

Winter 2022 issue!

insight

The South Essex Homes Resident Newsletter



Our Hostels staff collected fantastic gift donations for kids living in hostels over Christmas



YOUR FREE COPY!

Be part of it!

HELPFUL HINTS & TIPS!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

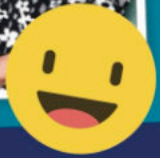
FALL PREVENTION:

Advice to help avoid injury this winter



HITTING THE BULLSEYE

Kestrel House residents enjoy thriving darts club



AND LOTS MORE...

- Tenant Board Member vacancy
- Major works at Balmoral begin

Vacancy
for a...

TENANT BOARD MEMBER

South Essex Homes manages and maintains homes in Southend-on-Sea on behalf of Southend Borough Council; whilst continuing to improve services, involve our customers and build strong communities.

We have a high calibre Board made up of 10 other non-executive Directors and are looking to recruit a tenant of Southend Borough Council, as a Board member with the ability to build effective relationships internally and externally and a strong commitment to best practice in governance.

We are particularly interested in people with skills or knowledge relating to business acumen, financial awareness or housing experience - which will help us to evolve and ensure our organisation continues to develop and improve in a changing environment.

We anticipate that people interested in this role will be passionate about making a contribution, can take on an ambassadorial role and be a strong team player, whilst embracing the future ambitions of South Essex Homes to provide good value, quality housing.

This vacancy is a paid voluntary position, which would actively enhance any job opportunities for the successful candidates in the future.

South Essex Homes in partnership with Southend Tenants & Residents Federation welcomes applications regardless of race, sex, age, disability or marital status.

For an informal discussion, please contact Simon Putt on 01702 212624.

The application pack is available on the South Essex Homes website or can be requested by email to carolcooper@seh.southend.gov.uk.

Closing date: Friday 1st March.

Please note: subject to the responses received, the Coronavirus situation and the ability to hold interviews, candidates will be advised of the subsequent interview process and time in due course.



EASTER EGGSTRA

An afternoon of **FUN FILLED ACTIVITIES** for all the family from midday till **4.00pm** at the **Balmoral Estate, Balmoral Rd., Westcliff on Sunday 17th April.**



Fancy Dress Competition for Children & Adults with PRIZES for best homemade costume, best costume made by a child and best adult costume.

EASTER BONNET PARADE



Your chance to win a prize for best bonnet.



easter egg hunt

Tea, coffee & squash provided as well as your opportunity to talk to STRF and find out what we can do for you!

The STRF Crafting Club will be there giving you a chance to purchase items they have made

REMEMBER TO WATCH OUT FOR SPARKY!



Keep it down!



Just a reminder to please be mindful of the volume of noise your household creates and how this may affect your neighbours.

Whilst general household noise is perfectly normal and understandable, please be considerate of the people around you when you are playing music, watching TV or enjoying video games and be especially careful to avoid disturbing others during night-time hours.

Thank you!

WELCOME

Welcome to the winter issue of Insight and Happy New Year!

I do hope you managed to enjoy the festive season, although it feels like a very long time ago already!

I was very pleased to welcome a new colleague to our Communications team at the end of last year. Amber Rodgers has already been busy shadowing other team members and learning about the organisation as part of her new role. In fact she has written about her day with the Careline team on page 6, as well as contributing some other articles for this issue. Please say 'hello' to Amber if you see her out and about taking photos. 😊

In this issue we delve into the



world of Aaron Services, our gas and heating contractors, and find out more about the work their company does with us and for the wider community here in Southend – I hope you enjoy learning more about them as much as I did.

We've included a puzzle page in this issue, which you'll find on the back page, in the hope that a bit of brain training gives you a good excuse to put the kettle on and get cosy indoors while it's chilly outside!

We'll be back in May with the next issue of Insight – take care until then.

All the best, Julia

Julia Pack, Editor

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Message from Mike

I would like to start off by wishing each of you a happy new year. I hope you had a good time over the festive break and enjoyed the unseasonably warm weather – I'm keeping my fingers crossed we don't have any severe weather incidents over the rest of the winter months!

While it's always good to have a positive outlook as you enter a new year, and there is lots to be positive about including some of the features in this issue of Insight, I would like to start off with a reflection on some sad news. Over the past few weeks, a couple of very highly regarded members of staff have passed away – both of whom would have been known to many residents over the past 16 years since South Essex Homes was set up. Firstly, we lost Steve Turner, who was originally one of our Tenancy Sustainment Officers and later joined our Support Services team, in both roles working closely with hundreds of residents who found

themselves in need of support in terms of their housing situation.

Also, Coral Miller, one of our long-standing Sheltered Housing Officers who will be known to many of our residents in the various sheltered schemes across town in which she worked. You may recall that Coral's cancer journey was featured in an article in the winter 2020 issue of Insight. Steve and Coral, (both pictured above) in their own inimitable ways, contributed to making South Essex Homes the people-focused organisation we always strive to try and be, to the best of our ability. They will both be missed.

This year promises to be a busy year for us, particularly in terms of putting in place measures to enhance even further our focus on building and fire safety in line with the recent Fire Safety Act and the anticipated Building Safety Act and I will provide



further updates in this area as we go through the year.

In a recent conversation with Keith Ducker, the chair of the Southend Tenants and Residents Federation (STRF), I was extremely pleased to hear positive reports about the Fed's recent achievements in organising a cinema trip for over a hundred residents and children at the end of last year, followed by the children's Christmas party arrangements at Kids Kingdom in December. It was also good to hear of their further plans for community events this coming year supported by our own Support Services team and I hope you get the chance to take part in some of these activities if you are able to.

I hope you enjoy reading through the range of articles in this edition of Insight and I look forward to catching up with you in the next edition in the springtime.

Best wishes, Mike

Mike Gatrell, Chief Executive of South Essex Homes



GET IN TOUCH!

For all telephone enquiries freephone **0800 833 160**

For general correspondence write to us at: Insight Magazine, South Essex Homes, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6FY

Email: juliapack@seh.southend.gov.uk



Contact us via Facebook during office hours – simply search for 'South Essex Homes' to find and like our page!

For general information about our services, please visit our website at www.southessexhomes.co.uk

SAFETY FIRST *in* TOWER BLOCKS

A safety system designed to give clear instructions to residents in high rise council housing during emergencies has been tested in Southend.



The voice annunciation system was installed in Longbow flats, in Sherwood Way, and allows emergency services to give instructions through a one-way microphone located on the ground floor. Loudspeakers are on every floor, inside every home, communal area and stairwell so residents can hear the message. It is thought to be one of the first installations of its kind into a tower block used for council housing. The installation was completed in April 2021.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, in partnership with South Essex Homes and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service's Technical Fire Safety Team, tested the system on Tuesday 14 December to make sure it works for residents on all floors of the building.

Cllr Anne Jones, cabinet member for communities and housing, said: "This is the first full emergency exercise testing the system which was run in partnership with South Essex Homes and Essex County Fire & Rescue. These exercises are run on a regular basis to test our systems, procedures, and staff to make sure appropriate processes are followed and more importantly, that they work.

"I'm pleased the exercise went well and want to thank the residents of Longbow flats for their understanding and patience while this event took place. We are committed to supporting our community and take the safety of our residents very seriously and this is an important step in this project."

The system will only ever be used in the event of an emergency and may, for example, enable fire rescue services to coordinate an evacuation of the building or to reassure residents that they need to stay indoors.

Mark Earwicker, Fire Engineer at Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, said: "I'd like to thank our partners and the residents for their assistance with this project and the exercise to test the system's function in a non-emergency situation. This gave our crews and officers an insight into the functionality and use of the system, enabling our procedures to be fine-tuned when using such systems.

"The system has been developed following the tragic fire at Grenfell and the recommendations that have arisen from it. It will enable the safe evacuation of the premises by the occupants in a controlled manner should it become necessary to do so."

Mario Ambrose, Executive Director at South Essex Homes, said: "To see this system, being used by Fire Rescue Service as part of an actual training exercise was very satisfying given the time and effort it has taken to get the system designed, procured, and installed. It could be a life saver, as it will allow the Fire Rescue Service to communicate with residents in the event of a fire, and provide them with guidance on what to do."



Major

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT BEGINS!

Work has now begun on a major project by Houghton & Son to improve a number of properties in the Balmoral tower blocks.

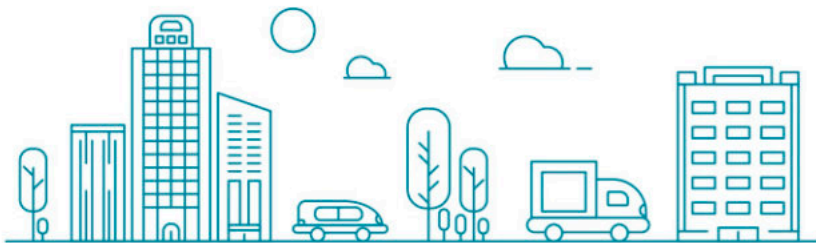
The works involve structural improvement works and complete refurbishment to the top three floors of the high-rise blocks at Brecon, Blackdown, and Grampian.

The improvements are being made following a structural survey of the properties and the works will bring the properties up to current safety standards to ensure the structural resilience of the blocks in the very unlikely event of an explosion.

As well as the structural works, the improvements include installing wall insulation to reduce residents' heating bills and improve energy efficiency. All the tenanted properties of the affected flats will also receive an electrical rewire, new kitchens and bathrooms, fire protection works and an improved air extraction system for the bathrooms. Also on completion of the works the properties will be fully redecorated.

Work has already begun on the 13th floor of Brecon with the removal of kitchen units, bathroom fixtures, and plasterboard in each flat; this work should not cause any disruption to residents before Christmas.

Work on Brecon is expected to be completed by August 2022, with work commencing on Blackdown in September 2022 until May 2023. Afterwards, work will commence at Grampian and this is expected to be completed by January 2024.



Sam Elliott, Support Services Manager, said:

“Houghton & Son have already made a contribution to the local community before the works even began, through a kind donation towards the Balmoral Community Event that took place in October to engage with residents affected by the works. They are also supporting the Balmoral Food Bank throughout the duration of the works, which again is very much appreciated.”



Day in
the Life

CarelineSOS
living smarter together



By Amber Rodgers

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be on the other end of a Careline call? This week I spent a morning shadowing the team at CarelineSOS in Southend and seeing what they get up to on a day-to-day basis.



Tucked away in our West Office, the Careline team are available 24/7 to check in on our sheltered scheme residents if their personal alarms go off. They will also be available to users who have privately purchased a Careline alarm for peace of mind. The scheme allows families of users and users themselves to feel safe in the knowledge that should they fall or become suddenly ill, CarelineSOS will be available to send help and reassurance.

The first thing I realised is that it's not only emergencies that the Careline team will handle during a normal day. In fact, there was only one emergency call during my whole visit. Daily tasks can include testing alarms and making sure they are not low on battery, logging the arrival or departure of wardens in each residence, or making sure that a caller's health and contact details on the system are as up to date as possible in case of emergencies.

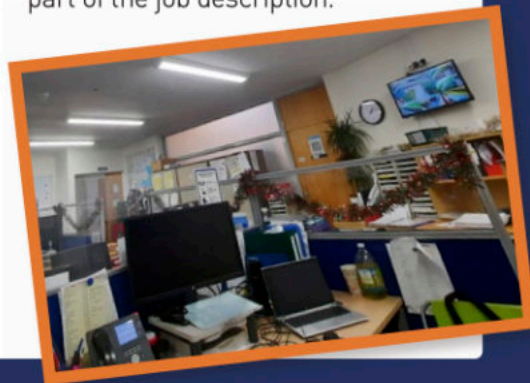
Although it was a quiet morning,

there were times when every phone in the office was ringing and suddenly it felt very busy! Luckily, the staff here work brilliantly as a team and support each other to make sure that a rush like that can be dealt with. Vanessa told me that she loves going into the office to work, as the support you get from your co-workers helps you to deal with some of the more difficult and emotional calls. Not to mention the endless cups of tea being made!

I quickly found out that no call is the same in this office. One minute there was a lady asking for her radio to be turned on, and the next a family member was needing to call 999. You truly never know what is going to happen once you pick up that call. Unfortunately, it was also apparent that whilst most callers are lovely, there can be an ugly side to the job with others shouting and swearing on the phone to staff. However, even when being shouted at, the staff want to help out as much as they can.

Despite this, there seems to be genuine relationships being formed over these phone lines, as the Careline staff really do care about their callers. They're a friendly voice for regular callers to talk to about their favourite sandwiches or what biscuit they would have with their cup of tea. It is clear that the staff in this office just want to make sure that the caller is feeling okay physically and mentally.

Although this is a small and busy team who are often under pressure, they always find time to make each other smile and laugh throughout the day, which is an equally important part of the job description.



CarelineSOS
living smarter together

0800 833162 | info@carelinesos.co.uk
www.carelinesos.co.uk

Our SOS personal alarm service offers the following benefits:

We provide 24 hours a day call centre response to our personal alarms and fall detectors

Affordable pricing for elderly alarms, response alarms and our support services

Safety and peace of mind for the elderly or disabled in their own homes



REWILDING

Like most people, you may not have heard of the term 'rewilding' before reading this article.

Councils around the UK have their own definitions, but Southend Council generally define 'rewilding' as environmental conservation and ecological restoration. They recognise that it aims to create self-sustaining environments by reintroducing lost animal species to their natural environments.

Rewilding can provide many benefits for our local nature and wildlife. It allows us to reverse biodiversity loss and help our wildlife to adapt to climate change. It can also benefit our own health and wellbeing by creating more breathable air, cleaner water, and healthy soils – as well as improving our mental wellbeing.

You can make your own changes to help rewilding efforts in your local area, such as creating wildlife friendly gardens to help the wildlife to move through them, and not mowing your grass as regularly as you may currently do. And if you don't have a garden, even a window

box or some plants on your balcony will make a difference.

This can also be done on a large scale in local parks, examples in Southend were outlined in the Southend Borough Council 'Pollination Strategy' in which the council aimed to improve the ecosystem for plants and wildlife by maintaining areas of longer grass and only mowing paths or specific areas for recreation in parks. Along with introducing more green corridors, this initiative allowed native plants to flower and provided nectar for bees and insects.

Here at South Essex Homes, we also aim to rewild some of the green areas we manage on behalf of the Council. This project will kick start this year with a series of mini community orchards that are planned for areas surrounding the Balmoral estate, sheltered housing complexes and other flats. Through a series of volunteer and community events, the aim is to plant a variety of trees and

bushes and to include educational boards to help raise awareness surrounding sustainability.

A similar project has already been featured in our last issue of insight where residents of Keats House worked to introduce a wildlife area and orchard in their communal garden. This was not only beneficial for the wildlife but also for the sense of community amongst the residents!



There will be opportunities for you to get involved, have your say and make suggestions about our rewilding project as we develop these ideas over the coming year, so please look out for more information in future issues of Insight!





NEWS FROM YOUR FEDERATION

Happy New Year to you all and we are hoping for a better 2022

The Federation have been busy as usual since the last issue of Insight. We put on the following for residents across the borough and will continue to put on FREE EVENTS & BARBEQUES that you are all welcome to attend.

OCTOBER 2021 CINEMA TRIP



At last, we held the Family Cinema trip. This happened in the October school half term. Families attended the Odeon to see *Ainbo: Spirit of the Amazon*. We would like to thank our great sponsors, in alphabetical order: **Aaron Services, George Jones, Pilon & South Essex Homes.**

It was very well supported over the 3 days of the event. We had 550 places available, 601 places were applied for and 549 residents, both children and adults, were given tickets. This was a great turn out even with the Covid restrictions that were in force at the time.



DECEMBER 2021 CHRISTMAS PARTY

We were able to offer 240 places to the party at Kids Kingdom at Garons Park. We held the event over 2 days at the beginning of the school Christmas holidays.

Thanks again to our great sponsors in alphabetical order: **Aaron Services, George Jones, Houghton Building, PFS, Pilon & South Essex Homes.**

This again was well supported with 237 places taken up by children across the borough. All the children had great fun, with food and drink provided for both the children and the adults who came along. Father Christmas attended on both days and gave every child a present.

Since the event we have had many emails, telephone calls and messages saying how they enjoyed the party and asking if we will be holding the party again next year, if so, can they be invited.

That just shows how well it went. We had 8 families contact us before the event cancelling due to Covid, but they did not miss out, we delivered the children's presents to them in time for Christmas.



HOSTELS



The Federation donated presents to every child in the Hostels for Christmas, helping to make their day a bit better while in one of our hostels awaiting accommodation. The presents were left outside each door, so that they found them when opening the door as if Santa had delivered them.

CHRISTMAS 2022



As last year's event was such a success, we will again be putting on a Christmas Party at Kids Kingdom on Monday 19th and Tuesday 20th December 6.15pm to 8.15pm. More details will be inside a future issue of Insight, our Facebook page (strf-2020), our website (strf.uk) and on your estate notice boards.



SUMMER 2022

We will be putting on events across the borough, so keep an eye on your local notice board, the Facebook page, strf-2020, the website, strf.uk and the next issue of Insight.

EASTER

17TH APRIL 22

The Federation are arranging an event on Easter Sunday this year.

This will be at the Balmoral Centre on Sunday 17th April from midday until 4.00pm with the following taking place during the afternoon.

1. **Easter egg hunt that all children can enter.**
2. **Easter Bonnet parade with the winner receiving a trophy and a voucher.**
3. **Fancy dress competition in 3 categories: Best child made costume – Best homemade costume – Best adult costume.**

All winners will receive a trophy and a voucher.

FEDERATION

MEETINGS

Why not join the Federation meetings in 2022, either in person at the Civic Centre (Look for the banner), or via Zoom at 10am? We will be having guest speakers, organisations, and many other interesting items at each meeting for you to get involved with. There are refreshments provided and a great welcome to all who attend.

These meetings will be held on the following dates:
Feb 22nd - Mar 29th - Apr 26th - May 31st - Jun 28th
- Jul 26th - Aug 30th - Sep 27th - Oct 25th - Nov 29th
- Dec no meeting.

The Zoom invite will be published on our Facebook page strf-2020 and also on the website **strf.uk** each month.





AARON

SERVICES

A Proud History with South Essex Homes



Aaron Services are a familiar face around town, having proudly worked with South Essex Homes, our residents, and our local community since 2014.

They are a market leading, multi-fuel heating and hot water specialist, who look after our >5,000 domestic and commercial properties completing services, maintenance, repairs, reactive installations, electrical testing, and remedial works.

Their dedicated 24/7 in-house delivery teams are qualified in all fuel types, including gas, oil, solid fuel, and renewable technologies; complemented by a team of electricians and multi-skilled tradespeople.

Involved in the South Essex Community

When they're not busy fixing our heating and hot water, Aaron Services have supported many meaningful, locally focused initiatives that prioritise South Essex people, and businesses. We've shared a selection of these to the right.

Local man Greg Hunter (pictured right), who served for 9 years as an Army Paratrooper before becoming an Aaron Services operative in 2018 gained full gas and additional qualifications under their programme.

When asked to summarise his experience Greg said: "The improver role at Aaron is perfect for anyone getting out of the military and has a mind for fault finding and finding out the 'why'. With the support of everyone at Aaron everything will fall into place."



▲ Aaron Services friends onboard the HMS Queen Elizabeth helping to raise awareness of their support.

◆ Greg, an ex-Army Paratrooper, is now an Aaron Services operative

Investment in our Local People

Committed to supporting our local people, Aaron Services have provided >14 apprenticeship and work experience placements within their South Essex operation.

They've also achieved the Armed Forces Covenant, Employer Recognition Scheme - Silver Award, in recognition of the work welcoming many ex-military candidates into work experience, apprenticeship, and permanent posts, benefiting from the variety of transferable skills and qualities that the armed forces community have been able to bring to their workplace.



Electric Vehicles Support Net Zero

As a big business Aaron Services take their responsibility to look after the environment seriously. One of the ways in which they are supporting us with our plans for net zero emissions by 2030 is by introducing electric vehicles into their fleet. The benefits of these 100% electric vehicles (above petrol and diesel) include:

- **Better for the environment. They emit fewer greenhouse gases and air pollutants.**
- European Energy Agency research found that, even with electricity generation, the carbon emissions of an electric car are around 17 – 30% lower.
- **Improved air quality. With no tailpipe, pure electric vehicles produce no carbon dioxide emissions when driving.**
- **They can help with noise pollution, especially in areas where speeds are generally low.**

Supporting Southend Tenants and Residents Federation

Each year, alongside South Essex Homes, Aaron Services make sizable donations to the Southend Tenants and Residents Federation chaired by Keith Ducker. The Federation organise events to enrich the lives of underprivileged children within their community, most recently a 3-day Family Cinema and separate Christmas trip in 2021.

Providing Covid-19 Emergency Fuel Vouchers

Last winter, Aaron Services supported by The Sureserve Foundation, offered Covid-19 Emergency Fuel Vouchers to South Essex Homes residents who otherwise wouldn't have been able to heat their homes due to loss of income/increased fuel use. The vouchers provided £1,115.40 of benefit within our community!

ADVICE for RESIDENTS

Looking after more than our heating and hot water, Aaron Services have provided some useful information for our communities, outlined below:

Gas Safety Advice

Always keen to raise awareness of gas safety and the importance of taking care of your gas appliances, Aaron Services have provided us with some top tips to stay Gas Safe:

- **Know the symptoms of CO poisoning: headaches, nausea, breathlessness, collapse, dizziness, and loss of consciousness.**
- **If you smell gas or think there might be a gas leak, call the free 24-hour national gas emergency number immediately on 0800 111 999.**
- **Never attempt to work on a gas appliance yourself, always seek the help of a qualified engineer who can work on your gas cooker, boiler, or fire in a safe way.**
- **Always ask to see your engineer's Gas Safe ID card. Make sure you check the back of the card, which will state which gas appliances they are qualified to work on.**

Badly fitted and poorly serviced gas appliances can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO is a highly poisonous gas that can kill quickly and without warning, as you cannot see it, taste it or smell it.

By taking care of your gas appliances properly you are taking care of your home, your loved ones and even looking out for your local community.

Energy Efficiency Guidance

Aaron Services are proud supporters of The Sureserve Foundation. A charity whose purpose is to create warmer communities by helping to alleviate fuel poverty, promoting fuel efficiency and in turn, lessening the financial burden of high energy bills.

Understanding that too many households face challenges to their everyday well-being, as a result of fuel poverty and energy inefficiency, the Foundation seeks to support in two key ways:

1. **Through the provision of education and advice services to combat fuel poverty and inefficient energy use; and**
2. **Through the delivery of projects in collaboration with industry partners, to provide energy efficient home and community improvements to combat fuel inefficiency and thus poverty.**

Thanks to their close relationship with the industry leading energy efficiency organisation National Energy Action, the Foundation are able to offer advice and guidance to help individuals tackle the challenges of energy efficiency and fuel poverty.

Please visit www.thesureservefoundation.org/advice-and-guidance to access energy advice and guidance, including:

- **Energy Supply – switching energy and gas supplier.**
- **Changing my energy usage habits.**
- **Making my home more energy efficient.**
- **Advice relating to fuel debt.**
- **Water Saving Tips.**



Welcome back to Leasehold Matters; the page in Insight devoted to Leaseholder issues

Welcome back to Leasehold Matters the page in Insight devoted to Leaseholders. We hope you enjoyed the Christmas Holidays and wish you the very best for the new year ahead. Due to the current situation our Focus Group meetings are still on hold, but we are aiming to begin these as soon as it is safe to do so.

Best Wishes *The Leasehold Team*



Estimated Service Charges 2022-23

The Estimated Service Charges will be sent out shortly. If you have any questions about your service charges, please send them in writing to South Essex Homes, Leasehold Services, PO Box 5817, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 9EL or email LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk For payment enquiries the Council's Income Team can be contacted on 01702 215797



Letting your property? Have a lodger?

Then let us know! If you have recently let your property or have a lodger at the address then give our Contact Centre a call on 0800 833 160. We can update your details and send out a form so your tenants and lodgers can also report repairs!

Don't forget if the property is likely to be unoccupied for over 60 days some items of the Buildings Insurance cover may be excluded.

Gas Safety Certificates

Thank you to all of you who have sent your Gas Safety Certificate in recently. If your most recent check is due to expire, please forward a copy of the new certificate to:

South Essex Homes, Leasehold Services, PO Box 5817, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 9EL or email LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk

Had a new boiler installed?

If you have recently had a new boiler fitted. A copy of the installation certificate is all that is needed in the first year.

Don't forget to visit the Gas Safe website for lots of useful information and sign up for free reminders for your next annual check:

www.staygassafe.co.uk



Driving in Snow and Ice

Time - Give yourself enough time to de-ice and remove snow from your roof

Check tyre tread - Poor tyre tread is more likely to skid

Keep revs low and try to stay in higher gears

Steer into a skid - do not break or let go of the wheel

Drive on fresh snow rather than tyre marks of other cars if the road has not been gritted



PREVENTING FALLS

None of us are immune to falling over. Old or young, we will all find ourselves tripping over our own feet or missing a step on the stairs at one point in time. During the winter months this can happen more often for some people.

this Winter

We try our best to look out for you and keep you safe on our communal paths during icy periods throughout the winter by clearing them of ice or snow and placing salt to prevent any re-icing. However, here are some things you can do to protect yourself when walking out and about this winter.

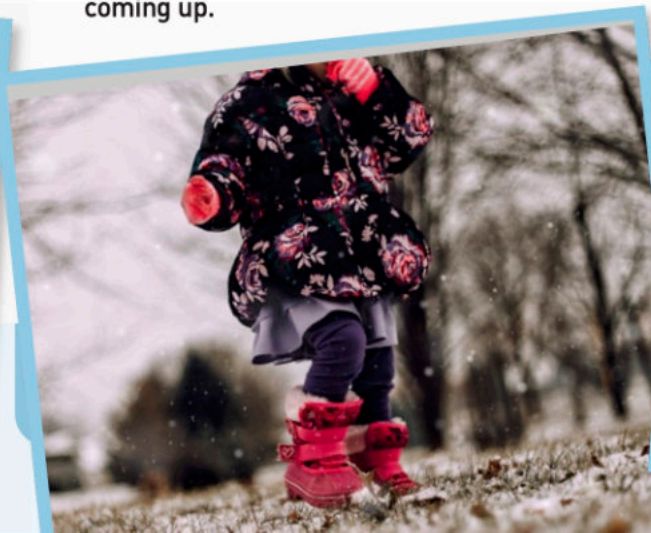
- 1. Wrap up** – The colder you are, the more tense your muscles will become and as a result your balance will be worse.
- 2. Be direct** – Avoid shortcuts and stick to cleared, gritted pathways even if it means walking a longer route.
- 3. Hands free** – Keep your hands available and out of your pockets. If you do fall you will want your hands to protect your face from injury.
- 4. Slow down** – Take your time and walk carefully. Keeping your toes pointed slightly outwards like a penguin will help you to maintain a stable base for balance.
- 5. Be aware** – Remember that grassy patches are not necessarily less icy than footpaths, you may not see it, but they can be just as slippery.
- 6. Correct footwear** – Wear good shoes with traction on them to better grip the floor and keep your soles as flat to the ground as possible.
- 7. Limit baggage** – Be extra careful if you need to carry heavy bags as this can throw off your centre of gravity and cause you to lose balance more easily.
- 8. Lights on** – Try to walk on pathways that are well lit so that you can see any icy patches that might be coming up.

If you do fall, do not rush to get back up on your feet. Stay where you are for a moment and assess how you are feeling, if you feel that you are not badly hurt then slowly start to get up and steady yourself on your knees first. Try to sit down somewhere and rest for a little while once you are up. If you find yourself struggling to get back up or are more injured than you thought, then try to grab a passer-by's attention or call 999 for help. After your fall make sure you keep an eye on your overall health and see a doctor if you feel that you are not recovering well.

Falling outside may increase your risk of falling again. Make sure you take precautions to counteract this in your home. Here are some things you can do to prevent falling in your home.

- Use non-slip mats in your bathroom.
- Remove any clutter, especially from floors, which may get in the way and trip you up.
- Keep hallways well lit and don't try to walk to the bathroom in the dark.
- If you have a personal Careline alarm keep it on you so that it is in reach if you do fall, you can also get a specific fall detector alarm through Careline.

Stay safe this winter and always call 999 if you feel that you have injured yourself, or are not recovering from a fall.





Who are we?

The Resident Scrutiny Forum (RSF) is an independent group of Southend residents who scrutinise the services that South Essex Homes provides on behalf of the Council.

The RSF was formed in 2012 and was originally made up of six residents who were interviewed to ensure the candidates who were selected had the right kind of skills to scrutinise South Essex Homes' performance and services.

On an ongoing basis the group are looking at how satisfied residents are with their housing services overall and whether South Essex Homes is meeting its targets.



Sound interesting?

The RSF have at this time just five members so are looking to recruit a new member to join them.

If you are a South Essex Homes resident or leaseholder and feel that you can work alongside others, are like minded and dedicated and you have some free time to spare then please contact them using the contact details below.

What areas need attention?

Do you feel there are services that South Essex Homes provides for you that could benefit from being reviewed, analysed or just looked at - to make sure those services are being delivered in the best way possible for both residents and staff?

If there are any departments or service areas you would like the RSF to look at you can, with confidence of confidentiality, contact any member of the RSF group using their details below.

- **Chris McPhillips** (RSF CHAIR) - Email: chris.mcphillips@sehscrutiny.co.uk
- **Brenda Tilley** (RSF VICE CHAIR) - Email: brenda.tilley@sehscrutiny.co.uk
- **Elaine Ridge** (RSF SECRETARY) - Email: elaine.ridge@sehscrutiny.co.uk
- **Ann-Marie Gough** (RSF MEMBER) - Email: ann.marie.gough@sehscrutiny.co.uk
- **Diane Nicholls** (RSF MEMBER) - Email: diane.nicholls@sehscrutiny.co.uk

Or you can email **Sue Rickard** from our Support Services team on suerickard@seh.southend.gov.uk

OUR SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

Here at South Essex Homes, we are embracing the social media revolution as we venture into different social media sites.

We have therefore now entered the ever-growing worlds of Instagram and TikTok!

One of our very first TikToks shared the views from the top of Longbow flats and received 600+ views which we hope to keep growing with future content.

We will be sharing events and fun behind the scenes footage so follow us over there to make sure you don't miss out... @SouthEssexHomes or find us on #SouthEssexHomes



What is Instagram?

Instagram is a social networking app which allows its users to share pictures and videos with their friends. The app can be downloaded for free from the usual app stores. Instagram is all about encouraging creative originality. Indeed, Instagram is probably among the reasons behind the resurgence in the popularity of photography.



What is TikTok?

TikTok is a short-form, video-sharing app that allows users to create and share 15-second videos on any topic. The "For You" page on TikTok is a feed of videos that are recommended to users based on their activity on the app.



Kestrel House Darts Evenings

Sasha Bush has been living at Kestrel House with her husband John for around six years now. Sasha plays for a local mixed dart league and used to be in a ladies league before play was unfortunately suspended due to Covid. A few years ago, Sasha decided to put her skills to great use and has since been running a darts club at Kestrel House for residents and their family members.

The club started with just two residents at first and now welcomes up to 15 people each week. Sasha is extremely proud to see residents who had initially never played before and just came along for the company, now playing and practicing together throughout the week. She believes this has had a great impact on the confidence of residents and their overall health. Each week they even have a trophy for the winners to show off their achievement!

Not only is this a darts club, but residents can use it as a time to socialise and enjoy the nibbles and cups of tea provided by Sasha. This club has allowed residents to bond and make new friends, which has made them feel less alone in such difficult times.

Although the club is of course only able to run when Covid rules allow, Sasha welcomes anyone to get involved in the club. People don't even need to play darts, they can simply pop along for a chat or for help with a variety of things from using mobile phones to booking outings if they need it.

Darts evening at Kestrel House is hosted on Monday nights, Covid restrictions permitting.



Hostel Halloween Fun!

Support Services Officers Sophie, Katie and Hannah created a pumpkin patch in one of the hostel gardens in Southchurch Road for a Halloween fun event at the end of October.

This was for the homeless children and parents to experience a pumpkin patch without the high costs. All children were able to pick one pumpkin to decorate at the table or take home and carve.

They had games, crafts, sweets, toffee apples and hot dogs. Lots of children turned out from across the hostels and it was a really successful day.

Sophie said: "We wanted to thank Jamie and Ian from the bulk refuse team for helping provide us with a wheelbarrow and a wooden pallet. We also wanted to thank Hollie Pocket Events for donating some lovely Halloween balloons."



Hostels staff made kids SMILE at Christmas!

Sophie, Katie and Hannah from our wonderful hostels team hired a van back in December and drove to Romford to collect presents for the hostel children donated by the charity S.M.I.L.E London & Essex.

They organised for the boxes to be given out in the week before Christmas to all children living in hostels, along with gifts kindly donated from Southend Council's Toy Drive.

Sophie said: "We were really happy to receive such kind and generous donations and our children were so delighted to have some presents for the big day."

"Things like this make being a front line staff member worthwhile, knowing we can put a smile on the homeless children's faces, especially at Christmas."

"It was a great day all round."



WORD SEARCH

A I I A K W O B K L E E U P
 C E R E R E B A I K K B W I
 I U O A I N D T E R E S L N
 T E P K N I A I E I S R F K
 T N T I V T N A O I W F A S
 F I E E D N O A K L E U T T
 E C L O V E N R W R E W E N
 A E H E O L H R T K T R T I
 E H U P R A T O C A R D N F
 H E C C E V W W E L E N E S
 E E V W T T I P S F E V E I
 A T E D O P I O L R I N A O
 R T W I S R N D E P E K I L
 T I W V W W S S A N L E S I

SWEET
 VALENTINE
 HEART
 BOW
 KISS
 ARROW
 PINK
 LIKE
 LOVE
 FATE
 CARD
 CUPID

PUZZLES

SUDOKU FOR BEGINNERS

Sudoku is a puzzle based on a small number of very simple rules:

- Every square has to contain a single number
- Only the numbers from 1 through to 9 can be used
- Each 3x3 box can only contain each number from 1 to 9 once
- Each vertical column can only contain each number from 1 to 9 once

- Each horizontal row can only contain each number from 1 to 9 once

You may have always been put off by the harder Sudoku puzzles printed in newspapers (and you wouldn't be the first person to feel that way!) so maybe try with the easy puzzle below and work along the line as they get slightly harder each time. It is basically one big process of elimination!

EASY

8	1		9	4	2	5	7	6
6	4	9	5		1			8
2	5				6	9	1	
7	9		1	3	4			5
		5		2			4	1
1	8	4		6		3	2	9
	2	8				1	9	7
		6	4	1	7	8	5	
						4	6	

MEDIUM

2		9				7	5	
		4		9		6		8
5				2	6			
	7				4		8	2
	3		2	7		9		
9	5			8			4	
		5			2	4		
			3			2	6	9
	2	4						

HARD

	5		8	1				2
6	2							5
				5		8	3	
3	8	6				7		
			7		1			5
		7			4	6		
2				4		5		
		1	9				7	4
					2		1	8