



Southampton City Council Housing Annual Report 2020



Meet Eileen –
The pandemic
entertainment queen

Inside this year's report

- New council homes
- How we spend your rent
- How are we performing
- Community garden got me through lockdown



WELCOME...

FROM COUNCILLOR SATVIR KAUR, CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES AND CULTURE



I very much hope you and your families are keeping well at what continues to be a difficult time for many of us

This year has not been easy, the coronavirus pandemic presented all of us with many big challenges, with our way of life having to rapidly change and adapt. It is incredible however, how we have come together through this, bringing out the best in people within our communities, showing true Southampton spirit.

Thank you to our staff, volunteers and tenants who ensured their neighbours were looked after, in good spirits and our communities were supported.

Thank you also for your understanding and patience during lockdown, when many of our housing services had to adapt to focus on the delivery of critical services, supporting our most vulnerable tenants and protecting our frontline staff. Many of our services such as repairs and homebid are up and running as usual, but you can find out more on how the council is responding to the pandemic here southampton.gov.uk/coronavirus.

While it is disappointing that we weren't able to host our annual Tenants Summer Conference this year, I'm pleased we've been able to capture and share many of your inspiring stories here in this report.

As a council and your landlord we are determined, despite the challenges, to carry on delivering our priorities for you. In July this year, the council signed off on £144m worth of investment to deliver 100% affordable, energy efficient, quality council homes.

We are making great progress on these new homes in places like Townhill Park, Lordshill and Maybush. Further work to improve safety and security also continues, with the expansion of our fire safety measures and fitting of more sprinklers.

We always strive to do better and value hearing your feedback. We always appreciate hearing new voices, so please consider joining our Tenants Tell Us and we'd especially like to hear from young people, page 22 with more details.

I hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report and please get involved this year with exciting new plans, from ways to improve your neighbourhood to Southampton's UK City of Culture bid.

Best wishes

Satvir

Councillor Satvir Kaur,
**Cabinet Member for
Homes and Culture**

Contents

- 4 Southampton: a community in action
- 6 Milner Court community garden
- 7 Junior Neighbourhood Wardens brighten up the city
- 8 Building new homes
- 9 Townhill Park regeneration
- 10 Safe home commitment
- 12 Fire safety improvements
- 13 How we spend your rent
- 14 Helping tenants avoid financial hardship
- 15 How are we performing?
- 16 Average rents and waiting times
- 17 Domestic abuse support
- 17 How we're tackling ASB
- 18 Bitesize news
- 19 Volunteering opportunities
- 21 Support coming out of hospital
- 22 Hearing the young person's voice
- 23 Looking for employment or a new career?
- 24 Keep in touch by getting online



Dear residents

First of all, I would like to introduce myself as the new Executive Director for Communities, Culture & Homes within Southampton City Council.

I joined the council on 23 March, so whilst it has been a very challenging time to start a new job, I am very excited to have joined as we look towards the future.

A future which involves building more homes; providing more opportunities for residents to shape their communities; and ambitious plans to develop the rich cultural heritage and opportunities within the city.

Already I have been lucky enough to be guided around Townhill Park with two of our residents and see the amazing display of local art produced by the residents and children of the area. I have also been fortunate enough to be shown the wonderful mosaics and artworks in the city centre residential areas.

It has also been inspiring to see how our residents and communities have risen to the challenges presented by COVID-19. To all of you who have looked out for your neighbours, shopping and collecting their medicines, to those of you who have supported us all as key workers in our hospitals, care homes and schools, I would like to say thank you and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the weeks and months ahead.

Best wishes

Mary

Mary D'Arcy
**Executive Director
Communities, Culture & Homes**

Southampton

A community in action

After only a few weeks of lockdown, some remarkable stories started to emerge of inspirational community responses and acts of kindness. These are some of our tenant's remarkable stories.



Eileen goes global as Mrs Motivator

Worried about the isolating effects of lockdown, Eileen from St. Denys started working on a cunning plan to entertain her neighbours and keep them active.

Eileen picks up the story:

"At the beginning of lockdown I wondered what I could do to help keep folks entertained.

I decided that I would try doing an exercise video each day in fancy dress for a bit of fun. I did 50 videos over eight and a bit weeks. I thought it would be good for me too; to use my grey matter coming up with ideas. To help with the videos I employed Ken (my husband) as my cameraman on a zero hours contract!!

It was good fun and everyone seemed to enjoy them. I had lovely comments from folks all over the country even from the USA."

Eileen, St. Denys



It's good to talk

"I am a volunteer for the Communicare charity and over lockdown I became a Telephone Befriender, chatting to the isolated.

I am usually really active, so volunteering made me feel that I was still contributing to the local community."

Lynda, Holyrood

Still clapping

"My daughter and I have clapped the whole 10 weeks in support of the NHS and all of the frontline staff. I will support them forever after this crisis."

Vicki, Hollybrook



Pandemic brings out the best in people

When the lockdown came, Leaside Way Tenants' Association (LWTA) were ready! Vicky and Ray from LWTA quickly put their genius plan into action.

The Tenants' Association idea was to give their residents red and green cards to display in their windows. A green card would let everyone know everything was okay; a red card signalled assistance was required.

Vicky would walk past each day and check the cards. Very quickly she identified two flats needing help through the red cards. In one case, this meant contacting the Supported Housing Warden. Another neighbour, who was isolating, was helped with shopping.

The Tenants' Association also identified other residents needing help; collecting medicines, doing odd jobs and reporting repairs.

Ray and Vicky reflected on a community pulling together:

"Basically we are here for each other during the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis. The Leaside Way estate is a community of friends."

I think everyone would agree, that the virus has brought out the best in most people."

Vicky and Ray, Secretary and Chair of Leaside Way Tenants' Association



I've got you covered!

Vicky developed some new skills during the lockdown; making face coverings for family and friends.

"I have also given a few to neighbours who have to travel by bus. And I am happy to make more for residents who need them for travel purposes."

Vicky, Bassett

Street celebrates 100th birthday.

When one lady reached her 100th birthday, the whole street stood outside her flat to clap and wish her happy birthday."

Barry, Sholing



Milner Court community garden

...got me through lockdown



Hayley from Shirley Towers on the joy of a community garden, and how it helped her through lockdown.

"Having access to the community garden has been totally life changing for myself and my family, especially with the current circumstances of COVID-19. Due to a medical condition I have been shielding since March. This meant I was confined to my flat with my two young children whilst my husband was working. The days were getting longer and I was getting more and more fed up and felt very lonely.

My husband came in one day and told me he had seen a sign for a community garden. It was just what I needed. After six weeks of being isolated I couldn't wait to get gardening and the children were very excited to get out too. After four years of living here, the garden has given me the opportunity to get to know my neighbours too. We have craved outdoor space since we first moved in, space for the children to run and play safely, for us to take time out and do some gardening where everyone can benefit from the beauty.

"Thank you"

Hayley, resident of Shirley Towers

We know not everyone has the luxury of a garden. With this in mind, we have created community gardens in three areas of the city; with more to come. Community gardens are a great way to improve open spaces, get to know your neighbours and to support your wellbeing. The gardens are run by the community for the community; with support from Plants for People and Housing.

Come and join us at one of community garden sessions. It's free; just drop-in.

You don't need any equipment or experience. We supply the equipment along with a gardening expert. Our community gardens are open all year, for all ages and abilities.

We have community gardens at Maybush, Weston and Holyrood and with a grant from the National Lottery of £261,000, we will be expanding into Thornhill, Sholing and Shirley.

**For more information
contact Aidan Cooper
on 07826 953 560**





Junior Neighbourhood Wardens brighten up the city

You have to hand it to our JNWs – they brighten up the city! This year we have chosen to focus on their bright and breezy artistic skills painting murals and street furniture at Townhill Park. Thanks guys; it looks amazing.

Once again our JNWs have had a very busy and varied year; with activities ranging from building bird boxes and bee hotels to tidying up a memorial garden. They have also been involved in some interesting inter-generational work. Meeting residents from Fairfax Court took them in some very interesting directions, including designing sculptures and folk dancing!

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



Building new homes



New homes at Potters Court

Potters Court is an exciting new development providing 83 housing with care flats. This provides independent living with 24-hour care and support when residents need it. At the same location we are also building 15 over 50s flats at Kiln Court. Potters Court aims to be more than just a new home though. If you like dining out and socialising then there's more good news. Potters Court will have its own restaurant serving tasty and hot nutritional meals to residents and the community. Also, look out for our on-site social events and activities.

Potters Court will also benefit from some clever new technology, improving energy efficiency and reducing running costs. Although new building arrangements caused by the pandemic have affected progress, we hope residents can start enjoying their new homes from April 2021.

Oaklands and Potters Court new build schemes are part of the council's commitment to build around 1,000 new homes over the next five years. If you are interested in Potters Court please contact Karen Reeves on 023 8083 3835.

Artist's impression of Potters Court



New homes at Oaklands

What a challenging year to be a builder!

The wettest February on record; the Beast from the East; and on top of that a pandemic, shutting down building sites for weeks. But we're back. And we're building. And we're on track to build 103 affordable homes at Oaklands by the end of Autumn 2022.

Oaklands homes, like all our new build properties, will be exceptionally energy efficient and designed around the latest security guidelines to ensure our residents feel safe and secure.



What do tenants think of their new build homes at Townhill Park?



Shortly after building 56 new homes at Townhill Park, we were interested to know what our tenants thought of their new homes. So we asked them. We found that satisfaction levels were high, with 90% of tenants rating their home a seven out of 10 or higher. Residents particularly liked the layout of their flats, their balconies and the communal areas.

We are working on building many more new homes in Townhill Park. This year we have been completing improvements to Meggeson Avenue to make it a more pedestrian and cycle friendly area. Next year we will be building the new park.

The council works closely with the local group SO18 Big Local in Townhill Park and we would like to thank them for their continued support. We have been working with them to incorporate their community mosaic art project into the new road signs in Townhill Park. For more info about SO18 Big Local please go to www.so18biglocal.org.uk.



Our safe home commitment

One of our commitments to you is to make sure your home is a safe and well maintained so you can enjoy a healthy living environment.

Did you know we regularly survey our homes?

One of the ways we make sure that your home is safe, we aim to survey all of our properties every five years. These regular home inspections mean that we are continually checking our housing to make sure it meets the necessary “decency” standards.

A decent home should:

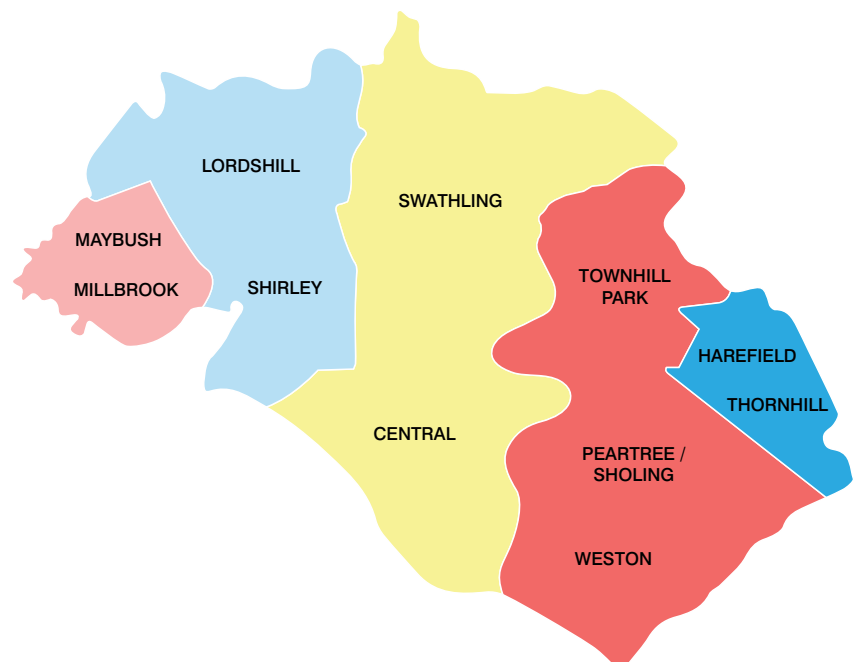
- Be in a good state of repair and meet 29 quality standards
- Have reasonably modern facilities and services
- Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

We are working hard to ensure all our homes meet these standards, and are focusing on those that may not at the moment.

We are already planning our home maintenance for the next 40 years. As part of this process we will be talking to tenants to find out what aspects of home maintenance are most important to you.



Home survey plan 2018/19 - 2022/23





Year	Area
1 2018/19	Millbrook/Maybush
2 2019/20	Thornhill/Harefield
3 2020/21	Central/Swaythling
4 2021/22	Shirley/Lordshill
5 2022/23	Peartree/Weston/Townhill Park

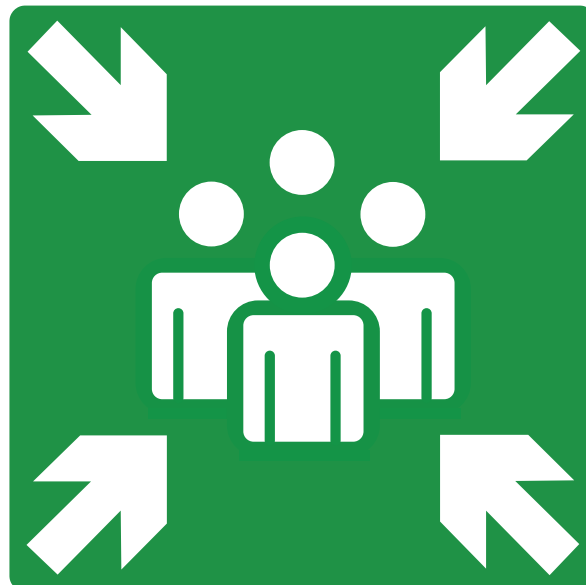


Feeling safer with fire safety improvements

We know how important it is to feel safe and secure in your home. Fire safety is a top priority for tenants and for us. Over the last few years we have invested heavily in fire safety, spending over £30m in fire safety improvements to our high-rise blocks, including:

- Fitting sprinkler systems in every flat
- Upgrading fire doors and frames in communal corridors and stairwells

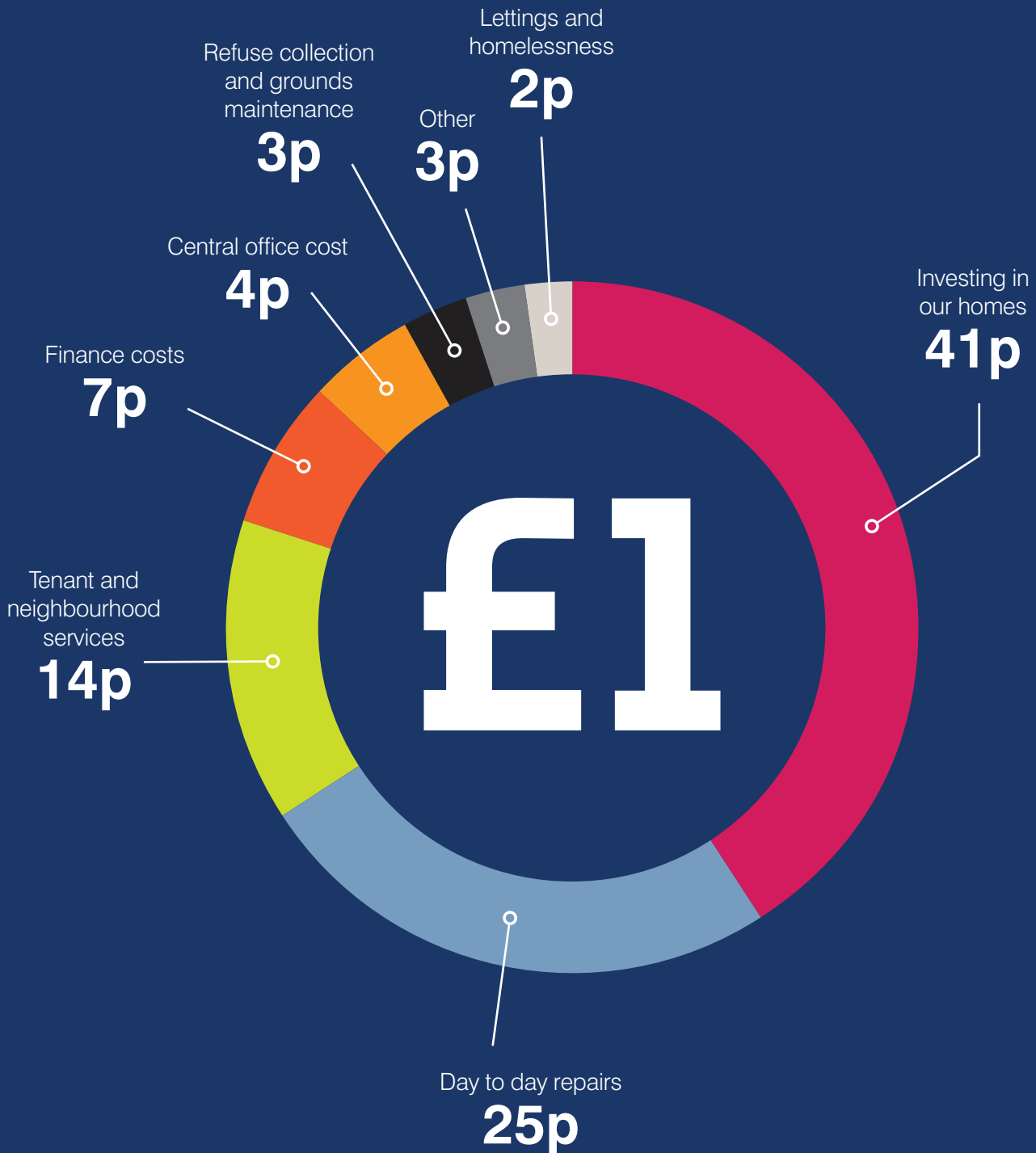
We are now investing in our medium and low-rise blocks. We have started to replace fire doors in corridors and upgrade the fire detection systems in some of our supported living blocks.



“We really are leading the way nationally when it comes to tenant safety. This is backed up by the feedback we’ve had from Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service, who we continue to work closely with.”

Councillor Satvir Kaur,
Cabinet Member for Homes and Culture

How we spend every £1 of rent



Your home is at risk if you do not pay your rent

Rent and financial hardship



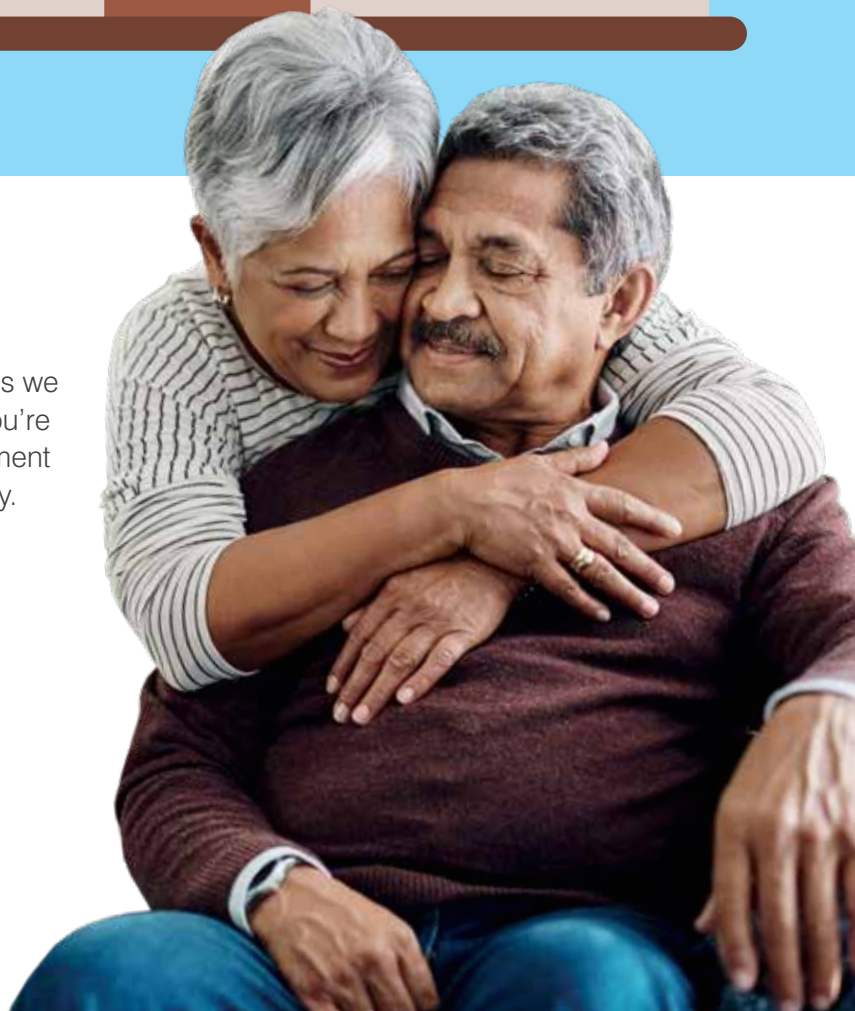
We know that many people are experiencing financial hardship in these difficult times.

We want to help and we often can. By talking to us we can make sure you are receiving all the money you're entitled to. And we can arrange affordable repayment plans with you and find you the easiest way to pay.

If you are experiencing rent difficulties and you receive a letter, text or phone call from our income team; please reply and let us help.

Also did you know, the Customer Payment and Debt Team offers independent, confidential and free advice to resolve money problems?

You can find them at:
www.southampton.gov.uk/benefits-welfare/money-advice/ or call 023 8083 2339.



How can we improve?



How are we performing?

Focus on Repairs and Rent

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
% number of repairs carried out	37,373	42,049	41,498
% repairs carried out first visit	80.54%	84.9%	86.6%
Jobs not carried out due to no-one home:	3,793	5,085	3,653
Total rent arrears	£4.58m	£5.85m	£6.55m

Repairing empty properties. How long does it take on average?

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
All empty properties including those needing major works	53 days	54 days	52 days	46 days
Routine empty properties	37 days	38 days	37 days	28 days

Average rents and waiting times for a property



Studio/1 bed

Average weekly rent

£74.26

Average waiting time

4 years



2 bed

Average weekly rent

£84.50

Average waiting time

3.25 years



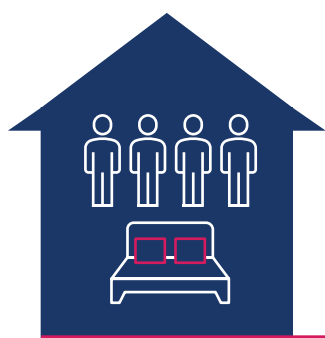
3 bed

Average weekly rent

£102.77

Average waiting time

6 years



4 bed

Average weekly rent

£109.74

Average waiting time

7 years





Domestic abuse

If you need us, we are here and we can help

We know how important it is to get this part of the service right; so this year, we asked the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) to review our service.

As a result, we have made many changes, including training 20 domestic abuse champions within Housing. This is in addition to our housing management staff who can deal with issues in confidence.

Following the review, DAHA have now awarded Housing an accreditation.

We hope that this gives anyone seeking our help, the extra confidence and reassurance to reach out to us.

If you suffer from domestic abuse, contact our confidential helpline on 023 8091 7917 or Email: pippa@southampton.gov.uk

In case of emergencies please call 999.



Tackling anti-social behaviour

Over the last year we have dealt with 898 cases of anti-social behaviour; a similar number to the previous year.

The three most common types of anti-social behaviour are noise, verbal abuse and behaviours related to communal areas.

This year we have taken successful action for noise nuisance, domestic abuse and drug dealing. In some of these cases the tenants lost their home.

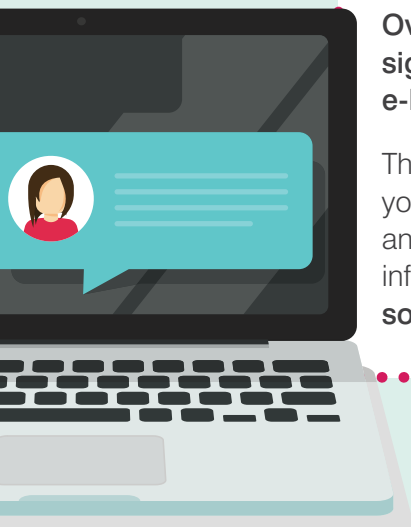


Total number of anti-social behaviour cases

881
cases in 2018/19

898
cases in 2019/20

Bitesize news



Over 7,000 of you have already signed up for the Tenants' Link e-bulletin

This monthly bulletin brings you the latest housing news and stories. It's free and informative. Join us now at southampton.gov.uk/tenantslink

We've got the green light and a £70,000 grant to find out if it's feasible to run district energy schemes in Southampton.

If it is feasible, this environmentally friendly energy will produce cost effective, low carbon energy for Southampton residents, while aiding climate change goals.



In February the city council Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and the Police ran a conference aimed at reducing violence, especially with young people.

A key role for the VRU is funding work in city schools, specifically to help young people most at risk from becoming involved in violence.

Watch our winter housing conference from the comfort of your home.

We are running our first video housing conference on Wednesday 9 December 6pm -7pm. To book a place email tenant.engagement@southampton.gov.uk or telephone 023 8083 3185 (leave a message) or call mobile: 07796 278 620

TENANTS

TELL US

It's never been more important to hear the voices of our tenants

The 2020 pandemic posed many challenges for us all; but it has never been more important to hear the voices of our tenants or to engage with our communities.

If the pandemic highlighted one thing, it is that we have many amazing tenants with fascinating life stories. We have recently started a project to listen to and record as many oral histories of tenants as possible. These amazing stories will be showcased in our own museums and galleries. If you want to know more about the project, please contact mayflower400@southampton.gov.uk.

We are also working on lots of opportunities for residents to engage with and enjoy the city. As part of our City of Culture 2025 bid, we are developing lots of exciting ideas to bring the arts, music and dance closer to your communities. We want to speak to as many of you as possible to make sure we get this right and are meeting your cultural needs. So please look out for our interactive surveys and events.

And finally, as we move into 2021, we want to encourage all of our residents to enjoy the wide range of arts and culture offered by our galleries and communities partners. Hope to see you soon at one of our many exciting events in the city.

Can we tempt you into volunteering?

Get involved



Do you like...

- Socialising and meeting new people?
- Learning new things?
- Helping us know what we can do better?

**Great...
volunteering
might be for you**

We have over 350 tenant volunteers in Housing. A big attraction for volunteers is meeting other tenants and developing friendships. And the bonus for us is that our volunteers help us identify where we need to improve.

From just five minutes a month to monitoring our grass service, to looking at how well we respond to complaints, there is something for everyone.

If you are interested in finding out more please ring the Tenant Engagement Team on 023 8083 3185 or email us at tenant.engagement@southampton.gov.uk

Finally, thank you to all our volunteers for all the wonderful work you have done this year. You can find out more about their achievements on our website at www.southampton.gov.uk/tenantengagement.

 @southamptonhousing

 @sotonhousing



We have some important news about CitizEn Energy.

Nottingham City Council has announced that they are selling their energy company, Robin Hood Energy, to British Gas.

As the supply licence partner for own ethical energy brand, CitizEn Energy, we're not able to operate without them and our customers will also be transferred to British Gas under their brand.

Robin Hood Energy was appointed by Southampton City Council to be the service provider for CitizEn Energy as they shared our values – being a green provider that was set up with the simple aim of tackling fuel poverty and giving back to the local community.

I'm a customer – how will this impact me?

Firstly, we would like to thank you for supporting CitizEn Energy. Our number one priority in all of this is our customers and making you aware of the options available to you.

We want to reassure any customers that you are not at risk of losing your energy supply and your service will be uninterrupted.

Your new supplier, British Gas, will be in touch to outline your new tariff and prices, which will be at least as good as you are paying today. They'll also ask for your consent to join them. You can find FAQs on the Robin Hood Energy website.

Have you compared energy prices lately?

Especially if you haven't switched energy providers in a few years, checking if you are on a competitive energy tariff could save you money. To check if you are on the most competitive energy deal, please visit energy switching sites such as Citizen's Advice. If you, or someone you know, is struggling with switching please contact citizen.energy@southampton.gov.uk.

full-fibre broadband is coming to Southampton!

register today toob.co.uk

900 Mbps

£25 per month

18 month contract then £29 per month

toob

Please note that this is a paid for advert. You can view our full advertising guidance at: southampton.gov.uk/advertisingguidance



How we can help

Supporting tenants leaving hospital

During the pandemic we had to quickly find new ways of providing remote care for people leaving hospital and living on their own.

The solution was a small 'Help at Home' device. This looks like a small mobile phone and triggers an alarm if it senses a fall or if the alarm button is pressed. This device allowed us to help over 200 elderly and vulnerable people leaving hospital.

Norma from Millbrook, is one of the new users of Help at Home, and is a fan:

"I'm quite happy; I was able to get through to someone straight away. I can even phone my daughter at a touch of a button."



Did you know there's a wide range of care technology devices available to support people in their own homes?

For more information please visit

www.southampton.gov.uk/telecare

Tel: 023 8083 3675

Email: city.telecare.services@southampton.gov.uk

Hearing the voices of children and young people



If you are a Care Experienced young person aged between 7-25 years of age why not come along to CICC to have your say about issues that are important to you.

We meet once a month in Southampton.

To get in touch email cicc@southampton.gov.uk

Groups not for you? follow us on social media to see what else is going on.



What else is there on offer in Southampton if you are a young person?



No Limits

www.nolimitshelp.org.uk

Tel: 023 8022 4224

Email: enquiries@nolimitshelp.org.uk



Youth Options

www.youthoptions.co.uk

Tel: 01794 525 510

Email: enquiries@youthoptions.co.uk



SAINTS FOUNDATION

Saints Foundation

www.southamptonfc.com/saints-foundation/



START SOMETHING

Princes's Trust

www.princes-trust.org.uk

Tel: 0800 842 842

youthforum SOUTHAMPTON

Last year, in the Make Your Mark consultation, over 14,000 young people voted Protecting the Environment as their number one issue. Due to this, the Youth Forum will now be helping organise a Green City Youth Assembly to really involve young people in the decision the city makes about the future. Join the Youth Forum to hear how you can get involved!

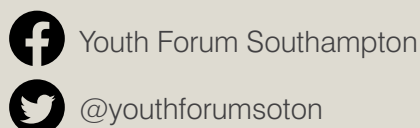
Are you aged 11-25?

Do you want to get involved with youth projects supporting Southampton?

Come along to the council's Youth Forum at the Civic Centre.

Email: youthforum@southampton.gov.uk

Forums not for you? follow us on social media for more info



"The Youth Forum has given us a voice"

Youth Forum Member

"We've given feedback on the mental health support in the city – helping to change Southampton for the better by directly influencing bids!"

Youth Forum Member



Looking for employment or a new career

Housing have a specialist TEEM* ready and waiting to help.

*TEEM are our Training Education Employment and Motivation specialists.

Help for 16-25 year olds

If you're aged 16-25 and not in employment, education or training, our team can:

- Help you to apply for a college place, jobs or apprenticeships
- Build confidence and help you plan your next steps
- Help you build positive routines through social activities and courses
- Continue offering support once you're in education, work or training

If you'd like to get help from our team

Tel: 07917 557 148

Email: jon.martin@southampton.gov.uk

Help for anyone looking for employment

If you're unemployed, been made redundant, looking for a new career or to set up your own business, TEEM can help.

"Before I found out about TEEM, I had no idea where to start with finding a job. With their help, I was able to write a CV and get help preparing for interviews. They also helped me find a voluntary job to get experience, and I'm now working part time in a nursery!"

Jane

Phone TEEM on **023 8091 7585** or
Email: employment.support.team@southampton.gov.uk

Find us at:

www.southampton.gov.uk/EST or

Twitter: [@sotoncareers](https://twitter.com/sotoncareers)

We also have lots of employment support advice on our website
Access Southampton
www.access-southampton.co.uk



Missed your friends during lockdown?

Discover how easy it is to keep in touch with family and friends with a smart phone, tablet or laptop.

How we can help

Let us help you take your first online steps with one of our sociable sessions below. Choose any of our free sessions:

1. How to keep in touch with friends and family at the touch of a button
2. Online shopping - find out how easy it is to get food and prescriptions delivered to your home
3. Beginners guide to banking online - money at your fingertips.
4. How to stay safe online and spot scams

All sessions are run by your friendly Tenant Engagement Team.

For more information please contact

Tenant Engagement Team

Tel: 023 8083 3185

Email: tenant.engagement@southampton.gov.uk

We will run these sessions as soon as we are able and social distancing allows.