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- [Housing annual report](#)

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Tenant Matters

2023

Building happy
homes



Ashfield

DISTRICT COUNCIL



How you can get involved

Find out more on Page 6

Annual Report
Pages 6-7

New Council Homes
Pages 9-10

Housing News
Page 17

Dear Tenants,

Welcome

to the latest issue of Tenant Matters, which includes our 2022-23 Housing Annual Report.

The magazine will provide you with important information about the work we are doing and the services we provide to you, as your landlord. In addition, you can find out about all of the ways you can get involved in shaping the services we provide to you, you can read about that on pages 4-5.

During the summer we contacted many tenants and completed the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey with them. We would like to thank all the tenants who took the time to participate in the survey, it really has provided us with valuable information and feedback. Your participation will help us develop the services we provide to you as your landlord. We are currently analysing the results, ready to report to the Regulator of Social Housing, and to you, early in the next financial year.

Your feedback is essential to helping us to understand where you want us to prioritise our resources. **Please don't wait for us to contact you**, if you have feedback or suggestions on our services, look at page 3 to find out how you can put your ideas forward to us. Not only will you be helping us to develop our services, but if you provide feedback during October or November **you'll be entered into a prize draw for the chance to win an air fryer!**

On the front cover is one of our very happy tenants who has moved into one of our new build properties, she told us that she is over the moon with her home. On pages 9-10 you can read all about how the rest of our new developments are progressing.

As you will see from the Annual Report, 2022/23 was an extremely busy and productive year, and next year will continue to be exciting. We are preparing for the Regulator of Social Housing's new Consumer Standards, the start of the regulatory inspection regime, and the new Complaint Handling Code from the Housing Ombudsman.

We hope you enjoy reading about the successes of the last year and our plans for the future! If you have any feedback on this magazine, please get in touch with us.

Yours Faithfully



P. Parkinson

Paul Parkinson
Executive Director
of Operations



A. Meakin

Cllr Andy Meakin
Executive Lead for
Social Housing and Assets



T. Hollis

Cllr Tom Hollis
Executive Lead for Strategic
Housing and Climate Change

Fantastic response to Tenant Satisfaction Measures

During the summer, officers from the Council have been busy contacting tenants to undertake the Tenant Satisfaction Measures tenant perception survey, to find out how tenants feel about the services we provide to them, as their landlord.

We have received a fantastic response to the survey and we would like to say thank you everyone who has taken part. We have received some really valuable feedback on our services, which will be used to help develop our plans to shape the future.

Following feedback from the pilot survey in autumn 2022, we visited the sheltered courts to meet tenants and complete the surveys with them, the remaining surveys were completed over the phone.



Tenants in Aspley Court

Whilst the majority of surveys have taken place over the phone, the sheltered court sessions were a real success.

The results will be analysed and reported to the Regulator of Social Housing in Spring 2024, after that we will publish the results to tenants too.

Win an air fryer!

Every tenant that provides us with feedback on how you feel about the tenant engagement opportunities during October and November will be entered into a prize draw to win an air fryer!

We are keen to expand on the valuable information provided through the survey and would like to hear from tenants on your thoughts about the opportunities available to you to become involved in shaping services.

On pages 4 and 5, you'll find a summary of the ways you can currently engage with the Council, regarding Housing Services. We are inviting tenants to provide us with feedback on how you feel about these options and to provide suggestions on alternative ways you would like to get involved or for us to engage with you.

Suggestions can be submitted by emailing the tenant engagement team on coin@ashfield.gov.uk or by calling 01623 450000 – option 1, then 3



Have your say and get involved with shaping our services

Listening to our customers is really important to us, to help us improve what we do. By getting involved with us, you can help shape our services and make things better for all tenants.

We are currently looking to recruit new members to all of our tenant engagement opportunities and have recently appointed a dedicated officer to support tenants to get involved and shape services.

If you are interested in getting involved in any of our tenant engagement activities, please contact Louisa Hillman, Tenant Engagement Officer to discuss by emailing: coin@ashfield.gov.uk or by calling 01623 450000 (Press Option 1 and then Option 3).

Tenants Gateway

The Tenants Gateway is a group of tenants who meet with Senior Housing Managers to discuss issues about the management and delivery of landlord services.

The Gateway meets every two months for about two hours to look at policies and procedures that the Housing teams provide. The Gateway also review and monitor individual services and performance, making recommendations to ensure continuous improvement so that services are customer focused.

The Gateway is formed of a maximum of 16 tenants from all areas of the District, representatives stand for terms between a minimum term of one year and a maximum term of four years.

Any out-of-pocket expenses that are incurred will be reimbursed in line with the volunteer expenses policy.



A tenant completing a survey with an officer



*Our current Tenant Gateway members
- come and join us!*

involved ces



Tenants Gateway meeting with Senior Housing Managers

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel is a group of up to nine trained volunteer Council tenants.

The panel are responsible for examining and scrutinising different areas of Ashfield's housing services, to ensure that the service provided and policies/procedures in place meet the needs of our tenants.

Panel members independently check service delivery and performance for specific service areas. Following scrutiny review the team will challenge service areas and make recommendations on areas for change/improvement, to ensure the best possible service is provided to tenants.

Customer Opinion and Influencing Network (COIN)

COIN is a network of tenants who share their views on the services they have received from the Council as their landlord.

Feedback can be given via a variety of convenient methods including through our website, by email, in person or by telephone.

All feedback received from tenants is reviewed by Senior Managers to identify areas of improvement and development.

“Tenant engagement is hugely important for us as a Council; your voice really matters to us. It can be really rewarding and fun to get involved with the various opportunities, and you get to make a difference! Why not sign up today?”

Tom Hollis, Executive Lead Member for Strategic Housing and Climate Change



Housing Annual Report 2022/23

Lettings

This year we have let more properties with shorter waiting times than in 2021/22

489 properties let in 2022/23. Average time to let properties **23.7** days



121

bungalows



3

maisonettes



135

houses



205

flats



21

studio flats

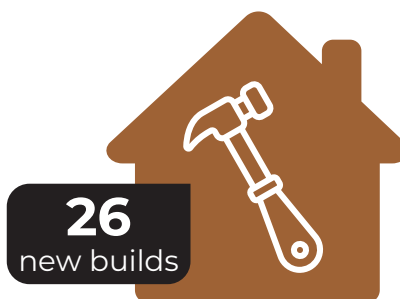
=
489
total

In 2022/23, **40** tenants moved home by way of mutual exchange. Tenants can register and search for a suitable exchange by visiting www.homeswapper.co.uk

Development/Acquisitions

A total of **37** new additions to the housing stock - **26** new build properties and **11** acquisitions.

By the end of 2023/4 the figures will be **70** (61 new build and 9 acquisitions)



26

new builds



11

acquisitions

Tenancy Services Rent



99.16% of rent collected
(excluding arrears brought forward)



1.55% rent arrears owed, as a
proportion of the rent charged, for 2022/23

295 Notice of Seeking Possession were
issued to tenants due to rent arrears and
other breaches of tenancy



19 tenants were evicted
for non-payment of rent

Tenancy Services Support



Over £108k has been accessed
in welfare benefits, Housing and
Council tax benefits, grants, and
white goods from charitable
trusts for tenants.

955 Council tenants assisted
with Welfare and Money Advice.

406 Council tenants provided
with Tenancy Support of which
100% of tenants remained in
their tenancy after six months.

Housing Repairs and Maintenance

Property repairs is our busiest service, we appreciate that having something go wrong or break in your home can be frustrating, so we aim to offer a service which is both easy to get through to and prompt in attending to the property at your convenience.

Average time taken to complete Responsive repairs

14
calendar days per repair



Emergency repairs completed on time -

99.76%
(Within 24 hours)



Repairs Call Handling Centre

91.7%
calls answered



37,176
repairs completed,
including
4,915
emergency repairs

Customer Feedback/Complaints



77 stage 1 complaints received

8 stage 2 complaints received

3 complaints referred to the **Housing Ombudsman** by tenants



9.32 days

Average time to respond to stage one complaints

11.3 days

Average time to respond to stage two complaints

100%

of complaints received were responded to within the timescale, as defined by the Tenant Satisfaction Measures

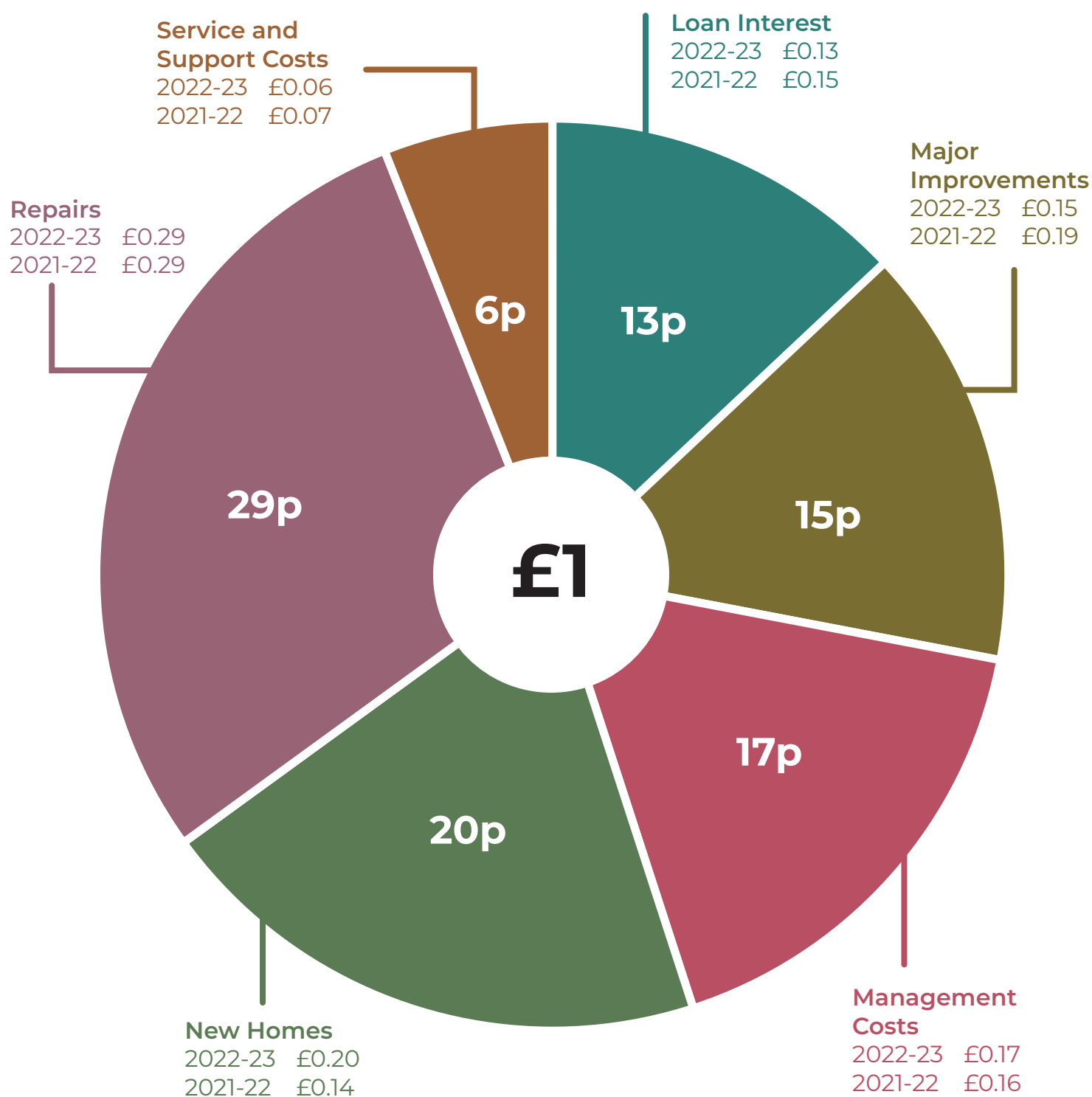
There were 94 learning outcomes from complaints received, 91% of which have been implemented – examples include:

- Amendments have been made to how we process and manage consent to disclose tenancy information to third parties
- Customer Relation Management system has been implemented and embedded into Housing Management processes to improve access to information relating to contacts between tenants and the Council
- A pest procedure has been created and has been implemented by the Housing Management Team. The tenancy conditions have also been amended to make it clear that who is responsible for the treatment of pests
- Practices have been implemented to ensure that where Housing Management Officers require access to inspect properties that sufficient notice will be provided in writing

- Processes have been confirmed to ensure that wherever possible tenants will be present during major works inspections and handover appointments
- Call centre officers have received additional training around repairs priorities and process put in place to ensure that 'out of hours' non-emergency repairs reports are prioritised as soon as possible
- Permission processes have been amended to ensure that inspections take place and tenancy records are fully reviewed prior to making a decision
- Officers have been reminded about having discussions at the doorstep and over smart doorbells, to ensure that personal information security is maintained
- Officers have been reminded to corroborate reports of tenancy breaches with site inspections, prior to issuing warning letters to tenants

What happens to the rent you pay?

The money we receive from the homes we rent to you is protected and is only spent on services for tenants. It's important that tenants know how this money is spent and re-invested into the housing stock, through improvement works to existing properties or by buying and building new properties. Below is a pie chart which shows the breakdown of how each £1 of housing money was spent during the last financial year. Further information about the Council's spending can be found on our website.



Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

The council knows that anti-social behaviour (ASB) can make people's lives a misery. Thankfully it's only a small minority of people who commit anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour is defined as behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to persons not of the same household as the person.

Not everything that is reported to us is anti-social behaviour, but you can find the full list of what is on our website. If you report an issue that isn't classed as ASB, we can still try to help you resolve the issue or signpost you to other agencies that can.

If you experience ASB from another Council tenant, we can help you resolve the issue. We will acknowledge your report of ASB within five working days, however if the case is urgent then we will reply within 24 hours. We aim to carry out a thorough investigation and find out the underlying reasons for the behaviour. Here's an outline of how the process works:

1. Report of ASB received
2. We respond to you and gather information from you
3. We talk to other witnesses and agencies if appropriate
4. We talk to the perpetrator and give them opportunity to change their behaviour
5. If our actions are unsuccessful, we may need to take legal action. This can be a lengthy process as we are reliant on the County Court process.

We will offer you support throughout this process to try and minimise the effects of the ASB on you and your household.

We encourage everyone to try to resolve the issue by talking to the individual responsible first. It could just be a case of a misunderstanding, or they might not realise they are having an effect on you or your household. When you talk to the person involved, stay calm, explain the problem, and listen to their point of view.

If you have tried talking to the individual(s) about their behaviour, and how it's affecting you, and nothing has changed, then you can report this to us in a number of ways:

- On our website using the online form
- By calling 01623 450000 option 1, then option 3
- By email tenancy@ashfield.gov.uk
- In person, or in writing to Housing Management Section, Ashfield District Council, Urban Road, Kirkby in Ashfield, NG17 8DA



Remember if it's an emergency or a crime is in progress call 999, or 101 for non-emergencies.

The Council has taken various actions to stamp out anti-social behaviour across Ashfield. Thanks to our Safer Streets Funding we have put a number of measures in place such as gating nine alleyways in Sutton, Kirkby, and Hucknall that were anti-social behaviour hotspots, increased patrols with the Police and our Community Protection Officers, and installed state-of-the-art Refuge cameras which allow the user to talk directly to the CCTV control room. We have also upgraded and installed new CCTV cameras across town centres and Coxmoor Estate.



Cllr Andy Meakin, Antonio Taylor, Community Safety Manager, and Cllr Warren Nuttall with ASB prevention measures on Coxmoor Estate

New Council homes

Our new build programme goes from strength to strength, with new Council homes being built on a number of sites across the District. We are ambitious in our plans and have set ourselves a target of creating a further 200 new homes over the next four years. We are working with partners to find new sites and a number are under consideration. You can find updates about our progress on the Council's website and social media channels.

After taking handover of our first new homes at the Beeches, Sutton in Ashfield in September 2021, we have now completed 74 new homes at 11 different locations. We have built flats, bungalows and family homes, all of which have been made available to applicants on the Council's Housing Register.

We have focused on building new homes on brownfield sites, that is those that have been used for a different purpose in the past, rather than greenfield sites.

The homes all exceed the minimum space standards and have been designed to be as energy efficient as possible, saving tenants on running costs. The family homes on Spruce Grove and Darley Avenue, Kirkby, also have solar panels built into the roof and electric car charging points.



Cllr Helen-Ann Smith, Paul Parkinson, Executive Director of Operations, and Cllr Tom Hollis outside the Beeches

Having recently let 20 new homes at Froghopper Way, Sutton in Ashfield, the Lettings Team have just let the final properties at Charlotte Gardens, Sutton in Ashfield. Our focus now turns to Warwick Close, Kirkby in Ashfield, our biggest development yet, where we are building a further 34 new homes. Two three-bedroom houses at Warwick Close will have a ground floor bedroom and bathroom, so will be suitable for families with disabilities, something our Housing Register tells us is much needed. The homes will be available to let at the end of the year and will be advertised for rent through the Council's Homefinder scheme.



We are making excellent progress on the homes on Warwick Close, Kirkby

Feedback from new tenants has been very positive, with many commenting on the space, the quality of the kitchen and bathroom fitting and the external look of their home.



The kitchen in one of the new homes on Hawthorne Avenue, Hucknall

Spotlight on Charlotte Gardens, Sutton in Ashfield.

Charlotte Gardens is a good example of what can be achieved and how a small, unloved site can be transformed into a fantastic new development, providing much-needed new homes for local residents.

A new Charlotte Gardens resident commented,

“I am delighted with my new home, it is perfect for me and my children. It is light, bright and the children are over the moon to have their own bedroom. For the first time they have a space where they can go, where they can relax and just be themselves.”

Special care was taken to protect the River Maun that runs along the edge of the site and extra measures were put in to provide a clear separation between the homes and the nearby industrial units.

After starting on site in March 2022, the 20 new homes, consisting of eight one and two-bedroom flats and 12 two and three-bedroom houses, we handed over as complete in July 2023.

The site began as a fenced off area of wasteland, wedged between existing homes and industrial units.



After securing Planning Permission on the site, we worked in partnership with our developer to clear the site and to level it. The new road was built, drainage was put in and the foundations of the homes were laid.



Complaints Procedure

We pride ourselves on providing an excellent level of service to tenants and leaseholders, but we know that sometimes we don't get everything right. If you feel that the service we have provided has fallen short of your expectations, please contact us as soon as possible so we can help to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Service Requests

A service request is a request from a resident to their landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests will be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. A complaint should normally only be raised following a resident raising dissatisfaction with the response to their service request.

Making a complaint

A complaint is 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.

We have a complaint policy, this can be viewed on our website or provided upon request, which explains how we deal with complaints. We have a two-stage process.

Complaints will be investigated by a relevant manager, and a written response will normally be provided within 10 working days.

If complainants remain dissatisfied following stage 1, they can request that their complaint is escalated to stage 2. The complaint will be re-investigated by a more senior officer and a written response will normally be provided within 20 working days.

If a complainant remains dissatisfied following stage 2, they can ask the Housing Ombudsman to review the case.

As part of complaint investigations, we record learning outcomes, which are used to improve the services we provide to tenants.



Resident of Sherwood Court providing feedback on housing services

Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman is a free, independent, and impartial service that resolves disputes between social housing tenants and their landlord. The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted by tenants at any time for support to help resolve a dispute.

The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted by:-

- Telephone: 0300 111 3000
- Email: info@housingombudsman.org.uk
- Letter: Housing Ombudsman, PO Box 152, Liverpool. L33 7WQ.
- Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code stipulates how they expect us to handle complaints received from our tenants and leaseholders and forms the basis of how we will handle complaints.

Each year we undertake a self-assessment of our complaint handling processes against the code and publish the results on our website, to demonstrate our compliance. The latest assessment took place in July 2023 and we were found to be compliant with the requirements of the code.

You can contact us using the following methods:-

Website – completing the online form at www.ashfield.gov.uk/your-council/contact-us/complaints-and-compliments/

Email: housingcomplaints@ashfield.gov.uk

Telephone: 01623 450000 (option 1)

By writing to or visiting our office at:

Ashfield District Council
Urban Road
Kirkby in Ashfield
Nottingham
NG17 8DA

Social Media - via the Council's Facebook page or via Twitter.

Tenant Portal – using the contact us function

What we've learnt from you

Whilst we always aim to offer the best possible service to our tenants, we acknowledge that sometimes tenants may be dissatisfied with the services we have provided to them. In these circumstances we have an open and accessible complaints process, to enable tenants to highlight this to us, so we can investigate and put things right, where required.

Our Complaints and Compliments Policy has been developed in line with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code, to ensure that we comply with the best practice guidance within the social housing sector.

Complaints received during 2022/23

- Stage One complaints – **77**
- Stage Two complaints – **8**
- Following exhausting the Council's complaints process, **three** tenants asked for their complaint to be investigated by the Housing Ombudsman Service during 2022/23.
- **91% of learning outcomes acted on**

Complaints are a valuable source of information about how tenants feel about the services we provide to them. Even if we have not identified that there has been service failure on our part during complaint investigations, we will always try to find any learning outcomes that could prevent the dissatisfaction from recurring.

From the complaints investigated during 2022/23 financial year, 94 learning outcomes were identified, 91% of which have already been implemented. The remaining outstanding actions will continue to be monitored, to ensure all learning outcomes are implemented.



More information can be found about the learning outcomes found through complaint handling in the extended annual report information available on our website, which can be accessed by scanning this QR code.

Keeping our tenants safe ...

The Council needs to ensure tenants can live safely in their homes. All landlords need to make sure they meet legal and regulatory requirements for compliance functions. The BIG six compliance areas which we, as your landlord, need to manage are...



1. Fire Safety

We have carried out fire risk assessments at all our sheltered schemes and general needs blocks of flats. All of these assessments are reviewed on a regular basis in order to continually identify and address any fire safety issues that may arise over time including the maintenance of emergency escape routes and exits.

We carry out regular fire safety and security checks on our buildings, we fully service and maintain all fire safety equipment such as extinguishers and alarms and we have systems in place to allow the reporting and tracking of fire safety repairs including the timely removal of fire safety hazards from communal areas. In addition, hard-wired smoke detectors are installed in all our housing stock.

!
Don't forget to
test your smoke
and Carbon
Monoxide alarms
on a regular
basis!

2. Asbestos

Although asbestos is a hazardous material, it can only become a risk to health if the material is disturbed in some way which allows the microscopic fibres within the material to be released into the atmosphere, which can then be breathed in.

We have put procedures in place which set out how we identify, control, manage and prevent exposure of persons to asbestos in our properties. These include asbestos surveys, asbestos registers (for both communal and domestic areas), asbestos inspections and a full suite of asbestos risk assessments along with asbestos awareness training. Asbestos information is provided to our employees and contractors before any repairs or refurbishment works take place and we have produced an asbestos task manual for those employees who are authorised to work with asbestos materials. We ensure only approved specialist, licensed contractors are used for higher-risk asbestos works.

3. Water Hygiene

The Council has a duty to assess and control the risk of exposure to legionella bacteria which can develop in hot or cold water systems. This bacteria can cause 'Legionnaire's disease' which is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia caught by breathing in tiny aerosol droplets of water which contain the legionella bacteria.

We have put measures in place to ensure all hot and cold water systems are appropriately assessed, serviced and maintained to minimise the risk of legionella. These include using specialist consultants for water hygiene work, carrying out legionella risk assessments, undertaking frequent checks and monitoring of communal water systems and ensuring relevant repair works are completed in a timely manner.

Some simple water hygiene measures which will help to reduce the risk of legionella bacteria developing are ensuring your shower and all water taps are used for at least one minute, at least once per week (this could be through normal use of the water supply) and to regularly clean and disinfect your shower head to prevent the build-up of lime scale, mould and algae on the shower head

4.

Passenger Lifts

Passenger lifts are provided in most of our sheltered accommodation buildings and are one of very few types of 'transportation' available which are designed for continuous, unsupervised use by all persons from the young to the elderly. As such, we have a duty of care and legal obligation to ensure all our passenger lifts remain in good, safe working order at all times.

To maintain their safety, all our passenger lifts receive a monthly service visit and a six-monthly thorough examination (sometimes referred to as an 'insurance inspection') as well as weekly tests of each passenger lift's emergency intercom system which is linked through to a 24hr monitoring centre. Any works carried out on our passenger lifts can only be carried out by engineers from our nominated specialist passenger lift consultants.

5.

Electrical Safety

Electricity needs to be taken seriously and by misusing electrical goods or completing DIY wiring you can place yourself and members of your household at risk of electrical shock, or in a worse case situation, death.

We will undertake an electrical inspection at your home on a periodic basis which will be completed as part of the Property Health & Safety Check / Service and we would ask that you provide access into your home when requested.

When we visit to complete an electrical inspection, we will require access to all the sockets and light fittings in your home. We will carry out any urgent repairs or necessary remedial work, that is our responsibility, at the time of our visit.



Our Electrical safety team

6.

Gas Safety

We will repair and maintain the gas appliances owned by us, and we can offer advice about appliances you own so you can arrange your own repairs. Any gas related work that is undertaken should always be completed by a Gas Safe registered engineer, you can check this online.

There is a risk to your safety if your gas appliances are not correctly serviced, repaired and maintained which is why we complete an annual property health and safety check. This check is a legal requirement. During the visit we will check the gas pipework and gas meters, and check that your smoke alarm, and Carbon Monoxide alarm, are working. You will need at least £2 credit on any prepayment meters for the checks to be completed.

Answering your most asked questions!



If you have any concerns about your new fence, your gutters, or you need a repair please contact our Repairs Call Handling Centre on 01623 457999.

Following conversations and responses to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey, we have found some commonly asked questions relating to fencing and ground maintenance. So here's what you wanted to know...

Fencing priorities

As your landlord we only have a legal duty to mark your boundary, not to create a secure environment. We generally have three types of fencing that we install to mark your boundary. These are, post, panel and plinth, chain link style, and vertical boards. The location of the fence will determine which style of fence is installed.

Our Planned, Cyclical & Estates Maintenance Section will generally install/repair fencing on a priority 249 (249 working days to complete the work) as this is considered non urgent work. This process allows us to batch work together and either distribute this to our approved contractor or undertake the work with our own employees. Where the repair is considered more urgent - the damaged fence could lead to a risk of injury, our Responsive Repairs Section would attend to make the area safe, either by replacing the fence, repairing the fence, or installing a temporary fence.

If we are installing a new fence, we cannot remove boundary hedges, and we cannot install a fence to an open plan area.

The grass is always greener

You may notice that after we mow the grass within the communal areas, and throughout the District, we leave the clippings. We do this so that the nutrients from the grass can be reabsorbed into the soil, resulting in greener and healthier grass. It may be more noticeable this year because we have had great grass growing weather; wet and warm.

In summer we trialled leaving our grass verges longer as part of no mow May. The longer grass allows insects to establish a home, and wildflowers to grow providing pollen for bees and nectar for butterflies. The Council is committed to enhancing and protecting our natural environment, and not mowing the grass as often helps us achieve greater biodiversity.

My gutters are overflowing, help!

Gutters help to keep the rainwater away from your home, and prevent damp and mould. If your guttering is overflowing or leaking, please contact us and we will generally respond on a priority 30 (30 working days). If the repair is large scale, it will be completed on a priority 249.

As part of our six yearly painting programme, we will clear any debris from your gutters, however if you spot any build up of leaves, moss, dirt, that is causing your gutters to leak please contact us.



An environment operative mowing a lawn

Housing news round up

Energy Efficiency Funding

Over the past 18 months we have successfully bid for government funding to carry out energy efficiency works to our housing stock, this has allowed us to install solar panels on 81 homes throughout the District. The latest funding stream, called Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme wave 2 will target eligible properties which have generally poorer thermal efficiency, including solid walled properties (no cavity to insulate) and timber framed bungalows. We will submit our bid for this funding and we will keep tenants updated on our progress. Make sure you follow our social media channels and our website for updates.



Huthwaite tenant benefiting from new solar panels



Housing repair technician inspecting a fire board

Housing condition surveys

Over the coming months we will be increasing the amount of housing condition surveys to give us the best information to help us develop our next works programmes. These surveys will assess the age and condition of parts of your home, examples include, windows, doors, roof coverings, kitchens, and bathrooms. This will allow us to plan when they will need replacing. It is very important that you allow us into your home to carry out the surveys, as you may miss out on receiving new works if we do not have survey information. If the information we have about your property is up to date, you might not receive a visit from us.

Our surveyors will carry photo identification. Do not let anyone into your home without proof of identification, and/or if you are not sure of who they are.

Collapse of J Tomlinson

Unfortunately, our major works partner J Tomlinson Limited, responsible for most of the major improvement works to our housing stock, entered into administration a couple of months ago. We know that people are worried about what this means to our planned improvement works, but we'd like to reassure everyone that we are looking to complete the existing works programme and start new works as fast as we can once a new contractor is in place.

Damp and mould

- why it matters

It is important to keep your home free from condensation, damp and mould. This is because condensation leads to damp and mould, which can cause problems with your health, and your property.

There is always some moisture in the air even if you can't see it. When the air gets colder, it can't hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear – this is condensation. You may notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror in the bathroom mists over when you have a bath or shower. Condensation mainly occurs during cold weather regardless of whether it is raining or dry. It tends to appear on cold surfaces and places where there is little or no movement of air, in the corners of rooms near windows or behind cupboards and wardrobes.

Condensation and continued high humidity can lead to mould growth. Most moulds need 24-48 hours of moisture to begin to grow. If a suitable material in your home is wet for more than 24 hours then you run the risk of mould starting to grow. If condensation isn't dealt with it can encourage black mould to start growing on your walls, ceilings, and around your windows



Our new Technical Officer inspecting a property

*Here are some tips
on how you can
prevent condensation*

1. **Put less water into the air** - dry clothes outside, put lids on pans
2. **Stop water vapour spreading** - shut kitchen and bathroom doors when bathing and cooking, use extractor fans or open a window
3. **Heat your home** - use a low level of heat all day rather than quick blasts (this should also reduce heating bills), avoid using bottled gas or paraffin heaters
4. **Ventilate your home** - keep a small window ajar or trickle vents open, don't put wardrobes against external walls

We take all reports of damp and mould seriously and would encourage you to get in touch if you think you have any problems in your home:

Online – www.ashfield.gov.uk

Email – adcrepairs@ashfield.gov.uk

Telephone – 01623 457999

We have recently appointed a specialist Technical Officer to improve how we respond to issues of damp and mould. The officer will visit your home to investigate the matter and determine the probable cause. You will also be provided with ongoing advice and guidance relating to the issues you are experiencing.

Sheltered Courts

Wordsearch

Can you find the names of all 10 sheltered courts that are hidden in our wordsearch?

N L L Z J R H Y S D R Q H Y E V Y G B B R S A
U P G I O Q F I U M P S E E C V V J H O F X O
Y R V D N A L T M L V H B N A H R I F D H I G
X I S N B O W E M D K M Q E F L I N T Y O C G
S Z Z O B W C E E O L K W Z F O X E J A M Y N
A B Q M D S M R R O B B D L E I F H C T I T W
H B J S Y T K T H W N G A N W Z V X W R S V M
T R E E U S A S I R M U K X H W R Q A I J G K
F A D D Q Q H K L E O R N U G O B B J E B X Z
E N M I L I J O L H V U U C Q A T C N O D Y T
V D X B D S Z O F S O B F B A X L U Z E Y O Q
H Z E A G R P R Z V L O G H H R T N T Z C W Z
Z A L M V S D B Z X N O S I L R A D E W L Q J
J U S Q T D X A S P L E Y S U T H N C S M A N
E D U C W U E L A V U A E B S P B Z T U V B O
U I H H H E A X L Q D Y E S K B N G I I Y R Z

ASPLEY

BEAUVALE

BRAND

BROOK STREET

DARLISON

DESMOND

NUNCAR

SHERWOOD

SUMMERHILL

TITCHFIELD

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Housing Rents

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