

# Spring 2023 issue!

# insight

The South Essex Homes  
Resident Newsletter



Art project with hostel youngsters

## HELPFUL HINTS & TIPS!



Be part  
of it!

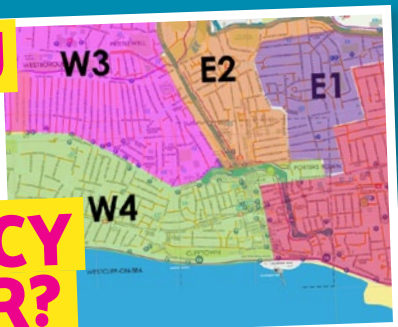
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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

### YOUR RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES EXPLAINED



### DO YOU KNOW YOUR TENANCY OFFICER?



## AND LOTS MORE...

- Help us to 'make things right'
- All you need to know about repairs
- How we are helping domestic abuse survivors

  
**southessexhomes**  
working smarter together



# HELPING DA SURVIVORS

In February, we received the excellent news that following our assessment, South Essex Homes has achieved Foundation Membership of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). This is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse (DA).

We received some extremely positive feedback from the Regional DAHA Lead, saying that it was evident with every single person that they spoke to, that we were absolutely committed to tackling this issue together. She reflected that we should be extremely proud of how we are working to embed the highest standards when responding to domestic abuse.

DAHA have also said: "We are delighted to have been able to award South Essex Homes DAHA Accreditation (Foundational) status. Demonstrating excellent partnership working, a deeply embedded believing, caring & compassionate culture & always working to improve & do more.

"We saw strong leadership which has been instrumental in the embedding of such a positive survivor-led response. Thank you from the whole DAHA Team here for what you are doing for survivors including children. You are a beacon of good practice in Essex."

Naturally we are delighted to have this affirmation from DAHA but even more importantly for us and our residents, is how undertaking the DAHA accreditation journey has helped us make a difference for people who experience the effects of domestic abuse.

## Who to contact for help

You can speak to any member of South Essex Homes staff about domestic abuse if you need any help or advice for yourself or someone you know.

**South Essex Homes' DA team** can be reached through an email to [SEHDA@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:SEHDA@seh.southend.gov.uk) or phone us on **0800 833160**.

**The Essex Domestic Abuse Helpline (COMPASS)** can be reached on **0330 333 7 444** and is open 24 hours a day. Visit their website at [www.essexcompass.org.uk](http://www.essexcompass.org.uk).

**Essex Police** have a freephone number for victims of domestic violence: **0800 358 0351**. This is an

alternative to the non-emergency number 101. Always call 999 in an emergency.

**Safe Steps** – open weekdays 9am - 5pm

Call them on **01702 302333**, visit their website at [www.safesteps.org](http://www.safesteps.org) or send an email to [enquiries@safesteps.org](mailto:enquiries@safesteps.org)

**SETDAB Refuge services**

Call **0808 2000 247** or visit [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk).

**National DA Helpline** - 24 hours **0808 2000 247**

**Respect** - Helpline for perpetrators **0808 802 4040**



# WELCOME

## Welcome to the spring issue of Insight!



Once more, the months seem to be whizzing by and here we are in my favourite season of all! I took the cover photo on a visit to Hyde Park in April and thought you might appreciate the stunning springtime colours.

It feels to me like this issue of Insight, more than any in recent memory, contains a real concentration of important articles, covering a wide range of topics. We've gone 'back to basics' in a way to explain key subjects relating to your tenancy such as rent and service charges, water bills, repairs, tenancy patches, lift safety and complaints - so it may be useful to hang on to this magazine for future reference.

Once more, we are also covering stories about some of the great work going on in Southend communities and I especially enjoyed learning about the art projects (see pages 8 & 9). It never ceases to amaze me how talented our residents are - Paul's work is exquisite and I hope you enjoy seeing that too. And if you have any hidden talents, please get in touch to share them with us!

I do hope you enjoy the upcoming summer months, we will be back with more news and stories in August.

*All the best, Julia*

Julia Pack Editor

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## Message from Mike

I hope everyone was able to enjoy the various bank holiday breaks we've recently been able to benefit from, including the special bank holiday for His Majesty's coronation.



It seems to have been a very busy spring 2023 and I think that's also reflected in the number of important information articles in this edition of Insight.

In particular, I would point out the article regarding the recent increases in rent and service charges see page 15. While I'm sure everyone understands that costs of heating and utility charges have all risen significantly over the past year - this has also been the case for materials, wages and contractor costs, especially since the war in Ukraine started - and our whole team is very much aware of the

pressure this places on your household budgets. We are conscious of every penny we spend on your behalf and our team are waiting to help any resident who finds themselves struggling with not

only their rent, but their finances in general. Please do not hesitate to contact your Tenancy Services Officer or our Specialist Income Management Team if you need any assistance or advice - we are here to help.

On the subject of being here to help, we're pleased to be in full support of the Government's 'Make Things Right' campaign and as a consequence I would encourage you to read the article on pages 6-7 which explains how we are approaching our role in responding to any contact you have with us.

One article I am particularly pleased and proud to highlight to you concerns the fantastic news that we were awarded the nationally recognised DAHA accreditation following a very intensive assessment of our whole organisation which took place in February this year (see page 2). If domestic abuse is an issue which affects you or anyone you know, whether or not they are in your household, then please do not hesitate to contact us because, again, we are here to help.

Finally, as we approach the summer period, I hope we can all look forward to some really nice weather as an antidote to the particularly dull and wet winter we experienced this year.

**Have a great summer!**

*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](mailto: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](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk)



# REPAIRS

We know it can be stressful if something breaks or needs replacing.

If you need something fixing in your home which isn't your responsibility, please give our repairs team a call on 0800 833160, option 1. They will book an appointment with the relevant contractor.

Morgan Sindall Property Services are our main contractors for repairs to all our properties, so this includes anything in your shared areas, like lighting in hallways or broken doors.

For routine repairs, you can contact us Monday to Friday, 8.30am until 5pm. If you have an emergency, you can call anytime, and you will be put through to our out of hours service.

Just to let you know, if you report the repair as an emergency and it's found out it's not, you could be charged.

## WHAT COUNTS AS AN EMERGENCY?

Sometimes it's difficult to know exactly what's classed as an emergency.

To clear up any confusion, we've put together this handy list:

1. Total loss of electricity
2. Dangerous electrical installation
3. Total loss of water
4. Water leaks that are uncontainable
5. Defective smoke detectors/fire alarms
6. Blocked or uncontainable leaking toilet where there is only one in your home
7. Blocked drains and sewers if backing up in property or overflowing
8. Loss of heating in winter months (October to March)
9. Uncontainable roof leak
10. Insecure property (front or back door), or ground floor window that cannot be locked
11. Loose roof tile, gutter or drainpipe where dangerous
12. Loose bricks or masonry where dangerous.

### Anything else will be classed as a routine repair.

Please note: Whilst not classed as an emergency repair - reports of damp and mould are a priority for us and we will make every effort to arrange the earliest possible appointment to attend the property to identify the cause of the dampness, remove any visible mould and offer advice to the resident on managing the issue until any necessary repairs can be made.

## RESPONSE TIMES

### Emergency repairs

We aim to respond to emergency repairs, covered by the list above, within 2 hours of being reported. We aim to rectify the issue within 24 hours.

### Routine repairs

We aim to respond to routine repairs within 28 days of being reported.

Please provide as much detail as possible when reporting the repair to us, so we can arrange for the correct tradesperson to attend first time.

If it comes to light that a different tradesperson is required to complete the repair, this will again be dealt with as a routine repair and you may need to wait a further 28 days for this to be actioned. If further work is necessary, this will be fully explained to you at the time so you know what to expect.

# RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPAIRS

**As your landlord, we have a legal duty to carry out certain repairs and modifications when these are needed. As legislation changes, the responsibility for specific repairs may also change. This means that there may be times when we have carried out certain repairs in the past but because of changes in the law, a specific repair may become your responsibility, or vice versa.**

## **Examples of repairs South Essex Homes are responsible for:**

- Structure and exterior of your home for example roof, chimney and external flues, walls, windows sills.
- External decoration.
- Hard wired smoke alarms. If your smoke detector is wired into the main electrical system, and has a battery back up, we still recommend you test it regularly to ensure it's working.
- Interior walls (not including decoration), skirting boards, letter boxes, ceilings.
- Installations for supply of water, gas, electricity and sanitation such as basins and waste pipes.
- Heating where fitted by us.
- Fences which form a boundary between your property and an area used by the general public.
- Gates, ramps, outhouses etc (where the responsibility has not been given to you at the point of starting your tenancy).
- Communal areas.

## **Examples of repairs you are responsible for:**

- Interior decorating.
- Changing fuses and light bulbs.
- If you have a battery smoke detector in your property, please test it regularly, and change the battery when needed.
- Replacing door keys and locks where you lose the key.
- To replace a fob for a communal door which has been lost, broken, etc. To replace a communal door fob, please contact us, noting replacements are chargeable.
- Plugs, chains, shower heads & hoses (shower heads and hoses should be replaced with the same make otherwise this can affect the shower's performance. You could possibly incur a recharge if the shower then has to be replaced).
- Blocked sink, bath, toilet. Initially for tenant to try to unblock with a plunger etc. If unsuccessful to report to the repairs line. If a foreign object is found it may be rechargeable.
- Other bathroom fittings, including replacement of toilet seats.
- Floor coverings with exception of kitchen & bathroom.
- Washing lines.
- Bleeding the radiators.
- Maintaining private gardens including all vegetation and trees within your garden, dustbins and refuse areas.
- Fences that are in between your home and neighbouring properties – you will have received details of your fence responsibilities when your tenancy commenced, but you can contact your Tenancy Services Officer if you require clarification.
- Gaining entry to the property due to lost keys, broken windows and any other damage not from general wear and tear.
- Fittings and appliances supplied by yourself, such as plumbing in washing machines.
- Anything you have installed/fitted within the property yourself.
- Pest control within your own house or flat. This includes mice and bed bugs. We will fill holes if necessary following removal. Please notify us if there is a pest problem within a communal area.
- Key safe if you require one to be fitted, please check with us and confirm the reason why. In some cases this will be carried out, but please bear in mind it may be chargeable.

### **Rechargeable repairs:**

**Certain repairs we carry out can be charged back to the resident. This includes things such as window breakage, sink breakage, intentional damage etc.**

## **Please, treat us as you would like to be treated**

Our team work hard and respond politely to you. On the most part, everyone we speak with is polite to us, too. However, that's not always the case. Sometimes, we have to have conversations with you which can be upsetting or frustrating. We understand you might be stressed, but swearing or aggressive behaviour is not acceptable.

Abuse of any kind will be taken seriously and it may lead to our staff ending a conversation with a customer. This could be by finishing phone calls, leaving the room or asking you to leave. We'll then send you a written warning about your behaviour and how this fits in with your tenancy agreement. Depending on what happened, it could affect the services we give you.

*Please, be kind.*

Help us to

# 'MAKE THINGS RIGHT'

As you may have seen on the TV or your social media newsfeed, or heard on the radio, the Government are currently running a national campaign called 'Make Things Right', where they are encouraging social housing residents to raise issues with their landlord.

Here at South Essex Homes, we wholeheartedly support this campaign and would ask you to make sure you report any issues that you have both inside your home and within your neighbourhood, so that we have the opportunity to 'Make Things Right'.

If you've reported issues to us but are unhappy with our response, we would also encourage you to make a complaint about our service so we can take steps to rectify the matter and learn from any mistakes.

## If we don't know about it, we can't put it right!

Please don't assume that someone else has already reported an issue to us – please take the time to contact us and let us know, as we would rather hear about a problem several times over than not at all! There are lots of convenient ways you can get in touch with us which are listed below.

## What is classed as a Complaint?

In order to ensure we provide the appropriate response to incoming communications we receive from residents, we need to deal with them through the relevant channels - although there is sometimes some crossover, which can complicate matters! As a general reference, incoming communications from residents can be classed as reports, service requests, queries or complaints.

## REPAIRS

If we receive a report of a repair or a report of anti-social behaviour, for example, these are forwarded to the relevant team for action. It may be that these reports contain an element of complaining – for example if the resident is unhappy with the actions of a neighbour or unhappy that something is broken – however if this is the first we've heard of the issue, it will be dealt with as a report via the normal channels of dealing with the matter raised.

**Raise a repair** via our online form:  
[www.southessexhomes.co.uk/report-a-repair](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/report-a-repair)  
Call us on 0800 833160 (lines are open 24/7 for emergency repairs)  
Email [sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk)  
Or contact us on Messenger via the 'South Essex Homes' Facebook page



**Report anti-social behaviour** via our online form:

[www.southessexhomes.co.uk/what-is-asb](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/what-is-asb)

Call us on 0800 833 163

Email: [antisocialbehaviour@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:antisocialbehaviour@seh.southend.gov.uk)

## SERVICE REQUESTS

If we are told about something that needs our attention, such as bulk waste needing removal or a hazardous mess in a communal area – this is dealt with as a service request whereby action is needed by one of our in-house teams. Again, the reporting resident may express dissatisfaction that they have had cause to report such matters – but in the first instance we will arrange the relevant response to rectify the issue being reported and this is not classed as a complaint.

**Raise a Service request** to our Estate Services team

via our online form: [www.southessexhomes.co.uk/cleaning-caretaking-grounds-maintenance](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/cleaning-caretaking-grounds-maintenance)

Or email [sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk)

## QUERIES

Where we are contacted to answer questions about the service we provide, or to clarify the Southend-on-Sea City Council Conditions of Tenancy, for example, then this can be dealt with as a query. The resident may not like the answer they are given or may not agree with the rules, but again this is not classed or logged as a complaint.

**Raise a query** by email to

[sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk)

Or call us on 0800 833160

## COMPLAINTS

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

So essentially if South Essex Homes have been given the chance to respond to a report, service request or query (as explained above) but the resident then contacts us because they are unhappy with how the matter was handled by the organisation, then it will be classed as a complaint.

**Make a complaint** by using our online form:  
[www.southessexhomes.co.uk/complaints](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/complaints)

Send an email to  
[sehcomplaintsandfois@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:sehcomplaintsandfois@seh.southend.gov.uk)

Via Messenger to the 'South Essex Homes'  
Facebook page

Via Direct Message to our Twitter Page  
[@SouthEssexHomes](https://twitter.com/SouthEssexHomes)

Or call us on 0800 833160.

### Our Complaints Policy

South Essex Homes is committed to always providing its customers with a high standard of service. However, we accept that there may be occasions when you are not satisfied with the service you have received and as a result you may wish to make a complaint.

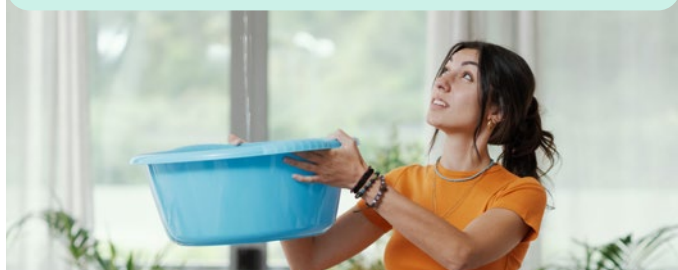
We try to make it easy for our customers to make a complaint and we accept complaints in most formats and from a variety of sources. All complaints will be registered and logged by our Corporate Resources Team. This team will decide which service area your complaint relates to and will ask the relevant service manager to investigate and provide you with a reply.

The Corporate Resources Team will log all complaints on our Complaints Database and save a copy of the complaint and our response on to Civica (the application that we use to save documents electronically). This team will monitor all complaints and ensure that a reply is sent out to you within the agreed timescale.

Wherever possible we will learn from the complaints we receive, and try and find any lessons or amendment to a service to improve how we do things in future.

At South Essex Homes, we ensure that we monitor the complaints received about our contractors. Each contractor will be expected to have a Complaints Policy comparable to our own. In particular, complaints about the service provided by our larger contractors are reviewed and discussed at our regular client management meetings.

You can download our full Complaints Policy via our website: [www.southessexhomes.co.uk/complaints](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/complaints)



### Timeframe for responding to a complaint

Logging and acknowledgement of complaint – 5 working days.

Stage One Formal Complaint decision – 10 working days from acknowledging receipt of the complaint – if this is not possible, an explanation and a date by when the stage one response should be received will be provided.

Stage Two Formal Complaint response – 20 working days from acknowledging receipt of the request to escalate the complaint – if this is not possible an explanation and a date when the stage two response will be received will be provided.

### Need help making a complaint?

There is lots of helpful advice on how to make a complaint to your landlord on the Housing Ombudsman Service website:

[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/outcome-page-help-complain-landlord/](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/outcome-page-help-complain-landlord/)

### Unhappy with South Essex Homes' response to your complaint?

If you're unhappy with South Essex Homes' response to your complaint, then you can make a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman will investigate fairly and impartially.

[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/)

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Call: 0300 111 3000

9.15am-5.15pm: Monday to Friday

Write to: Housing Ombudsman Service,  
PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ

For the purpose of completing their online form please note that the name of your landlord is listed as Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.

### Exclusions

South Essex Homes will accept any complaint received from, or on behalf of, a resident or leaseholder unless there is a valid reason not to do so, for example:

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over six months ago. Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident. (N.B. it may not be appropriate to rely on this exclusion where complaints concern safeguarding or health and safety issues).
- Legal proceedings have been started. We will not look at a complaint where you have ongoing court proceedings or have already had a decision from the court about the same issues which you would like us to investigate.
- Matters that have already been considered under the complaints policy. If South Essex Homes decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation should be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process.
- The complaint is being pursued in an unreasonable manner or is considered vexatious.

# LET'S GET

## Meet our TALENTED TENANT!

By Amber Rodgers

In February we met one of our Sheltered Housing residents, and talented artist, Mark Perkins. Mark showed us some of his brilliant drawings and told us about his artistic journey and how he came to live in one of our Sheltered Housing Schemes.

Mark has been painting and drawing since before he could write, his dad was an artist and made models down at Never Never Land on the seafront, and he would paint there when he was younger. When he was 12, he went on to win two national awards. As he didn't have a lot of money for art materials when he entered them, his submissions were painted on the back of a 'horrendous' flowery wallpaper!



At school, Mark remembers being given a homework assignment to draw the anatomy of a pregnant woman, but he was given a detention as his teachers believed that he hadn't drawn it himself. He was made to redraw it to prove that it was him, and when he did it came out better than the textbook... leading to a deserved apology and a visit to the art teacher! However, Mark didn't get on well in the art classes at school as he wasn't allowed to paint or draw what he wanted and had to stick to class assignments, he recalled having to design swimming shorts for one of the projects.

Since then, Mark has won 15 awards, but he doesn't keep all of his award-winning art displayed on the walls of his new flat. He told us he gives a lot of them away, which we soon discovered when he asked us which drawing we would each like to take with us!

Now he likes to save it for something to do in his spare time. He explained to us that when he begins to draw something, after about ten minutes, his vision can take over and he can see the finished piece before he has even completed it. As well as drawing, Mark creates large sculptures including gargoyles and gorillas.

One of his biggest projects was when he built a cabin close by his allotment, which gave him something

positive to focus on. He built it all from scratch, out of old wooden pallets, and even insulated it with old plastic bottles – we love a bit of recycling! Molly the cat also loved to hang out in the newly built cabin for a bit of warmth and company, Mark managed to find her a safe home once they got to know each other.

Unfortunately during the

project, he stood on a nail sticking out of a piece of wood, and it had entered his heel and caused further complications and pain, leading to an operation. After this, a friend helped him to get into one of our hostels, as Mark had also earlier had two heart attacks in one year and was struggling on his own. From there, he placed a bid on a flat at Nicholson House, as he had visited a family friend who lives there and liked the feel of the place, and he got it straight away – the first time he tried! Now he has been living there since November.

Mark says that Sheltered Housing has changed his life, his mental health has improved now that he finally feels secure and has a permanent place to call his own. He enjoys being able to socialise down at the common room when they put events on, such as the Pancake Day event that was on when we went to visit, but likes that he still has his own space to go back to.

If you are interested in one of our Sheltered Housing Schemes you can find out more about them on the South Essex Homes Website.

Mark has some of his art and sculptures on display on his website if you are interested in seeing more: [www.markperkinsart.weebly.com](http://www.markperkinsart.weebly.com)



# CREATIVE!

## SOUND ON!

Elevator Arts ran the Sound ON project during Half Term for the children and young people living in our hostels, they were encouraged to get creative with projects such as decorating their superhero masks and choosing their superhero name.

They also worked together to think of group agreements and wrote these up so that they could always refer back to them. The agreements were ideas such as be respectful to each other, have fun, and make friends.

"Young people experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience social isolation & anxiety plus low attainment in school. Sound ON was developed to provide regular creative activity to support the wellbeing plus communication & life skills of young people in South Essex Homes' temporary accommodation for families." - Elevator Arts

Free lunches were provided throughout the week with thanks to The One Love Project, and ReGen Construction even popped by to drop off Easter eggs and art packs for the children!



## SHELTERED HOUSING UPDATES

Project 49 and some residents have been working hard to create this beautiful mural at The Jordans.

### THANK YOU!

The Community Development team would like to thank residents at Nicholson House especially Liz, Alan and Teresa and residents at the Jordans for their support. They have donated items such as toothpaste and deodorants, shower gels and face cloths for hostels tenants. This is a stressful time for many dealing with the Cost of Living crisis so their support is really appreciated.

Thanks to Carol, one of our Digital Ambassadors, who has donated these beautiful throws. The work is exceptional, and they are so bright and will add colour to our communal lounges.

Please contact me if you would like to know more about the above projects. If you have any ideas of activities or projects, please send me a email at [sarahgallagher@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:sarahgallagher@seh.southend.gov.uk)





# STRF UPDATE

## MEET THE VICE CHAIR

*Hello,*

**My name is Susan Moss I am the new Vice Chair of the STRF. I have lived in Nicholson House for two years where I am also the Resident Representative for the building and a Digital Ambassador.**

The Chair and I are passionate about giving our residents a way to mediate between SEH and the STRF. We are in the process of promoting

the Fed by using a new poster and leaflet we have designed to give our resident members a voice for problems or issues they may be having with their tenancies.

The Fed are asking if there is anyone who would like to get involved with the STRF as Committee members or Resident representatives in your local area. This would involve a few hours a week work and attending meetings

at the Civic Centre once a month. We are particularly interested in people who could help with admin work e.g., letter writing and phone calls, but any help would be appreciated even on a one-off basis.

Please get in touch via the details at the bottom of this page – I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

*Sue*



*Make a difference...*

## JOIN OUR COMMITTEE!

We are an organisation representing all tenants of South Essex Homes. We are here to help with any problems which you may be experiencing but finding difficult to resolve.

If you are a South Essex Homes Resident, would you like to become a Committee member and help us achieve this?

If you can spare a couple of hours a month that would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested, please contact us and we will explain in more detail what it is we do and how you can help us.



**Please contact us by either:**

 Telephone - 07977 667278  Email - [info@strf.org.uk](mailto:info@strf.org.uk)

 Website - [www.strf.uk](http://www.strf.uk)  FaceBook - STRF2020



# Please LOOK OUT for your NEIGHBOURS

By Keith Ducker

**None of us want to intrude in other people's business, instead being a good neighbour is all about looking out for each other.**

If you find that a neighbour has not been seen for a few days and this is out of the ordinary, then you might want to check in on them to make sure they're OK.

If you are worried that your neighbour is not eating or heating their home properly, or generally isn't looking very well, you might want to have a chat with them to see if there's anything you can do to help.

If you're really worried about them or haven't seen them for a long time, please raise this with your Tenancy Services Officer. You can contact them by phone on 0800 833160 or find their email address via the South Essex Homes website.

As a neighbour you are in a good position to identify any worries or concerns, so South Essex Homes will be happy to follow up where there are genuine concerns for someone's welfare and offer any support they can to residents to help them live safely in their home and access available services.

However, they may not know there is anything to be concerned about unless you tell them, so please do speak up!

**Ask yourself the question - "Am I a good neighbour?"**

**Remember you get what you give and if you look out for your neighbours, they look out for you. It might make all the difference to somebody's life.**

## BOARD RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT AND COMPLAINTS CHAMPION



**My name is Keith Ducker and I am one of three Tenant members on the South Essex Homes Board. I have just been selected as your Board Resident Engagement and Complaints Champion (BRECC).**

The role of the BRECC is to provide support to residents and challenge Officers, so we can be confident that;



- South Essex Homes is delivering on the commitments captured in the SEH Resident Engagement Charter
- Residents' views are heard and factored into service provision
- All relevant information about South Essex Homes' performance is shared openly and transparently with residents

- South Essex Homes is accountable to its customers

This role will help to enhance links between the Board and established resident engagement structures such as the Southend Tenants and Residents' Federation (STRF) and Resident Scrutiny Forum (RSF).

If you need advice or guidance, or if you want any representation from me as one of your board members, please get in touch with me.

**This is a brand new role but I'm always happy to hear from you. Please contact me on 01702 309064. Leave a message and I will get back to you or you can email me at [kthjac@gmail.com](mailto:kthjac@gmail.com), with BRECC in the subject line.**



Have your

# VOICE HEARD

For the past two issues of **Insight**, we have been sharing information with you about our performance, this third instalment covers a new chapter of the Social Housing Charter, 'To have your voice heard by your landlord.' This topic is about how we engage with our tenants and how we listen to your views, so we have included a selection of case studies to help illustrate this, alongside some statistics about the many ways in which we engage with you, our tenants.

## How do we engage with tenants?

Our Resident Engagement and Community Development Team is always on the go organising community events, attending meetings with resident associations, and much more! Below is a visual representation of how they have engaged with tenants throughout the last year.

The most amount of engagement comes from community events that members of the team organise or attend, with over 300 tenants being engaged with at these events over the past year. Such events include an art project with children from the

Balmoral Estate to explore the issue of climate change, as well as the Christmas party at Kids Kingdom organised by the STRF. Community events allow tenants to come together and have fun with their neighbours and families, as well as providing an opportunity for them to meet and speak to South Essex Homes staff.

The second largest category on the chart is relating to other activities within the community, these aren't large events but can include classes such as the falls prevention class that has visited several of our Sheltered Housing schemes, or art classes which are organised and run by residents themselves.

The next two categories are residents' meetings and coffee mornings, making up just over 13% and 10% of engagement, respectively. Residents' meetings are organised to support tenants in setting up resident associations, and to work with established groups to represent residents' views and concerns. Coffee mornings are also opportunities for tenants to meet with the team to discuss future events and areas of development for their area, both types of meeting aim to encourage and promote a sense of community spirit.

10% of engagement is created via

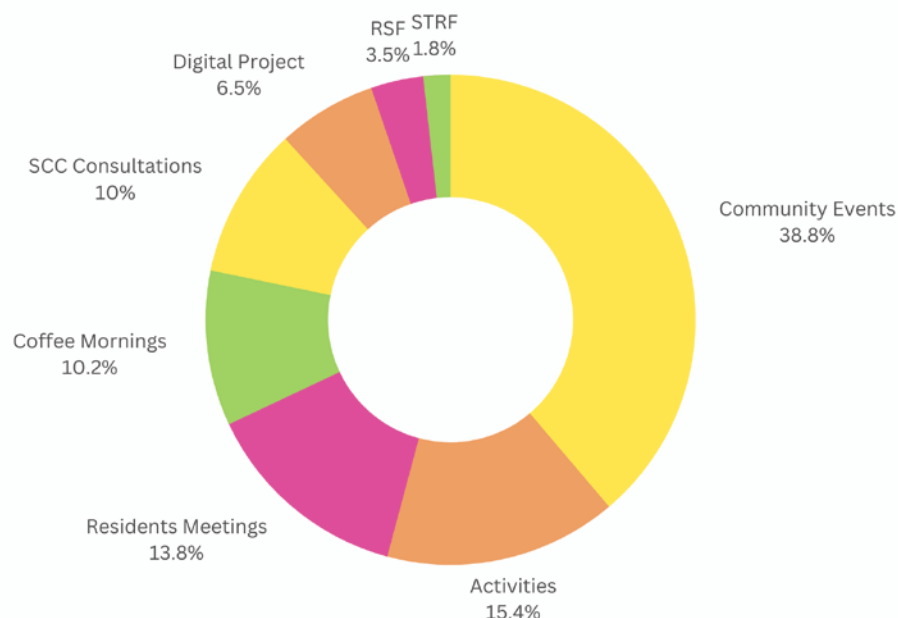
partnership working with Southend-on-Sea City Council on consultations such as the Ageing Well Strategy, these consultations provide an opportunity for tenants to give their personal views on housing, transport and what it's like to live in Southend.

Over 6% of engagement comes from the Digital Inclusion Project, this is run by our Community Development Team, with the help of residents who volunteer as Digital Ambassadors, and involves meeting with Sheltered Housing residents to help them get online and learn to use technology.

The final two sections of the graph show engagement with the Resident Scrutiny Forum (RSF) and the Southend Tenants and Residents Federation (STRF). The RSF is an independent group of Southend residents who scrutinise the services that South Essex Homes provides on behalf of the Council. The STRF aims to discuss general matters and city-wide issues, developing local pride amongst the residents and making improvements to local services. The Community Development Team attend meetings to work with these groups and to listen to their views.

We have also put together a list of just some of the ways other teams in South Essex Homes can engage with tenants to hear their views, as this is a company wide effort.

- Focus groups.
- Satisfaction surveys.
- Estate walkabouts.
- Insight (we love to hear your stories and include them here!)
- We support the Southend Communities Outreach Group and help with food parcel deliveries.
- Out and about (don't hesitate to stop and talk to us!)
- Housing Services Team members attend regular Hub sessions at Cluny Square, Shoebury Youth Centre, and St Cedds in Mendip.
- We also receive help from our contractors to deliver events and activities within the community.



## CASE STUDY: Community Development Projects

South Essex Homes, in collaboration with residents and other organisations, held an end of summer extravaganza at the Balmoral Estate last year.

The event was a fun day for children and families from the Balmoral Estate to enjoy the sun and get to know each other. Activities ranged from basketball, football, ping-pong and creative activities including face painting! There was something for all age groups. We were delighted to have the Mayor and Mayoress attend and enjoy a burger with the children.

Houghton & Son donated paints and tote bags for the children to design and make their own! One girl designed a bag for the contractor to say thank you as she really enjoyed the afternoon. The team enjoyed burgers, chatted with residents and helped with the clear up.

### The outcomes of this event:

- 30 children from Balmoral Estate attended. Working with local organisations such as SECH Youth club, Get the Kids Out, and Triple-T's on this project enabled us to make sure that we were connecting with children from the Balmoral estate and the surrounding area.
- The event was free to all residents and food was served over a four-hour period, enabling more flexibility for



tenants to attend and for our teams to offer support during the Cost-of-Living crisis.

- Activities included working with arts and crafts on tote bags. Children and parents had discussions around sustainability and the need to reduce plastics, and the children were able to decorate bags to reflect their understanding of climate change.
- Balmoral tenants were able to meet with our contractors on the estate and hold conversations that were clear and open. Contractors left the event with a better understanding of our tenants' environment and have continued to show support at future events.

## Resident Associations



There is a total of three active resident associations at present. They meet a number of times throughout the year and our Community Development Team also attend some meetings and help to make sure the associations can run smoothly. In the past year the team has engaged with tenants 108 times from attending Resident Association meetings.



## Online: Website

Our new website and continued use of social media has offered a unique way for tenants to keep in touch with us and share their views. At the time of gathering this data, our website has had 970,245 visits since it was created. Some of these visits could have been to read our news stories about local events or relevant awareness days, and some of them could have been tenants wanting to fill out one of our online forms.

We currently have eight forms available for tenants to complete on our website, here is how often they have each been completed in the past year, from April 2022 to March 2023.

- Report a repair – 1,253 forms
- Report an estates issue – 25 forms
- Report ASB – 33 forms
- Make a complaint – 240 forms
- Mobility scooter application – 8 forms
- Other contact forms – 36

Alongside the online forms, in February of this year we added an online chatbot to our website for tenants to find answers to their questions more easily. Since adding this to the website, our chatbot has answered a total of 84 questions, with a growing success rate from an initial 10% to now 41% of questions being answered correctly straight away. The chatbot continues to be a work in progress as it learns exactly how users like to ask questions, but with 27% of questions being asked outside of normal business hours it allows tenants to ask their questions at a time that best suits their lifestyle.

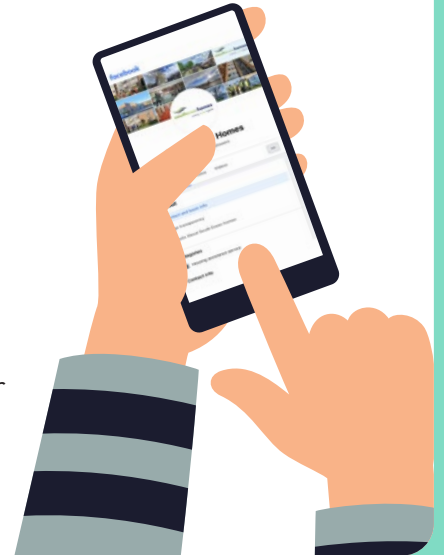


## Online: Social Media

Between April 2022 and March 2023, we dealt with 216 queries via Facebook messenger and 26 queries via Twitter. Speaking to tenants on social media has a range of advantages, allowing those that would rather not make a phone call to get in touch with us quicker than by email, and allowing tenants to send over images when reporting repairs so that the most appropriate response can be coordinated.

We also interact with tenants by posting on social media. For over a year now we have been using TikTok to engage with our younger tenants, since April 2022 we have posted 19 TikToks ranging in topic from fire safety tips to videos of community events that we have attended. These 19 TikToks resulted in a total of 9,691 views during that year, allowing tenants and other users worldwide to see what South Essex Homes is getting up to.

On Instagram, we reach an average of 388 users each month, and with 57% of our followers based in Southend-on-Sea it is likely that a lot of these users will be our tenants. We will usually post pictures from events we have attended, and will often share posts from other local organisations that may have tagged us or which we think our tenants will be interested in.



## Satisfaction Data

We would also like to take a look at our satisfaction data relating to how well you think we listen to your views and act on them.

64.1% of tenants were satisfied that South Essex Homes listen to tenants' views and act upon them, this is only slightly lower than the benchmark figure for the sector which is 64.75%.

74% of tenants were satisfied that we keep them informed about things that matter to them, this is slightly lower than the benchmark figure which is 75.85%.

83% of tenants felt that they are treated fairly and with respect by South Essex Homes, this is just above the benchmark figure for the sector which sits at 82.5%.



## Resident Scrutiny Forum

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. 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. Over the past year, we have engaged with tenants 27 times via RSF meetings.

The RSF have recently worked with the Careline and Sheltered Housing Team and have visited four Sheltered Housing schemes to get feedback from tenants. They hope in the future to work with the Contact and Repairs Centre to provide further feedback.

## CASE STUDY: STRF Events

South Essex Homes have supported a number of STRF events in the past, including a fantastic party last year held at Kestrel House for the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Residents, their families, and the local community came together for a fun filled afternoon. Party goers enjoyed a barbeque, face painting, a bouncy castle, and so much more!

There was even music to dance to from The New City Band, fronted by a resident of Kestrel House. And if you saw any pictures from the party at the time, you would also know that some guests dressed up for a competition – and there was a great effort from those that did!

We were extremely lucky with the weather, as the sun pushed its way through the clouds just in time for us to enjoy a warm and dry afternoon. The Mayor of Southend even stopped by to share in the celebrations and to have a chat with the residents.

The STRF worked hard to pull this event off and created a wonderful afternoon giving the local community an opportunity to come together and celebrate such a historic occasion, SEH staff enjoyed helping out behind the BBQ and speaking to residents and their families.



# RENT *and* SERVICE CHARGES



## What is my rent for?

The rent is the amount you pay Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC) to be able to live in your home.

The amount by which your rent increases in April each year is determined by guidelines set by the government.

South Essex Homes (SEH) collects your rent on behalf of SCC – all rent payments go direct to the Council.

## Your Service Charges Explained

Service Charges are calculated at the start of every financial year, based on the actual amount that SEH is paying to maintain the building you live in and they are set in accordance with government guidelines.

These are considered and approved in a meeting of the Council's Cabinet ahead of being communicated to tenants.

The service charges incorporate the cost of:

- Heating for the communal (shared) areas of the building
- Electricity for the communal areas of the building
- Maintaining the cleanliness of the building through our Estate Services team (Cleaners and Caretakers)
- Grounds Maintenance of the outside areas – eg cutting grass and maintaining trees and bushes
- Maintaining communal building elements such as door entry systems and lifts
- The provision of staff members to support residents, including but not limited to: Support Services and Careline & Sheltered Housing Officers

Unfortunately, most residents will have noticed a larger-than-usual increase in the service charges this year, which is the unfortunate result of the Cost of Living crisis affecting household bills up and down the country.

South Essex Homes is a 'not for profit' organisation, so please be assured that every penny you pay in service charges reflects the actual cost that South Essex Homes incurs to maintain the specific building you live in and that no profit is being made.

### **\*\*PLEASE NOTE \*\***

**If you are in receipt of full Housing Benefit, this covers the Service Charge on your property less any heating or water charges, so your personal finances will not be affected by this increase.**

## Support Available

South Essex Homes' Support Services team can help you to get a better understanding of your finances by assisting you to complete an Income & Expenditure form and by reviewing your benefits to make sure you're receiving everything you're entitled to.

We can also refer you to the Citizens Advice Southend if we feel they can offer more specialist support and we can also make referrals to local food banks and consider other short term solutions to help get you out of a financial jam.

If you feel you would benefit from this support, please give us a call on 0800 833160 or email [sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk).

**You will also find lots of useful information on local support services on our website:**  
[www.southessexhomes.co.uk/cost-of-living](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/cost-of-living)



# WATER BILLS

Many of you will pay South Essex Homes for your water charges, which we collect on behalf of Essex and Suffolk Water. However, there are other options available to you.

You can apply directly to Essex and Suffolk Water for a water meter, and they will endeavour to install a meter whenever they are requested to do so, however, in some cases, this may not be possible.

Depending on your water consumption, a water meter may be more cost-effective for you as you will only pay for the water you use. You can apply for a water meter online at [www.eswater.co.uk](http://www.eswater.co.uk). If you would like to discuss this or if you require more information, please call the Essex and Suffolk Water Metering Department on 0345 7820 333.

If a water meter is not suitable for the property you occupy you can apply for an 'Assessed Measured Charge', where you would pay the water supplier directly (rather than via South Essex Homes) the rateable value, which historically was provided as standard.

An assessed charge is based on the average consumption for a one person or a two person household and works out cheaper than the rateable value for the majority of tenants, but the saving will vary depending on how many people live in your property and what you currently pay.

For more information on the current charges and to make an application to move to an assessed charge, please call the Essex and Suffolk Water Metering Department on 0345 7820 333.

If you are already on an assessed charge, you may be able to benefit from the following help provided by Anglian Water:

## Payment Plans

Anglian Water's specially trained extra care support team can create personalised payment plans to help their customers' budgets. They can also provide some breathing space if a customer needs some extra time to pay, as well as guide them towards other help and benefits that are available.

# TENANCY Patches

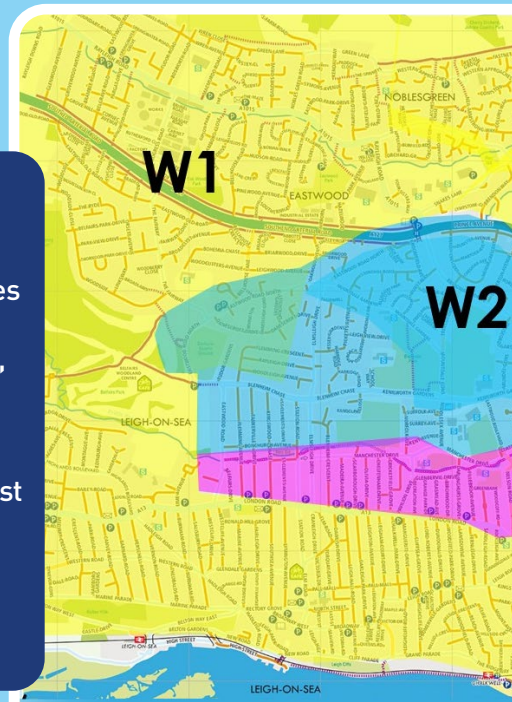
In order to share out the work of our Tenancy Services team, we split the Southend area into 'patches', each containing a similar number of households.

As part of the recent changes within the Housing Services team, we have recently changed the total number of patches to 8, and therefore the boundaries between the patches have moved.

Please take a look at the map to find out what patch your home comes under, and then cross reference with the list of road names under each patch name. It is difficult to be precise with this map as there is some cross over of patch boundaries but it gives you a rough idea!

Please note that patch codes starting with a 'W' mean they are classed as west area codes and ones starting with an 'E' indicate that they are east area codes.

Once you've found the location of your patch you will be able to find the name of the Tenancy Services Officer and Support Services Officer who look after residents living in your area. Please feel free to contact them with any queries or requests relating to your tenancy.



TENANCY SERVICES OFFICER:

**Olaide Balogun**

[olaidebalogun@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:olaidebalogun@seh.southend.gov.uk)

SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICERS:

**Karen Tappenden & Lyndsey Clarke**

W1

ALTON GARDENS	LAKENHAM HOUSE
ARTERIAL ROAD	LAUREL COURT
AUDLEYS CLOSE	LUNDY CLOSE
AVRO ROAD	MANNERS WAY
BEAVER TOWER	MANSSELL CLOSE
BELLHOUSE LANE	MUSSETT HOUSE
BISHOP HOUSE	NAYLAND HOUSE
BRADFORDBURY	NEIL ARMSTRONG WAY
BRENDON WAY	NESTUDA HOUSE
BROOKFIELD COTTAGES	NIGHTINGALE CLOSE
CAROLINES CLOSE	PRINCE AVENUE
CRANSTON AVENUE	PURLEY WAY
DENTON AVENUE	RECTORY GROVE
DENTON CLOSE	ROCHFORD ROAD
DEREK GARDENS	ROTHWELL CLOSE
EAST STREET LEIGH	SCOTT HOUSE
EASTWOOD OLD ROAD	SENIER HOUSE
EASTWOODBURY CLOSE	SIDMOUTH AVENUE
EASTWOODBURY	SNAKES LANE
CRESCENT	WEST STREET
EASTWOODBURY LANE	WESTERN APPROACHES
EATON ROAD	WESTWOOD
HARDY COURT	WOOD FARM CLOSE
HORNBY AVENUE	EATON ROAD (flat 64)
HORNBY CLOSE	

TENANCY SERVICES OFFICER: **Treena Nash**

[treenanash@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:treenanash@seh.southend.gov.uk)

SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICERS: **Sharon Daniels & Janice Cleaver**

W2

ADAMS ELM HOUSE	FOSTAL CLOSE	PICKETTS AVENUE
BIRCHE CLOSE	FURZEFIELD	RANDOLPH CLOSE
BLENHEIM CHASE	HARRIDGE CLOSE	RAYLEIGH DRIVE
BRIDGWATER DRIVE	HARRIDGE ROAD	SANDHURST CRESCENT
BROOMFIELD AVENUE	HIGHBANK CLOSE	SHANNON CLOSE
BRUTON AVENUE	HUNTERS LODGE	STONEHILL CLOSE
CHARLES CLOSE	HURST WAY	STONEHILL ROAD
CHEDDAR AVENUE	IRVINGTON CLOSE	SUFFOLK AVENUE
CROFT CLOSE	JUNIPER ROAD	SURREY AVENUE
DANBURY CLOSE	KENT AVENUE	THE MENDIPS
DANBURY CLOSE (flat 9)	LEIGHWOOD AVENUE	THISTLEY CLOSE
DANESCROFT CLOSE	LITTLE FRETCHES	TIPTREE CLOSE
DANESCROFT DRIVE	MANCHESTER DRIVE	TRAFFORD HOUSE
DARLINGHURST GROVE	MARTOCK AVENUE	TREECOT DRIVE
DUNSTER AVENUE	MENDIP CRESCENT	TREELAWN DRIVE
EASTWOOD ROAD NORTH	MENDIP ROAD	WOODLEIGH AVENUE
ELMSLEIGH DRIVE	NORFOLK AVENUE	YANTLET
FLEMMING CRESCENT	PAVILION DRIVE	

TENANCY SERVICES OFFICER: **Emma Saville**

[emmasaville@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:emmasaville@seh.southend.gov.uk)

SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICER: **Cheryl Say & Sophie Aldridge**

W3

BLACKDOWN	FAIRVIEW DRIVE	QUEEN ANNES DRIVE
BOSTON AVENUE	FIRST AVENUE	RIVERSTONE
BRECON	GAINSBOROUGH DRIVE	ROCHESTER DRIVE
BUCKINGHAM HOUSE	GRAMPIAN	SPRINGFIELD DRIVE
CARLTON AVENUE	HILDVILLE DRIVE	VICTORIA AVENUE
CECIL COURT	INVERNESS AVENUE	WENHAM DRIVE
CLAREMONT ROAD	JONES CLOSE	WESTBOURNE GROVE
CLEVELAND DRIVE	MORNINGTON HOUSE	WESTBOURNE GROVE (flat 85a)
COLEMANS AVENUE	NORTHVILLE DRIVE	WESTBOURNE GROVE (flat 87a)
FAIRFAX DRIVE	PRITTEWELL CHASE	

TENANCY SERVICES OFFICER: **Lorraine Gaudyn**

[lorrainegaudyn@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:lorrainegaudyn@seh.southend.gov.uk)

SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICER: **Chloe Hague & Tracy Beers**

W4

ALEXANDRA ROAD	CRAWLEY AVENUE	NICHOLSON HOUSE	PRINCES STREET
ARGYLL ROAD	DEVEREUX ROAD	PALMERSTON ROAD	QUANTOCK
AVENUE ROAD	HAMLET COURT ROAD	PALMERSTON ROAD (flat 8B)	SATANITA ROAD
BARRINGTONS	LONDON ROAD (flat 1, no 497)	PARK ROAD (flat 12, no 14)	SUTTON ROAD 5 - 29a
CEYLON ROAD	LONDON ROAD 616a	PENNINE	VALKYRIE ROAD
CHILTERN	MALVERN	PENNINE (flat 94)	WESTCLIFF PARK DRIVE (flat 76a)

## Contacting the team

Tenancy Services Officers are often out and about at visits so email is the best way of contacting them with your queries. They will respond as soon as they are able to and always within 10 working days. If they are on annual leave or otherwise not available, please refer to instructions for forwarding your message to another Officer contained within their 'out of office' autoreply.

The patch details change from time to time to reflect staffing changes or operational needs, so please refer to the Tenancy Services Officers page of our website for the most up to date patch information.

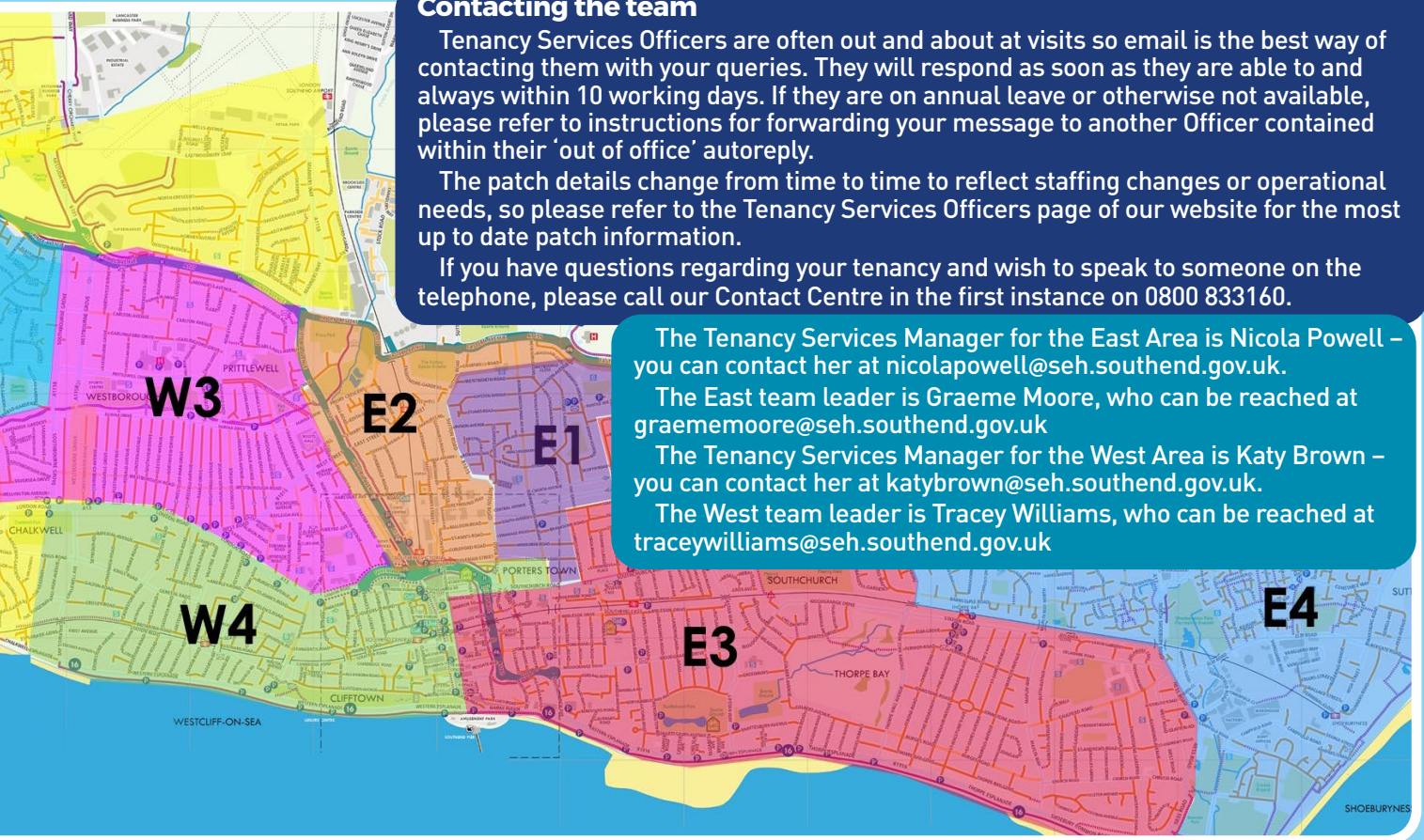
If you have questions regarding your tenancy and wish to speak to someone on the telephone, please call our Contact Centre in the first instance on 0800 833160.

The Tenancy Services Manager for the East Area is Nicola Powell – you can contact her at [nicolapowell@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:nicolapowell@seh.southend.gov.uk).

The East team leader is Graeme Moore, who can be reached at [graememoore@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:graememoore@seh.southend.gov.uk)

The Tenancy Services Manager for the West Area is Katy Brown – you can contact her at [katybrown@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:katybrown@seh.southend.gov.uk).

The West team leader is Tracey Williams, who can be reached at [traceywilliams@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:traceywilliams@seh.southend.gov.uk)



### TENANCY SERVICES OFFICER:

**Jamie Cooper**

[jamiecooper@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:jamiecooper@seh.southend.gov.uk)

SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICER: Crista Poole

E1

BETJEMAN MEWS  
BOURNEMOUTH  
PARK ROAD  
BRONTE MEWS  
BROWNING AVENUE  
BYRON AVENUE  
CEDAR CLOSE  
CHESTNUT GROVE  
CLUNY HOUSE  
CLUNY SQUARE  
COKEFIELD AVENUE  
DICKENS CLOSE  
DRYDEN AVENUE  
EASTERN AVENUE  
ELIOT MEWS  
KEATS HOUSE  
KIPLING MEWS  
LEWES ROAD  
LORNES CLOSE  
MAPLE SQUARE

NORTH AVENUE  
NORWICH AVENUE  
NORWICH CLOSE  
PANTILE AVENUE  
PEARTREE CLOSE  
PRIORY MEWS (flat 14,  
44 Station avenue)  
ROYSTON AVENUE  
RUSKIN AVENUE  
SHELLEY SQUARE  
ST EDMUNDS CLOSE  
ST LUKES ROAD  
SUTTON COURT  
SYCAMORE GROVE  
TEMPLE COURT  
TENNYSON AVENUE  
THE JORDANS  
WALTHAM CRESCENT  
WEYBOURNE CLOSE  
WORDSWORTH CLOSE

### TENANCY SERVICES OFFICER: **Thomas Hare**

[thomashare@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:thomashare@seh.southend.gov.uk)

SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICER: Carmela Noo & Nichola Hayden

E2

APPLETREE CLOSE  
ARCHER AVENUE  
ARCHER CLOSE  
BEWLEY COURT  
BLUE BOAR HOUSE (flat 1)  
BOYDEN CLOSE  
BURR HILL CHASE  
CANTERBURY AVENUE  
CARNARVON ROAD  
CHAINGATE AVENUE  
CROWBOROUGH ROAD  
EAST STREET 81 - 224  
ELDBERT CLOSE  
ELM COTTAGES

HAMSTEL ROAD  
HARDWICK COURT  
HARDWICK COURT (flat 12)  
HARDWICK COURT (flat 34)  
HARDWICK COURT (flat 4)  
LINCOLN CHASE  
LONGBOW  
NEWINGTON AVENUE  
NEWINGTON CLOSE  
PHILPOTT AVENUE  
ROOTS HALL AVENUE  
RYAN COURT  
(flat 2, 27 Eastcote Grove)  
SHERWOOD WAY

ST BENETS ROAD  
ST MARYS COURT  
STEPHEN MCADDEN HOUSE  
SUTTON ROAD 310 - 390  
SUTTON ROAD 443 - 489  
THE BRAMBLES  
THE MULBERRYS  
TOWNFIELDS  
VALLANCE CLOSE  
WELCH CLOSE  
WHITTINGHAM AVENUE  
WICKMEAD CLOSE

### TENANCY SERVICES OFFICER:

**Hayley Sharman & Tracey Waller**

[hayleysharman@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:hayleysharman@seh.southend.gov.uk)

[traceywaller@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:traceywaller@seh.southend.gov.uk)

SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICER:

Vanessa Frood & Katie Lee

E4

ANSON CHASE  
ASH COURT  
ASHANTI CLOSE  
ASHANTI LODGE  
AVON WAY  
BULWARK ROAD  
CARMANIA CLOSE  
CENTURION CLOSE  
CHELMER WAY  
CROUCH WAY  
CROUCHMANS  
CUNNINGHAM CLOSE  
CUNNINGHAM CLOSE  
(flat 98)  
DANE STREET  
EAGLE WAY  
ELM ROAD

EXETER CLOSE  
FRASER CLOSE  
FRIARS STREET  
GEORGE STREET  
GREAT MEAD  
JOHN STREET  
KESTREL HOUSE  
KINGFISHER CLOSE  
LITTLE WAKERING ROAD  
LONGMANS  
NESS ROAD  
ROPER'S FARM COTTAGE  
SANDPIPER CLOSE  
SEA VIEW ROAD  
SHOEBURY AVENUE  
STOUR CLOSE  
WEST ROAD

### TENANCY SERVICES OFFICER: **Lisa Gillies**

[lisagillies@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:lisagillies@seh.southend.gov.uk)

SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICER: Angela Lloyd & Hannah Moggan

E3

BALTIC AVENUE  
BLYTH AVENUE  
BROADWAY  
BUNTERS AVENUE  
CAULFIELD ROAD  
CHASE ROAD  
CHINCHILLA ROAD  
CHRISTCHURCH COURT  
CHRISTCHURCH ROAD (flat 34a)  
CUMBERLAND AVENUE  
DELAWARE CRESCENT

DELAWARE ROAD  
GOLDMER CLOSE  
HAMSTEL ROAD (flat 26a)  
HERBERT GROVE  
HEYGATE AVENUE  
LANCASTER GARDENS  
LONGSAND  
MAPLIN WAY/THE BUNGALOW  
NORMAN HARRIS HOUSE  
NURSERY PLACE  
QUEBEC AVENUE

SAXON GARDENS  
SOUTHCHURCH AVENUE  
SOUTHCHURCH  
RECTORY CHASE  
ST AUDREYS  
TREVETT HOUSE  
VICTORIA ROAD  
VIKING COURT  
WESTBURY ROAD  
WOOLPACK  
YORK ROAD

# JOIN A FOCUS GROUP



Do you care about your home, repairs, planned works and how your rent is used? Then you need to come along to one or all of the three focus groups that meet to discuss these issues along with our officers and contractors. They are: Repairs, Planned Works and Finance. You are not expected to know everything about the subjects, but have some knowledge of repairs, building or finance, as you will be able to pick it up as you go along.

So, come and help other residents to shape the services we have and need for the future. There are refreshments at the civic for the Income Group that meets every quarter and the other two, repairs and planned works that meet monthly, are via video link (Teams).

If you are interested and would like more information regarding all or just one of the meetings, then please contact Sue Rickard on 01702 212650 (leave a message and she will get back to you) or email: [suerickard@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:suerickard@seh.southend.gov.uk)



# LEASEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP

The Leaseholder Focus Group meets quarterly to discuss matters that affect people who have purchased a former council flat and are now leaseholders within a block that South Essex Homes manage.

If you are a leaseholder and you wish to attend a future meeting or raise an agenda item, or for any further information about the Focus Group, please send an email to [LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk).

**The meetings for the rest of 2023 will all be held at the Civic Centre on the following dates:**



**Tuesday 6th June 23**  
**2pm-4pm**  
**Committee Room 5**



**Tuesday 5th September 23**  
**2pm-4pm**  
**Committee Room 2**



**Tuesday 5th December 23**  
**2pm-4pm**  
**Committee Room TBC**

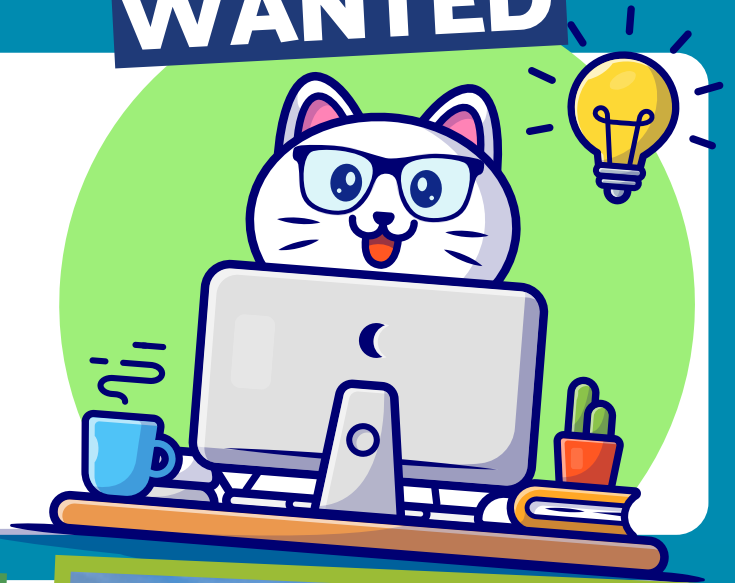
# DIGITAL AMBASSADORS

## WANTED

We are currently running the digital project and would like to have more digital ambassadors involved. Volunteering can help you to feel connected with your community and is a great way of making new friends, it also gives a sense of accomplishment when you have helped someone discover a new skill.

To become a Digital Ambassador, you need basic IT skills, patience, empathy and enthusiasm. Our volunteers generally give 1-2 hours per week supporting tenants. You would also be supported by the Resident Engagement Team staff and have regular contact.

If this is something you are interested in, please contact [suerickard@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:suerickard@seh.southend.gov.uk) for more information.



## PATCHWORK ORCHARD

In April, our Resident Engagement Team visited Grampian armed with ten apple trees. With the help of Graham Burnett from Spiralseed, Project 49, Houghtons, SAVS, local councillors, and South Essex Community Hub, they managed to get all ten trees planted around the tower block before it was even time for a cup of tea and some lunch!

This was a real team effort, with some groups bringing the much needed strength to dig the holes for the trees, and others providing the expert gardening knowledge to make sure that they thrive. South Essex Homes staff also spoke to residents about why we were planting the trees and took on suggestions for locations where more trees could be planted.

Going forward, Graham and Project 49 will be keeping an eye on the trees, making sure that they have the best conditions to grow, and will continue to maintain them.

### The benefits of patchwork orchards:

The patchwork orchard will provide opportunities for growing an abundance of fresh apples, pears, cherries, and plums, including local Essex varieties, as well as opportunities for growing vegetables, herbs, salad crops and other edible yields. It will also help to increase sustainability and biodiversity, creating a healthy habitat for wildlife and encouraging pollinators such as bees.

In addition, this work can create opportunities to learn about natural ecosystems and sustainable design, as well as traditional skills such as tree care, pruning, grafting, coppicing, and other traditional crafts.

The patchwork orchard will improve physical health through exercise that has a purpose and enabling people to have access to fresh food. It can also promote positive mental health by providing a therapeutic and relaxing landscape close to nature.

Finally, this project will create community cohesion and understanding by involving residents and the local community. Providing opportunities for volunteering and learning, community events, volunteering days, and a safe secure meeting place as well as leisure opportunities.





# LIFT SAFETY

We know that it can be a big inconvenience when a lift goes out of service, so we rely on tenants to let us know as soon as possible if there are any issues with them.

We also rely on tenants to make sure the lifts are being used correctly, as misuse can result in increased issues and can put a lift straight back out of service even if it has just been repaired. Here are some of the most common issues we see:

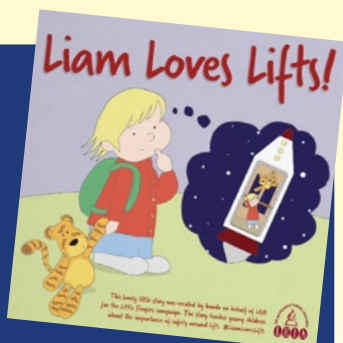
## Unintentional misuse

- Obstructing or holding the doors open.
- Overloading the lift when moving in or out of the block or having large household goods delivered or disposed of.
- Catching the safety edges of the lift car doors with mobility scooters, shopping trolleys or larger items.
- Allowing children to play near or inside lifts, often children's toys are found in door gaps or at the bottom of the lift shaft.

Children can learn about the dangers of playing near lifts in a simple and fun story book 'Liam Loves Lifts', which has been created by the Lift and Escalator Industry Association (LEIA).

If you live in a block with a lift and have young children living with you, or regularly visiting, then we recommend that you share this story with them.

'Liam Loves Lifts' can be downloaded for free from our website at [www.southessexhomes.co.uk/lifts](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/lifts).



## Intentional misuse/vandalism

- Littering or leaving rubbish in the lifts as this can get into the doors or tracks and cause operating issues.
- Vandalism of the lift car lights, the lift car itself or the button controls.
- Vandalism of the lift car doors or surfaces.
- Damage caused to the lift car floor by human or pet urine.
- Unauthorised access to the lift shaft or other restricted areas

If a lift where you live is not working then please call us on 0800 833 160 to report this as soon as you notice. We will then aim to send an engineer out within two hours of receiving this report and, if possible, the engineer will complete the repairs straight away.

If components need to be ordered, they will return urgently once received.

In the interim we will always try to provide assistance for vulnerable residents.

