

Summer 2025 issue!

# insight

The South Essex Homes Resident Newsletter



Estate Day at Beaver Tower

## HELPFUL HINTS & TIPS!



VE Day celebrations at Senier House in Leigh

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*Be part of it!*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

# MySEH

## RESIDENT PORTAL LAUNCHES!

## QUEENSWAY CORNER



AND LOTS MORE...

- Disrepair claims
- Meet local artist, Ed Nottingham
- Fire and Lift safety

# WELCOME TO MySEH: YOUR NEW RESIDENT PORTAL!

We're excited to launch MySEH, a brand-new online portal created just for South Essex Homes residents. Whether you want to check your rent, update your details, or check on a repair, MySEH makes it simple, fast, and available 24/7.



## What Is a Portal?

You might be wondering, "What exactly is a portal?" - a portal is a special kind of website that lets you safely see and manage your personal information online.

Think of it like a secure window into our computer system. When you log in to MySEH, you're opening that window - but only you can see your own information. It's protected with strong security, so your details stay private and safe.

MySEH is designed to make it easier for you to stay informed and in control of your tenancy.

## What Can You Do with MySEH?

**Manage Your Household:** Keep your household information up to date with ease. You can view details for everyone living in your home, including names, ages, and contact information. If anything is incorrect or has changed, just click 'Update My Details' to send us the latest information.

**Stay on Top of Your Rent:** Check your current rent balance, view your recent transactions, and download full statements whenever you need them. You can also make payments online, set up a plan to repay arrears, and see a full breakdown of your rent charges.

**Track Repairs:** See a full list of repairs you've reported, including the status, contractor, and appointment details. Need to report a new issue? Just click through to our online form for non-urgent repairs - it's quick and easy.

**View All Your Tenancies:** See a full list of your current and past tenancies, including any garages you rent. For each tenancy, you can check the rent balance and take action if needed - such as making a payment, requesting a refund, or transferring a credit.

## Why Use MySEH?

- **Convenience:** Access your account anytime, from anywhere.
- **Speed:** No more waiting on hold - get what you need in just a few clicks.
- **Transparency:** See exactly what's happening with your rent, repairs, and tenancy.
- **Control:** Update your details, manage payments, and track repairs all in one place.

This is a big step forward in how we support our residents - and it's just the beginning. We'll be adding even more features in the future to make your experience even better.

**Register for MySEH at:**  
[www.southessexhomes.co.uk/myseh](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/myseh)

**Sign Up  
Bonus!**

**Register for MySEH  
before the end of  
September and  
receive a £5 credit on  
your rent account!**

## We'd Love Your Feedback

Tried MySEH? Let us know what you think by filling out our short online survey:



# WELCOME

## Welcome to the Summer issue of Insight!



...and what a lovely summer it's been so far! We hope you've been enjoying the sunshine and making the most of the longer days.

This time, we're bringing you our biggest-ever issue of Insight - we simply had too much to share to fit into the usual page count! As always, there's a great mix of articles - from updates and performance info to stories and features we hope you'll enjoy.

I'm personally really excited to share news of the launch of our new portal, MySEH (see opposite page). I've been working on this project for several months, so it's fantastic to finally be able to show it to you all! Early feedback has been really positive, so I hope you'll take a moment to register for MySEH and try it out for yourself.

This is just the start—we plan to add more features to MySEH in the future, and your views can really help us shape it. Please let us know what else you'd like to see and do through MySEH by completing the feedback form once you've had a go.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and the early autumn days ahead. We'll be back with the next edition of Insight in November!

*All the best, Julia*

Julia Pack, Editor



## Message from Mike

Welcome to the latest edition of Insight!

We had hoped to update you in this issue on the outcome of our recent inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing. However, we're still waiting for the report to be published. As soon as it's available, we'll share the findings with you, along with our response to the conclusions.

In the meantime, this edition of Insight includes a variety of articles as usual.

We know that sharing South Essex Homes' performance is an important part of being open and honest with you. We hope we are giving you all the information you need to fully understand how we're delivering our services - we've worked hard to make the information clear and easy to follow.

In this issue, you'll find updates on our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (based on last year's resident surveys), how we're doing against the Neighbourhood & Communities consumer standard, and what we're learning from our performance data.

You can also find this information on our website all year round. We'd love to hear your thoughts on how we present it - your feedback helps us improve and make sure we're sharing what matters most to you.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the warm weather, and I look forward to sharing more updates with you in the next edition of Insight.

*Best wishes,*

*Mike*

Mike Gatrell, Chief Executive of South Essex Homes



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## 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)

If you are unhappy about the services you have received and would like to make a complaint, you can do this via our online form at [www.southessexhomes.co.uk/complaints](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/complaints), by emailing [sehcomplaintsandfois@seh.southend.co.uk](mailto:sehcomplaintsandfois@seh.southend.co.uk) or via a call to our customer services team on 0800 833160.

# FIRE SAFETY IN SUMMER



Summer is a great time to enjoy the sunshine. You might have barbecues with your family, relax in the garden, or spend more time outside. But when the weather gets hot and dry, fires can start more easily. That's why it's important to know how to stay safe both inside and outside your home.

## Barbecue Safety

Barbecues (BBQ) are fun, but they must be used carefully. Always use them outside - never indoors or in a shed - and place them on flat ground, away from fences, trees, or anything flammable.

Only responsible adults should light or move a BBQ, and someone should always stay nearby while it's hot. After cooking, let it cool completely before cleaning or storing.

**Extra care is needed with disposable BBQs:** never use them on bone-dry grass, and if placed on paving, be aware the spot can stay dangerously hot. People, pets, and especially children have been badly burned this way.

Take a look at our BBQ risk assessment document on our website: [www.southsexhomes.co.uk/fire-safety](http://www.southsexhomes.co.uk/fire-safety) or check out the website for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents: [www.rosa.com](http://www.rosa.com)

## Garden Safety

In the garden, dry grass and plants can catch fire quickly. It's best not to use fire pits or burn garden waste when it hasn't rained for a while.

If someone in your home smokes, they should always put out cigarettes properly and never throw them on the ground. Even a small spark can start a fire.

Glass bottles or jars left in the sun can also be dangerous. Sunlight can shine through the glass and heat up dry grass, which might start a fire. That's why it's a good idea to tidy up bottles and rubbish after relaxing or eating outside.

## Smoke Alarms Save Lives

Make sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them once a month and replace the batteries if needed.

It's also a good idea to talk to your family about what to do in case of a fire. Make sure everyone knows how to get out safely and where to meet outside.

## Staying Safe Indoors

Inside the house, people often use fans or plug in extra things to stay cool. That's okay, but it's important not to plug in too many things at once. Too many plugs in one socket can cause a fire.

Also, fans and other electrical items should be turned off when you leave the house or go to sleep, because they can get too hot if left on for too long.

## Involving Children

While fire safety is an adult responsibility, children can still play a helpful role. Encourage them to tidy up outdoor spaces, stay away from BBQs and fire pits, and tell an adult if they see something unsafe, like matches left out or a BBQ left unattended.

## Safely Dispose of Waste

Please be extremely careful to safely dispose of all your household waste, this applies year-round but especially in warmer weather.

Never dispose of items such as cigarettes, matches or candles unless they are completely put out and ideally only after they've been dipped in water to make sure there is no chance of them relighting.

Other items that could cause a fire, such as barbecue coals and batteries (especially lithium-ion batteries), must not be put with household waste and never down bin chutes.

Incorrectly disposing of these items could result in a fire, endangering your neighbours and Southend's refuse collectors.

## Firework Safety

We know it's early, but as our next issue of Insight won't be out until after 5th November, we're sharing this important firework safety advice now to remind all residents to enjoy fireworks safely and responsibly.

Follow the Firework Code to protect yourself, your family, and your community:

### The Firework Code:

- ✓ Only buy fireworks with a CE or UKCA mark
- ✓ Keep them in a closed box and use one at a time
- ✓ Read instructions carefully - use a torch, not a flame
- ✓ Light fireworks at arm's length and stand well back
- ✓ Never return to a lit firework
- ✓ Don't throw fireworks or carry them in your pocket
- ✓ Keep pets indoors
- ✓ Avoid alcohol if you're lighting fireworks
- ✓ Be considerate of neighbours
- ✓ Follow the law - no fireworks after 11 pm (midnight on Bonfire Night)

# SPOT THE HAZARD: LIFT SAFETY MATTERS

Lifts are a part of everyday life, helping us move quickly and easily between floors. But did you know that many lift-related incidents happen not because of mechanical failure, but due to misuse or unsafe behaviour?

That's why we've created a fun and educational "Spot the Hazard" activity to help everyone, young and old, learn how to stay safe around lifts.



## What to Look Out For

In our "Spot the Hazard" image, there are 7 hazards to look out for which could affect the safety of the lift. Can you spot them all and figure out why they might be hazards?

By following simple safety rules and being aware of your surroundings, you can help keep lifts running smoothly and safely for everyone, whether you're moving in, visiting a friend, or just heading out for the day.

1. Urine on the floor - pet or human waste in the lift is both unhygienic and damaging to the flooring.
2. A can on the floor by the doors - leaving rubbish in the lift can jam the doors or tracks.
3. A child playing nearby - toys are often found in door gaps or even at the bottom of the shaft, which is extremely dangerous.
4. A man holding the doors open - holding the doors open with objects or hands can damage the lift and cause delays.
5. Damaged buttons outside of the lift - vandalism not only causes costly repairs but can also make the lift unsafe.
6. Damaged buttons inside of the lift (taped over)
7. Cracked wall at the back of the lift - this also makes the lift unsafe and will be a costly repair.

**Answers:**



# HAVE YOUR SAY: YOUR VOICE MATTERS

at South Essex Homes



At South Essex Homes, we believe that the people who live in our homes are the best people to tell us how we're doing and how we can do better. That's why we encourage all residents to have your say.

Whether it's a compliment, a concern, or a suggestion for improvement, your feedback helps us shape the services we provide and ensures we're meeting the needs of our communities.

## Your voice helps us:

- Understand what's working well
- Identify areas where we can improve
- Make decisions that reflect the needs of our residents
- Build stronger, more responsive services

We want to hear from you, whether it's about repairs, safety, communication, or your overall experience as a resident.

## There are lots of easy ways to have your say:

- **Become a Mystery Shopper:** If you're confident, discreet, and reliable, you could be a mystery shopper. You'll contact a service by phone, email, or in person, then fill out a short feedback form. We'll provide full training, and you'll receive a £5 Amazon voucher for each completed task.
- **Join the Resident Scrutiny Forum (RSF):** The RSF is an independent group of Southend residents who scrutinise the services that South Essex Homes provides on behalf of the Council. The group look at how satisfied residents are with their housing services overall and whether South Essex Homes is meeting its targets.

- **Join a Focus Group:** Focus Group meetings give residents the opportunity to have a say in service delivery and voice their opinion in a group which ensures that the right people receive the feedback and can adjust plans accordingly.
- **Join the Resident Advisory Panel (RAP):** This is a list of residents who are happy to be contacted by us to get our residents' opinions on a range of issues. The RAP may be asked to complete short surveys by e-mail or post or to voice their views on a draft document.

If you are interested in any of the above opportunities, or would like to find out more, please visit the 'Resident Engagement' section of our website to explore the various options. Alternatively, contact [residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk) to get involved now.

## Getting Involved:

# TERRY'S EXPERIENCE WITH FOCUS GROUPS

After moving into his new South Essex Homes property, Terry didn't expect to get involved in focus groups, but a simple invite from a neighbour changed that. He went along to a residents' federation meeting, and from there, his involvement grew.

## What Is a Focus Group?

A focus group is a small meeting where residents can talk about their homes, neighbourhoods, and ideas. People share what's working well and what could be better. It's a good way to be heard and help make changes.

## Making a Difference

One group Terry joined helped improve bus safety. The Disability and Carers focus group spoke up about drivers pulling away too fast before people had sat down. Because of the group, the bus company made changes to help keep people safe.

Terry also helped choose new furniture for shared lounges in sheltered housing. He says it felt good to be part of something that helped others.

## Getting Involved

Terry says focus groups help him feel more informed. Sometimes, other people ask the same questions he has, and he gets answers without even needing to speak.

For anyone new to focus groups, Terry recommends just going along and listening at first. It's a good way to learn what's going on and get a feel for how things work. Over time, ideas naturally start to come, and getting involved becomes easier.

Looking ahead, Terry has lots of ideas for new focus groups or even bringing back a few old ones. But for now, he's hoping more people will come along to the groups that already exist. He explained that many residents still don't know these opportunities are available, and spreading the word is key. This is your invite!

## Come Along and See

If you're curious, why not come along to a meeting? You don't need to speak. You don't need to know anything before you go. Just come along, listen, and see what it's like. Your voice matters – and focus groups are a great place to use it, our current focus groups are:

- Disability and Carers Focus Group
- Income Management Focus Group
- Leaseholder Focus Group
- Planned Maintenance Focus Group
- Responsive Repairs, Gas, and Voids Focus Group
- Residents' Complaints Review Panel
- Customer Improvement Panel

# RESIDENT ADVISORY PANEL:

## Progress and Next Steps

If you read the last edition of Insight, you may remember our new feature **'Question of the Month'**, where we ask for your thoughts on key housing topics that affect you and your neighbours. This is part of our ongoing commitment to listen, understand, and act on what matters most to residents.

We want to thank everyone who has taken the time to share their views so far. We also want you to know that we're not just asking, we're listening, and we're using your feedback to shape real changes.

### Downsizing: Making It Easier for Residents Who Want to Move

Recently, we asked the Resident Advisory Panel (RAP) for ideas on how we can better support residents who live in homes that are now too big for them and who might be open to moving to a smaller, more suitable property. Here's what residents told us:

- **Give priority to those giving up larger homes** – The Council already supports this by awarding the highest housing priority (Band A) to those in this position.
- **Offer an incentive payment per bedroom given up** – This is available through our existing Tenants Incentive Scheme.
- **Provide practical help with moving** – such as covering removal costs or helping arrange packing and transport.
- **Help people find the right property** – especially one close to their current area, so they can stay connected to their community.

These were fantastic suggestions, and we're now developing a business case for a pilot project to introduce a Downsizing Officer. This new role would offer hands-on support to residents thinking about downsizing, helping them plan, find a suitable property, and manage moving.

### Annual Rent Letter: Clearer, Friendlier, and More Useful

We also asked RAP members for feedback on the annual rent letter and how we could make it easier to understand and more helpful. Here's a snapshot of what we learned:

- 84% found the letter easy to understand, though some said parts were a little confusing
- Main issues raised included the lack of a monthly rent breakdown and the tone feeling a bit too formal
- Residents would like simpler language, clearer explanations about rent changes, and a layout more like benefit letters
- Most didn't need help, but a few turned to family, friends or the Contact Centre
- Extra guidance was a mixed bag – some wanted a step-by-step example, others felt it wasn't needed

Based on this, we're working on:

- Drafting a revised rent letter with a clearer format and a friendlier tone
- Including a simple guide or example where useful
- Testing the new version with RAP members before it's sent out next year

### Keep Getting Involved!

These are just two examples of how your feedback is helping to shape better services. By taking part in the RAP, or simply responding to our Question of the Month, you are helping us understand your needs and improve what we do.

If you're not already on the RAP and would like to get involved – or if you just want to share your views on a particular issue – we would love to hear from you – please send an email to [residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk)

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH



We'd love to hear your views on our Question of the Month. Each month, we ask a quick question about the services we provide. Your feedback helps us improve and make better decisions for everyone.

### This month's question: What are your thoughts on ethical values and conduct at South Essex Homes?

We are reviewing our Ethical Framework, which sets out the values and conduct we expect from our staff and partners. Your feedback is important to make sure that these standards reflect the expectations and experiences of the people we serve.

To answer this question, please scan the QR Code and share your thoughts.

If you are unable to scan the QR Code, you can email your answer to our email address: [residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk)

A paper version is also available, please call the Resident Engagement Team on 0800 833 160.

### Join the Resident Advisory Panel

When completing the **'Question of the Month'** you will be invited to join our online Resident Advisory Panel where you will receive monthly **'Question of the Month'** surveys and help influence real change in your community.



# COMMUNITY

## NEW SHED FOR FURZEFIELD RESIDENTS

At the end of April, Phoebe from our Resident Engagement team joined Stewart, Wayne, Steve, and Alex from Estate Services to build a brand-new shed for residents at Furzefield. This was made possible thanks to a grant the residents received to replace the old, worn-out communal shed.

Wayne Medforth, Estate Services Team Leader, guided the team through the build. Even with limited instructions and a few tricky parts, the team worked together to get the job done smoothly.

Several residents were very helpful including providing tea & coffee to the team.

Everyone was thrilled with the result. Residents shared their thanks, happy to have a safe, sturdy new shed where they can store their belongings without worry.



## THANK YOU TO THE RESIDENTS OF KESTREL HOUSE

The Resident Engagement Team would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the residents of Kestrel House. We recently held a meeting with the Resident Scrutiny Forum at the scheme and were kindly welcomed into the communal lounge, where an exercise session was already taking place.

Despite this, we were made to feel incredibly welcome. We were offered tea, coffee and even cake! It was a lovely experience, and we truly appreciated the warmth and hospitality shown to us.

We're very grateful for the kind welcome and hope to visit again soon!

## CELEBRATING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

We would also like to recognise the incredible efforts of the residents at Keats House as well as Sandpiper and Kingfisher Close.

Keats House residents have done some great work organising new weekly socials and quiz nights, which are proving to be a great success and are well attended each week. They also held a charity fundraiser event recently in aid of Prostate Cancer UK, which was attended by local Councillors and raised awareness of this important cause as well as over £300 for the charity.

Over at Sandpiper and Kingfisher Close,

residents have regained oversight of the shared hall space and been working to get it back up and running as a lively community hub for all to enjoy. They have already hosted VE Day celebrations, summer BBQs, and the easter event that we have featured on this page, with plenty of exciting events planned for the near future.

Both groups have been working tirelessly to improve their community, showing real dedication, teamwork, and care. Your hard work is making a meaningful difference and is much appreciated. Thank you for your hard work and keep it going!



## SNAP HAPPY SOUTHEND

Do you enjoy taking photos or want to learn how to capture the things you love about your community? **Snap Happy Southend** is a fun and inspiring photography project launching this September – and we would love SEH residents to be part of it!

This hands-on project is all about sparking creativity, building new skills, and celebrating what makes Southend special. Whether it's nature, heritage, quirky buildings, local businesses, or the people who

bring your area to life, **Snap Happy Southend** will help you tell your story through photography.

You don't need to be an expert or even own a camera! Just bring your curiosity and enthusiasm. Sessions will be practical and engaging, and you'll have the chance to try different techniques and equipment (including smartphone photography). The project will end with a brilliant celebration event, showcasing your creative journey and the images you've captured.

We're looking for around 8-10 participants, so everyone gets a rich and enjoyable experience. If you're interested in taking part, get in touch now to register your interest. Please email [residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk) or contact us on 0800 833 160. We will collect some basic details and get in touch as we begin planning for the autumn. Let's frame Southend through your eyes!



## POPPY APPEAL

Do you have an interest in crocheting or knitting? If you do, then you may be interested in 'Poppies on the Pier'. As a tribute for Remembrance Day, Southend pier will be transformed with a display of knitted and crocheted red poppies.

If you would like to take part in this special tribute, please contact the resident engagement team on 0800 833 160 or via e-mail [residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk). The closing date for your crochet / knitted poppies is Monday the 1st of September 2025.

For more information or for pattern ideas please visit: <https://www.southendpier.co.uk/poppies>



## BEAVER TOWER ESTATE DAY

In June, we enjoyed a lovely sunny afternoon speaking to residents at Beaver Tower. Staff from all our teams were there to answer questions and offer support, alongside our partners from Achieve, Thrive, Flourish (ATF), Essex Police, and our repairs contractor, Axis.

The Resident Engagement team is now using the feedback gathered on the day to help shape our next Estate Day. Keep an eye out, you might see us in your neighbourhood soon!



# SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES YOUR FAMILY SERVICE



City Family's **YourFamily** service is here to make life easier for parents and carers by helping you find the right support in your local community.

Whether you're looking for parenting programmes, fun family activities, or information about local schools and nurseries, their friendly **Navigators** are ready to guide you.

Navigators are also there to listen, offer practical advice, and support you through the ups and downs of family life – from pregnancy right through to when your child starts secondary school. If you need more help, they can connect you with a **YourFamily Practitioner**, who will work with you in a way that suits your family best.

## YourFamily also runs:

- **Stay and play groups** for parents and young children
- **Sessions for dads and male carers**
- **Craft courses** for primary school-aged children

You can speak to someone in person at Socata House, 543–545 London Road, Westcliff, SS0 9LJ. The reception is open Monday to Saturday.

## Need to get in touch?

- Call: 01702 844118
- WhatsApp / Live Chat: 07507 242398
- Email: [yfsouthend@cityfamily.org.uk](mailto:yfsouthend@cityfamily.org.uk)

## Opening hours:

- **Monday to Thursday:**  
10:30 AM – 7:00 PM
- **Friday and Saturday:**  
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Stay up to date with their weekly timetable by scanning this QR code:



# YOUR Family

## Need Help Around the Home?

# JUST ASKSARA!

At South Essex Homes, we're always looking for ways to help our residents live safely and comfortably. That's why we wanted to tell you about a helpful service we've recently discovered – it's called **AskSARA**.

AskSARA isn't run by SEH – it's a completely **independent** service created by a charity called the **Disabled Living Foundation**. But we think it's so useful, we wanted to share it with you.

### What Is AskSARA?

AskSARA is a **free online tool** that gives you advice and ideas to make daily life easier – especially if you're older, disabled, or just need a bit of extra help at home.

It can help with things like:

- Getting dressed
- Using the bathroom
- Cooking and eating
- Moving around your home safely

### How Does It Work?

It's really simple:

1. Go to the AskSARA website: [asksara.livingmadeeasy.org.uk](https://asksara.livingmadeeasy.org.uk)
2. Pick a topic you want help with (like "getting in and out of bed" or "using the stairs").
3. Answer a few questions about yourself and your home.
4. AskSARA will give you a personal report with:
  - Helpful tips and advice
  - A list of useful products or equipment
  - Where to find more help if you need it

You can even save or print your report to share with your family, friends, or support workers.

### Who Is It For?

AskSARA is for anyone who wants to stay independent and safe at home. You don't need to be a certain age or have a disability – it's for everyone who wants a bit of extra support.

### Need Help Using It?

If you can't use the website, you can contact the AskSARA team:

- Call: 0300 999 0004 (Monday to Friday, 10am–4pm)
- Email: [info@dlf.org.uk](mailto:info@dlf.org.uk)

They can send you advice by post or talk to you over the phone.

## Thinking About Moving?

# HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

We understand that your housing needs can change over time. Whether your family is growing, you're looking to downsize, or your current home no longer suits your health or lifestyle, there are options available, but it's important to follow the right process.

While South Essex Homes manages your tenancy, Southend-on-Sea City Council is responsible for the housing register and all applications for social housing. If you're thinking about moving, you'll need to apply on the Southend On the Move website.

Here's what you need to know if you're considering a move.

### Can I Apply for a Move?

You may be eligible to apply for a move if:

- You are over 16
- You have an eligible immigration status
- You have a housing need, such as:
  - o Overcrowding (not enough bedrooms for your household)
  - o Under-occupying (you have more bedrooms than you need and want to downsize)
  - o Medical or welfare needs that make your current home unsuitable

- You do not have:
  - o Excessive rent arrears or property-related debt
  - o A history of persistent anti-social behaviour
  - o Income, savings, or assets that would allow you to resolve your housing needs privately

Even if you qualify, please be aware that demand far exceeds supply, and many applicants do not receive offers due to the limited number of available homes.

### How Do I Apply?

1. **Start with a quick check** – Use the 30-second form found on the Southend Council website to see if applying is right for you: [www.southend.gov.uk/applying-council-housing](http://www.southend.gov.uk/applying-council-housing)
2. **Register online** – Click the 'Register' tab on the On the Move site: [www.southend-on-the-move.org.uk](http://www.southend-on-the-move.org.uk)
3. **Complete the full application** – This takes about 20 minutes and requires supporting documents.

### Need Help with Your Application?

Housing Support Officers are here to help if you need support completing your application, navigating the process, or applying for a mutual exchange.

Don't hesitate to reach out if you need guidance:

- Phone: 0800 833 160
- Email: [housingsupport@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:housingsupport@seh.southend.gov.uk)

# MUTUAL EXCHANGES MADE EASIER!

Are you thinking about swapping homes with another social housing tenant? You can now easily apply and manage your mutual exchange through SwapTracker - a secure online system that helps you track your application every step of the way.

### What You'll Need:

- An email address
- Your tenancy reference number
- Details about your current property
- Information about your exchange partner (if you've already found one)

### Step-by-Step Guide

#### Step 1: Visit the SwapTracker Portal

Go to: [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)

#### Step 2: Register or Log In

- New users: Click 'Register' and enter your details, including your tenancy information.
- Returning users: Just log in using your email and password.

#### Step 3: Start Your Exchange Application

- From your dashboard, click Start a New Mutual Exchange.
- Fill out all required fields about your current home and what you're looking for in a new one.

#### Step 4: Add Exchange Partner Details (if applicable)

- If you've already found someone to swap with, enter their details (full name, landlord info, etc.).
- If not, you can still complete your part of the form and update it later when a match is found.

#### Step 5: Upload Required Documents

- You may be asked to upload ID, tenancy agreements, or proof of residence.
- Use clear photos or scanned copies.

#### Step 6: Submit Your Application

- Review everything to make sure it's correct.
- Click Submit - and you're done!

#### Step 7: Track Your Progress

- Log in anytime to check updates, respond to messages, or upload additional documents.

### Need Help?

If you need help registering or applying, please contact us at:

Phone: 0800 833160

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

Website: [www.southessexhomes.co.uk/mutual-exchange](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/mutual-exchange)

# QUEENSWAY CORNER

## QUEENSWAY RESIDENT GROUP

Established earlier this year by four residents, the Queensway Resident Group (QRG) has been making a positive impact on the Queensway Estate. The group have already successfully had the playground repaired and reopened for residents which had been closed off for some time, children have enjoyed having this open space to play in with positive comments from parents. You will find the before and after pictures of this project on page 25.

The QRG meet every last Tuesday of the month for their evening meeting from 6-7:30pm, as well as their coffee mornings which are held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month from 9:30-11am with the Storehouse kindly allowing the group to host these on site. The group welcomes anyone from the nearby community including Sutton Road, Barringtons and Nicholson House and particularly anyone with a passion for Queensway to join.

Coffee Mornings - 09:30-11:00am	Monthly QRG Meeting - 6-7:30pm
Thursday 4th September	Tuesday 30th September
Thursday 18th September	Tuesday 28th October
Thursday 2nd October	Tuesday 25th November
Thursday 16th October	
Thursday 6th November	
Thursday 20th November	

With support from Resident Engagement and Southend Community Matters, the group have successfully just delivered the first issue of their quarterly newsletter to increase communication to the surrounding community. You can view the newsletter by scanning this QR code.



You can also fill out this quick survey to have your say on the future of the Queensway estate. If you need help accessing any of these links please contact our resident engagement team on [residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:residentengagement@seh.southend.gov.uk)



During the summer months, the QRG will be assisting with a Queensway Art Jam where children of the Estate will be adding artwork onto the forecourt area.



## COMMUNITY ART PROJECT

During the month of August, residents of Queensway have been joining together with South Essex Homes, partners, and local artist Edward Taylor-Nottingham (who you can read more about on page 14) to create a beautiful display of art on the forecourt - as part of our long-term plan to add colour and creativity onto the Estate following a successful project last year updating the seven planters.

Two workshops were held on the 7th and 14th August where local children gave their ideas on what they would like to see around their homes and on the 21st of August, their thoughts and creativity came to life.

## DAVE'S STORY

The chair exercise group, run by ATF every Thursday at All Saints church hall 5:30-6:30pm, offers gentle seated workouts designed to improve strength, flexibility, and wellbeing, perfect for those with limited mobility or recovering from health issues. It's also a great way to stay social and active in a supportive environment.

Since joining the chair exercise group, Dave has felt supported and encouraged by everyone around him. Their kindness has helped him on his weight loss journey, and he is proud to have made some progress. Although his health sometimes keeps him from attending, he knows the others miss him when he is not there. Dave always looks forward to going back and is grateful for the group and everything it brings.

Find out more at [www.atfcommunity.com](http://www.atfcommunity.com)

# SEH Residents Commemorated

## VE DAY IN STYLE

### BISHOP HOUSE

On Monday 5th May, Bishop House residents along with their families, friends, and neighbours came together to mark Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) with a communal garden event.

The event, organized by Brenda and Marie, saw around 80 attendees gather in the garden and communal lounge decorated with 120 vibrant balloons, classic wartime posters, bunting and flags.

Guests joined in with the national anthem and observed a respectful minute silence to honour those who served and lost their lives in the war.

Residents played a central role in the event's success, bringing homemade food and helping with preparations. The sense of community was high as everyone helped to make the day a success.

Adding to the importance of the day, guests included friends from the Bomb Disposal Unit, the Air Force, and the Army, whose presence was a powerful reminder of the importance of service and remembrance.

A highlight of the day was the charity raffle, which raised an impressive £280. This was split equally between the British Royal Legion and Help for Heroes. Prizes included some

wonderful donated items such as alcohol, toiletries, kitchenware, sweets and biscuits, as well as vouchers for Primark, Odeon and Remedy Tea Rooms.

The Bishop House VE Day event was a beautiful blend of reflection, celebration, and community spirit. A day to remember for all who attended.



### NICHOLSON HOUSE

On the 8th of May, residents of Nicholson House, along with their friends, family, and local councillors, came together to celebrate VE Day in true wartime style. The lounge was beautifully decorated and full of happy memories, welcoming over 60 guests who shared stories, smiles, and a tasty wartime buffet.

The event was planned by Jan and Pauline, who spent many hours preparing a wonderful meal. Rob added to the celebration with his colourful decorations, turning the room into a cheerful tribute to the past. Dave gave a touching speech, reminding everyone why the day is so important.

The celebration also became a tribute to Dave himself, as residents gathered to mark his 90th birthday, which had taken place earlier this year.



### SENIER HOUSE

On the 8th of May, residents, family, and local councillors came together to remember VE Day with a lovely community event. The occasion was marked by shared reflection, delicious food, and the warm spirit of togetherness.

Chris and Mike generously made a tasty buffet with sandwiches, cakes, and sweet treats. A special highlight was the homemade cupcakes, lovingly baked by a resident's family member. The garden looked great, decorated with bunting and items kindly donated by the Royal British Legion.

Before the fun began, everyone took part in a two-minute silence to remember those who gave so much. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed a relaxing afternoon together in the glorious sunshine.

Residents also came together to make a donation to the Royal British Legion.



### SANDPIPER/KINGFISHER AND KEATS HOUSE

Gatherings also took place at 105 Sandpiper/Kingfisher and Keats House, where residents came together to host wonderful events in honour of VE Day. Both locations were filled with delicious snacks and heartfelt conversations about the past. We're so pleased to see our communities unite to mark this special occasion and remember those who served.





# SPRAY CANS, COFFINS & ROBOTS: MEET ED209

*By Amber Rodgers*

When I sat down with local street artist and resident Ed, otherwise known as Ed209, I didn't expect to hear about eco-coffins, monster costumes, or painting a 50-foot wall in China. But that's just how his story goes, full of twists, creativity, and a lot of spray paint.

## From Printmaking to Props

Ed's journey began in Brighton, where he studied printmaking at art college. After graduating, he found himself in an unusual job making eco-coffins. It was hands-on work that taught him a lot and left him with transferable skills that he still uses today as a creative.

While in Brighton, he met people who were making music videos in the early 2000s and joined their creative team. He would make props for the music videos, such as a giant monster costume, he even worked with Fatboy Slim! He told me that they would usually create the props and shoot the videos all within a few weeks, so he managed to learn a lot from all of the different projects!

## Picking Up a Spray Can

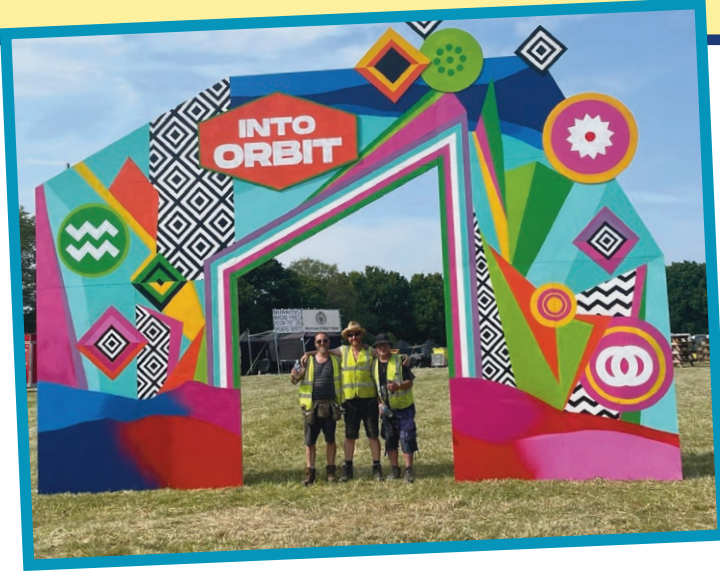
It wasn't until a friend introduced him to spray painting that things really changed. He picked up a can, was taught the basics, and quickly found his style. Even though he's only been doing it for about six years, he's already made lots of connections and some amazing pieces!

Ed209 takes his name from a robot in the 1987 sci-fi film *RoboCop*. In the movie, ED-209 is a bulky, futuristic law enforcement machine. It's common in the street art world to adopt a tag or alias, and this one gives off a strong, futuristic vibe.

Street art turned out to be a perfect fit as it is fast, expressive, and full of energy. Ed explained that it is a great outlet for people who think differently or struggle with focus. For him, it became a way to turn creative ideas into something real, right there on the wall.

## Moving to Shoeburyness

After living in Brighton for a while, he moved to Shoeburyness as a tenant of a leaseholder in a South Essex Homes property. Brighton had become more expensive, and the art scene there was very crowded. In Shoeburyness, he found more space, more opportunities, and a stronger sense of community. He's now been here in Essex for about 18 months and is getting involved in lots of local projects, including Queensway Art Jam which you can read more about in this magazine!



## Big Walls and Big Projects

One of Ed's biggest projects so far was with fellow artist Snub23. Together, they travelled to China and painted a 50-foot wall, they were flown out specially for this not once, but twice. He's also fast becoming a regular at City Jam, a street art festival where he first got involved by helping a friend out in 2022. Whilst setting up, he ran into the organisers who found out that he paints and they immediately gave him his own wall!

## Art That Lasts

One thing that Ed loves about street art is how it changes the way people treat public spaces. When a wall is left with nothing on it, it's often seen as a blank canvas, and will end up covered in tags. But once a strong piece of art goes up, people tend to leave it alone, or tag in more respectful ways. He explained that there is a certain etiquette behind tagging, where sometimes it can be taken as a compliment to the artist!

He also told me about one of his favourite pieces, a pair of old, tagged double doors he painted in Brighton for an antique dealer. "I asked the shop owner if I could paint them. I used metallic gold and made something a bit abstract and surreal. That was four or five years ago and it's still there now untouched."

## More Than Just Art

Ed doesn't just stick to walls. He's also teaching himself coding and likes to explore other styles like landscapes. He's especially inspired by the quiet, natural spaces around Shoeburyness and told me that he wants to paint more of them, "Shoebury's really peaceful and natural. I'm drawn to wanting to paint it whenever I'm down by the seafront."

## Why Art Matters

For Ed, art is more than just decoration. It's a way for people to express themselves, especially if school and traditional paths in life don't work out. Street art is open, experimental, and full of possibilities. Events like City Jam show how exciting it can be to watch artists in action, turning blank walls into something magical.

You can check out more of his work on Instagram at [@ed209.uk](https://www.instagram.com/ed209.uk), or better yet, take a walk around Southend when City Jam is on. You might just spot one of his pieces bringing colour and creativity to the streets.





## Make Your Voice Heard – Join the Leasehold Focus Group

Are you a leaseholder who wants to stay informed, feel more in control, and help shape how your building and services are managed? The **Leasehold Focus Group** is your chance to get involved, share your experiences, and work together with others to improve the things that matter most to you.

Then why not come along to our next **Leasehold Focus Group** meeting?

- **When:** Wednesday 1st October 2025
- **Time:** 4pm – 6pm
- **Where:** Committee Room 5, Civic Centre

This is a friendly, informal group where leaseholders come together along with officers from South Essex Homes to discuss key issues like service charges, building repairs, major works and more. It's a chance to get involved, raise questions, and help influence how leasehold services are delivered.

### What's in it for you?

- **Stay informed** about what's happening with your block and across the borough.
- **Have your say** on decisions that impact your home and community.
- **Meet others** in the same boat – share ideas, concerns and solutions.
- **Help shape the future** of the group and the topics we cover.

Whether you're new to leasehold or have lived in your home for years, everyone is welcome. We're especially keen to see some new faces join the conversation.

There's no pressure – just come along, listen in, and take part as much or as little as you like. It's your home, your voice – and this is your chance to be heard.

For more information, contact [leaseholderservices@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:leaseholderservices@seh.southend.gov.uk) or call 0800 833 160, or just drop by on the day. We'd love to see you there.

## Reminder: Gas Safety Certificates Required

If you're a leaseholder and your property has a gas supply, please ensure you provide us with a copy of your current Gas Safety Certificate.

Keeping this certificate up to date is essential for the safety of your home and the wider building – and it's also a requirement under your lease.

If you rent out your property, please note that it is also a legal requirement under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations to have an annual gas safety check carried out by a registered engineer. You must supply us (and your tenant) with a copy of the valid certificate.

Please send your up-to-date certificate to [leaseholderservices@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:leaseholderservices@seh.southend.gov.uk) as soon as possible.

## Keep Your Contact Details Up to Date

To make sure we can reach you quickly with important updates about your property or building, we kindly ask all leaseholders to ensure that the contact details we hold for you are up to date.

If you've recently changed your phone number, email address, or postal address, please let us know so we can update our records.

If your property is sublet, please also provide the details of your subtenant(s). This helps us ensure the right people receive essential information and can be contacted in case of emergency.

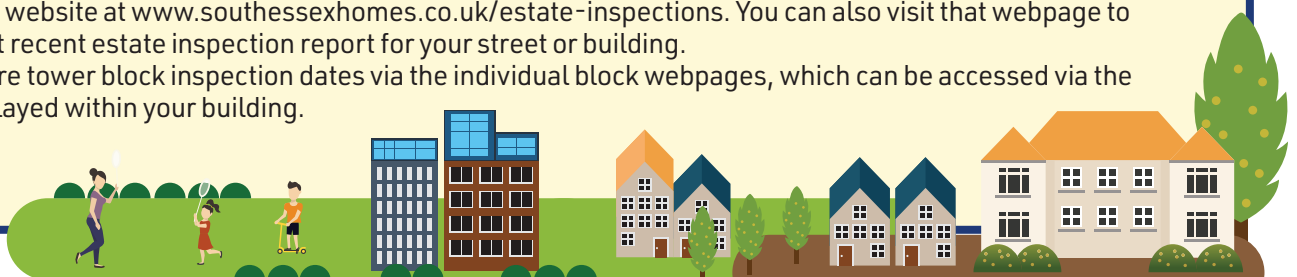
Please send any updates to [leaseholderservices@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:leaseholderservices@seh.southend.gov.uk)

# ESTATE INSPECTIONS

We are currently reviewing the boundaries of our neighbourhood patches and, as a result, at the time of going to print with this issue of Insight magazine, the schedule for Estate Inspections over the autumn and winter months has not yet been finalised.

As soon as it is ready, and by the start of September at the latest, the schedule will be available on the South Essex Homes website at [www.southessexhomes.co.uk/estate-inspections](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/estate-inspections). You can also visit that webpage to view the most recent estate inspection report for your street or building.

We will share tower block inspection dates via the individual block webpages, which can be accessed via the QR code displayed within your building.



# YOUR RIGHT TO BUY A SIMPLE GUIDE

If you rent a council home, you might be able to buy it at a discount through the Right to Buy scheme. This means you could own your home and make decisions about it yourself. But owning a home is a big responsibility, so it's important to understand what's involved.

## Can I Buy My Home?

You can apply if:

- It's your main home.
- You're a secure tenant.
- You've rented from a public landlord (like Southend-on-Sea City Council or a housing association) for at least 3 years.
- You don't owe rent or have legal problems with money.

You can apply on your own or with others, like:

- Someone who shares your tenancy.
- Your husband, wife, or civil partner.
- Up to 3 family members who've lived with you for the past year (even if they're not on the tenancy).

## How Much Discount Can I Get?

You could get up to £38,000 off the market price of your home. The amount depends on:

- How long you've been a tenant.
- Whether it's a house or flat.
- The value of your home.

If you sell your home within 5 years, you may have to pay back some or all of the discount.

Use the Right to Buy calculator on our website to see how much discount you might get.

## Costs You'll Need to Pay

### One-Time Costs:

- Solicitor or conveyancer fees.
- A survey of the home.
- Mortgage arrangement fees.
- Land Registry fee.
- Stamp duty (a tax when buying a home).

### Regular Costs:

- Mortgage payments.
- Council tax and water bills.
- Insurance (for the building, contents, and life).
- Repairs and maintenance.
- Service charges (if you buy a flat).

## Buying a Flat or Maisonette

These are sold as leasehold, usually for 125 years. You'll sign a lease that explains your rights and responsibilities. You'll also pay service charges for things like caretaking, lighting, and garden maintenance.

Southend-on-Sea City Council will give you:

- Cost estimates for major works in the first 5 years.
- Service charge estimates (these can go up).

## How to Apply

To apply, you need to fill out and send these forms, which you can find by visiting our website – [www.southessexhomes.co.uk/right-to-buy](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/right-to-buy):

1. RTB1 form (Notice Claiming the Right to Buy)
2. Supplementary Application Form

Also include:

- Proof of identity (passport, driving licence).
- Proof of residency (bank statement, utility bill, etc.).

## Send your forms to: South Essex Homes

Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue  
Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6FY

## Or email them to: LeaseholderServices @seh.southend.gov.uk

If you need the forms in a different format (like for screen readers), email: [alternativeformats@communities.gov.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@communities.gov.uk)

## Need Help?

Call the Government's Right to Buy Agent for free advice:

0300 123 0913  
(Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

[enquiry@righttobuyagent.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@righttobuyagent.org.uk)  
[righttobuy.gov.uk](http://righttobuy.gov.uk)

# LOOKING TO IMPROVE YOUR CV THIS SUMMER?

Did you know that there are lots of excellent free courses available online, funded by the UK Government? They provide you with a certified level 2 qualification, which is the equivalent of GCSEs.

They cover a wide range of subjects including:

- Adult & Children Social Care
- Business Administration
- Counselling
- Customer Services
- Digital Marketing
- Mental Health

...to name just a few! Check out the website for a full list of available courses: [www.freecoursesinengland.co.uk](http://www.freecoursesinengland.co.uk)

Our

# PERFORMANCE

## NEIGHBOURHOOD & COMMUNITY

In this issue of Insight, we're looking at how South Essex Homes is doing with the 'Neighbourhood & Community' consumer standard. This means checking how we help keep shared areas safe, work with local groups, deal with anti-social behaviour, and support people affected by hate crime or domestic abuse.

### SAFETY OF SHARED SPACES



**The standard says that landlords must work together with tenants and other groups to help keep shared spaces safe for everyone.**

We check every estate we manage at least twice a year. These checks are done by our Tenancy Services Officers, surveyors, and cleaning staff. Residents and local councillors can join in to share concerns or ask questions. You can find the inspection schedule and reports on our website.

We also run events to help people take pride in their neighbourhoods. These include meetings at places like the Storehouse and Mendip Wildlife Garden.

SEPS Neighbourhood Patrol carry out nightly patrols of Queensway and Balmoral Tower blocks (8 buildings including Barringtons). They provide a daily report of their activity and wear body worn CCTV. Where there are reports of anti-social or criminal activity, this is dealt with by the Patrol but also shared with partners, Essex Police Southend Neighbourhood Policing Team and Southend City Council Community Safety Team. Between April 2024 and March 2025, the team carried out over **12,325 patrols** and have assisted the police in a number of cases.

This ensures that the information and activity is shared to enable a comprehensive partnership approach to improve the safety of communities South Essex Homes work within.

We work with local groups to support young people, especially those who might need extra help. Visit [www.atfcommunity.com](http://www.atfcommunity.com) or speak to your Tenancy Services Officer to learn more.

### LOCAL CO-OPERATION

**The standard says that landlords must listen to tenants and work with local councils and other groups to help make communities better places to live. They must also explain how they help with things like health, money, and the environment.**



We work with Southend-on-Sea City Council, Essex Police, and others to support our communities. We hold resident meetings, estate days, and joint events with the police to tackle local issues.

### ASB AWARENESS WEEK

**We support ASB Awareness Week, which this year ran from 30 June until 6 July. We used the opportunity to carry out a short online survey asking how easy residents found it to report ASB to us.**

#### Here's what you told us

- What's working: Many of you find it easy to report ASB by phone, email or online, and praised our staff for being polite and helpful.
- What needs to improve: You told us that follow-up can be slow, the process isn't always clear, and more support is needed, especially in more serious or repeated cases.

We hear you. We're using your feedback to improve how ASB can be reported and how we respond.





## ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) & HATE INCIDENTS



**The standard says that landlords must have a clear plan for how they work with others, like the police or the council, to stop and deal with anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the areas where they provide homes.**

Our Housing Community Safety Team works hard to deal with people who cause anti-social behaviour (ASB). They use different ways to solve the problem, depending on what's needed.

We respond to ASB reports based on risk:

- **High risk: within 24 hours**
- **Medium risk: within 5 days**
- **Standard risk: within 10 days**

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we responded to:

- 99%** of high-risk cases on time
- 100%** of medium-risk cases on time
- 98.6%** of standard-risk cases on time

We work closely with Essex Police and other partners. We hold joint visits, door knocks, and community events to talk to residents and solve problems together.

We are part of Resolve, a group that helps improve how ASB is handled. We were given accreditation in July 2025 for our work.

**The standard says that landlords must make it easy for people to report anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate incidents. They must also keep tenants updated on what's happening with their case.**

In 2024-25, we opened **489 ASB cases** – a 32% increase from the year before.

During this period, we also received **15** reports of hate crimes or incidents and offered support to those affected. Residents who report ASB to us are later contacted and asked to complete a survey to provide feedback about their experience. 196 surveys were completed between April 2024 and March 2025 and those residents gave us the following average scores (out of 10):

- Ease of reporting ASB: **8.4**
- Satisfaction with contact from the team: **7.9**
- Satisfaction with outcome of the case: **7.8**

## DOMESTIC ABUSE

**The standard says that landlords must have a clear plan for how they spot and deal with cases of domestic abuse in the right way.**

We take domestic abuse seriously. We were accredited by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) in 2022 and continue to support victims.

We have a strong policy and train all staff to handle reports. As of April 2025, we were helping 22 open cases, down from 37 the year before.

We won the Essex Housing Award in November 2024 for our work supporting people experiencing domestic abuse.

The standard says that landlords must work with the local council to help make safe plans and services for people and children affected by domestic abuse.

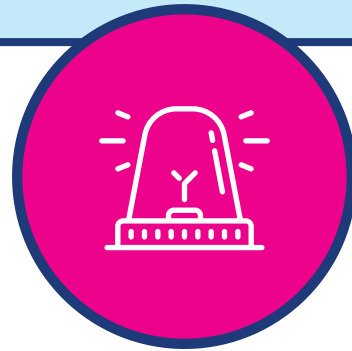
We work with Essex Compass and Safe Steps to help victims and are part of the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB).

For more information about the strategy, please visit: [www.setdab.org/about-us/](http://www.setdab.org/about-us/)



# Our PERFORMANCE NEIGHBOURHOOD & COMMUNITY

## TAKING ACTION



**The standard says that landlords must act quickly and in the right way when someone reports anti-social behaviour (ASB) or a hate incident. They should use all the tools and legal powers they have to help solve the problem.**

We take strong action when needed.  
In 2024-25, we issued:

- **4 x Partial Closure Orders** - for county lines activity, serious assault and noise nuisance.
- **2 x Full Closure Orders** - for drugs and organised crime.
- **3 x Injunctions** - for noise, ASB and unruly visitors.
- **1 x Suspended Possession Order** - for noise and nuisance.
- **11 x Evictions** - for drugs, serious ASB and criminal activity, domestic abuse and criminal conviction.

**10 Possession Hearings currently awaiting a court date** - for ASB, serious ASB, organised crime and criminal conviction.

**29** of our staff are trained under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS), giving them powers to deal with ASB in the community.

**The standard says that landlords must support people who are affected by anti-social behaviour (ASB) or hate incidents. This includes helping them find other organisations that can give the right help and advice.**

Our staff are trained to help residents. Two Tenancy Support Officers completed BTEC qualifications last year. We also help people affected by ASB and hate incidents by referring them to support services.

Lots of information can be found on the Southend Community Safety Partnership website - [www.southendcsp.org.uk](http://www.southendcsp.org.uk)

The South Essex Homes website contains the below details of other organisations who can provide support:

Victim Support is the national charity that provides free and independent practical and emotional support to victims of crime or traumatic incidents. Victims can access their services regardless of when the crime happened or if the police are involved:

- Call Essex Victim Support on 0808 178 1694 (open 8am-5pm, Mon-Fri).
- Call the national, 24/7 Support line on 0808 168 9111
- Visit their website at [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

Visit [www.asbhelp.co.uk](http://www.asbhelp.co.uk) for valuable information and advice about ASB.

**Hate Incident Reporting Centres are community venues offering confidential advice and support:**

- Southend-on-Sea City Council - 01702 215000
- Estuary Housing - 0300 304 5000
- Mencap - 01702 341250
- Transpire - 01702 668060
- Peabody - 01702 445870

Details can be found by searching 'Hate Crime' at [www.essex.police.uk](http://www.essex.police.uk)

**You can also:**

- Speak to the police directly:
  - o In person at a police station
  - o By calling 999 for emergencies
  - o By calling 101 for non-urgent enquiries.
- Online - Report online to True Vision at [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)
- Report anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111
- Call Stop Hate UK on 0800 138 1625 (free 24-hour helpline) or 0808 801 0576 (for under 18s) or visit their website: [www.stophateuk.org/](http://www.stophateuk.org/). Stop Hate UK are a national Hate Crime charity that provide a free 24/7 Hate Crime reporting and information line to residents in Essex.

# LEARNING FROM PERFORMANCE

At South Essex Homes, we continuously review our processes to improve services for our residents. By learning from performance data, resident feedback, and complaints, we have introduced several key changes to enhance efficiency and customer experience.

On this page you will find some of the improvements we have made so far, by making these changes, we are committed to delivering a better experience for all residents. If you have feedback on how we can further improve our services, please get in touch.



## Automated Arrears Letters

To ensure timely communication with residents in arrears, we have introduced an automated letter system. This ensures that everyone who should receive a letter is notified without delays, improving clarity and consistency in our rent collection process.



## Seamless Credit Transfers for Moving Residents

We've made it easier for residents moving to a new property to transfer any credit on their rent account. Now, a simple form at sign-up ensures the credit is transferred efficiently, reducing unnecessary rent arrears and providing a smoother transition.



## Enhancing Our Complaints Service

In response to feedback, we have centralised our complaints service and introduced a Complaints Action Plan. This allows us to respond more effectively, track recurring issues, and improve the experience for residents raising concerns.



## Additional Resources for Repairs Complaints

We have seen an increase in complaints relating to repairs. To address this, we have brought in additional resources, helping us respond to repair issues more quickly and reduce waiting times.



## Repairs – Customer Improvement Panel

We value resident input in shaping our services. Our Customer Improvement Panel now plays an active role in reviewing our repairs service, providing feedback, and ensuring we continue to meet residents' needs.



## Improving Major Void Works

To reduce delays in major void works, we now hold regular meetings with contractors and have set a 28-day target for completion—unless delays are beyond our control (e.g. UK Power Network issues). This ensures properties are ready for new tenants as quickly as possible.



## Enforcing Routine Works Deadlines

To improve efficiency, we have introduced a system where contractors exceeding their target times for routine works are charged rent loss based on their contract. This ensures accountability and encourages timely completion of works.



## Voids and Work in Progress (WIP) Monitoring

We hold weekly contract meetings to discuss outstanding works, review our Service Improvement Plan, and assess performance against standards. We are also working on streamlining the voids process to move people into properties faster and reduce the time homes remain empty.

# TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES



It is important for us to be open and honest with you about the work we carry out on your homes and how this fits in with our responsibilities under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

Below you can view our 2024-25 performance information based on Tenant Satisfaction Surveys we carried out, where we asked YOU for your opinions on all things from repairs to anti-social behaviour.

If you took part in this survey, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your time as your feedback will help us to make informed changes to the service that we provide to you on behalf of Southend-on-Sea City Council.

You can find out more about how we conducted this survey by reading our summary approach, featuring the full survey, which can be found on our website at [www.southessexhomes.co.uk/tsm](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/tsm).

Key: 😊 = meeting the target 🙄 = within 10% of the target 😡 = more than 10% away from the target

## OVERALL SATISFACTION

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall service from South Essex Homes:

**69.8%** TARGET **70%** 🙄

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that South Essex Homes listens to tenant views and acts upon them:

**63%** TARGET **60%** 😊

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that South Essex Homes keeps them informed about things that matter to them:

**73.2%** TARGET **74.0%** 🙄

Proportion of respondents who report that they agree South Essex Homes treats them fairly and with respect:

**81%** TARGET **83%** 🙄

Proportion of respondents with communal areas who report that they are satisfied that South Essex Homes keeps communal areas clean and well maintained:

**63.6%** TARGET **65%** 🙄

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that South Essex Homes makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood:

**66.2%** TARGET **69%** 🙄

## ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1,000 homes: **80.2**

Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes: **2.3**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with South Essex Homes approach to handling anti-social behaviour:

**60.4%** TARGET **63%** 🙄

# RESPONDING TO REPAIRS

Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed with South Essex Homestarget timescale

**66.8%** TARGET **95%** 😞

Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed with South Essex Homes target timescale

**94.9%** TARGET **99%** 😞

Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard

**0.4%** TARGET **0%** 😞

Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service

**71.8%** TARGET **70%** 😊

Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair

**68%** TARGET **68%** 😊

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is well maintained

**75.1%** TARGET **70%** 😊

# EFFECTIVE COMPLAINTS HANDLING

Number of stage 1 complaints received per 1,000 homes:

**82** TARGET **40** 😞

Number of stage 2 complaints received per 1,000 homes:

**17.6** TARGET **7.2** 😞

Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales:

**69.5%** TARGET **95%** 😞

Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales:

**76.6%** TARGET **95%** 😞

Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with South Essex Homes approach to complaints handling:

**35.8%** TARGET **30%** 😊

# BUILDING SAFETY

Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out:

**100%** TARGET **100%** 😊

Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out:

**100%** TARGET **100%** 😊

Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out:

**100%** TARGET **100%** 😊

Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out:

**100%** TARGET **100%** 😊

Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out:

**99.5%** TARGET **100.0%** 😞

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is safe:

**77.3%** TARGET **78.0%** 😞

# WHY FIRST TIME ACCESS MATTERS



South Essex Homes needs to check homes every year to make sure they are safe. First time access means letting our surveyors or our contractors in the first time they come to visit, especially when they need to carry out checks which keep you, your family, and your neighbours safe. This includes the stock condition survey which is vitally important.

## Safety Comes First

Gas cookers and boilers need to be checked regularly to make sure they're working safely. If there's a problem, our engineers can fix it or disconnect it to prevent any danger. They'll also check your fire alarm and replace it if needed.

These visits help prevent serious issues like gas leaks or carbon monoxide poisoning, and they only take a short time.

## It's Not Just About Gas

There are also other times when South Essex Homes may need access to your home. This could be for:

- Electrical inspections or rewires
- Stock condition surveys
- Damp and mould inspections
- Asbestos checks
- Fire door checks
- Window replacements
- Kitchen or bathroom upgrades
- General maintenance or improvement works

Allowing us in the first time helps these jobs get done quickly, with less disruption to you.

## Save Time, Stay Safe

Letting our colleagues and contractors in on their first visit means problems can be sorted sooner. It also avoids delays,

missed appointments, and extra costs. Plus, regular checks help your home run more efficiently, this means you could even end up saving money on energy bills!

## It's a Legal Requirement

Many of the safety checks are required by law, and both South Essex Homes and tenants have a duty to make sure homes are safe. If someone keeps not letting us in to carry out important works, we may take legal action for breach of tenancy or to gain entry by other means.

In fact, South Essex Homes has recently gained two court injunctions to get into properties. These can last up to the lifetime of the tenancy and mean that we can get access any time we need to. We have also recently secured two court warrants to force entry for electrical testing. These steps are only taken when it is the last option, but they show how serious the issue can become.

## A Little Effort Goes a Long Way

If you get a letter or phone call about a visit, please try to be home. These checks don't take long, and it helps keep your home safe. Alternatively, if you are not able to be home for the appointment, please call back on 0800 833 160 or the phone number provided to you, to rearrange.

**And here's a bonus: if you book your appointment with Sureserve Compliance Central and let them in on the first visit, you'll be entered into a prize draw to win £100!**

# HOW TO CONTACT US

In order for us to get you the appropriate help you need, please take note of our telephone contact details and what option to choose depending on the nature of your enquiry:

**Call us on freephone 0800 833160, then choose:**

**Option 1** – for Rent enquiries

**Option 2** – for Repairs; then press

- 1 for Axis\* – to chase the status of a repair you've already previously reported, or to change an existing appointment; or

- 2 to:
  - o report new Axis repairs (carpentry, plumbing or electric); or
  - o report or chase boiler/gas central heating issues and any other repairs.

**Option 3** – for all matters relating to your **Tenancy** or if you require help sustaining your tenancy (excluding ASB and rent enquiries).

**Option 4** – for **Anti-Social Behaviour** enquiries, such as reporting a new issue with ASB or for an update on an existing ASB report.



**Option 5** – for **Estate Management** enquiries, such as cleaning, caretaking and grounds maintenance

\*If you need to speak to **Axis** regarding an existing repair report or to change an appointment, you can also call them directly on **0203 5972056**.

# MAKING HOMES BETTER

## Our Property Improvements

In the last issue of Insight, we told you we were in the middle of a major project to replace the roof of **Adams Elm House**. We're pleased to say this is now complete and there are before, during and after photos below to prove it!



We also thought we'd tell you about a new mobility scooter storage shed that's been built on the grounds of **Mussett House**. We hope the residents there will enjoy using this new facility!



### What's happening right now?

As always, we are busy fixing and improving homes across Southend as part of what we call our Capital Programme - which helps keep homes safe, modern, and comfortable.

This includes Decent Homes work:

- Some homes need new kitchens, bathrooms, or electrical updates to stay up to standard and some work on these began back in April and remains ongoing.
- Many homes are getting new windows and doors! Work started on that programme back in June and remains ongoing now.

We'll keep you updated in each issue of Insight as we continue making homes better!

One of our contractors, Kieran Lucas, has recently refreshed the **children's play area** at the Queensway estate:



# RESIDENTS VOICE YOUR VIEW

## Join Our Board Meetings!

South Essex Homes is run by a Board, a group of people who make important decisions about housing and services. They meet regularly to talk about how to improve things for residents.

### Come Along to a Meeting!

Anyone can attend a Board Meeting to listen to the public items being discussed - but please note that members of the public are not allowed to speak during Board meetings, they can only observe.

Some meetings happen in person at the Civic Centre, while others are online using Microsoft Teams.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday 4 November 2025 at 3:00 PM, Committee Room 6 of the Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend, SS2 6FY**

Public documents: Available on the South Essex Homes website 5 days before the meeting.

### How to Join the Meeting

When they are in person: Just turn up on the day!

When they are on Teams: Email Carol Cooper (carolcooper@seh.southend.gov.uk) at least 5 days before to get the link to join.

### Share Your Views!

Board meetings are a great chance for residents to ask questions and share their thoughts - we call this 'Resident's Voice Your View' (RVYV).

As members of the public are not able to talk during Board meetings, you need to send us items for RVYV well ahead of each Board meeting, to make sure that Board members can look into any questions you raise and prepare to respond to them during the public session of the Board meeting.

### Want to ask something?

Send your question to:

Email: [daniellyons@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:daniellyons@seh.southend.gov.uk) or [carolcooper@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:carolcooper@seh.southend.gov.uk)

Write to: South Essex Homes, Civic Centre, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 6FY

Deadline for questions for the November meeting: Tuesday 14 October 2025

All questions and answers will be published on our website. You can also check past RVYV submissions at [www.southessexhomes.co.uk/our-board](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/our-board).

If you need more information, contact Carol Cooper at the email above.

**Come along, share your voice, and help make South Essex Homes even better!**

# LOOKING AFTER YOUR GREEN SPACES

With approximately 180 sites under their care, our Grounds Maintenance team is here to ensure that all grassed and shrubbed areas are kept to a high standard throughout the year. Their work not only improves the appearance of these spaces but also makes sure they remain safe and accessible for everyone.

## Grass Cutting Schedule

Grass cutting begins in March and continues through to November, with each site receiving attention every 2 to 3 weeks. This regular schedule aims to keep a neat and tidy appearance across all locations, adding to the overall look and usability of the grounds.

## Shrub Maintenance

Shrub pruning is carried out twice a year, with the first round starting in June. Given the scale of the work, this process takes several months to complete. The team works carefully to ensure that all shrubbery is trimmed back properly, promoting healthy growth and preventing overgrowth that could get in the way of pathways or views.

## Responsive and Responsible Service

While the team always try to stick to planned rotas, certain issues need their immediate attention. Complaints or reports of overgrowth, particularly affecting footpaths, windows, or fire exits, are prioritised to ensure safety and accessibility.

Our commitment to looking after these green spaces is not just about appearance, it's about creating safe, welcoming environments for all who use them. We appreciate residents' patience and feedback as we continue to improve and adapt our services.

If you would like to get in touch with our Grounds Maintenance team, you can submit an online form via our webpage [www.southessexhomes.co.uk/grounds-maintenance](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk/grounds-maintenance)



# INSIGHT MAGAZINE'S ECO IMPACT

At South Essex Homes, we care about our planet – and we know you do too! That's why we're proud to share some good news about how we're helping the environment through the production of Insight magazine.

Thanks to our printing partners at Resource, who are certified as a Carbon Balanced Printer, we've been able to reduce the environmental impact of our latest issue. This means that the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) created during the printing process has been balanced out by protecting endangered forests.

## What Does "Carbon Balanced" Mean?

When something is "carbon balanced," it means that any carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) released into the air – like from making paper or printing – is offset by doing something good for the planet. In this case, it's done by supporting the World Land Trust, a charity that protects tropical forests around the world.

## Our Impact This Issue

By printing the latest edition of Insight magazine using FSC-certified sustainable paper and carbon balancing, we've helped to:

- Offset 464kg of CO<sub>2</sub> – that's about the same as driving over 1,000 miles in a small car!
- Protect 89 square metres of tropical forest – that's roughly the size of a tennis court!

This forest is home to amazing wildlife and helps clean the air we all breathe.

## Why It Matters

Forests are one of the best natural ways to fight climate change. They absorb carbon dioxide, provide homes for animals, and help keep our planet healthy. By choosing greener printing options, we're doing our bit to protect these precious places.

## A Greener Future

We're always looking for ways to be more eco-friendly at South Essex Homes – and we're proud that Insight magazine is part of that journey. Every small step counts, and together, we can make a big difference.





# DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT: DISREPAIR CLAIMS

We want to help you keep your home safe and in good condition. If something is broken, like your heating, electrical sockets, or toilet, please tell us as soon as possible so that we can do our best to fix it.

We've recently seen some companies trying to get residents to make disrepair claims, which can sound appealing on the surface, but can cause big problems. They may call you, send you letters or leaflets or could even come to your door.

## What Is a Disrepair Claim?

This is when someone takes legal action because repairs that need to be carried out haven't been done. Some companies say they can help you get money or force repairs, but they don't always tell the full story.

We'd prefer to work with you to sort out any repairs that are needed. One way we can do this is through something called Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). This means we'll keep you informed about what repairs are needed, and make sure the work is done as quickly as possible.

## What's the Problem?

These companies:

- Might make it look like they are from South Essex Homes or Southend-on-Sea City Council. They are not.
- Say you'll get compensation, but don't mention the hidden costs.
- Ask you to sign papers without explaining the risks.
- May seem to be acting with your best interests at heart, but it is a big money-making exercise because those companies claim for high legal fees. We strongly defend any such claims made against us, which costs South Essex Homes a lot of money in legal fees for our own lawyers, which in turn reduces the money available in our budget for repairs and improvements in your home.

Some people have ended up with big debts and unexpected legal costs after using these companies.

## What Can Go Wrong?

- You might have to pay money up front.
- They can charge high fees even if they say it's 'no win, no fee'.
- If the claim fails, you could be

responsible for both your legal costs and ours.

## What Should You Do?

If something in your home needs fixing:

1. **Tell us first** - we're here to help. If problems have been going on for some time, please use our Complaints process or contact the Housing Ombudsman.
2. **Don't sign anything** from people you don't know.
3. **Check ID** - our staff always carry ID badges.

## Need Help?

Call us on 0800 833 160 or visit [www.southessexhomes.co.uk](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk). We'll always try to repair problems quickly and safely.

If you're not happy with our repairs service, you can submit a complaint using the details on page 3.



# CREATIVE CORNER

Many thanks to Westcliff resident Georgette Poole for taking the time to send a touching poem in to us at Insight. In her letter, Georgette explains that she's been writing poetry since she was a child but, now at the age of 90, she's struggling to hold a pen due to arthritis. These days her main hobby is enjoying the flowers in her garden.

If you have a poem, short story, joke or any artwork you'd like us to share in a future Insight magazine, please get in touch using the contact details on page 3.



## Her Smile So Warm By Georgette Poole

Her smile so tender and warm,  
Her eyes as blue as the sky,  
Her hair as golden like the corn,  
Her voice as sweet as I've ever heard.  
She was all these wonderful things to me,  
There simply was no other,  
She meant the whole wide world to me,  
Because she was my MOTHER.

# CROSSWORD

All the answers to these clues can be found within the magazine, we've even given you the relevant page number as an extra clue!

## ACROSS

- 1) Ed has worked with residents on some great art projects this summer - but in which other seaside town did his story begin? (8) *Page 14*
- 4) What is the name for the friendly people from City Family who help parents and carers find information on local services as part of the YourFamily service? (10) *Page 10*
- 6) We've seen an increase in untrustworthy companies trying to get our residents to make what type of claim against us? (9) *Page 27*
- 10) What words go in front of 'Southend' in the name of a project to encourage residents to share photos that bring Southend to life? (4,5) *Page 9*
- 11) What's the name of the independent service provided through the Disabled Living Foundation? (7) *Page 10*
- 12) The current 'question of the month' asks for your views on our \*\*\*\*\*values and conduct? (4) *Page 7*
- 13) The South Essex Homes contractor which has recently refreshed the play area in the Queensway estate is called Kieran \*\*\*\*\*? (5) *Page 25*

- 14) The consumer standard we focus on in this issue of Insight is the Neighbourhood & \*\*\*\*\* Standard? (9) *Page 18*

## DOWN

- 2) When you call our 0800 number, what type of enquiry do you press option 1 to discuss? (4) *Page 24*
- 3) At South Essex Homes, we know your voice matters, which is why we encourage residents to what? (4,4,3) *Page 6*
- 5) What important event was commemorated by residents across Southend during May? (1,1,3) *Page 13*
- 7) Which fire safety device should be tested once a month? (5,5) *Page 4*
- 8) What's the name of the scheme that you can purchase your council home through, should you meet the criteria? (5,2,3) *Page 17*
- 9) What's the name of the new South Essex Homes Portal? (5) *Page 2*

