

Winter 2023 issue!

insight

The South Essex Homes
Resident Newsletter



Re-Gen donate to One Love Project

HELPFUL HINTS & TIPS!

YOUR
FREE
COPY!

Be part
of it!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

**DEALING
WITH
MOULD**

Tips to reduce
condensation



**YOUR
TENANCY
FAQS**

Answers to
common
questions!



AND LOTS MORE...

- Our performance - how we deal with complaints and spend our money
- Find out about our Digital Inclusion Project


southessexhomes
working smarter together

THINK
AHEAD

TAKE
TIME FOR
YOURSELF

GET
ORGANISED

MEAL
PLAN

NEW YEAR, NEW US!

The start of a new year always comes with lots of different promises that we make to ourselves (that we hardly ever end up sticking to!), so we thought we could share four of our new year's resolutions that we think are easier to keep whilst still making a real difference!

1. THINK AHEAD – why not tell yourself you are going to start paying a little extra on your rent each month leading up to December, so that at the end of the year you can spend more money on presents and less money on rent, as it's already been paid!

2. TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF – take a break from social media everyday and allow yourself to unwind, this can really help our mental health in a time where everything is online.

3. GET ORGANISED – this could look different for everyone. Some of us may want to get organised with our finances (take a look at the Financial Advice Service on <https://tfas.com/>*) and some of us may want to get organised in our homes by decluttering, you could sell unwanted items on Vinted or Facebook Marketplace!

4. MEAL PLAN – this one might be the hardest one to stick to as it requires a bit of preparation, but meal planning can simultaneously help us to eat healthier and save money by buying less ingredients.

*You can also find lots of advice on our Cost of Living page on the South Essex Homes website – scan the QR code to go straight to the page!



*Do you have a disability
or are you a carer?*

If so we would love to welcome you to our group meetings!

The Disability and Carers Focus Group, which is run by residents of South Essex Homes (SEH), is starting up again in March 2023.

The meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of each month starting on the 8th March 2023 at 11am in the Civic Centre. If you are unable to make it to the Civic Centre yourself then transport can be arranged if it is needed but there is also the option to join the meeting online if you prefer.

This group is there for residents who have a disability (either seen or unseen), have children who are disabled, are a carer for a disabled person, or are interested in helping disabled people or would just like to meet us all for a chat, to see if you can help in any way. The group is run by disabled residents and carers who live in SEH properties.

Over the years, the group has been involved with many changes within SEH and across the city that affect disabled residents and carers; making sure that any changes benefit and do not hinder the disabled



community. The group have been asked by SEH and SCC (Southend-on-Sea City Council) to help guide them when doing any works that would affect disabled residents.

Why not be part of this group and have your say on things that will or do affect your daily lives living in a SEH/Council property, as well as living in the City of Southend-on-Sea in general?

Changes can be made if you get together and propose them to the right people and that is what we have done in the past and will do in the future.

The meetings are very informal and free refreshments are provided. Both yourself, your family, friends, carers or willing helpers will be given a warm welcome.

To find out more about this group, please contact Keith on 01702 309064 and leave a message if you get the answer machine and he will get back to you. Alternatively you can email Keith at kthjac1@gmail.com.

WELCOME



Welcome to the winter issue of Insight!

Well here we are at the start of another year! I do hope that 2023 is a healthy and happy year for you all.

On pages 10 to 13, we follow on from the company performance information we shared in the autumn issue and this time we are focussing on the issues of complaints and how we handle them, along with our finances and how we spend the money we are given. I hope you find this interesting and insightful!

It was great to find out more about the Digital Inclusion Project and how we are able to help residents develop their skills using their electronic devices and accessing the internet – find out more on how you can benefit from this on page 14.

I hope you enjoy this issue...we'll be back with the Spring edition of Insight in May.

All the best, Julia

CONTENTS

Your Lives

- 2 New Year Resolutions
- 2 Disability & Carers Focus Group
- 7 Looking for a new career in security
- 14 Digital Inclusion Project
- 16 CarelineSOS

Your Home

- 4-5 Damp and Mould
- 8-9 Your Tenancy FAQs
- 14 New garden at Yantlet

Your Southend

- 6 STRF update
- 7 Re-Gen One Love donation
- 10-13 Our performance
- 15 Our New ChatBot

Message from Mike

I hope everybody was able to have an enjoyable break from the usual routine over the festive period. Notwithstanding the financial pressures across the country at the moment that we are all aware of, let's hope 2023 brings with it some positive things and the easing of these pressures as we move forward.

This edition of Insight magazine focuses on an issue that has always been of concern and importance to us – condensation, damp and mould – which has unfortunately been highlighted by the widely reported and tragic death of young Awaab Ishak in Rochdale last year.

While we have always focussed on addressing the issue where it has occurred in the properties we manage, we know it continues to be a problem for some individual

residents in their particular homes. We are using the national focus on this issue to thoroughly review how we approach and deal with incidents of condensation in people's homes.

We are aware that with many people having to control their use of heating even more than they may have had to in the past, this is a problem which may become more evident.

The article you'll find on pages 4 and 5 of this edition of Insight reminds everyone of not only the causes of dampness and condensation but also of what we can all do to control and mitigate the problems which can occur.

One of the specific actions we plan to take at South Essex Homes is to set up our own specialist in-house team to focus on dealing with these issues and particularly to support residents who are experiencing condensation and mould in their home.

Future editions of Insight will contain more detail on this subject so please watch this space for further updates.

I would also urge you to read our article on pages 10 – 13 about South Essex Homes' performance in relation to our handling of complaints and how we spend the money we receive from Southend-on-Sea City Council to provide your housing services. As you may have read in the last edition of Insight, we are committed to being open and honest about our performance and would welcome any feedback from you about the services we deliver.

*Best wishes,
Mike*

**Mike Gatrell,
Chief Executive
of South Essex
Homes**



GET IN TOUCH!

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

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

Email: juliapack@seh.southend.gov.uk



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

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

CONDENSATION AND MOULD

Whilst it is an issue that comes around every year during the winter, we know that the topic of damp and mould has been at the forefront of everyone's minds recently, especially due to the unfortunate death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in Rochdale. We would like to reassure you that we are taking the issue seriously, and we encourage tenants to report any persistent issues of damp and mould in their home.

Every home is subject to condensation at some point, and it is quite normal to find your bedroom windows with moisture on them after a cold night. You may notice condensation on other cold surfaces such as walls, pipes, and your toilet. However, not all dampness is caused by condensation, sometimes dampness can be as a result of leaking pipes and radiators, leaking roofs, guttering or chimney flashings, penetrating damp from porous bricks, or rising damp. If you suspect any of these issues, please report this to us.

This article has been put together to provide you with a range of best practice tips to keep condensation under control and keep mould away, as well as how to best deal with it when the signs start to show.

We want to remind you that you can report damp and mould issues to us on our website via the report a repair form, or by calling us on 0800 833 160.

Kevin Hazlewood

Director (Property)

WHERE DO YOU FIND MOULD?

It can be found on and adjacent to windows, in the corners and edges of rooms and behind and inside wardrobes and cupboards especially if they are against an external wall.

Mould can even grow on clothes, handbags, and shoes if they are hung up in wardrobes when still damp or wet, or stored so tightly to prevent air from circulating.

How to treat mould

Do NOT use bleach to clean walls or ceilings. This may be hazardous.

It is important to treat any mould you may already have in your home. If you then deal with the basic problem of condensation, mould should not reappear.

- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive approval number. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely.
- Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of respiratory problems.

- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint, sometimes known as damp seal paint, to help prevent mould recurring. Please note that this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper. The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to eliminate dampness.



HOW TO DEAL WITH CONDENSATION

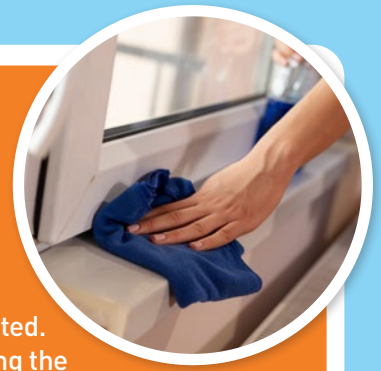
Once you have treated the mould you will need to work to deal with and prevent condensation to stop the mould from reappearing.

Condensation is the most common kind of moisture in the home, caused by warm moist air condensing on cold surfaces such as glass and walls. It's mainly a winter problem, as at this time of year walls are much colder than the air inside. Condensation is made worse by poor ventilation and not heating the property enough.

Prevention

Ordinary activities can produce a lot of moisture quite quickly. Some steps you can take to reduce moisture production in your home are...

- Do not dry clothes or towels on radiators - if you dry clothes inside, dry in a room with the window ajar and the door closed.
- Ensure that tumble dryers are properly vented to the outside through a wall vent.
- Cover pans when cooking and use extractor fans if fitted.
- Reduce steam when running the bath by running cold water first and then topping up with warm.
- Keep the internal bathroom and kitchen doors shut and these rooms well ventilated during and after, bathing and cooking.
- Wipe down surfaces where moisture settles, such as windows, pipes, cisterns etc.
- Do not use bottled gas or paraffin heaters in your home; these produce a lot of water vapour when the fuel is burned.



VENTILATION, VENTILATION, VENTILATION!

Increasing ventilation will help prevent moisture laden air from being trapped in your home and condensing on the windows, walls and ceilings.

Actions that can be taken include:

- Each morning, 'air' the affected rooms by opening the windows for a little while and wiping down any wet windows and sills.
- Use extractor fans/hoods in bathrooms and kitchens where they are fitted.
- Leave bathroom and kitchen windows open slightly for 20 minutes once you have finished cooking, showering or bathing, with the door closed.
- If your windows have trickle vents fitted, leave these open as this will provide a steady flow of fresh air and remember to shut your windows before you go out.



KEEP YOUR HOME WARM

Condensation can be worse in a cold home. This is because cold air cannot hold as much moisture as warm air. Keeping your home warm can really help to reduce condensation.

Condensation and mould often form in rooms that are unused or under heated. Turn the radiators and heaters down in these rooms to save energy, but don't turn them off completely if you are in the position to keep them on low.

Important things to remember:

- Move furniture away from walls to allow air to circulate around your rooms
- Do not block vents or extractor fans
- Clean condensation and mould away when you see it forming
- Avoid blocking chimney openings
- Leave cupboard and wardrobe doors open periodically so that air can circulate

The best way to heat your home is through steady background heating. This is because warmer air can hold more moisture and as the temperature of the walls increases the possibility of condensation forming on them is reduced.





STRF UPDATE



Message from

STRF

ACTING

CHAIR

Hello,

You may or may not be aware there have been some changes to the Southend Tenants & Residents Federation (STRF) committee over the last few months and by the next issue of Insight Magazine we will have a fully operational new team of members but for the time being I am Acting Chair.

I joined STRF in the summer of 2022 as Treasurer, since which time we have had several meetings and held a children's Christmas party at Kids Kingdom in Garon Park over two days. These events were a roaring success and I hope every child went home at the end of the parties very happy after meeting Father Christmas and receiving a gift, whilst their parents enjoyed a coffee and chat in the café. I hope you enjoy some of the photos on this page.

We have received messages of thanks from some of the parents whose children attended saying they had a lovely time and hopefully we will repeat this again at the end of 2023.

We had several donations from companies around Southend without which we would not have been able to provide gifts, so I hope you join me in thanking the following for their very generous donations:

- Aaron Services Ltd
- Double L Ltd
- George Jones & Sons (Contractors) Ltd
- Kieran Lucas Contractors Ltd
- Mountfield Services Ltd

We are working towards holding one or two events later in the year and will be holding several meetings throughout the year to discuss and arrange these, which you are invited to attend should you wish to. The dates will be advertised on our website. Please take a look at our Facebook Page too where you will see more photographs of the children's party. Details are at the bottom of the page.

I hope to see some of you at one or more of our regular meetings but should you require our help in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact us by phone, email or through Messenger.

Thank you all and please do look out for the dates of the monthly meetings for the year ahead.

Sally Robertson

Acting Chair



Contact your STRF

Website: www.strf.uk

Facebook: search for 'STRF-2020'

Call: 07977 667278



New COUNCIL LOGO



**Southend-on-Sea
City Council**

As you may have started to notice, Southend-on-Sea City Council have recently updated their logo to reflect the new city status, so you will begin to see items appearing across the area bearing the logo to the right.

This changeover doesn't happen overnight and it may be several years until all signage is updated, but all new items will be created with this new logo in place of the old 'Southend-on-Sea Borough Council' logo.

CONTRACTORS DONATE TO



“We have several contracts in Southend and wanted to give something back to the community. We were very overwhelmed with the fantastic support they offer to the local community.”

In the run up to Christmas, one of our contractors - Re-Gen (M&E Services) Ltd, who carry out some electrical work for us - visited the One Love Project in Southend to make a donation of food and toiletries.

They said: “We have several contracts in Southend and wanted to give something back to the community. We were very overwhelmed with the fantastic support they offer to the local community.”

Lloyd Williams, one of South Essex Homes’ Project Surveyors, added: “Our contractors are encouraged to employ local people and give back to the local community wherever possible and this is a great example of just that.”

To find out more about the One Love project, search for their Facebook page ‘The One Love Project & Soup Kitchen – Southend’.



**EXPERIENCE THE CITY
IN A NEW LIGHT**

16-18 February 2023
southendluminocity.co.uk

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



SUPPORTED BY



YOUR TENANCY FAQs ANSWERED!

QUESTION: Can I have a mobility scooter?

Apply

Residents must seek permission to keep a mobility scooter in any property managed by South Essex Homes, by completing the Mobility Scooter Application Form available from your Tenancy Officer or via our website.

This is to ensure health and safety is not compromised and insurance requirements are met. The completed form should be sent to your Tenancy Services Officer. While the request is managed by the Tenancy and Support Services team, they will liaise with our Fire Safety Manager to conduct a joint assessment with the resident to consider the building, potential risks and the person's needs together.

We will not unreasonably withhold permission for a tenant to keep a mobility scooter on Council property as long as all the necessary conditions that keep you and other residents safe, are met.

Insurance

Please note that whilst by law mobility scooter users don't have to take out insurance in order to use their vehicle, users must have appropriate insurance if they apply to us for permission to use, store and/or charge their vehicle on property managed by South Essex Homes.

Safe charging

Where there is no designated charging or storage area, mobility scooters must be stored outside the building, or within the confines of the home, but never in shared internal communal areas as they present a fire risk and can restrict escape routes in the event of a fire. Some sheltered schemes have existing storage and charging facilities, some do not. You must check the situation with the Tenancy and Support Services team before you acquire a mobility scooter.

Mobility scooter owners must ensure any manufacturer guidelines and instructions on the safe charging of the mobility scooter are followed.

Our Mobility Scooter Policy is available on our website and sets out some guidelines to ensure safe charging is observed.

Consent

Following communications with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, SEH has had to take a zero-tolerance approach to mobility scooters being stored anywhere on Council stock/land without consent, other than in a designated scooter store or within the tenant's/leaseholder's home.



QUESTION: Can I keep a pet in my home?

Permission

You must not keep any animals (including reptiles) at your home unless written permission has been granted.

If we give our permission, you must ensure that your pet does not cause damage to your home and does not cause a noise or other nuisance. This includes smells or mess caused by your pet.

Control

If you have a dog or cat you must keep it under control. If you take a dog in the shared areas, it must be on a lead and you must clean up any mess it causes. If you have a dog and you have a private garden you must make sure the garden is enclosed so your dog cannot escape. You must not allow your dog to enter any children's play area or other dog-free zone.

You must not keep more than two dogs or two cats in your home at any one time. You (and anyone living with you) must not keep (or allow your visitors to bring onto the estate) any breed of dog named as dangerous in Section 1 of the Dangerous Dog Act 1991, or any other breed which we do not allow.

Sheltered schemes

If you live in a sheltered housing scheme you will only be allowed to keep certain pets at your home. Please check the Pet Policy on our website or speak to your Tenancy Services Officer. Only guide dogs for the hearing or visually impaired are allowed into the shared lounges.

We may stipulate that you (and anyone living with you) cannot keep any animal in your homes if we have concerns that it would cause a danger or nuisance.



For more information, to complete a permission form and to view the full policy please visit www.southessexhomes.co.uk/pets-and-animals

QUESTION: How do I get rid of rubbish?

If you live in a flat...

It is important that you dispose of your household rubbish correctly and considerately using the facilities we have provided.

You must not cause a nuisance to your neighbours when using the shared rubbish chutes and be careful not to block them. You must ensure that the correct items are placed in the correct sack/bin and not cause a nuisance to your neighbours due to an accumulation of rubbish.

You must never throw rubbish out of windows or down stairwells or leave it in any of the shared areas (including lifts). Not only is this potentially very dangerous, I am sure that we would all agree that it is not fair to expect someone else to clear up after another person.

You must not leave bulk items (e.g. furniture) in any of the shared areas as they are considered a health and safety risk. If found the items will be removed immediately and you will be recharged for this.

Please be aware that if our Caretaking team needs to regularly make extra visits to a particular block in order

to clear rubbish left in the wrong place then this may lead to an increase in the service charge for everyone living in the block. Therefore, if this is a problem in your building and you can identify who is causing the issue, please let us know so we can investigate further and take any necessary actions against them specifically, to prevent this affecting all residents.

If you live in a house...

If there is no area set aside for collecting rubbish you must provide your own dustbin. We cannot supply these. You must put rubbish in suitable bags and tie these securely so no rubbish can fall out.

Present your pink recycling and clear textile recycling sacks, blue food waste collection bins, garden waste (if applicable) and black refuse sacks by 7am on your scheduled collection day.

Be sure to leave them in a visible and accessible location on the kerbside (boundary) of the property and not obstructing the public highway (this includes the footpath or verge).



Our

PERFORMANCE

As we explained in the autumn 2022 edition of Insight, we are sharing details of our company's performance with you over four issues of Insight. This is the second instalment of this process and this time we are covering the chapters of the new Charter for Social Housing on the subjects of complaints and our financial performance.

We hope you find this interesting and if you have any comments or questions we'd be delighted to receive them. Please email your feedback or write in using the details at the bottom of page 3.

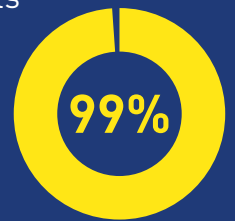
TO HAVE YOUR COMPLAINTS DEALT WITH PROMPTLY AND FAIRLY

Number of complaints received during 2022

Stage 0 / Informal Complaints =	257
Stage 1 Complaints =	190
Stage 2 Complaints =	25
Housing Ombudsman Complaints =	4
Housing Ombudsman Enquiries / Requests =	10

Complaint response rate

Only two Stage 1 complaints were outside of the set timeframes, which means that response service standards were met in over **99%** of cases.



What did people complain about?

The top two subjects of all the complaints we receive are Repairs and Tenancy issues.



Repairs

We always aim to respond to reports of repairs in a timely fashion:

- For urgent repairs (something that needs to be made safe / is a danger to life) we aim to get a contractor out as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
- For non-urgent repairs with one of our main contractors, we aim to give you an appointment which will be within 20 working days of reporting the repair.

For repairs that are needed to communal areas, please don't assume someone else has already reported it – please let us know so we can arrange for the appropriate contractor to attend.

We monitor complaints received about our contractors and each contractor is expected to have a Complaints Policy comparable to the policy of South Essex Homes. In particular, complaints about the service provided by our larger contractors will be reviewed and discussed with individual contractors and residents at client management meetings and reported to the Board where appropriate.

Tenancy

Complaints raised about the management of tenancies can vary greatly but the majority can be categorised under:

- Handling of ASB issues
- Mobility Scooters issues
- Parking issues
- Rubbish and fly tipping

Each complaint is looked at on an individual basis but we also try and learn from the 'themes' of complaints that we receive. The Tenancy Team will answer concerns and questions raised by tenants in the first instance but if the matter remains unresolved then we will respond through our complaints process.

Ombudsmen cases

Two of the Ombudsman Complaints have been reviewed and the findings advised to South Essex Homes (SEH); the other two are ongoing as it can take the Ombudsman several months before they come back to us.

CASE 1 – This complaint originally raised an issue with the tenant requesting a designated parking space. It also included a complaint about repairs not being carried out in a timely fashion and Estate Walkabout results not being published so that residents were made aware of the outcomes and work (if any) to be completed. ASB was also a factor with SEH not taking required action in a timely manner.

The parking space aspect of the complaint was not upheld. The remaining elements of the complaint were upheld and SEH was made to pay compensation to the tenant.

Lessons learnt – Whilst still a work in progress, we now have a much better system of sharing Estate Inspection reports via our website. You can now find the latest report for most addresses by searching for your road or building name at www.southessexhomes.co.uk/estate-inspections.

CASE 2 – A Leaseholder complained about not having their repairs completed within an expected timescale and not being happy with the way their complaints were dealt with.

The complaints were upheld and resulted in compensation being paid by Morgan Sindall and SEH.

Lessons learnt – this case led to a review of the Complaints procedures which has since been completed.

How do SEH deal with complaints?

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

We try to make it easy for our customers to make a complaint and accept complaints in most formats and from a variety of sources, including email, our online feedback form, letter, telephone, text or message via Facebook or Twitter.

All complaints are registered and logged by our Corporate Resources Team. This team decides which service area each complaint relates to and will ask the relevant service manager to investigate and provide a reply. This team monitors all complaints and ensure that replies are sent within the agreed timescale. All complaints are dealt with promptly and in a professional manner by appropriate member(s) of staff and confidentiality is preserved as far as is possible.

Please note that complaints relating to nuisance or ASB by neighbours will be dealt with separately by our Tenancy or Housing and Community Safety Teams.

We ensure that we benchmark against our peers to learn from other organisations within the housing sector on how they provide their service.

Timeframes for dealing with complaints

Logging and acknowledgement of complaint (Informal/Formal) – 5 working days.

Informal complaints are defined as:

Expressions of minor dissatisfaction or minor failure in service which can be quickly rectified. Informal complaints either do not warrant a full investigation, or the customer

specifically states they do not wish to take the matter any further through the complaints' procedure. When you make an informal complaint to us, we will try to resolve the problem, and this should happen within 10 days of you contacting us.

Stage Zero Informal complaint decision – 10 working days from receipt of informal complaint – if this is not possible, an explanation and a date will be given by when the decision should be received.

Formal Complaint

Effective complaint handling should be a resident-friendly process that enables residents to be heard, listened to and understood. The starting point for this is a mutual understanding of what constitutes a complaint.

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

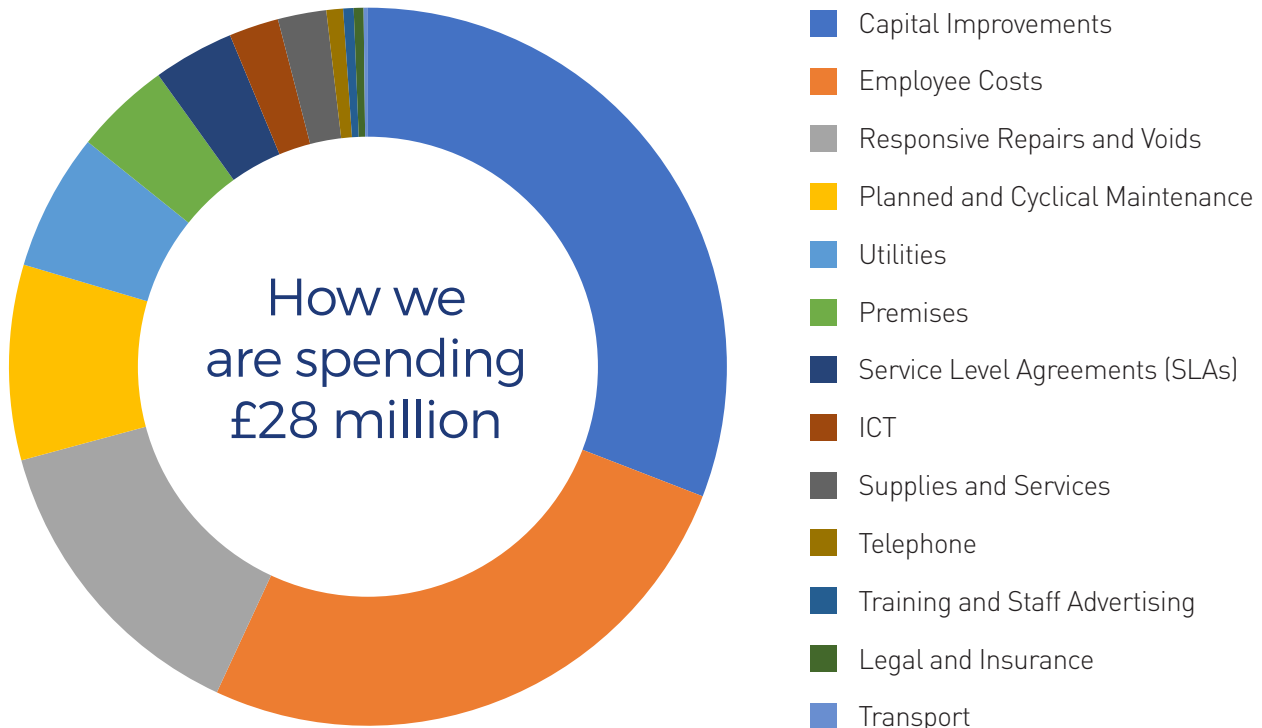
The resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. We should recognise the difference between an informal complaint (pre-formal complaint), survey feedback and a formal complaint and take appropriate steps to resolve the issue for residents as early as possible.

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

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

TO KNOW HOW YOUR LANDLORD IS PERFORMING

Forecast expenditure for 2022-23



Area	Value
Capital Improvements	£8,685,000
Employee Costs	£7,322,000
Responsive Repairs and Voids	£3,905,000
Planned and Cyclical Maintenance	£2,472,000
Utilities	£1,737,000
Premises	£1,214,000
SLA's	£1,025,000

Area	Value
ICT	£630,000
Supplies and Services	£614,000
Telephone	£211,000
Training and Staff Advertising	£132,000
Legal and Insurance	£124,000
Transport	£54,000

Rent collection

In the year from April 2021 to March 2022, we collected a total of

£33,195,402 in rent

This figure equates to 99.4% of the total amount of rent due for that period across all the tenancies we manage for Southend-on-Sea City Council.



Overall satisfaction with South Essex Homes

Every year we conduct a programme of resident surveys (which we call 'STAR surveys') to help us understand the general feeling amongst tenants as to how we are performing; what we are doing right and what we could improve upon.

For 2021-22 we surveyed over 900 residents and one of the questions we asked was regarding their overall satisfaction with the services provided by South Essex Homes. For last year the number of satisfied residents was **80.9%** of respondents.

The median rate of overall satisfaction across organisations in the social housing sector is **79.94%**, putting our performance slightly above average.

Our teams followed up with many of the residents who had expressed dissatisfaction about an area of our service, where they had said they were happy for us to contact them regarding their survey. This allowed us to find out more about their experience and if there was anything we could do better next time. It also helped us to identify outstanding repairs and unresolved ASB cases, which we were then able to address.



Tenant Satisfaction Measures

The Regulator of Social Housing has recently issued a set of measures that all social housing providers will need to collect data on and publish at regular intervals. These include a number of measures designed to track tenant satisfaction, as well as the areas that a social housing landlord should focus on to ensure tenants' homes are safe and concerns are listened to.

Here are some of the areas we follow and our most recent findings:

Performance measure	2020-2021	2021-2022	Compared to last year
Satisfaction that home is safe - Overall	81.7%	82.1%	↑
Overall Satisfaction of Residents	84.8%	80.9%	↓
Repairs completed in target timescale - emergency	99.9%	99.7%	↓
Repairs completed in target timescale - Non Emergency	97.8%	97.3%	↓
Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	6.3%	3.8%	↑



DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT



The South Essex Homes Digital Inclusion project was launched in 2020 and has since been helping residents in Sheltered Housing to get online. The aim of this project is to help tenants to understand the benefits of using technology, to enable them to focus on the changes it could bring to their day to day lives, and to help them gain confidence to deal with modern technology.

We have Digital Ambassadors who are resident volunteers, and they love sharing their skills with others whilst also meeting new people.

One of our Digital Ambassadors, Sally Robertson, said:

“Being a digital ambassador is great fun. I get to travel around Southend and meet lots of lovely people. It’s really nice to be able to pass on what knowledge I have to others to enable them to be able to do simple tasks like online shopping, booking blood tests, reporting repairs to South Essex Homes, even paying your rent online or other bills, or simply just to listen to your favourite singer or band, read the news and check out the weather. The world is your oyster when you know how to use the internet. Sending an email is a great way to communicate with friends and family, or having a Zoom chat with them all at the same time, it’s like being in the room with everyone.

“All these things are becoming more and more important to learn as companies and the authorities are turning to the internet to run their businesses. You will be provided with a device on a six-month agreement if you do not have one and you will have one-to-one training to enable you to learn. You may find you enjoy it but if you find it is not for you then that’s okay too, we will just stop the lessons and the device will be returned.”



The Digital Ambassadors can visit the schemes to give regular 1-2-1 sessions whether it be on a device provided by South Essex Homes or on a personal smartphone or tablet.

In the coming months, members of the Resident Engagement Team along with the Digital Ambassadors will be setting up coffee mornings in your schemes to come and discuss the project in more detail.

If you think the Digital Inclusion project would be any help to you, even if it is learning to do just one thing on a computer or another device, then please contact Sue Rickard in the Resident Engagement Team on 01702 212650 or suerickard@seh.southend.gov.uk

Digital Ambassadors Wanted

Volunteering can help you to feel connected with your community and is a great way of making new friends, it also gives a sense of accomplishment when you have helped someone discover a new skill.

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

If this is something you are interested in, please contact suerickard@seh.southend.gov.uk for more information.

YANTLET RESIDENTS OPEN THEIR NEW GARDEN!

Residents at Yantlet celebrated the opening of their new roof top garden, the ‘Queen Elizabeth II Memorial garden’.

The Mayor and Mayoress officially opened the garden and celebrated with residents and special guests. The tenants have worked to make this garden a special place for all to enjoy and take in the fabulous view. They have raised funds by holding events and raffles and plan to introduce more plants in the springtime.



Introducing our

WEBSITE CHATBOT!

If you have visited the South Essex Homes website recently you may have noticed that we have launched a new feature – our ChatBot.

This is like an advanced search tool which enables you to ask a question about the services we offer and the ChatBot will search through some pre-populated online questions and answers to try and understand what information you are looking for, before signposting you to the answer.

When you visit our website, www.southessexhomes.co.uk, from any device there will be a box in the bottom of the screen asking 'What are you looking for?' with a button underneath that you can press to 'Ask us a question'. [IMAGE 1]

You are invited to type in some basic details about you and choose which topic your question is about before starting the chat. The four topics we have created so far are: **My Home, My Money, My Neighbourhood** and **My Tenancy**. [IMAGE 2]

You can then type in your question or some keywords that will help the ChatBot understand what you're looking for and it will search the database for matches, before offering you an answer. You will be prompted to end the chat if the answer provided by the ChatBot leads you to the information you are looking for. [IMAGE 3]

If the answer it suggests first time doesn't provide the information you are looking for, you can try rewording it. If it continues to misunderstand you then you can click on the button to 'Request a Call Back' and a member of our Customer Services team will call you back as soon as possible to discuss the issue further.

We have prepopulated the database with dozens of frequently asked questions but fully appreciate that there may be some questions we haven't thought of, so we will continue to update and improve the database when it starts to be used more and more, as we get a better understanding of how our tenants are using this online function.

This is just the start of what we hope will be a series of developments over the next couple of years that will ensure our website remains as useful as possible. We welcome your feedback on our website so please let us know what you think and any ideas for what else you'd like to see, using the contact details at the bottom of page 3.



IMAGE 1

Ask us a question



IMAGE 2

IMAGE 3

“Fantastic service which gives peace of mind”



At Careline, we are here for you and your loved ones 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year with just a push of a button.

Our alarm service provides peace of mind to vulnerable people and their families at affordable prices – from 46p per day.

We offer simple price plans, that are designed to suit all budgets. Having a personal alarm system installed can leave you feeling more independent and secure in your own home and gives family members reassurance that someone is always available to help.

If you are unsure what plan is right for you, or want to speak with someone – call us on **0800 833 162**.

Alternatively, you can visit www.carelinesos.co.uk and request your free information pack via post or email.

How it works



STEP 1

Your personal alarm will either be activated by pressing your pendant or the alarm unit itself – it's the same procedure whether you have a base unit, a pendant or a wrist strap



STEP 2

A signal is sent from your personal alarm to our ultra-fast response team in our control room. The operator will have all your personal information to hand and will know whether to contact your chosen emergency contacts or emergency services



STEP 3

You will speak with the operator through the highly sensitive microphone on your personal alarm unit, and they will then arrange the appropriate assistance

www.carelinesos.co.uk
Call us today on 0800 833162


CarelineSOS
living smarter together