

## South Essex Homes' Service Area Updates – October/November 2021

<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
<p><b>Housing Community Safety</b></p> <p>From Anita McGinley</p>	<p>SE Homes have made a commitment to Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation (DAHA). This accreditation is the benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse and looks at 8 priority areas. This is comprehensive accreditation that will affect all areas of the organisation to ensure a comprehensive response for residents and staff affected by domestic abuse. It is likely this accreditation will take approx. 2 years to obtain. We have recently approached staff to become DA Champions and will, as the accreditation progresses look to involve residents more proactively. The accreditation will build on the DA Act that received Royal Assent in April 2021</p> <p>I am currently working with colleagues in our Social Care and Mental Health Team to improve our collective approach to residents using either service taking into consideration the different areas of guidance and legislation that we separately operate under. This coincides with my role as operations lead for safeguarding</p> <p>I have been working with Southend Community Safety Partnership around various aspects of community safety including modern slavery, hate crime, CS action group as well as reviewing our membership of Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme</p> <p>Recent County Court ruling on home CCTV has been handed out and legal understanding of judgment and whether appeal likely needs to be identified before progressing with a specific policy</p>
<p><b>CarelineSOS and Customer Services / Repairs Contact Centres</b></p> <p>From Deborah Hill-David</p>	<p><b>CarelineSoS</b></p> <p>CarelineSoS is now a digital monitoring platform. The staff have undertaken virtual training by Enovation and went into a test 'go live' situation for four weeks. Staff were offered 121 training for two weeks both on their shifts and also outside their shifts in order to ensure they felt confident to switch over from their historical Tunstall platform. Last week Enovation were on site from 05:45 to 10pm Tuesday to Thursday making sure they spent time with those members of staff on shift covering queries and making sure all glitches were ironed out before leaving us on Friday to move forward ourselves.</p> <p>The staff have found the process challenging but they can see the positives in the new system already.</p> <p><b>Customer Contact Centre &amp; Repair Contact Centre</b></p>

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	<p>These are continuing to work remotely until 1<sup>st</sup> November when, if all being well and we don't have to go into lockdown, they will be working on a home, hub hybrid working so will be back in the office catching up with their colleagues.</p>
<p><b>Communications</b></p> <p>From Julia Pack</p>	<p>The autumn issue of Insight has gone to the printers to be posted out from the end of this week along with rent statements.</p> <p>Miranda Edwards is leaving the organisation and interviews were held for her replacement at the end of October. We hope to have someone in post very soon.</p> <p>We are currently building a new staff intranet to launch at the end of this month. We hope this will help bring teams together, especially because we now spend so much more time apart from our colleagues in person.</p>
<p><b>Estate Services</b></p> <p>From Tony Holliday</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estates Teams carrying out deep cleans in areas as required</li> <li>• Caretakers looking at new equipment options for moving service forward</li> <li>• Issue with bulk truck caused delays in collections , truck has now been repaired and teams catching up</li> <li>• Teams directed towards rectification works highlighted in satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Maintenance Team reviewing and updating the way performance information is shared</li> <li>• Grounds maintenance maps being created to include in depth information around S.E.H areas including historical grey areas such as alleys and service roads that fall under our remit.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p>From Rebecca Coleman</p>	<p>Finance are continuing to operate with a reduced number of staff following some changes within the team. We hope to recruit to vacant posts as soon as possible. We are currently working on budget setting for 2022/23</p>

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<p><b>Projects</b></p> <p>Paul Longman</p>	<p>Cecil Court sprinklers, Mulalley appointed as the contractor, however due to delays in obtaining materials a start on site is not expected until January.</p> <p>Balmoral Structural and Refurbishment works, Houghton's have been appointed as the contractor a start on site is expected in November.</p>
<p><b>Property Services</b></p> <p>From Bradley Staff</p> <p>From Russell Haynes</p>	<p>We are continuing to see delays in material deliveries for goods being manufactured in Europe. In particular electrical fittings.</p> <p>The previous engineer vacancies Morgan Sindall have all been filled so we are hoping to bring forward some repairs, which will reduce the time residents are waiting for repairs to be completed.</p> <p>See attached document 'Capital Works Programme update Oct 2021'</p>
<p><b>SEPS new business</b></p> <p>From Lynsey Hurd</p>	<p>Continuing to work with our parent organisations SBC and SEH providing cleaning and security across the town</p> <p>Pleased to announce the Courtyard Café is now back up and running</p>
<p><b>Specialist Income Management</b></p> <p>From Laura Thomas</p>	<p>The team continue to mainly work from home with occasional visits to the office.</p> <p>Due to some changes in the team, we're currently recruiting for a part-time assistant and hope to have someone in place soon so that we will be fully staffed again.</p> <p>The ban on evictions was lifted at the end of May and we have seen five evictions so far since the ban was lifted. This is still a much lower number when compared to previous years prior to the pandemic.</p>

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	<p>We are slowly and steadily seeing possession cases move through the court system. Our aim still being to sustain tenancies and avoid evictions whilst reducing rent arrears. The extra measures we have adopted over the past year to engage with residents about their rent arrears remain in place. We are only taking possession action when all other avenues have been exhausted.</p> <p>The new debt respite scheme “Breathing Space” came into effect on 17<sup>th</sup> May. We have not been notified of any cases to date relating to rent arrears.</p> <p>Actual Service Charge Statements for Leaseholders are due to go out imminently. We are also going to be scheduling in a date for our next Leasehold Focus Group which to hope to hold in person at the Civic Centre.</p>
<p><b>Tenancy Services</b> From Nicola Powell</p>	<p>After a long battle with the court office, we have finally obtained a sufficient number of court slots to clear the pre-existing gas safety checks that were outstanding, so that we are now working on the current cases coming through. In other news, the number of ASB cases is still higher than October pre-covid, however, we are continuing to work through these cases whilst managing the resident's expectations in line with the current ASB Policy. We have seen some positive outcomes with several legal cases, showing the benefits of partnership working, so well done to those involved.</p>