Southampton City Council Housing Service Review of 2018/19





BREAKING NEWS!

RENT PAYMENT CARDS ARE RETURNING

Following feedback form customers and the Tenants Scrutiny Panel we have reintroduced rent payment cards. You can request a card by contacting the Customer Payment and Debt Team on 023 8083 3388 or email cpd.general@southampton.gov.uk

AN OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR FROM COUNCILLOR KAUR



Councillor Satvir Kaur

Cabinet Member for Homes and Culture

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year as Cabinet Member for Homes and Culture and meeting many of you on the doorstep, at community events, tenant meetings and conferences.

As a council we remain committed to delivering more sustainable, safe and secure homes. I'm pleased that our fire safety programme, which includes sprinklers in all our high-rise blocks, is nearing completion. We also continue to ensure our homes are energy efficient and help keep your energy bills low: there are solar panels on our new builds and more and more tenants are signing up to CitizEn Energy, the council's energy company where 100% of the profits goes back into tackling fuel poverty.

We all know we are in a national housing crisis, and our local response to it is to build more quality, affordable, council homes that local people need. Our ambition is to deliver 1,000 council homes by 2025, and so far we have built homes in Townhill Park (with more set to come), work has started to develop 103 houses and flats on the former Oaklands School site in Lordshill, (page 13), and close to 100 homes (including 83 housing-withcare apartments) will be delivered by late 2020 in Millbrook (page 13).

However, homes are more than just bricks and mortar. They are about people. It's important that everything we do has people and communities at its heart. We're passionate about working with you to make our communities stronger, happier and healthier. Everything from developing tenants' employability skills, to protecting people experiencing domestic abuse in their homes, plus there are Junior Neighbourhood Wardens and local residents groups who are all doing their bit to improve our communities.

We always strive to do better, so thank you to those that take the time to offer feedback, as it enables us to focus our attention on projects that matter most to you. Our Tenants Tell Us scheme provides a great opportunity to help shape services in your area - find out how you can get involved on page 23.

I look forward to another exciting year ahead for homes in Southampton. As ever, if you have any questions or feedback please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Satvir

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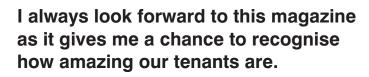
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Welcome to our annual review of the Housing Service

Paul Juan

Service Director Adults, Housing and Communities



You always impress with your strong sense of community, selfless volunteering attitude and desire to help neighbours. Inside, you can find out how our tenants are making a real difference to their communities through tenants' groups and gardening clubs.

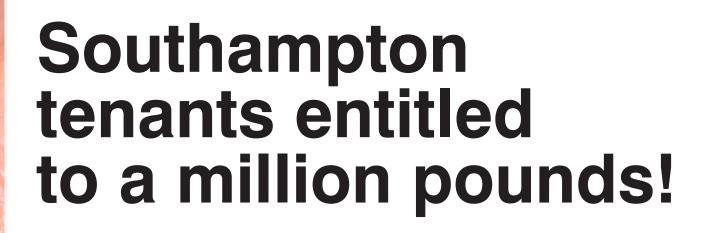
One of the issues we know is important to you is building new council homes. And the good news is we are working hard to make that happen. Read on to discover more about the many new homes we are building and our future development ambitions.

Finally, I'd like to say a big thank you for taking the time to complete our surveys and consultations this year. We found out that 77% of our customers are happy with the Housing Service, which is a great result. But we still want to do even better and I'm looking forward to sharing more successes.

Best wishes, Paul

Share the report with your friends and neighbours online at southampton.gov.uk/housingannualreport





What could you do with a million pounds?

Well, this year our tenants are better off collectively by over a million pounds. This is by our Wellfare Rights Team helping tenants claim benefits they are entitled to.

In one case, our Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team helped a family receive an extra £213.60 a week.

By providing welfare rights advice, we have also helped avoid 230 tenants becoming homeless.

Over the last year, the Welfare Right and Money Advice Team have given advice to over 4000 households - that's nearly a quarter of all our tenants. But we want to see if we can help more people.

How we can help

So, if you need advice on benefits, or are having problems making ends meet or paying bills, please contact our Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team at welfarerights.advice@southampton.gov.uk or go to southampton.gov.uk/moneyadvice.





Left: Northam estate completed 1960, photo courtesy of Southampton City Council Archives

Celebrating 100 years of council housing in Southampton

This year marks 100 years since the first council houses were built in the UK.

Following the end of World War 1 the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, promised "habitations fit for the heroes who have won the war".

Some of our first council homes were built in Simnel Street above the medieval Undercroft vault.



And 100 years on and we are still building! Read more about our current building projects on pages 12-13.

Left: Simnel Street



Tenants support national campaign for more Council housing

As part of celebrating 100 years of council housing our tenants met to watch and discuss the Channel 4 programme George Clark's Council Housing Scandal.

The programme highlighted-

- That there are over a million people on council housing waiting lists
- The need for more council houses to be built
- That council houses need to be built to better standards, nationally
- The need to break down stigma and rebuild pride in council housing communities

The tenants group signed up to the national campaign to get the government to build 100,000 council homes each year for the next 30 years.







Top: Turner Crescent completed 1968

Middle: Clover Nooke, Redbridge completed 1960

Bottom: Palmerston House, Queensway completed 1962 All photos courtesy of Southampton City Council Archives





We are proud to support the Benefit to Society Campaign launched earlier this year.

It aims to change the way Social Housing is perceived in Britain and promotes the many positives of Social Housing. Giving a voice to tenants fed up with the negative stereotypes portrayed in the media. In a recent national survey 90% of social housing tenants feel they are unfairly represented by the media.

The campaign also highlights the benefits of Social Housing such as security of tenure, good maintenance and cheaper rents.

We have been talking to our tenants about this and here are some of their views...



"I love where I live my home is warm the people are so friendly" Hany Babai, Weston



"I feel safe and secure living where I am and my neighbours are brilliant" Alex Ivancevic, Northam



"I love the sense of community where I live and the location is perfect for me" Hanch Yusuf, Northam



"I've had help and support from the council when I've needed it and I've been a council tenant for 38 years, overall very happy" Gillian Orman, Portswood



"Very happy to be a council tenant, they've always taken care of us, I'm proud to be a council tenant and this my home" Jean Frecknall, Swaythling



"I've spent 50 years as a council tenant and I've loved every minute of it, great service from all departments" **Timothy Corcoran, Midanbury**



"I've lived in council housing for 30 years. Our ground floor flat is lovely, we've decorated it nicely, and I respect my home and love where I live" Virginia O'Dell, Harefield



"My flat is great value for money and I know the council is still going to be around. I want council services to be delivered by council staff because they have a vested interest to deliver the best that they can"

Chris Alliston, Swaythling,



support and security of tenure during the last 10 years in supported housing, which I never had during years in the private rented sector"

Ray White, Swaythling

Under development

New homes at Townhill Park

This year, we welcomed families to 56 newly built homes at Townhill Park providing modern, energyefficient and affordable living.

The six three-bedroom houses each have a private back garden and shed, while all of the 50 flats include a balcony or patio.

The new council homes are just the start of a major regeneration of Townhill Park.

Over the next eight years Townhill Park will benefit from many other improvements including:

- A further 609 new flats and houses
- Environmental improvements to Frogs Copse
- Better walking and cycling routes
- Measures to make Meggeson Avenue more pedestrian friendly
- A new community space or "Village Green"
- Better play facilities for children
- A new convenience store and, potentially, a café



Under construction

New housing-with-care scheme coming to Millbrook

When Potters Court opens in 2020, it will be the largest housing-with-care facility in Southampton.

The £26m scheme will include 99 purpose-built, affordable council homes, including 84 extra care apartments for qualified city residents with an assessed care need. There will also be 15 general needs flats for residents aged 55 and over at adjoining Kiln Court.

Potters Court will benefit from a modern design, landscaping and a communal courtyard. Plus there will be a range of energy efficiency measures, including solar panels, LED lighting and electrical car charging points.



In the future

103 new properties at former Oaklands School site, Lordshill

Funding has been approved to build 103 new affordable homes on the site of the former Oaklands Community School in Fairisle Road, Lordshill.

The site will consist of 41 flats and 63 houses and will be a mixture of council rented and shared ownership homes.

The development is due to be completed in 2022. When residents move in to the new homes they will benefit from energy efficient features such as solar panels to help keep fuel bills low.

In keeping with the local area, the development will be made up of semi-detached, short terraces, and small blocks of two and threestorey flats.

The scheme will also include play areas and a cycle path will be re-routed through the development.



Could our supported housing help you take the next step?

If you're starting to feel like your home is too big for you, perhaps now is the time to start considering the benefits of moving into one of our supported housing flats?

Our accommodation for older people allows residents to live independently. But you will still have your own home, with your own front door. There is a lot of flexibility in supported housing and the amount of support you receive can increase or decrease depending on your needs.

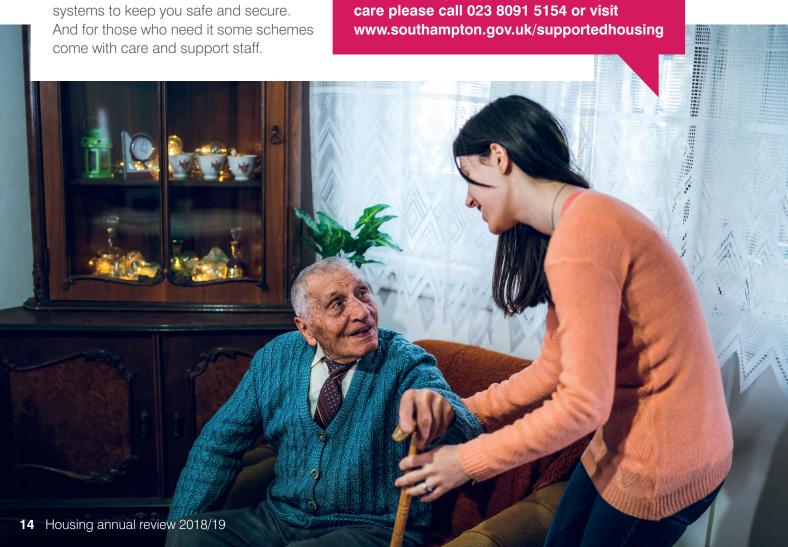
We have accommodation with communal lounges that hold social events and activities. All include built-in alarm systems to keep you safe and secure. And for those who need it some schemes come with care and support staff

If you're interested in finding out more why not have a look at our new film of Kathleen a tenant living at Erskine Court and what housing with extra care means to her.

Visit Youtube - Erskine Court Housing with Extra Care Scheme - What does adult care look like in Southampton?

To find out more about housing for over 60s

and to see if you qualify for housing with





Do you want peace of mind knowing there is always someone there to help in an emergency? if so telecare may be for you.

> To find out more about housing for over 60's and to see if you qualify for housing with care please call 023 8091 5154 or visit www.southampton.gov.uk/supportedhousing

With our telecare service you'll have access to our 24/7 call centre, pendant alarm, our emergency responder service and other care technology if needed.

There is a small charge for the service. For more information about our basic telecare service or to request an installation complete our application form online or contact us by telephone on 023 8083 3675. my.southampton.gov.uk/service/ Careline information request.

However if you think that you may need a more complex telecare package such as a falls detector, or a device such as a GPS tracker then please contact SCC Care Connect 023 8083 3003 and request an assessment for telecare. Staff there will be able to fully assess your needs and/or eligibility for these more complex telecare solutions.

Helping you live independently by adapting your home?

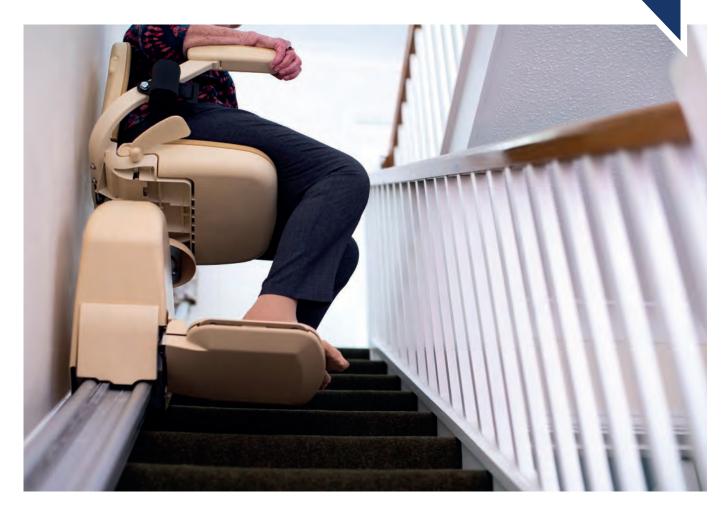
We want to ensure your home continues to be suitable for your needs.

One way we can do this is by adapting your home to meet any changing medical conditions. Last year we carried out over 1,300 adaptations to allow our tenants to live independently for longer. These adaptations ranged from installing small items such as hand rails to larger items like level access showers.

To meet the rising demand for home adaptations in 2018/19 we increased our disabled adaptations budget by over £900k to £2.3 million. And we will be spending further £2.3 million on adaptations in 2019/20.

If you or a member of your household requires an adaptation to your home please **contact the Adult Contact** Team on 023 8083 3003. If the adaptation is for a child please contact the Jigsaw Team on 023 8091 5702.

These teams will assess your needs and liaise with the Housing Service to arrange any appropriate alterations.



Helping rough sleepers find accommodation

Like any other major UK city, Southampton faces challenges with rough sleepers and we have been working hard to support these vulnerable people.

We recently received a £400,000 Government grant and this has helped us employ two more outreach support workers. Their role is to encourage the take up of Hostel beds and this has helped an extra 124 rough sleepers find accommodation over the last year.

We have also increased our short term accommodation for rough sleepers and are helping them overcome some of the barriers when moving into private rented accommodation.

We encourage residents and visitors to give money to homelessness charities rather than directly to rough sleepers.

> To find out how you can help rough sleepers visit the Street Support Network website to see how you can donate, support and volunteer.

www.streetsupport.net/Southampton or if you have any concerns over someone sleeping on the streets, then you can report your concern via



You asked us to improve neighbourhoods and community spaces...

This is what

We know that parking can be a problem, we have recently improved the parking and landscaping around Cuckmere Lane and Redbridge Towers. We also wanted to give the kids something to smile about with a brand new play area.

We will be moving onto other areas around the city, remodelling car parks, footpaths, recycling and drying areas to create high quality community spaces. In total we will be spending £2.1m over the next two years improving communal spaces around our properties.







we're doina

Creating vibrant communities with plants and flowers

We've teamed up with Plants for People to engage with communities to develop colourful vibrant outside spaces with plants, flowers and vegetables.

We support a number of gardening clubs which are open to all ages and abilities. We are encouraging all residents to come along to meet new friends and learn new gardening skills. The gardening clubs can be found in the Millbrook, Weston and Holyrood estates.

Gardening can bring communities together. It is a great way to meet people and socialise with new friends. Gardening is fun, keeps you active and provides plenty of fresh air.

If you are interested in getting more involved and helping us create vibrant green spaces in these areas, then please come along.

A friendly experienced gardener from Mayfield Nurseries will be on hand during the following days:

Mondays 1.30-4.30pm Mayboush, meeting at the entrance of block 67-125, Irving Road

Wednesdays 1.30-4.30pm Weston, meeting at Oslo Tower

Fridays 1.30-4.30pm Holyrood, meeting at Challis Court



For more information contact: Dreade@solentmind.org.uk or phone 07768 082631.













Our young and inspirational Junior Neighbourhood Wardens

Our Junior Neighbourhood Warden (JNW) scheme is a great way for children aged 7-12 to get involved in community activities and events across Southampton.

We have 107 Junior Neighbourhood Wardens and this year they have taken part in 42 events, including 16 after-school and half-term sports projects.

Junior Neighbourhood Wardens are busy bees. During their litter picks they have helped collect 160 black bags weighing more than 2.7 tonnes.

They have also helped with gardening projects including planting for disabled residents. Over the year they have visited the police, fire and ambulance services as well as trips to Mayflower Theatre and City Tours to find out about the city's rich history.

Our JNW regularly meet our older residents for fun and games and most importantly interaction. Intergenerational evenings are currently held at Weston Court and Fairfax Court and there are plans to expand.

If you would like to be part of the JNW scheme visit www.southampton.gov.uk/jnw

How our tenants are making a difference

We have a number of small tenant groups that work closely with us to ensure tenants have a voice and a say in how we run the Housing Service. This is a quick snapshot of what they've been doing:

Our tenants feel it is important that they have a say in the contractors we use to improve your homes. So tenants in the Tenant Resources Group are working with managers to try and make this happen. They also want to ensure that tenants are involved in deciding what level of service we should expect from a good contractor.

Our Tenant Inspectors want to encourage more tenants to attend estate walkabouts. After investigating this they have asked us to make sure we publicise our estate inspections better. They have also asked us to let tenants know what actions we have taken following the inspection.

Below: The Tenant Inspectors share their findings at the Summer Housing Conference.

Visit: southampton.gov.uk/estatewalkabouts



The Scrutiny Panel is a small group of tenants that look at our service and challenge us to improve. They have successfully campaigned for the reintroduction of rent payment cards for new tenants.

- They were worried about how long it was taking for aids and adaptations to be fitted to properties. Following their report this service has been given more funding. More information can be found on page 16
- They were concerned with the quality of our grass-cutting service and have regularly met with managers to improve this service.

The tenants who are involved in the **Tenant Repairs Panel** have helped to improve the Online Repairs Form. making it easier to report repairs.

The Tenant Repairs Panel has also helped organise a DIY day for tenants. This is a fun day where you can learn simple day-to-day repairs and decorating skills.

Come along to our Winter Conference

Interested in finding what is happening to your homes and communities over the next year. Why not come along to our winter Housing Conference on the 21 January 2019, 6-8.30pm. This is open to all tenants but numbers are limited. To book a space call tenant engagement on 023 8083 3185.

Just how amazing is Leaside **Way Tenants Association?**

We have many amazing Tenants Associations in Southampton, and we wanted to tell you about one of them - Leaside Way Tenants Association.

This group prides itself in helping the community, recognising that loneliness can be a problem and that everyone needs a little help from time to time.

To help their residents stay active, they run a range of activities from yoga to Zumba, to more relaxed tea and chat afternoons. They are also developing a gardening club.



They have run first aid courses so they can help one another in emergencies and will shop for ill neighbours.

If you are thinking about setting up a Tenants Association, Leaside Way tenants are happy to help, and share their knowledge and expertise.

For more information contact the Tenant Engagement Team on 023 8083 3185



Can you help us rate our cleaning service?

We are looking for volunteers to spend five minutes a month, rating our cleaning service.

We currently clean the communal areas in and around our flats and we are looking for volunteers to rate our cleaning service after each clean. As a cleaning monitor we would like you to complete a very short form. This will let us know if we are reaching our expected standards along with highlighting any cleaning problems.

If you are interested in becoming a cleaning monitor, we would love to hear from you at

tenant.engagement@southampton.gov.uk

How good is our grass cutting service?

Housing aims to cut its green areas around every four weeks during the growing season.

We are looking for more volunteers to monitor our grass cutting service so that we can check we are meeting our grass cutting targets.

If you would like to volunteer to become one of our green space monitors, please contact us at

tenant.engagement@southampton.gov.uk

Tell us what's important to you

We're setting up 'Tenants Tell Us' so you can give us your views on the Housing Service via short monthly online surveys. By taking part, you can influence how services are delivered, highlight issues, and help shape the service in your area.

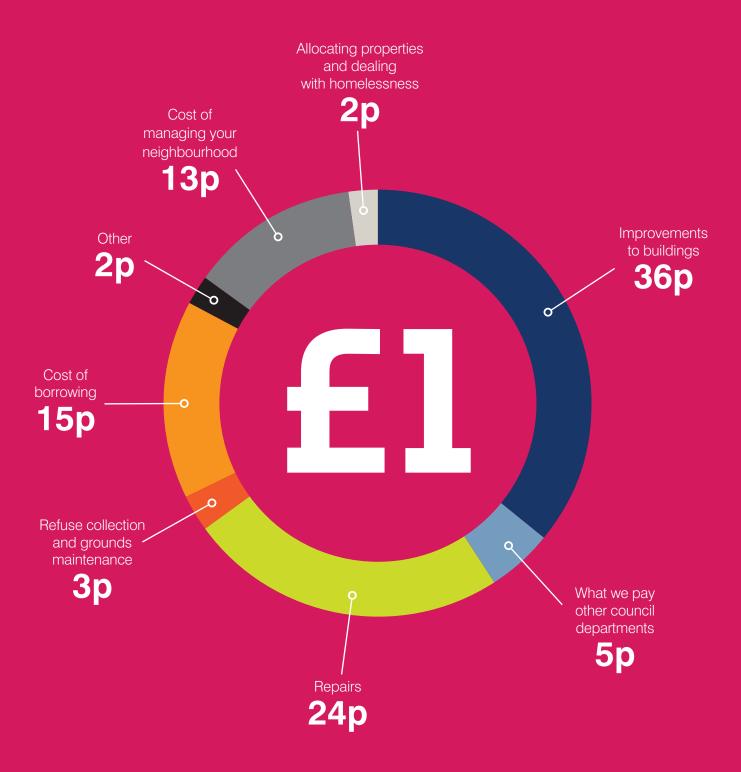
We'll share the results with you so you know how you're making a difference. If you're interested in telling us your views please sign up by visiting southampton.gov.uk/tenantstellus

Getting social online

Tenants are increasingly using social media and email to stay in touch with us. Remember to 'like' us on Facebook and 'follow' us on Twitter. You can also sign up for our monthly Tenants' Link online magazine at

- southampton.gov.uk/tenantslink
- /southamptonhousing
 - @sotonhousing

How we spend every £1 of rent



Average rents and waiting times for a property



Studio/1 bed

Average weekly rent £79.14

Applicants on waiting list 4,840

Average waiting time 18 months - 4 years



2 bed

Average weekly rent £90.03

Applicants on waiting list 1,833

Average waiting time 2-4 years



3 bed

Average weekly rent £109.45

Applicants on waiting list 1,447

Average waiting time 4-7 years



4 bed

Average weekly rent £116.92

Applicants on waiting list

Average waiting time 4-7 years

Customer complaints

Number of complaints we have had this year about the Housing Service down from 129 last year.

If you would like to make a comment, compliment or complaint visit:

southampton.gov.uk/complaints

Antisocial behaviour

877

Antisocial behaviour is down from 938 cases to 877 in the year.

Noise continues to be the main ASB.



How are we performing compared to previous years?

Performance measure	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Total rent arrears	£2.33m	£4.58m	£5.85m
Leaseholder service charge arrears	£58,943	£129,863	£224,969
Days to re-let an empty property	37	38	37
Number of repairs carried out	40,007	37,373	42,049
Repairs completed on 1st visit	80.97%	80.54%	84.9%
Repairs completed on time	95.49%	91.26%	86.8%
Average cost of repair	£98.70	£102.77	£226
Jobs not carried out due to 'no one home'	3,291	3,793	5,085

How we can improve? We know rent and service charge arrears have increased see how we're tackling this on page 28. Repair jobs not being carried out because no one is home cost us around £100,000 last year (we could buy over 30 new kitchens for that price!). Please make sure you keep to your repair appointments or if you need to change your appointment please let us know in good time.

Better life chances, improving employment opportunities

Our TEEM (Training, Education, Employment and Motivation) group works with people to support them into employment. Since April 2019 our work clubs have been accessed by 648 people, 28 people have gained paid employment, 23 people are in training and 11 people have taken up volunteering positions.

Our Housing Repairs team has taken on eleven apprentices two carpenters, four electricians, three gas engineers and two plumbers.

For help and support in to employment please email: employment.support.team@southampton.gov.uk or visit: southampton.gov.uk/employmentsupport



Repairs – how do we compare with other councils?

Here's a look at how we performed compared to other housing organisations for the year 2018/19



Three areas we are looking to improve the service

Last year we set up a Housing Improvement Programme to improve customer satisfaction and reduce costs.

The three key areas we want to improve are our repairs service, reducing the time our properties are empty and rent collection. This will be supported by improving our computer systems and technology.

This is what we're aiming to do in each area:



Repairs

Complete more repairs on time, first time

Reduce the cost of repairs

Improve the online reporting forms on our website

Using text as a way to keep you informed (if you have a mobile phone)



Voids

(Empty properties)

Reduce the time it takes to get an empty property ready to let

Improve the online bidding experience



Rent collection

Our most experienced staff are now working on collecting rents

Improve communication with tenants in arrears through a texting service

Improved, clearer and more customer friendly letters

What do you think of the service?

In April 2019 we phoned 1,000 tenants to find out what you thought of the Housing Service.

Satisfaction has increased since two years ago with the quality of you home and more tenants feel we are providing value for money.

However overall satisfaction with the service has dipped a little to 77%, and satisfaction with our repairs service has fallen slightly to 71%.

Here are the results:

77% 78% 76%

Overall satisfaction with Housing Service provided by Southampton City Council

√ 2.7%

Satisfaction with quality of home

1.7%

Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live

1 0.6%

87%

Satisfaction with rent providing value for money

1 3.6%

74%

Satisfaction with service charge providing value for money

? 2.1%

71%

Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance

V 0.9%

61%

Satisfaction Housing Service at Southampton City Council listens to views and acts upon them

^ 2.8%

We also wanted to know the areas we need to improve on, here's what you told us:



Communication



Grounds maintenance



Repairs



Neighbourhood



Updating properties



Listening to residents/being supportive to tenants We have recently held focus groups with tenants and are develop an action plan to improve these areas. In next year's Annual Review we'll update you on the actions we've taken to improve in these areas.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey.

Read the full Housing Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2019 Report at southampton.gov.uk/housing







Your new local energy provider

For people, not profit

We think you'd like CitizEn Energy, because they:

- · Keep their prices as low as possible
- Are brought to you by Southampton City Council
 - · Are a not-for-profit energy provider
- Supply electricity that is certified as 100% renewable and sourced from solar and wind farms from across the UK
- Use any money made to invest in projects to make homes more energy efficient
- Offer the Warm Home Discount scheme of £140 to certain low income households

Getting a quote and switching is simple Visit citizenenergyuk.co.uk or call 0800 953 0165





Impress your friends with some new skills

These fun courses are free and open to all SCC tenants and leaseholders.

Stay safe in January 2020



Come to our Staying Safe Online session.

Love the internet but concerned about scams. This will help you spot those worrying internet scams.

Thursday 23 January, 6.30-8.30pm Civic Centre

Finding your way around the councils website.

In this session we will show you were to find all that important information on the councils website, including how to report a repair.

Wednesday 29 January, 2-4pm Civic Centre

Discover a new you in February 2020

lpads for beginners

You will be amazed at how easy it is to use an iPad. There's a whole new world waiting to be discovered at your fingertips. Ipads provided.

Monday 3, 10, 17, 24 February, 2-4pm Shirley Housing Office



Community Gardening

Learn how to create a community garden.

Tuesday 25 February,

1-3pm Challis Court.

March 2020



All you need to know about emails.

Need to send an email but not sure how? No problem. At the end of these sessions, you will be emailing like a pro!

Friday 13 and 20 March, 10.30-12 noon Challis Court

Ever wondered How the council is run?

Find out in this session.
Friday 6 March,
10.30-12 noon Civic Centre
Tuesday 10 March,
2-3.30pm Civic centre.



Getting started with internet banking.

Interested in internet banking? We can show you how to get started and how to set up direct debits too.

Monday 23 March, 10.30-12 noon Civic Centre.

Do some DIY in April 2020



DIY for beginners.

This session will show you how to fix those tricky DIY jobs around the house.

Saturday 25 April, 10-3pm Testlands Hub, Green Lane.



Finding you way around the councils website. Tuesday 21 April, 6.30- 8.30pm Civic Centre.

Staying safe in May 2020

Staying Safe Online. Tuesday 12 May, 10.30-12.30pm Challis Court

