be clear and consistent.** Residents need to understand the rules, requirements, and boundaries, and see that they are applied fairly and consistently.
- **Communicate openly and honestly.** When things do not go as planned, explain what happened, apologise, and acknowledge the impact on residents. Share problems and challenges so that we can explore solutions together.
- **Listen and respond with empathy.** Be responsive to questions and complaints, take time to understand residents' perspectives, and respond with care. When people are distressed or unhappy, it is often best to address concerns quickly and directly rather than relying solely on the formal complaints process. Since the cyber-attack, complaint responses have taken longer, which can leave residents feeling unheard.
- **Be flexible in how services are delivered.** While most residents are comfortable using digital services and communications, some prefer face-to-face conversations or telephone contact and should be supported in these ways.

Through the Grenfell Community Advocacy Team's work, we have also gathered specific insights about areas where residents are not getting the support they need, which we are working with other teams to address.

The Grenfell Partnerships Team has been working with the Independent Scrutiny Function to explore other ways in which we might take forward some of the learning from the programme and use it to influence the wider council.

The Grenfell Partnerships Team's priorities

Looking ahead, the GPT intend to:

- Launch the Year 2 review in August, working with the OSG and the ISF, so residents can share their views on the programme's impact and suggest improvements for Year 2 and beyond.
- Continue to work with the OSG to design the main community activities programme, with the aim of launching it before Christmas.
- Continue to improve the reach of the programme and explore new ways of communicating with residents to reduce the reliance on the printed and digital newsletter.
- Develop and publish clearer monitoring dashboards to support transparency and community understanding of the programme.
- Make sustainable decisions about leisure centre memberships, balancing resident feedback, financial pressures and the overall purpose of the programme.
- Gather feedback from residents who have received support by GCAT and use this to review the offer to make sure it is having maximum impact.

Assessment from the Independent Scrutiny Function (ISF)

Since May 2025, the ISF has monitored the programme's progress through quarterly reviews of GPT monitoring data, taking into consideration:

- Delivery, reach and impact of the support provided
- Handling of complaints
- Reporting and transparency
- How well the programme centres residents' experiences and repairs harm
- Expenditure

Alongside this, the ISF has met regularly with the GPT, facilitated community sensemaking sessions with residents, engaged with the OSG, and reviewed monitoring, survey and dashboard evidence relating to the Community Support programme.

Based on the evidence reviewed during the first year and a half, the ISF is satisfied that the GPT has delivered the community programme in line with the agreed model and programme intentions.

The programme has moved beyond initial implementation into more established delivery. This has enabled scrutiny to shift from checking whether core elements of the model were in place towards examining how effectively they are working for different residents, what impact they are having and how learning is informing improvement.

The ISF considers the programme's ability to maintain access to support during disruption, particularly following the cyber incident, to be a notable strength. The use of manual processes, drop-ins, telephone applications and other direct routes helped maintain continuity where normal systems were unavailable.

However, the evidence also points to areas requiring continued scrutiny in Year 2. These include:

- Understanding who is still not being reached
- Strengthening transparency around expenditure and decision-making
- Ensuring monitoring information is accessible and meaningful to residents
- Clarifying how complex cases are coordinated across wider council services
- Continuing to evidence how restorative practice is shaping delivery in practical terms

What the Independent Scrutiny Function has learnt

Programme delivery

1. Accessibility

The programme has established several routes into support, including digital, telephone and face-to-face options. Equity of access has been an ongoing area of scrutiny, including monitoring differences in reach and take-up across groups of residents. As delivery continues, the focus remains on understanding the reasons for differences in access and whether adaptations to delivery are helping to reduce barriers.

The evidence reviewed so far suggests that flexibility has helped the programme maintain access during disruption and respond to different preferences. However, continued scrutiny is needed to understand who remains underrepresented or less able to access support, why this is the case and whether adaptations to delivery are reducing those barriers.

ONGOING SCRUTINY FOCUS

The ISF will examine differences in access and take-up between groups, the reasons for any gaps, and how this evidence is used to adapt delivery.

2. Community involvement and decision-making

Residents have influenced the programme through a range of routes, including the OSG, annual reviews, workshops, complaints and wider engagement. Feedback gathered through the Year 1 review directly informed a number of changes to the programme, which were subsequently communicated to residents. Changes have also been made to the OSG, including clearer Terms of Reference setting out its role and what it can and cannot influence.

The remaining focus for Year 2 is to continue to understand how these different routes for involvement work together and how residents can influence the programme as it develops. The Year 2 review will provide another important opportunity for a wider group of residents to shape future changes, alongside the OSG's more focused role with the programme's community activities.

ONGOING SCRUTINY FOCUS

The ISF will continue to scrutinise how different forms of resident involvement influence programme decisions and delivery. We will also reshape ISF scrutiny and reflection sessions to ensure they provide opportunities for overall programme scrutiny now that the OSG has a narrower remit.

3. Meaningful monitoring

From the outset, the ISF expected scrutiny of the Community Support programme to go beyond activity and take-up data. Over the past year and a half, the depth and breadth of evidence available to support scrutiny has increased.

As monitoring has developed, the ISF has been able to draw on survey data, demographic insight, GCAT examples, OSG discussions, community sensemaking activity and increasingly

developed dashboard reporting. This has made it easier to examine who the support is reaching, how residents experience it, what difference it is making and where gaps or inequalities may remain.

ONGOING SCRUTINY FOCUS

The ISF will continue to scrutinise the quality, accessibility and use of monitoring data, including whether it supports transparent decision-making and meaningful assessment of reach, resident experience and impact.

4. Issues beyond the programme's reach

Some issues raised through the Community programme cannot be addressed by the programme team alone. This is particularly clear in relation to complex cases, including housing-related advocacy, where addressing residents' needs depends on wider council systems.

ONGOING SCRUTINY FOCUS

The ISF will continue to examine how learning from the Community programme is shared and acted on across the wider council, so that scrutiny supports both programme improvement and longer-term change.

Wider influence and legacy

The Community Support programme has generated practical learning about what resident-centred and restorative support requires from wider council systems and ways of working.

For the wider council, this raises several implications. There is a need for clear routes for escalating and coordinating complex cases that cross departmental boundaries, clearer shared responsibility where residents' needs do not sit neatly within one service, and approaches to communication and access that recognise different levels of trust, confidence, digital access and support needs. The programme also demonstrates the value of bringing together quantitative monitoring and residents' experiences when assessing whether services are working as intended.

A key legacy question moving forward is therefore how learning from the programme is translated into wider council practice. This will require clear mechanisms for identifying transferable learning, taking it into the relevant council teams and decision-making spaces, and tracking whether it leads to changes in policy, service design or ways of working.

YEARS 2-3 OF THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The Independent Scrutiny Function's priorities

For the remainder of year 2, the ISF will prioritise:

- **Continuing the agreed scrutiny cycle**, following up on outstanding questions from the last year and a half, and looking at how the GPT uses learning from monitoring, resident feedback and delivery experience to shape the next stage of the programme.
- **Scrutinising the community activities** offer and the role of resident involvement in shaping them. Including how decisions are made, the role of the OSG, how residents influence delivery and how learning from early activity informs future funding and delivery decisions.
- **Continuing scrutiny of the Community dashboard** and wider reporting arrangements. This will include whether the dashboard is accessible and useful for residents, whether the data is clear and includes enough narrative explanation and whether monitoring information is being used to inform delivery.
- **Examining how learning from the Community support programme is used to influence wider council practice**. There is an opportunity to draw together learning about access, trust, communication, resident involvement, advocacy, monitoring and cross-council coordination, so that insights from the programme contribute to the longer-term legacy of Grenfell Support. The ISF is working with GCAT and housing teams to identify ways to work and learn together to improve resident experiences.

- **Support the GPT to act on the ISF's recommendations** about how to support wider impact and legacy from the programme, based on a workshop held with the GPT in June 2026:
    - Codify its restorative way of working e.g identify principles, practical examples and learning (e.g. about barriers and enablers).
    - Develop a structured approach to learning about how to effectively influence the wider organisation. Use test and learn cycles to ensure a focused approach with rapid and actionable findings.
    - Work in partnership with colleagues across the council who are adopting and working to spread similar ways of working.
    - Develop approaches to communicating with and supporting colleagues.
- The GPT will start to **codify its learning** in the autumn of 2026 and identify how best to share the insight to influence more widely within the council. The ISF will review progress as part of its scrutiny in autumn 2026, and provide an update to RBKC's CEO and leader - referencing the GPT's work to codify its practice and sharing its recommendations about what's needed to spread the practice across the council.