

# ANNUAL HOUSING REPORT FOR TENANTS

SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

## 2023/24



# WELCOME

I am pleased to introduce myself as the Councillor responsible for the Housing Landlord Service and I welcome you to the Annual Report for South Holland District Council's tenants. This report highlights our achievements and challenges as we work in partnership with our tenants to provide quality housing and services. Setting out our performance as your landlord between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. I hope that you find the report both interesting and informative.

July 2023 saw the publication of the new Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 which requires all social housing landlords to meet new standards. From April 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing will inspect all social housing landlords, which includes councils, every four years. We will be assessed against a new core set of consumer standards, which includes new tenant satisfaction measures.

The report will highlight some of our many achievements over the last year with 86% of tenants surveyed feeling safe and 84% of our tenants surveyed feeling they are treated fairly and with respect. However, there is still room for improvement. We will focus especially on complaint handling, and on our repairs service over the forthcoming year to ensure our tenants are as equally satisfied in those areas. I am confident this additional assessment will support us positively to drive further changes and improvements to the way we work, to deliver the housing service to you, our tenants.

A safe, sustainable, stable and affordable home is the foundation for good wellbeing and financial stability. Good quality homes support South Holland District Council's ability to respond to the climate emergency, to the cost-of-living crisis, to tackling inequality and to building strong communities. That's why the standard of the homes and housing services we provide to our 3,800 council tenants and leaseholders is so important to the Council.



Through 2024 and 2025, you will experience several positive changes to the way we interact with you, including asking you more regularly for feedback. We will do our utmost to ensure you feel listened to if you do have a concern you would like to raise with us. This greater involvement from tenants will help to shape the service based on what matters most to you.

I look forward to the year ahead and welcome the opportunity to working with many more of you to improve services further.

**Councillor Tracey Carter**  
**Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing, and Member Responsible for Housing Complaints**

## HOUSING BY NUMBERS: 2023/24

- **195** households supported by our Cost of Living Support Team
- **13,385** repairs completed by our in-house repairs team
- **100%** of fire safety risk assessments completed
- **£3m** invested in making homes more energy efficient
- **69** new social homes delivered
- **98%** of rent collected during 2023/24

## YOUR HOME, YOUR VOICE

**Have your say, influence our services and make a difference.**

Let us know if you'd like to be involved Email [get-involved@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:get-involved@sholland.gov.uk) or call 01775 761161

# LISTENING AND ACTING ON YOUR FEEDBACK

**73%**  
of tenants surveyed are satisfied with our housing services overall

## Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023/24

We are pleased to present the results of our first Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey. Although mandated by the Regulator of Social Housing, the Council sees this as an opportunity to gather valuable insight from tenants regarding their homes and the services provided by the Council as a social landlord, with a focus on understanding residents views on the service they experience as tenants of South Holland District Council.

While a significant proportion of tenants reported satisfaction, there is an opportunity for us to further strengthen efforts in areas such as complaint handling and responding to cases of anti-social behaviour, to create safer and more harmonious communities. We remain committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement. See page 4 for our results.

## Your Feedback

All feedback, whether it's positive or negative, helps us to focus our plans and work on the things that matter most to our tenants. We value your feedback. When things go wrong, we own it and work with you to make it right. Complaints help us learn from our mistakes.

13 Compliments received

37 complaints received

48.65% complaints responded to within Housing Ombudsman timescales

2 Housing Ombudsman reviews

## Common themes of complaints:

- Antisocial Behaviour
- Damp Condensation and Mould
- Property Condition

In response to tenant feedback, we have made changes to improve how quickly complaints are shared with the relevant manager reducing the time taken for the tenant to receive a response. Complaint handling has been moved into the housing department and the service is now achieving 100% compliance with the Housing Ombudsman timescales. We have also set up a working group whereby officers review themes of complaints received and consider how we can improve the service we offer tenants, ensuring that mistakes don't happen again.

See page 15 for further information on how to share your feedback with us and the role of the Housing Ombudsman. Our Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report is available at [www.sholland.gov.uk/Housing-Feedback](http://www.sholland.gov.uk/Housing-Feedback)

# TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES 2023/24

Survey responses:

73% satisfied with housing services overall (TP01)

70% satisfied with the repairs service (TPO2)

62% satisfied with the time taken to complete most recent repair (TPO3)

71% satisfied that we provide a home that is well maintained (TPO4)

86% are satisfied the Council provides a home that is safe and secure (TPO5)

60% satisfied that the Council listens to their views and acts upon them (TPO6)

73% satisfied that we keep them informed about things that matter to them (TP07)

84% agree that they are treated fairly and with respect (TP08)

27% of tenant who made a complaint are happy with the response (TP09)

68% of tenants with communal areas feel that we keep them clean and well maintained (TP10)

66% feel that we make a positive contribution to the neighborhood (TP11)

50% are happy with how we deal with complaints of anti-social behaviour (TP12)

Telephone interviews were conducted with 522 tenants selected via a quota sample out of all SHDC tenant households as per the technical requirements set by the Regulator of Social Housing. This represented 16% of the total SHDC tenant population, and the final results had an error margin of +/- 3.9%. This achieved the stipulated target error margin of +/- 4.0%. Please note that interviews were conducted to a quota sample to ensure that the sample was representative by age, stock, area, property size, household size and length of tenancy. Further information is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenant-satisfaction-measures-faqs](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenant-satisfaction-measures-faqs)

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT MEASURES 2023/24

100% of gas safety checks completed\* (BS01)

100% of fire risk assessments completed\* (BS02)

100% of asbestos management surveys completed\* (BS03)

100% of legionella risk assessments completed\* (BS04)

100% of communal passenger lift safety checks completed\* (BS05)

2.53% of homes do not meet the decent homes standard (RP01)

9.69 stage one complaints received per 1,000 (CH01(1))

0 stage two complaints received per 1,000 (CH01(2))

48.65% proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's timescales (CH02(1))

91.1% Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the target timescale - 28 days (RP02(1))

100% Proportion of emergency repairs completed within timescale (RP02(2))

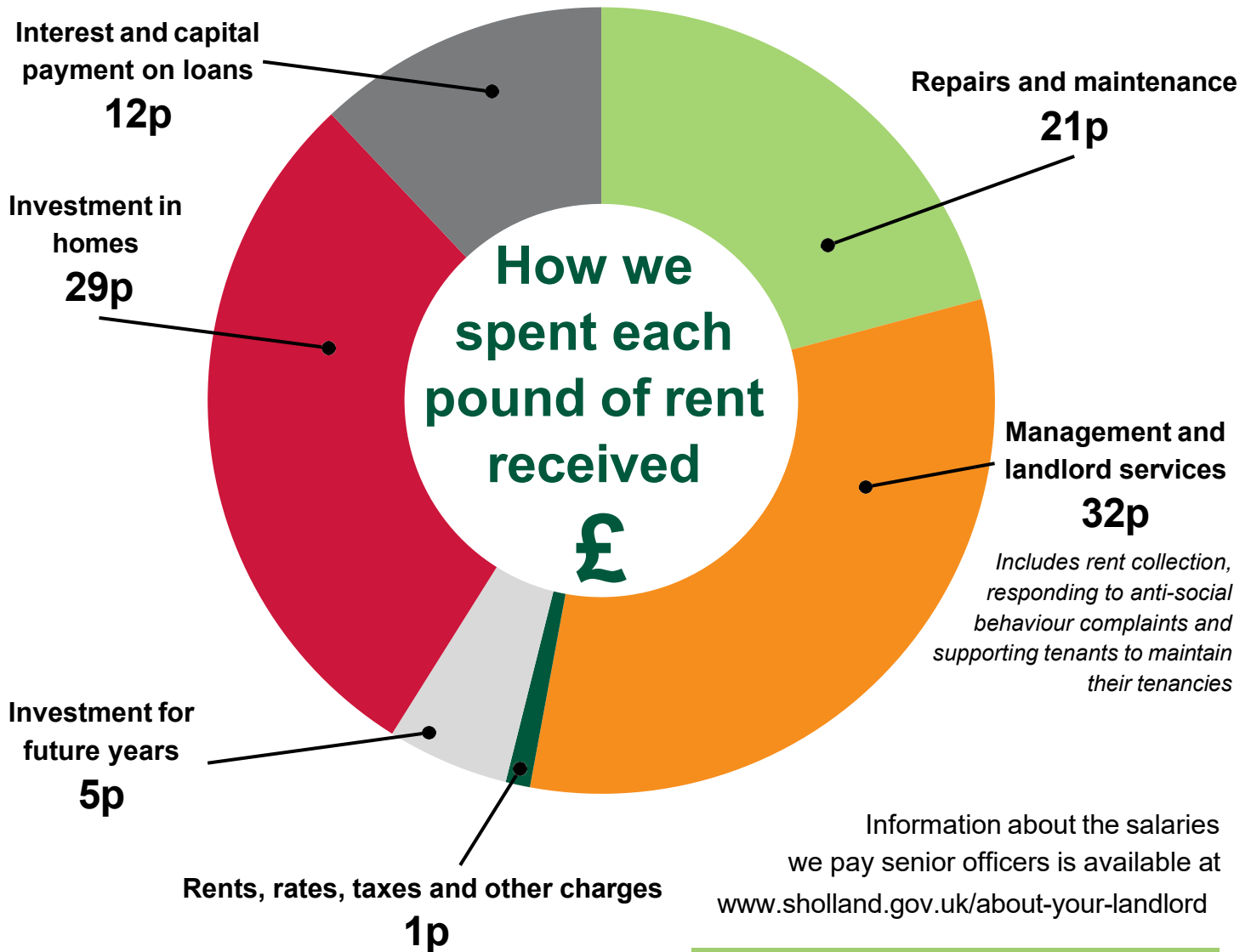
29.09 anti-social behaviour cases opened (per 1,000 homes (NM01(1)))

0.524 anti-social behaviour cases opened involving hate incidents (per 1,000 homes (NM01(2)))

\*completed on required properties

# HOW WE SPENT YOUR RENT

No funding is received from the wider council or central government to cover the cost of managing, maintaining and improving council housing. Most of our money comes from the rents and service charges that we receive from you. This money can only be spent on South Holland District homes and related services. The chart below gives a breakdown of how we spent each pound of rent received during 2023/24.



## Struggling to pay your rent?

Rental income pays for the investment in your home. It is really important that you pay your rent. Please don't suffer in silence if you are starting to struggle. Get in touch with us by calling 01775 761161 so that we can help you. You may be eligible for benefits or a reduction in your council tax.

# £85.96

was our average weekly rent during 2023/24 (excluding service charges).  
An increase of £4.71 from 2022/23

# PROVIDING GOOD TENANCY SERVICES

## Reviewing our offer to sheltered housing tenants

Over the last 2 years, we have been working with tenants to review the service offer provided to sheltered housing tenants. A thorough review has taken place considering the assets, services, engagement opportunities, digital offer and the finances (including service charges). Findings of the review included:

- 30% of tenants would be happy to pay for a handyman service
- 2,000 average number of calls received through the 'pull-cord' service each month
- ½ of sheltered tenants asked for more officer presence on estates
- over 50% of sheltered housing tenants required support with managing their physical and/or mental health
- 25% of sheltered schemes stated they needed help when moving home
- 40% of schemes wanted to see the community centres re-decorated

Thank you to all the tenants that assisted us with our review. See page 13 for more information.

## Supporting residents through the cost of living crisis

The Cost of Living Response Team was established to help work with our tenants to enable them to access resources, funding and support when they were finding it difficult to manage. This service is only accessible to SHDC tenants. Since April 2023, the team has:

- supported over 195 tenant households
- accessed funding from charities for over 112 households
- spent over £26k from our tenant hardship fund
- awarded £325k in Cost of Living credits (paid to rent accounts)
- saved tenants over £20,000 by supporting them with accessing benefits they are entitled to and/or helping them to reduce their outgoings.



In addition to the Cost of Living Team, the Council continues to fund a contract through Citizens Advice, providing a debt advice service dedicated to tenants. **Please contact us if you would like to access the debt advice service or would like support from our Cost of Living Team.**

## Sheltered housing creative music project

During spring 2024, over 50 tenants living in local sheltered housing communities worked alongside professional musicians to create and perform their own music as part of a project to improve health and wellbeing, and reduce loneliness.

Working with the Sinfonia Viva creative team, they created new music inspired by their community, followed by a celebration concert at the South Holland Centre. The event included several short classical pieces alongside the premiere of their newly written songs performed by a 14 piece orchestra, a professional singer and students from Spalding Music Centre.

**“Music brings people together. Everybody involved in this project has contributed to the creation and performance of some wonderful new music.”**

Ralph Clarkson, Sinfonia Viva creative team

## Disabled adaptations made to homes

We can install a range of home aids or adaptations to help you live more independently or improve your standard of living. Over the last 12 months, we have:

- £424k spent on disabled and elderly person adaptations
- 21 minor adaptations completed e.g. grab rails
- 40 bathrooms adapted
- 17 external ramps installed

### How can I get my home adapted?

Major adaptations such as stair lifts and wet rooms are assessed initially by the Occupational Therapy Team at Lincolnshire County Council. Please contact them on 01522 782155. Information is also available at [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/help-live-home](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/help-live-home)



## Responding to Antisocial Behaviour (ASB)

Everyone should feel safe and secure in their home, living in communities they're proud of. We have a firm policy on ASB and hate crime, taking all reports very seriously. We are committed to ensuring that we treat all reports of ASB fairly and in line with our policy.

We work closely with partner agencies, including the Police, to provide advice and support in the community. A recent example includes working with the Police to stop offenders from accessing a Sheltered Housing estate. Known as 'cuckooing', multiple vulnerable tenants were being exploited by persistent perpetrators of ASB - crimes included theft and assault. We took legal steps to safeguard tenants, resulting in prison sentences and an injunction in place for two years, providing continued protection to the victims and their neighbours.

**We will do our utmost to keep our communities safe. If you are experiencing ASB, you can report it online at [www.sholland.gov.uk/reportit](http://www.sholland.gov.uk/reportit) or phone 01775 761161. If you experience criminal, threatening, or violent ASB, please ring the Police immediately by calling 999.**

## Tenant census

Thank you to the 2607 households who completed our tenant census. This piece of work has helped us to update our records and make sure we are providing the right services to tenants and that your needs are properly met. It has also allowed us to update contact details including mobile phone numbers and email addresses - this will allow us to contact tenants quickly when we need to share urgent messages such as changes to our repairs service in bad weather.

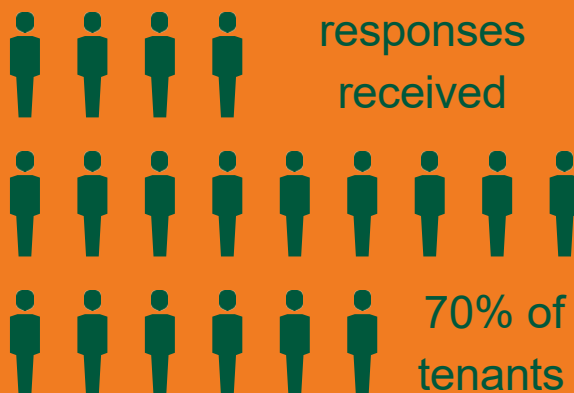
**63**

average age of tenants

**1/3**

of general needs tenants have children

**2607**



**8%**

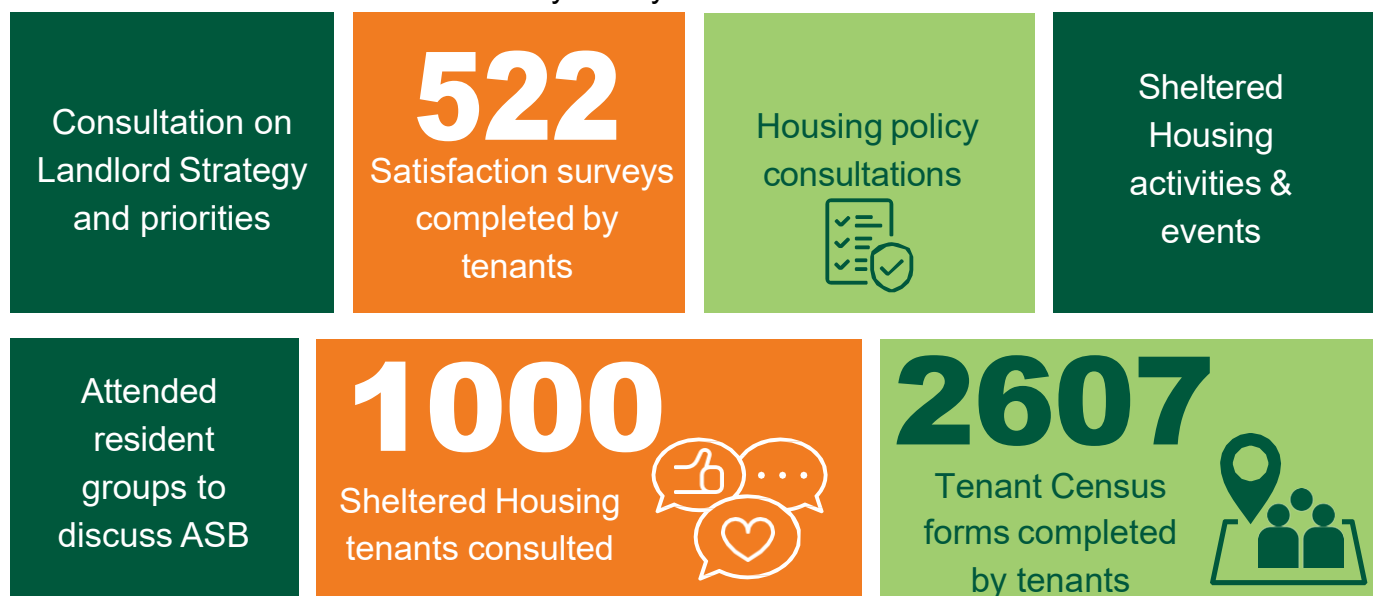
of tenants are Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic

**40%**

of households have permanent mobility issues

## Involving tenants

We have received feedback in a variety of ways:



“Your feedback helps us understand the things that matter to you, ensuring our policies are fair and robust” Chris Mycock - Housing Repairs Manager.

“I would like to thank all tenants who contributed to feedback opportunities for the redesign of the Sheltered Housing Service. I hope the new service provides the support and assistance required to enable independent living” Bev Chapman - Sheltered Housing Project Manager.

“Ensuring our residents feel safe in their homes is a vital role of the Council. Working in partnership with colleagues across the Council to deliver a coordinated response to issues reported to us remains a key learning outcome” Sandra Ferreira - Housing Services Manager.

“Accurate data forms the basis of strong landlord services. I would like to thank each and every tenant who took part in completing our tenant census” Jason King - Assistant Director Housing.

“Having rich data provides a solid base for us to review and improve our services. We continue to welcome feedback from our tenants” Sam Dicker - Business Support Manager.

## Allocation and letting of homes

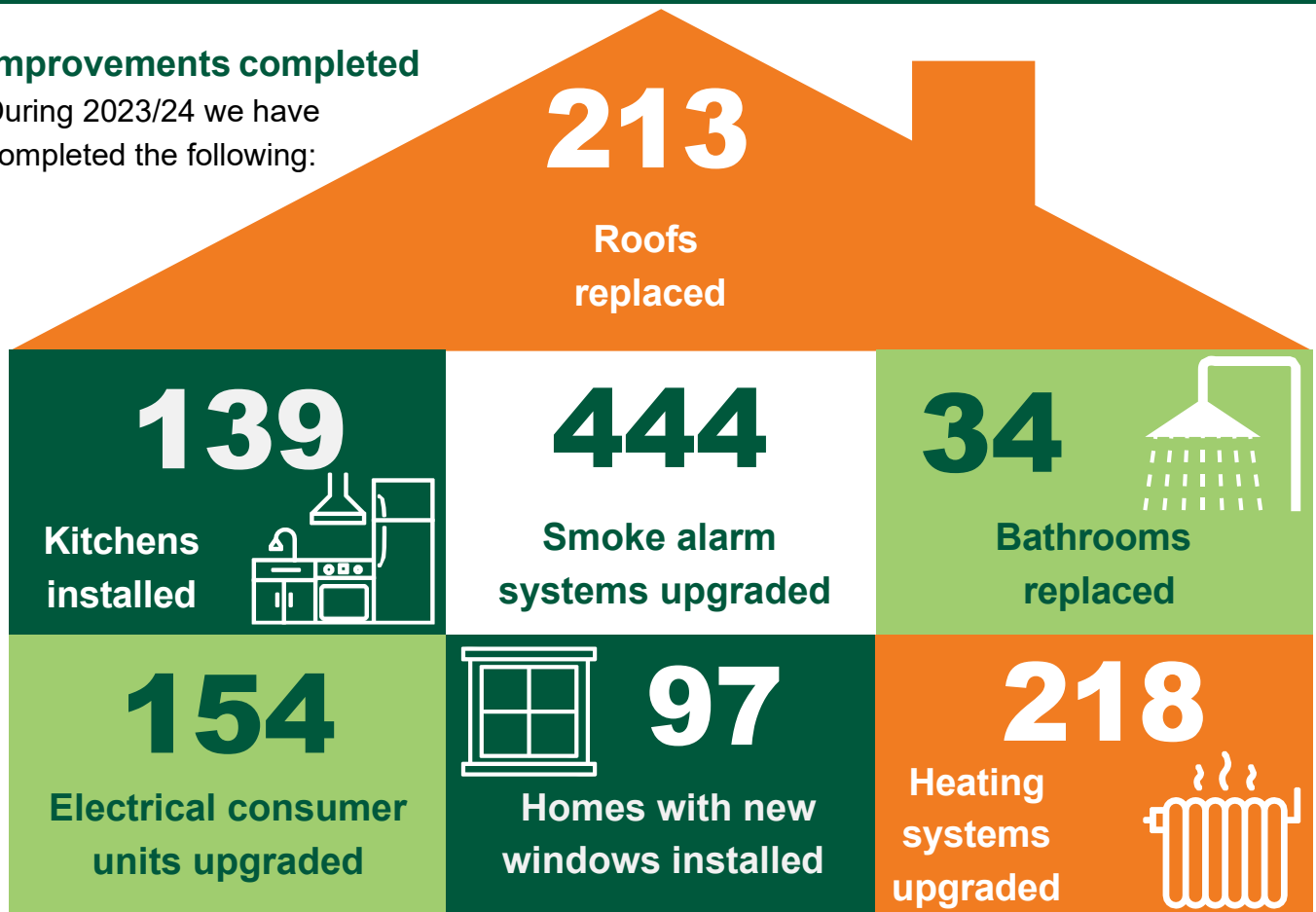


Further information on moving home, including how to apply to the Housing Register and complete a mutual exchange can be found at [www.sholland.gov.uk/movinghome](http://www.sholland.gov.uk/movinghome)

# INVESTING IN YOUR HOMES

## Improvements completed

During 2023/24 we have completed the following:



See page 13 for more information about improvements planned during 2024/25.

## Damp and mould

Over the past 12 months we have put the following additional measures in place:

- a new Damp, Condensation and Mould Handling policy
- delivered a training programme for all Housing staff
- awarded additional contracts to companies to survey properties and carry out remedial works specifically to address damp and mould.

If you, or an Officer, report a case of damp and mould in your property, we will contact you within 2 working days to complete a risk assessment. The risk assessment will assist us in determining the severity of damp and mould, and enable us to book an inspection based on risk to the household. (Timescales vary between 24 hours and 5 working days).

All assessments are recorded on a survey and the findings of the inspection will be discussed with you. Any necessary repair works will be raised with our specialist contractors.

**If you have damp and mould in your home, please contact us during office hours by phoning 01775 761161 or email photos to [info@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:info@sholland.gov.uk)**

## Going green

Last year saw the beginning of our 2 year energy efficiency investment programme focussed on spending £7m (partially government funded) to make your homes more efficient. Homes that were the least efficient have been prioritised with the aim of all properties achieving an EPC grade C by 2030. Works include external wall insulation, air source heating and solar panels. We have improved 77 homes over the last 12 months.



**302**

lofts topped up with more insulation

**54**

installations of air source heating



**357**

properties with external wall insulation installed

**150**

properties have had solar panels installed



**54**

thermostats upgraded to smart heating controls

**272**

properties have had low energy lighting installed

## New homes delivered

The Council delivered a record 69 new social homes for residents last year consisting of a mixture of rented and shared ownership properties. These properties include 1, 2, 3, and 4-bedroom houses, as well as 2-bedroom bungalows, located in various towns and villages across the district.

This achievement reflects the council's commitment to providing quality and affordable housing options for our residents.



# LOOKING FORWARD

## Our housing transformation programme

We are committed to improving our housing services. Our Landlord Strategy sets out the Council's vision for Council-owned social housing within the district including our transformation and improvement programme, driving improvements for tenants.

As part of this work, a board of Officers and Councillors, has been established to oversee the programme and ensure that improvements are made based on the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing and the wishes of tenants.

We look forward to working with more tenants over the next year to hear about what is important to you and how we can work with you to shape and improve our services. If you would like to be involved, please email [get-involved@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:get-involved@sholland.gov.uk) or contact us on 01775 761161.

A copy of the strategy and programme is available at [www.sholland.gov.uk/Housing-policies](http://www.sholland.gov.uk/Housing-policies) You can also request a copy by phoning 01775 761161

## Our new sheltered housing offer

As a result of a thorough review of our sheltered housing service, we are introducing some new services for our sheltered housing tenants. These will consist of:



Independent Living Officers to help our tenants remain independent and to monitor the safety of our communal spaces.



Handyperson / Caretaker services to offer small handyperson work to tenants and to maintain communal spaces.



New enhanced void standard for all sheltered tenants, with the option to pay for additional decorating and carpeting room by room.



To upgrade each community centre over a 4-year period and help to facilitate more activities within them.



A response service to respond when named contacts aren't available and a new digital alarm pull cord system.

## Continued investment in your homes

Contracts have been awarded to invest the following over the next 12 months:

- £1 million - replacing doors and windows
- £190k - smoke alarm upgrades
- £975k - gas heating upgrades
- £130k - electrical upgrades
- £1.5million - kitchen and bathroom upgrades
- £600k - sheltered housing pull-cord system upgrade.
- £930k - roof and guttering replacements
- £200k - chimney replacements

## Reporting repairs - online option to be launched this year

A new online service will be launched this year allowing tenants to book repairs online. This service will be in addition to the option to book repairs via telephone. We will contact tenants when this service is ready to go live.



# TENANT SURVEY

**£50 FREE PRIZE DRAW**

## **A chance to share your thoughts and ideas to influence our landlord services.**

We recognise that our tenants should have a key role in influencing our decision making about the housing services they receive. We are working with TPAS, an external organisation, to understand views on how we can improve and provide a better experience for you in the future.

**Your views are important, and we would love to hear them. Please complete our survey at [www.sholland.gov.uk/get-involved](http://www.sholland.gov.uk/get-involved) or scan the QR code below. If you require a paper copy please phone 01775 761161.**

**As a thank you for taking part in our short survey, you will be added to a prize draw to win £50 worth of shopping vouchers at a supermarket of your choice.**

The survey will run from 26th July 2024 until 25th August 2024 and is the beginning of us involving tenants more about how we deliver our landlord services. Have your say, share your feedback and help us shape the services we provide.

SCAN HERE FOR THE SURVEY



TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS

**tpas**

# GETTING IN TOUCH

## We welcome feedback in a variety of ways:

- Online - [www.sholland.gov.uk/Housing-Feedback](http://www.sholland.gov.uk/Housing-Feedback)
- Email - [housingcomplaints@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:housingcomplaints@sholland.gov.uk)
- Call - 01775 761161
- Write to us: Housing Feedback, SHDC, Council Offices, Spalding, Lincs PE11 2XE.

We adopt a two stage complaints process. **Stage 1** involves a full investigation and a response in writing within 10 working days. You have the right to escalate to **Stage 2** if you are not happy with the resolution offered. Your complaint will be reviewed further by another officer and a response will be provided within 20 working days. You can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage for advice.

## Housing complaint contacts:

1

**Lead officer for Housing Complaints**  
Business Support Manager

2

**Member Responsible for Housing Complaints**  
Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing



You can contact them by emailing [housingcomplaints@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:housingcomplaints@sholland.gov.uk) or phone 01775 761161. For more information about complaints (including our policy and self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code), visit [www.sholland.gov.uk/Housing-Feedback](http://www.sholland.gov.uk/Housing-Feedback)

## The Housing Ombudsman Service

A fair and impartial service, set up by law to look at complaints about landlords of social housing. The service is free and independent. You can contact the Ombudsman for advice by emailing [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk) or calling 0300 111 3000.



## Meet the Housing Ombudsman

**Richard Blakeway,**  
CEO of the Housing Ombudsman



## Meet the Housing Ombudsman on 7th October, 1.30pm at the South Holland Centre, Market Place, Spalding

Tenants are invited to attend our in person event to:

- Find out what the Ombudsman does and how they can support you.
- Share your experiences and talk to other tenants.
- Shape the services offered by the Housing Ombudsman.

**Spaces are limited - please visit [www.sholland.gov.uk/housing-ombudsman](http://www.sholland.gov.uk/housing-ombudsman) or call 01775 761161 to secure a space.**

## Responsible persons

People you can raise concerns with:



### **Responsible person for compliance with the consumer standards**

Assistant Director for Housing



### **Lead Officer for Health and Safety**

Housing Repairs Manager



### **Responsible person for higher-risk residential buildings**

Assistant Director for Housing



### **Responsible person for fire safety**

Chief Executive of South Holland District Council

You can contact them by emailing [housing.regulation@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:housing.regulation@sholland.gov.uk) or phone 01775 761161

## Useful contacts

- Emergency repairs outside of office hours: 01522 782235
- Disabled adaptation referrals through Lincolnshire County Council: 01522 782155
- National Domestic Abuse helpline: [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk) or 0808 2000 247
- Mutual Exchange: [www.houseexchange.org.uk](http://www.houseexchange.org.uk)
- Rent payments: [www.sholland.gov.uk/rentpayments](http://www.sholland.gov.uk/rentpayments) or 0345 340 9310, option 2
- Thistle (Contents insurance): [www.crystal-insurance.co.uk/](http://www.crystal-insurance.co.uk/) or 0345 450 7286
- Smell Gas? Urgently ring 0800 111 999

## Contact us

- Email: [info@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:info@sholland.gov.uk)
- Telephone: 01775 761161
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/SouthHollandDCofficial](http://www.facebook.com/SouthHollandDCofficial)
- X (formerly Twitter): SHollandDC
- Linked in: South Holland District Council
- Post: South Holland District Council, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, Lincs, PE11 2XE
- Home visits: available by requesting through the channels above



Please contact us if you have any comments on this report or there is anything that you'd like to see in the future.

**We can provide this information in other languages and formats for example, in large print, in Braille, on CD or audio cassette. Please email [info@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:info@sholland.gov.uk) or phone 01775 761161.**