

2023-2024

# HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT



**SWINDON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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# FOREWORD

*Councillor Janine Howarth,  
Cabinet Member for Housing*

Welcome to the 2023/2024 Annual Report to Tenants. I am glad of the opportunity to address you all in this report.

This year has been a year of change.

In May of 2023 the administration changed, and I was privileged to become the Cabinet Member for Housing. I was determined to contact, meet and listen to as many of you as possible. I have visited our wonderful community cafes, regularly attended tenant events, begun the Sheltered Housing Roadshows. I will continue to be as visible as possible but if you need to speak to me, please feel free to contact me.

There has been further change within the department with the Director of Housing Mike Ash retiring and the Corporate Director Alison Barker moving on to pastures new. We now have a new Interim Director, Chris Stratford and joining us soon, a new Corporate Director, Kirston Nelson.

This year has also seen the New Housing Regulation Act that brings with it, new Consumer Standards, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and an inspection on a regular basis by the Regulator of Social Housing. People do not always like change but I embrace and welcome anything that ensures that we work constantly towards a better and improved service for you, the tenants. Reading the report there is much to be proud of and working together over the next year we can build an even better service that speaks with your voice.

**Welcome to this year's Annual Report to Tenants. The following pages tell you how we have delivered the Housing service and gives you an idea of the work we have been doing.**



# WELCOME

*from your Tenant Scrutiny Panel*



Your Independent Tenant Scrutiny Panel welcomes you to Swindon Borough Council's Housing Annual Report.

This report highlights the performance of Housing services throughout the year and showcases the amazing work of volunteers and groups supported by Swindon Borough Council's Tenant Engagement Team who are passionate about helping tenants, volunteers and the wider community. In a time when many of us, including the Council, have been under great financial pressure there have been many challenges, but also lots to be proud of.

The new build at Queens Drive has helped people off the waiting list and into homes. In the wake of Awaab's Law a damp and mould response team has been created and have worked tirelessly to tackle the issue many tenants face, especially those in non-traditional built and older homes. The repairs team have continued to work hard responding to day to day and urgent repairs, ensuring our homes are safe and habitable. Throughout the year your Tenant Scrutiny Panel has kept a watchful eye on Housing services and will continue to do so. Last year we focused on our Communication Review and have now secured agreed actions on how the Council will improve their communication with tenants, a summary of which is in the Tenant Scrutiny Panel section of this report.

Communication is vital to maintaining and improving the services provided to us and we would encourage all tenants to raise the issues they face, including making complaints if these are not resolved. The information provided by tenants reporting issues is used by the Council to improve services and dedicate resources to the areas that need them. It is also one of the ways that, as a Scrutiny Panel, we can ensure that problems get resolved.

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel wishes to thank Swindon Borough Council Housing Team for their hard work. This year also saw the introduction of new Tenancy Satisfaction Measures by the Regulator for Social Housing. As a Scrutiny Panel we engage in national conferences and network with tenants from other housing providers and this has shown us that we have lots to be positive about as Swindon Council tenants! But the work is never done and services, tenant-council relationships, and our community can always be improved.

So, I encourage you to read this report, be proud of the positive things we've achieved (I say we as the Council provide the services but tenants PAY for them), and implore you to give feedback to the Council on how you feel they are performing and what can be improved. Rest assured, your Tenant Scrutiny Panel shall be keeping watch over the coming year and endeavour to make 2024-25 even better.

*Emily Webb*  
Chairperson Independent Tenant Scrutiny Panel



# CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS

The choice-based lettings team at Swindon Borough Council are responsible for managing our council housing waiting list. They advertise vacant properties for tenants to 'bid' for, and in certain circumstances, will directly match a tenant to a property. They guide customers through the bidding process, from the initial housing application to the day the tenant collects the keys and moves into their home.

To find out more about choice-based lettings visit:

[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20151/council\\_housing/1009/how\\_our\\_choice-based\\_letting\\_system\\_works](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20151/council_housing/1009/how_our_choice-based_letting_system_works)



# LETTINGS

Number of properties owned by Housing	10,401
Average time taken for re-lets standard vs target	24 days versus target of 20 days
Total no of re-lets for 2021-22	368
Mutual exchanges	211 applications 108 were successful
Number of people on housing register at year end	4,530


If you are considering a mutual exchange find out more about it here:

[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council\\_tenants/238/exchanging\\_your\\_council\\_home](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council_tenants/238/exchanging_your_council_home)

We have carried out the following adaptations to make homes more suited to the needs of our customers and to help them maintain their independence. If you need to discuss an adaptation to your home please see our webpage: [https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council\\_tenants/517/request\\_an\\_adaptation\\_to\\_your\\_council\\_home](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council_tenants/517/request_an_adaptation_to_your_council_home)

## MAJOR WELFARE ADAPTIONS COMPLETED

**23**  new kitchens

**18**  over bath showers

**6**  bungalow conversions

**19**  automatic wash dry toilets

**114**  level access showers

**3**  house conversions

**15**  concrete ramps

**16**  fit new composite wide doors for access

**13**  dropped kerb drives

**7**  fencing works for protection

**2**  automatic door opener/closer for wheel chair user

# HOUSING CUSTOMER SERVICES

Your Neighbourhood Housing teams are here to help customers maintain their tenancies. Your Neighbourhood Housing Officer will review rent accounts and offer support to customers who are experiencing financial difficulties, they can also refer customers for help with benefits and debts. The Housing Officer deals with low level anti-social behaviour (ASB), referring to Housing Enforcement Officers where the ASB is more severe. If your circumstances change, or you need advice about your tenancy, please speak to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer. You can find their contact details here:

[Make an enquiry to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer | Swindon Borough Council](#)

# ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

This year your Neighbourhood Housing and Enforcement teams have worked to resolve anti-social behaviour in your communities. They have:

## Opened 280 cases

- 295 ASB Cases
- 20 Hate Crime Cases
- 273 ASB Cases closed/resolved
- 22 ASB Cases currently still open with an allocated Housing Enforcement Officer

All Hate Crime Cases have been closed for that period.



<sup>1</sup>Hate crimes are where a perpetrator has demonstrated hostility based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity, or has been motivated by hostility based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity

# CLOSURE ORDERS

Closure Orders are there to protect everyone, by prohibiting access to a property. There are both full and partial closure orders; full closures bar everyone and partial closures bar specific people. They both have time limits Whilst the Closure Order is in place partner agencies will offer support to the individuals affected.

This year your Housing Enforcement team worked with our partners to deal with an organised group who had been running a number of drug lines, and were exploiting young persons aged between 12-16 to conduct drug dealing within the community from an SBC Housing address. The gang was organised, structured and controlled people through intimidation and violence.

Without a Closure Order in place, the selling of drugs along with the associated crime and anti-social behaviour within the community would continue to cause high levels of harm to many.

The Closure Order process is achieved through community engagement, intelligence gathering, investigation and working with partner agencies towards the joint goal of protecting our communities. Illegal drug supply is disastrous for communities bringing an array of serious and dangerous crime such as, violent assault/offences including the use of weapons.



# RENT COLLECTED



The Rent Income team have connected with customers to maximise the amount of rent collected and to reduce rent arrears. The team will offer support and guidance to those struggling to make their payments. If you are concerned that you may fall into rent arrears please contact your Neighbourhood Housing Officer.

As at 31 March 2024 SBC Housing owned 10,401 properties across the borough

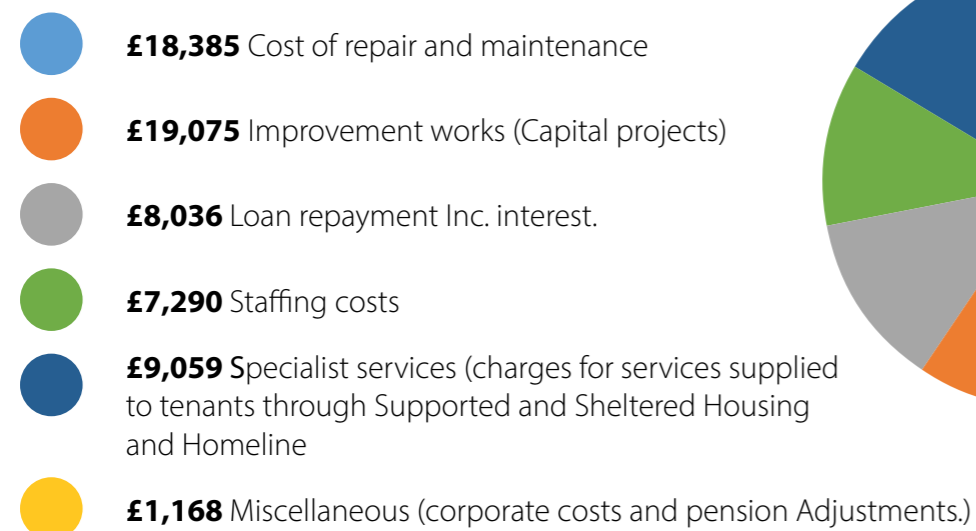
Proportion of rent collected	<b>96.93%</b>
Universal credit number of claimants	<b>4091 (as at 31/03/24)</b>
No of evictions as result of rent arrears	<b>4</b>
Rent arrears at year end	<b>£1,320,147.00</b>

You can pay your rent in a variety of ways; to find out more please visit:  
[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council\\_customers/251/pay\\_your\\_rent](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council_customers/251/pay_your_rent)

The rent we collect from all of our tenants is used to provide the Housing service, this is how we spend it.

## HOW WE SPEND YOUR RENT (£MILLIONS)

We collected **£63,013 million** in rent this year this is how we spent it:



Housing Director - Salary Scale	<b>£98,502-£130,672</b>
Housing Heads of Service – Salary Scale	<b>£55,175-£72,900</b>

# NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS



The Neighbourhood Warden teams work in your communities to promote respect for people and property, ensure communal homes are safe and rubbish free, and to create safe and clean environments. You can find out more about what they can help you with here: [Neighbourhood wardens | Swindon Borough Council](#)

This year your Neighbourhood Warden teams carried out the following:

Fire checks completed in the communal areas in blocks of flats	<b>4,272</b>
Occasions where we cleared items that tenants were unable to do for themselves	<b>52</b>
Instances of fly tip dealt with	<b>579</b>
Vacated properties cleared	<b>153</b>
Garage inspections	<b>942</b>
Skimmed Euro bins of overflowing rubbish to ensure they could be emptied	<b>4,583</b>

*The total weight of rubbish collected from fly-tipping, garages, empty properties and garden clears was 522,233 kgs!*



# SHELTERED HOUSING

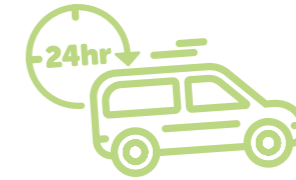


Our Sheltered Housing teams help our customers to live independently. Customers are supported to manage their tenancies, access the services they need, look after their homes and become part of their neighbourhood.

We currently have 31 sheltered housing schemes, which are managed by 29 Sheltered Housing Officers. The Sheltered Housing Officers report to three Sheltered Housing Managers.



# HOMELINE



Homeline is our alarm service that offers support to over 1300 customers living in bungalows and flats. In addition, the team supports residents living in sheltered housing out of hours or when specialist skills are needed.

Our Homeline team has vehicles equipped with specialist person lifting equipment and first aid kits with all staff trained to a high level

The year was extremely busy for the Homeline Team with the team responding to an average of 10 calls per day from customers who required to be lifted due to a fall. The team also co-ordinate emergency services if they are not able to fully assist, as well as liaising with nominated next of kin via the Control Room 24/7, which is located in the Civic Offices

The team attending calls for assistance within 45 minutes (our target) was met on 98% of occasions.

This year we also commenced the upgrading of many of our alarms to the new national digital format enabling customers to still call for assistance when the telecoms infrastructure is digitalised.



# DELIVERING NEW HOMES TO OUR CUSTOMERS



2023/24 has been a really positive year for housing delivery and our overall stock number has increased, mainly due to the Queens Drive development. We have now completed the final phase and a total 149 social rented units including adapted homes have been built and occupied.

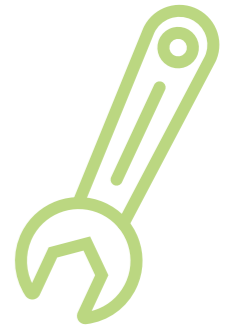
Furthermore, The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) launched the Local Authority Housing Fund, an innovative capital fund that supports local authorities in England to obtain housing for those who are unable to find settled accommodation on resettlement schemes. Swindon Borough Council received £3.5 million from DLUHC and together with our own funds purchased 31 street market properties based across our estates that now form part of our stock and generate income for the Council.



## RIGHT TO BUY

*309 customers submitted applications to buy their council home, 128 went ahead with the purchase.*

# REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE



Our Repair teams are responsible for fixing your home when something goes wrong. However, there are some jobs that are the responsibility of the tenant, you can find out more here:

[Maintenance and repairs | Council housing handbook | Swindon Borough Council](#)

If you feel confident, there are some useful videos on our website that guide you through minor repairs that you can do yourself, please visit this page:

[Request a housing repair | Swindon Borough Council](#)

We respond to repair emergencies at any time of night or day.

Urgent repairs	<b>7,763 (80% completed within our service level agreement)</b>
Routine jobs	<b>36,342 (65% completed within our service level agreement within our service level agreement)</b>

We also completed 5,767 jobs through our contractors

Your satisfaction with the responsive repairs service was 84%

Your satisfaction that we got repairs right first time was 81%

### Damp and Mould

We continue to focus on issues raised by customers around damp and mould in your homes. We have 1,240 customers on our strategy for damp and mould. Over the last 12 months we have completed 1,479 specialist surveys.

We have engaged with local contractors and are also looking to create a bespoke team of tradespeople ready for winter 2024. This will allow us to further improve the service.

Please make us aware if you have any concerns with damp and mould in your home, so that we can add you to our strategy. Please call the Contact Centre to report your concerns on, 01793 445500.



# COMPLIANCE



*keeping you safe in your home*



We carried out 8,827 gas safety checks, 99.7% of our target. If we have contacted you to arrange a gas safety check it is important that you get in touch with us to book a gas servicing appointment. Find out more here: [Maintenance and repairs | Council housing handbook | Swindon Borough Council](#)



We checked 10,332 of a possible 10,522, domestic electrical circuits; we were 98.2% compliant.



Water Hygiene, Swindon Borough Council are 100% compliant, all the 42 buildings that have a communal hot water system or a Potable cold-water system have a valid Water Hygiene Risk Assessment (L8) as well as the hot and cold water temperatures being monitored to ensure these are within parameters laid out by the Health and Safety Executive.



Our fire safety team carried out 286 fire safety checks to our high-rise blocks of flats, 100% against target. This is in addition to the checks carried out by the Neighbourhood Warden teams. The buildings are checked each month.



Swindon Borough Council services our passenger lifts, monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly, depending on the height of the building, it's usage and service need. This is above the frequencies laid out by the Health and Safety Executive. Swindon Borough Council are 100% compliant with both the service and maintenance programme and SAFED inspections for our Housing Passenger Lifts.



We carried out 601 asbestos surveys in the year – there is a statutory requirement that we keep surveys and re-inspections up to date. We were 100% on target.

# MAJOR WORKS TO YOUR HOMES



We have other property teams who carry out planned maintenance to your homes and also the capital team who carry out works to the structure and exterior of our buildings.

This year we installed:

New bathrooms/wet rooms	<b>390</b>
New heating systems	<b>44</b>
New UPVC windows to houses	<b>44</b>
New kitchens installed	<b>196</b>
Number of blocks of flats had roof replacements (1 block = 1 replacement)	<b>6</b>

**Missed appointments cost on average £130 each. Can you help us to save money? If you can't make your appointment please go online to reschedule it, or call 01793 445500 to cancel – thank you.**

**You can raise repairs, book, or reschedule your appointment here: [Login Screen \(swindon.gov.uk\)](#)**

**If you don't yet have an account why not join over 7,000 of our customers who do, all you need is your rent reference number along with a few details.**

**If you need help to register please email us at [getinvolved@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:getinvolved@swindon.gov.uk) and we will be in touch.**

# OUR SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS



Tenant Satisfaction Measure surveys were introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing in 2023.

they include a suite of 22 different measures, comprised of 12 perceived satisfaction measures and 10 actual performance measures, these are collected throughout the year. The 22 measures and their survey questions are determined by government; all social housing landlords must use them to collect customer feedback.

To understand how we carried out the perception survey, use this link: [https://www.swindon.gov.uk/directory\\_record/25556/tenant\\_satisfaction\\_measures/category/234/what\\_our\\_priorities\\_are\\_and\\_how\\_we\\_are\\_doing](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/directory_record/25556/tenant_satisfaction_measures/category/234/what_our_priorities_are_and_how_we_are_doing)

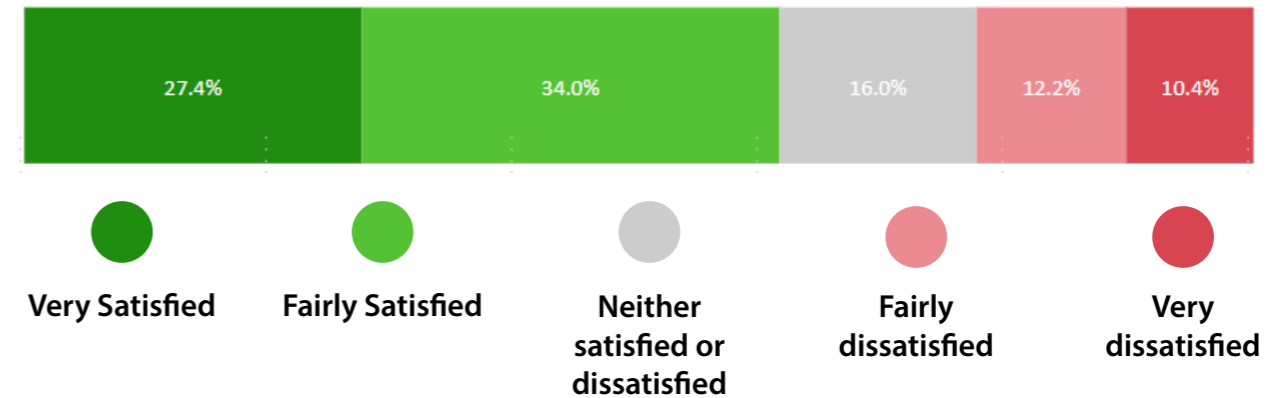
The responses we collect allow us to see what our customer's think of how we manage our homes and neighbourhoods. The surveys are now sent annually and the results reported to our customers and the Regulator of Social Housing.

We know we have work to do to improve the service we deliver to you, by listening to what you have told us we are able to prioritise the things that matter to you. Please take time to complete this year's survey when you receive it.



See the results below and what we will do to improve:

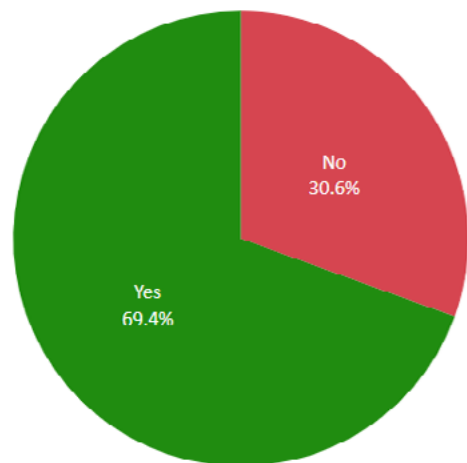
## Q1. TAKING EVERYTHING INTO ACCOUNT, HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES?



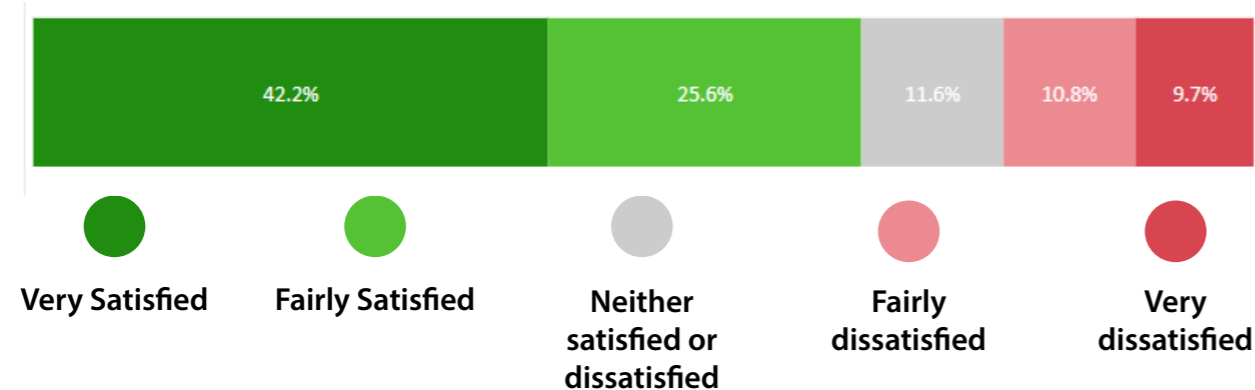
### to improve we will:

- i) work on an improvement plan. This covers the gaps in the service that were identified, including those identified by tenants. Progress of this plan will be monitored by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel.
- ii) provide more Neighbourhood Housing Officers who will be out on the estates supporting and advising tenants on housing issues.
- iii) roll out mandatory training to all housing staff called 'See the Person', which demonstrates that where we live makes no difference to the people we are. The film and training got the thumbs up from a group of tenants and will encourage the right values and behaviours we expect from all housing colleagues to ensure customers are treated with respect at all times.

**Q2 A) HAS SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES CARRIED OUT A REPAIR TO YOUR HOME IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?**



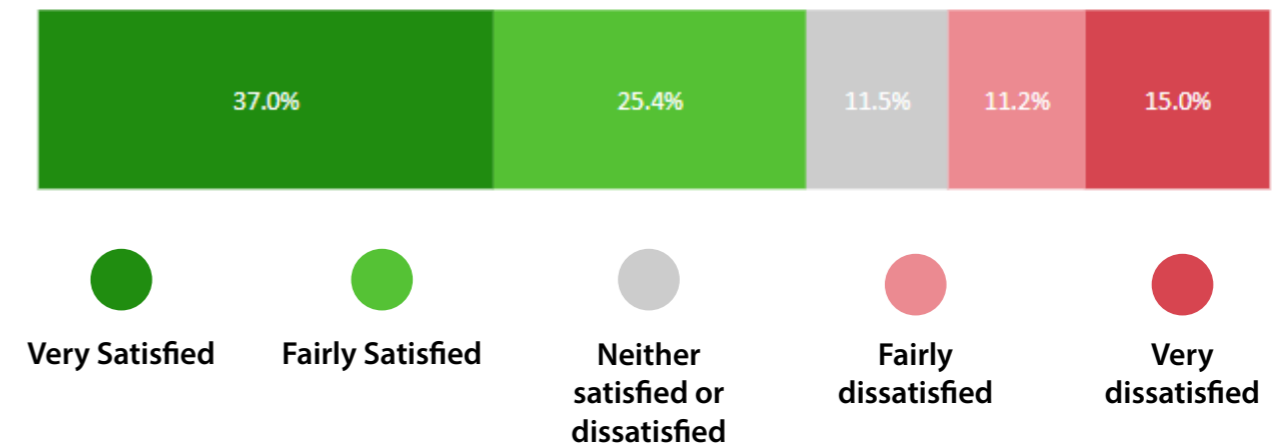
**Q2 B) HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE OVERALL REPAIRS SERVICE FROM SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS?**



**to improve we will:**

- i) review all repair job priorities in respect to completing jobs within a set target number of days. We will be asking for your opinion on this over the coming months to make sure we work in line with your expectations and we are fit for the future with any changes in legislation.

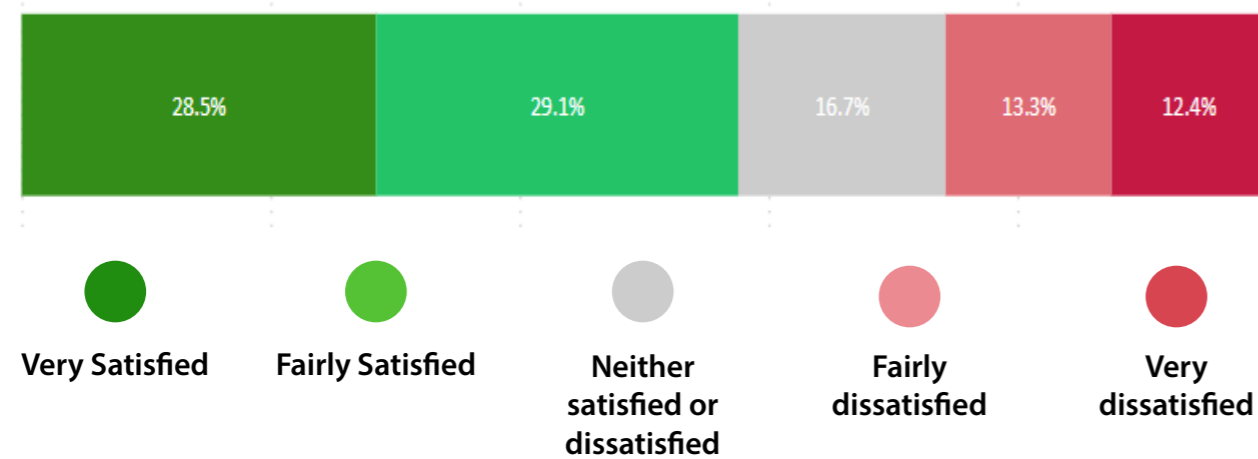
**Q3. HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE YOUR MOST RECENT REPAIR AFTER YOU REPORTED IT?**



**to improve we will :**

- i) work on getting the correct resource in place to be able to respond to our customers, including dealing with peaks and troughs with the volume of repairs reported. We will do our best to fill vacancies across the repairs department.
- ii) commit to entering into new contracts with local suppliers who are best placed to respond and support our direct labour workforce by undertaking specialised or more complex repairs and help out in instances of high demand
- iii) undertake a full 'van stock' review in 24/25 to identify where we can make improvements to increase the number of right first-time repairs and making our teams more efficient.

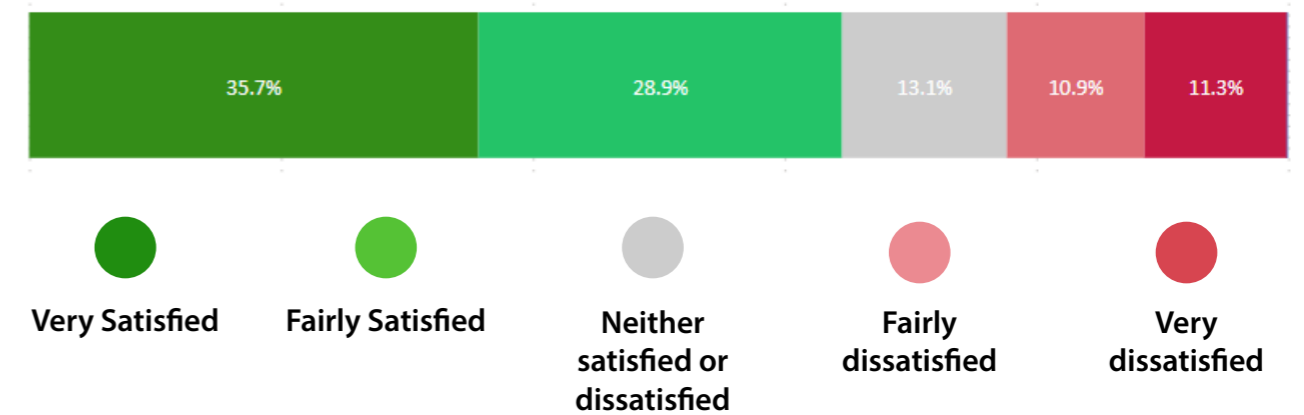
**Q4. HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU THAT SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES PROVIDES A HOME THAT IS WELL MAINTAINED?**



**to improve we will :**

- i) deliver a UPVC window and door renewal programme which will see £10,000,000 invested over the next 3 years, approximately 700 homes each year will benefit.
- ii) commence a roof replacement programme which will see £7,500,000 invested over the next 5 years, around 240 new roofs a year.
- iii) have a bathroom replacement programme which will see £20,000,000 invested over the next 5 years, around 600 new bathrooms each year.

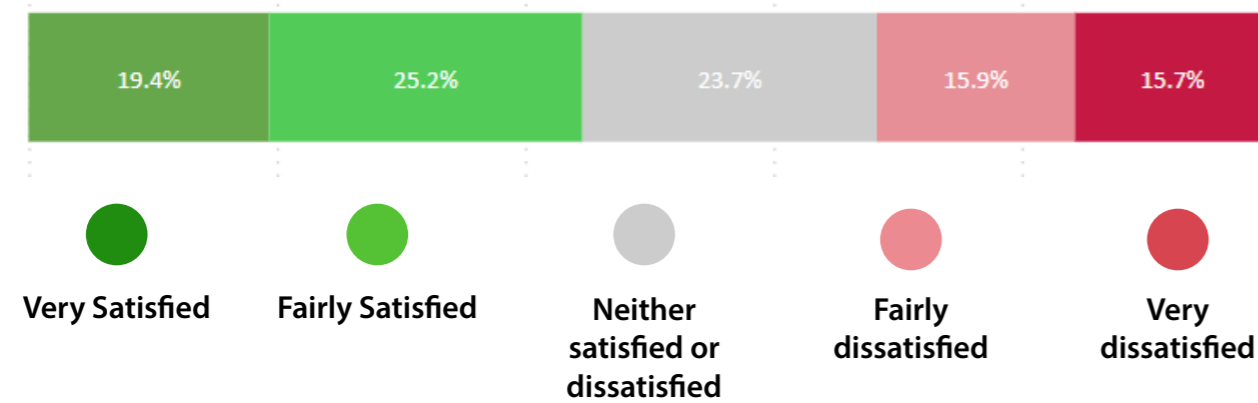
**Q5. THINKING ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE PROPERTY OR BUILDING YOU LIVE IN, HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU THAT SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES PROVIDES A HOME THAT IS SAFE?**



**to improve we will :**

- i) we have commenced a stock condition survey which will see all 100% of our houses and flats benefit from an independent survey. The purpose of these surveys is to assess the current condition of your homes and collate information to assist us to plan our future repair and improvement programmes to ensure we invest where required over the coming years
- ii) commence a smoke and carbon monoxide alarm upgrade programme which will see £10,500,000 invested over the next 5 years. This new system will send notifications to the council when the alarms require testing or replacing or has developed faults to ensure the alarms within your home are operational at all times. There is also an app you can choose to download that will also display the same notifications and alerts.
- iii) plan fire safety works for all our sheltered schemes which will see the upgrading of the fire alarms and fire doors.

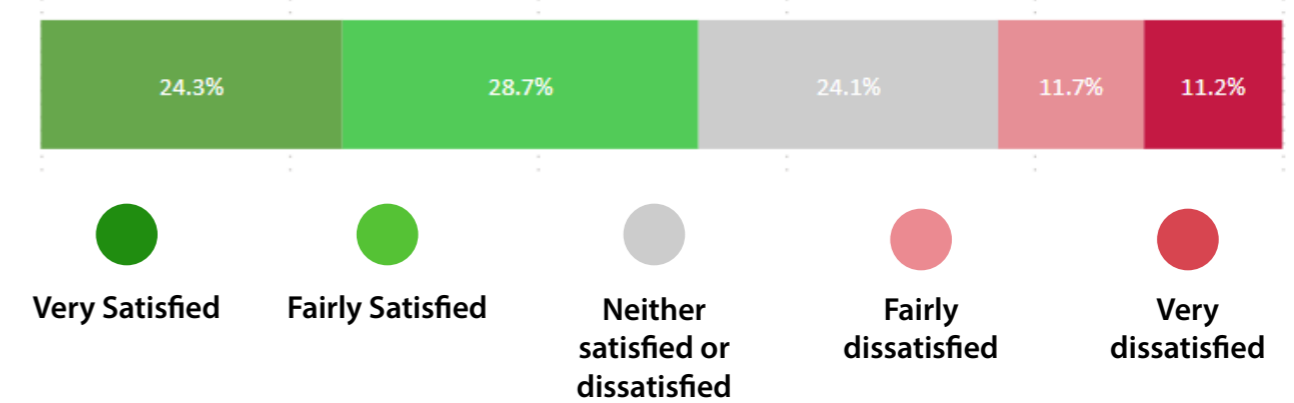
**Q6. HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU THAT SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES LISTENS TO YOUR VIEWS AND ACTS UPON THEM?**



**to improve we will :**

- i) work with customers who recently completed the Housing Connect survey. This survey asked customers how they would like to voice their views by getting involved to help shape the future housing service. Further news will follow on this as officers make contact with the tenants who responded to plan the next steps.
- ii) ensure the recommendations within the most recent review by Tenant Scrutiny covering Communications are actioned.

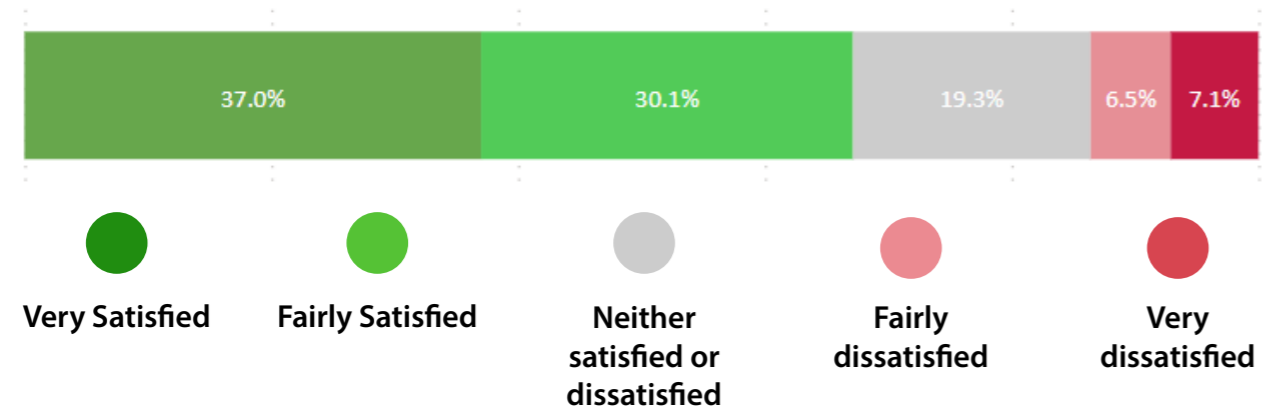
**Q7. HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU THAT SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES KEEPS YOU INFORMED ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER TO YOU?**



**to improve we will:**

- i) issue a new newsletter for all customers in Sheltered Housing and distribute the Tenant Focus newsletter at the three community cafes (JMH, Railway Village and Meadowcroft) and display Tenant Focus on the notice boards of sheltered housing.
- ii) publish the Housing Annual Report each July which will detail how the housing service has performed over the last 12 months.
- iii) continue to post on the Housing Facebook page and promote updates to the housing service and respond to tenants feedback

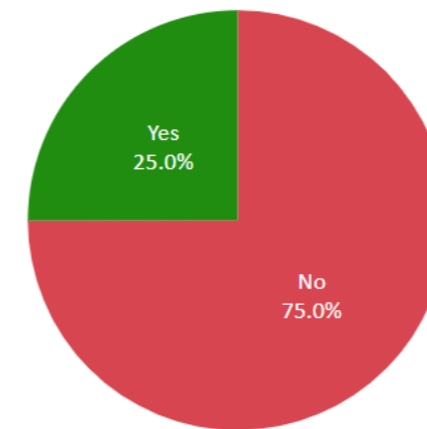
**Q8. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING “SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES TREATS ME FAIRLY AND WITH RESPECT”?**



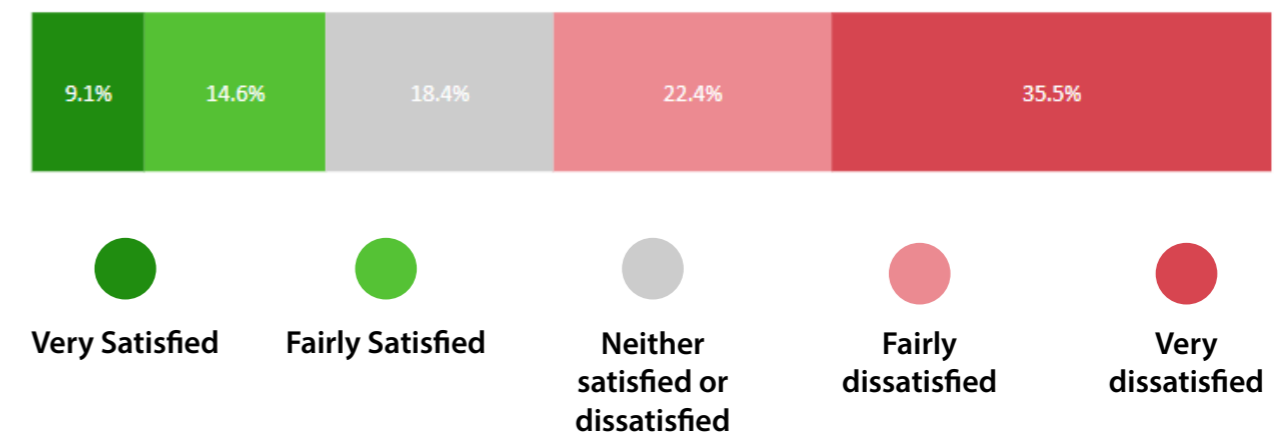
**to improve we will:**

- i) make every effort to attend every call. If the Housing Officer is out of office (e.g. doing visits on the estates) then an up to date voicemail will be left and the Officer will return the call within three working days.
- ii) ensure Housing Officers have attended ‘see the person’ training. Housing is adopting a culture of getting things right first time.
- iii) make sure all new and revised housing policies will have an up to date Equality Impact Assessment to ensure the policy has no negative effect on specific individuals in relation to the Equality Act protected characteristics.

**Q9 A) HAVE YOU MADE A COMPLAINT TO SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?**



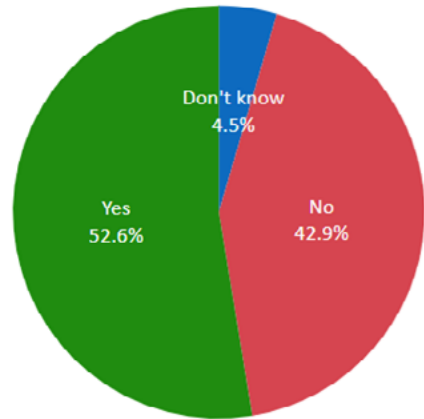
**Q9 B) HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU WITH SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES APPROACH TO COMPLAINTS HANDLING?**



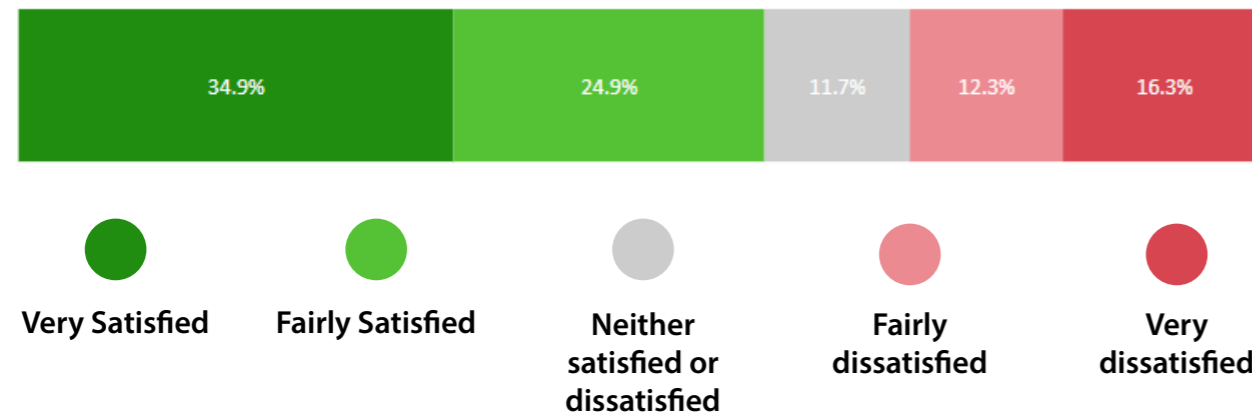
**to improve we will:**

- i) complete at least annually the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code self assessment. There are things that we do well but there are also some gaps where we need to improve and we are working on this.
- ii) ensure responses are sent to the complainant in time and are of a good, consistent standard. A new Complaints Resolution Manager has started and this new post will monitor all housing complaints.
- iii) review all Stage 2 complaints to better understand where the service has failed and what remedial action can be taken to improve the service.

**Q10 A) DO YOU LIVE IN A BUILDING WITH COMMUNAL AREAS, EITHER INSIDE OR OUTSIDE, THAT SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING?**



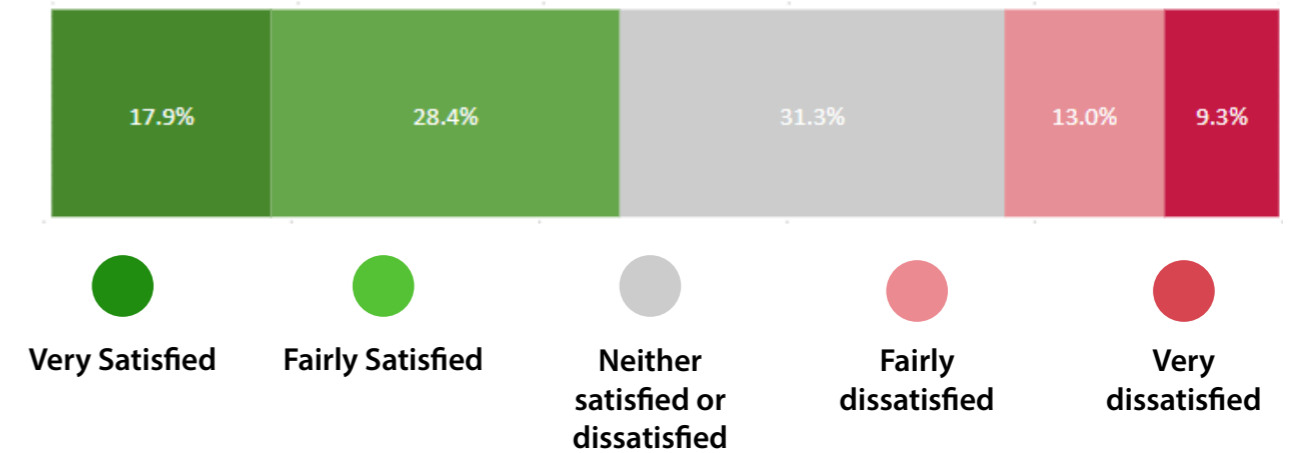
**Q10 B) HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU THAT SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES KEEPS THESE COMMUNAL AREAS CLEAN AND WELL MAINTAINED?**



**to improve we will:**

- i) ensure Housing Officers encourage tenants to keep their communal areas clean and work to help them do so. For the wider community benefit Housing officers can enforce the tenancy agreement should this be required.

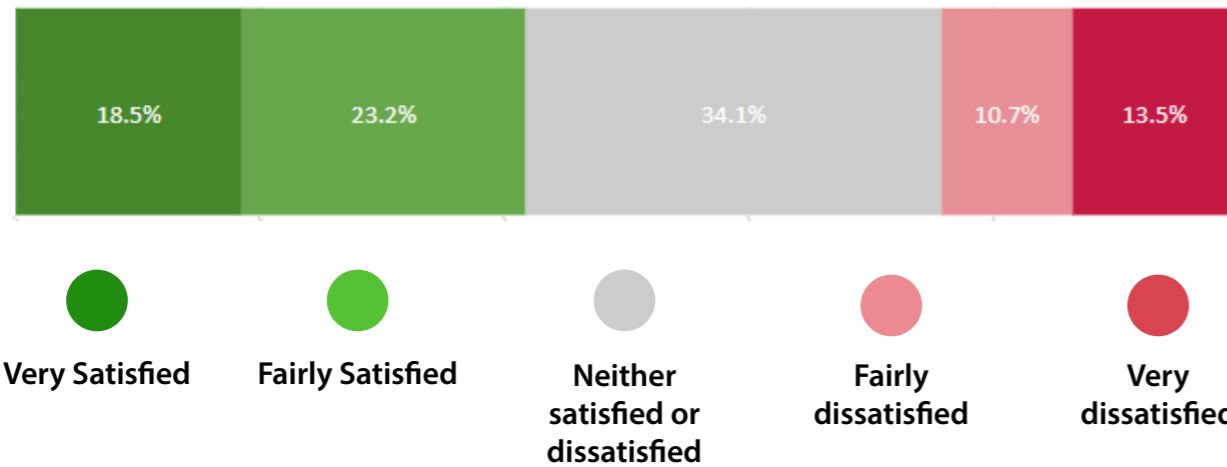
**Q11. HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU THAT SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?**



**to improve we will:**

- i) have a robust plan to carry out 30 estate walkouts in the next 12 months. These will be published and stakeholders and customers are welcome to take part.
- ii) ensure the Neighbourhood Wardens are visible on the estates, building relationships with the local community and working with them to keep things safe, clean and tidy.
- lii) work hard to engage and invest in our customers with initiatives such as the Junior Wardens and Street Reps.

## Q12. HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU WITH SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES APPROACH TO HANDLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR?



### to improve we will:

- i) have a dedicated Enforcement team working to lead on ASB cases, and we are drafting a new ASB policy to ensure we are up to date and in line with latest working practices and regulatory requirements (e.g. including hate crime).
- ii) work with partner organisations to be more effective, for example, by attending joint meetings with organisations such as the Police.
- iii) update the Council website to ensure our customers can easily find out the information they need and access the services they require.

# PERFORMANCE INFORMATION 2023-2024



THE 10 PERFORMANCE MEASURES BELOW HAVE BEEN COLLECTED ACROSS THE LAST YEAR:

<b>Gas Safety Check:</b> Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	<b>99.7%</b>
<b>Fire safety checks:</b> Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	<b>100%</b>
<b>Asbestos safety checks:</b> Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out	<b>100%</b>
<b>Water safety checks:</b> Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out	<b>100%</b>
<b>Lift safety checks:</b> Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out	<b>100%</b>
<b>Complaints relative to the size of the landlord</b>	
Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes	<b>51.1</b>
Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes	<b>5.7</b>
<b>Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales</b>	
Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	<b>82.1%</b>
Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales:	<b>79.7%</b>



# HOUSING COMPLAINTS



help us to improve the service we deliver to our customers. An annual performance report on complaints will be available on the SBC website by end of July 2024 along with the self assessment carried out against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.

<b>Total number of complaints received</b>	<b>591</b>
Stage 1	<b>532</b>
Stage 2	<b>59</b>
number of stage one complaints received within our service level agreement	<b>437 (82.1%)</b>
number of stage one complaints resolved outside of our service level agreement	<b>95 (17.9%)</b>
number of stage two complaints resolved within our service level agreement	<b>47 (79.7%)</b>
number of stage two complaints resolved outside of our service level agreement	<b>12 (20.30%)</b>

The top five areas of complaints fell into these categories:

Repairs	<b>240</b>
Damp and condensation and structural repairs	<b>141</b>
Tenancy Services	<b>57</b>
Gas repairs and servicing	<b>33</b>
External and internal planned maintenance	<b>22</b>

## Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord

Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1,000 homes	<b>28.4</b>
Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes	<b>1.9</b>

## Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard

Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	<b>12%</b>
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## Repairs completed within target timescale

Proportion of Non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	<b>65.2%</b>
Proportion of Emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	<b>79.8%</b>



# HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT A POOR HOUSING SERVICE?



If you want to make a complaint because we have not met your expectations you can do this through the following methods:

Visit our website and fill in our complaint form:  
[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contacting\\_us/463/complaints\\_and\\_feedback](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contacting_us/463/complaints_and_feedback)

Tell us face to face and we will raise a complaint on your behalf.

**Ring us on: 01793 445500**

**Write to us at:**  
**Customer Services Reception**  
**Wat Tyler House**  
**Princes Street**  
**Swindon**  
**SN1 2JG**



# CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT



## How have customers been getting involved?

The Tenant Academy team, working with customers, to develop their skills has delivered the following training:

Training	Number of customers to complete
Tenancy e-learning	402
Be the Change e-learning	268
DIY - Decorating your home e-learning	256
Loan Shark Awareness e-learning	256
Face to face Tenancy workshops	34
Household budgeting: Workshops for customers living within supported housing schemes.	10
Every Penny Counts: Delivered online and face to face. Slow cookers and recipes for low cost, tasty meals were given out on completion.	24
Greenlight to Housing: affordability assessments to allow applicants to access SBC housing	4
Designated Safeguarding Lead	2
Fire Marshall training	3
Food Hygiene	3
Safeguarding Children (level 2)	3
Safeguarding Adults (level 2)	4

# THE TENANT ACADEMY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

- Supported local schools with mock interviews for their students
- Hosted a young person from Horizons College with their work experience. Having them work with us on lots of different projects has been rewarding for them and for us.

## Here is what they had to say about their time at the council:

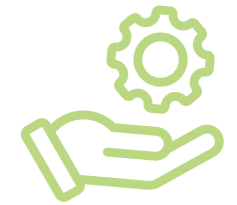
**"During my time at Swindon Borough Council my work experience has been good and there's been plenty of work and courses to complete."**

## Here is the feedback from the college:

**"Since starting work experience at Swindon Borough Council J's confidence has soared. J is speaking confidently about his skills and abilities and linking this to his future aspirations and his current work he does with the Tenant Academy Team."**

- Held two tenant steering group meetings, offering customers the chance to see what the Tenant Academy is working on; and, to get feedback and advice from customers to ensure we are delivering what customers want and need.
- Installed translation software and translated the pre-tenancy training into three different languages for applicants where English is not their first language. If you would like a translated copy, please contact [Tenantacademy@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:Tenantacademy@swindon.gov.uk)

# TENANT VOLUNTEERS



## Tenants gave their time to:

**Community cafes – making space for conversation over a cup of tea. Litter picking, community gardening and hosting Playing Out activity sessions for local children in designated streets. Reviewing sheltered housing services and discussing issues affecting older people. Reviewing our performance and making recommendations for improvement. Giving feedback on Government Housing consultations, and much, much more.**

We recently ran a survey to find out if customers were interested in having their say or getting involved in a customer activity – we want to thank the 315 of you who responded – we will be contacting those of you who expressed an interest, over the coming months.

If you would like to find out more about how you can get involved please email us at: [Getinvolved@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:Getinvolved@swindon.gov.uk)

# THANK YOU

**1,376**  
hours of tenant  
volunteer time

Our customer volunteers gave 1,376 hours of their time throughout 23 - 24 volunteering on 602 occasions.

# TENANTS ASSOCIATION OF SHELTERED HOUSING



Having served as Vice-Chair and only taken over as Chair in February 2024, I would like to thank my predecessor, Keith Andrew, for the work that he has done on behalf of TASH and residents of sheltered housing.

This has been a time of significant change within Housing with the introduction of greater regulation and introduction of a new 'consumer standard' which will help ensure that the Council, as landlord, is far more accountable to its customers. Communication, and how this can be improved, has also been an important topic for discussion at TASH meetings over the past year. In addition to considering how this might be addressed to improve service delivery, in response to this we have also seen the introduction of 'Sheltered Housing Roadshows' which provide an opportunity for residents' concerns to be heard as well as raising awareness of TASH.

December 2023 saw the introduction of 'The Sheltered Voice', Housing's new quarterly newsletter which includes a regular feature about the group's work. The debate around whether pets should be permitted in sheltered housing has also featured prominently this year and, following a second survey, you will no doubt be aware that based on the outcome of this it was decided that:

- There will currently be no change to the existing policy
- Properties with front doors that don't open onto an enclosed corridor will be consulted again later in the year

Among the many other topics raised by TASH members include, scheme parking provision, electric vehicles, repairs and maintenance, contracts for window cleaning, mobility scooter storage, voids & relet standard for sheltered housing, rents & service charges, change of use for Salzgitter Court, and even the piloting of 'self-serve machines at Harold Thorpe Gardens.

**Michael Joyce**  
TASH Chair

**Email: [getinvolved@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:getinvolved@swindon.gov.uk)**



Michael Joyce  
TASH Chair



# STREET REPS



## Highlights from last year

Street Reps continue to be an enthusiastic group of volunteers who volunteer for the benefit of their own communities. They get involved in many positive activities that help to enhance where they live.

## Keeping their community clean and safe

litter picking and road side cleaning have taken place in Penhill in the last year with more planned for the summer of this year. Street Reps in Penhill continued to maintain The Haven, a local space for residents to enjoy. It is a valued area, supporting local wildlife in the natural settings, filled with plants and flowers. Reps visit every Wednesday for a couple of hours to keep the Haven looking good.

## Community cafés

The community cafés are supported by the Night Shelter, Tesco (Fareshare), and Aldi (Neighbourly), all providing surplus food to ensure little is wasted. The Parish Councils let the Reps use the John Moulton Hall in Penhill and Meadowcroft Community Centre in Stratton free of charge each week – a big 'thank you,' for your ongoing support. The cafés welcome customers and residents alike, reducing isolation by providing a space for neighbours to meet, friendships to be formed, to share information and discuss local issues. The Tenant Liaison Officers attend the cafes to assist customers who need help to report repairs. Housing Officers and colleagues at SBC use the café to listen to our customers.

Colleagues and partner organisations came to the cafes this year to raise awareness of the work that they do, some of the visitors were the Centre for Sustainable Energy, the Community Safety Partnership who spoke about domestic abuse, the Live Well Team who offered health and wellbeing tips, the Night Shelter and Swindon Climate Action Group, also the Acorn Community Bank which has a regular place at the Penhill café.

## Junior Reps

The Juniors have also been out litter picking, road sign cleaning, and supporting the free café. Junior reps meet every two weeks at the Everleigh Road centre in Penhill. The Everleigh Centre kindly provide this free of cost to help support the junior group. Reps in Penhill were included in a short film to promote the sense of community that can be found in Council estates. The film was made by students at Create studios who spent a couple of days interviewing and filming locals.

For more information on the Street Reps scheme please contact: Nick Brock on **07816540729** or email **[nbrock@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:nbrock@swindon.gov.uk)**

# REFRESH



Refresh provides an opportunity for Housing to put something back into the community by providing support to local groups, improving the environment, and helping with the cost of living..



At Meadowcroft Community Café the donation of wool and materials enabled the knitting group to make hats urgently needed for premature babies at Great Western Hospital.

The group also produced knitted squares which were then used to create some colourful blankets.



Young people have benefitted through the provision of Hi -Vis vests for a local Scout group, helping keep them safe while carrying-out work in the community. Essential equipment and new aprons have also been provided for volunteers at the Community Cafes.

Although difficulties have been experienced with supply of materials

and contractors, two of our sheltered housing schemes have benefitted from Refresh with improvements to both the 'laundry garden' at Elsie Hazel Court and at David Stoddart Gardens.



The increased cost of living is something that is of concern to us all, and Refresh has been doing its bit by supporting the Tenant Academy with slow cookers for those completing their training sessions.

Did you know that low energy lightbulbs last much longer than traditional bulbs and can use up to 90% less energy? That's why we've been giving these away to our customers to help reduce their energy bills!



In the coming year, whilst some funding will continue to be available for smaller projects, we will also be working on a new venture with Enterprise works.

If you've got a 'bright' idea about how Refresh could help, why not drop us a line by emailing: [getinvolved@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:getinvolved@swindon.gov.uk)



# TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel review how we deliver the Housing Service to customers, they challenge our performance and, through their investigations, make recommendations for improvement. They are critical friends telling us when we need to step up and when we are doing well.

Their review for 2023-2024 looked at how we communicate with customers. The panel gathered evidence by speaking to customers about their experiences; met with customers at the Civic Offices and at Community Cafes. This will be published in a future edition of the Tenant Focus newsletter. The panel presented their findings and recommendations to senior management who accepted them all.

## TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS & HOUSING'S RESPONSE:

### 1) Have a regular drop-in service

Customers can access advice through the core libraries – find out more here: [https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contacting\\_us/933/cant\\_do\\_it\\_online](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contacting_us/933/cant_do_it_online)

Housing will soon be able to offer office-based appointments to tenants wishing to speak with their Neighbourhood Housing Officer

### 2) Increase the visibility of Housing Officers

Housing is creating four Neighbourhood Housing Teams (currently there are three) this will give Housing Officers smaller areas to manage and allow them to spend more time in the community.

### 3) More call centre staff

Staffing increased to 17 staff with an additional four apprentices plus two vacancies (Feb 24)

### 4) Better advertisement of online services

Customer Services are reviewing the advertising of online services

### 5) Provide a clear explanation of Neighbourhood Housing Officer duties

We have suggested that Housing Customer Services explain the role of the Neighbourhood Housing Officer – this will be done through the Tenant Focus newsletter.

### 6) Clear and accurate recording of conversations with tenants

Reminders will go to staff to make accurate records of conversations with customers about specific issues raised.

### 7) Tradesmen to let schedulers know if they are running late for their next job

The Scheduling team will do this where they are able to.

### 8) Give customers a timescale

Housing is renewing many of its policies – the Tenant Scrutiny Panel are working with them on this, timescales are including in this piece of work. Once completed the policies will be available on the SBC website.

### 9) Identify customers that may be vulnerable if services online

Housing is creating four Neighbourhood Housing Teams (currently there are three) this will give Housing Officers smaller areas to manage and allow them to spend more time in the community. Tenancy Services to identify potential vulnerable tenants and prioritise visits to them.

### 10) Ensure continued face to face engagement with customers across the borough

Housing Customer Services team will be carrying out tenant visits, they aim to visit every tenant to better understand the household and any issues they may have. This will be carried out over a five-year period.

### 11) Listen to customers

An expectation from the Regulator of Social Housing. Housing to demonstrate that they listen.

Earlier this year Panel Chairperson Emily Webb was also invited to address a National Conference, organised by Inside Housing, where she spoke about tenant and resident engagement in Swindon.

# USEFUL INFORMATION:

**Civic Offices 01793 445500** or visit [https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contact\\_us](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contact_us)  
Emergency repairs 01793 445503 (including out of hours)  
Non-emergency repairs should be raised online:  
[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council\\_tenants/506/request\\_a\\_housing\\_repair](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council_tenants/506/request_a_housing_repair)  
or by calling 01793 445500

## Rents

Updating your contact details /viewing your rent account:  
[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council\\_tenants/242/managing\\_your\\_council\\_housing\\_tenancy](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council_tenants/242/managing_your_council_housing_tenancy)

## To make a rent payment:

[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council\\_tenants/251/pay\\_your\\_rent](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council_tenants/251/pay_your_rent)

## Benefit advice visit:

[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20013/benefits\\_and\\_swindon\\_money\\_matters](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20013/benefits_and_swindon_money_matters)

## Face to face help at the libraries:

Library staff can support you to use the self-service machines at the following libraries and can signpost you to other services.

- Central Library
- Highworth Library
- North Swindon Library
- Park Library
- West Swindon Library (currently closed due to flood damage)

You can find details about their opening times here:

[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contacting\\_us/933/cant\\_do\\_it\\_online](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contacting_us/933/cant_do_it_online)

## Complaints

Find out how to make a complaint about an aspect of the Housing Service:

[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/6402/customer\\_feedback\\_and\\_complaints\\_handling\\_policy](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/6402/customer_feedback_and_complaints_handling_policy)

You can also take advice from the Housing Ombudsman Service, they can be contacted:

[Residents | Social housing | Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Whilst they would encourage you to fill in the online complaint form <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/> or email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

You can also:

Phone: **0300 111 3000** (phonelines are open Monday – Friday 9am -5pm)

Write:

**Housing Ombudsman Service**

**PO Box 1484**

**Unit D**

**Preston**

**PR2 0ET**

**Fax: 020 7831 1942**

## Communication:

To sign up to Tenant Focus newsletter please visit:

[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20029/people\\_and\\_communities/701/sign\\_up\\_for\\_our\\_e-newsletters](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20029/people_and_communities/701/sign_up_for_our_e-newsletters)

Please visit our Facebook page: [\(2\) Facebook](#)

To contact your Housing Officer, find out more here:

[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council\\_tenants/836/make\\_an\\_enquiry\\_to\\_your\\_neighbourhood\\_housing\\_officer](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20056/council_tenants/836/make_an_enquiry_to_your_neighbourhood_housing_officer)

## Community Cafes (free)

John Moulton Hall, Penhill Drive, Penhill, SN2 5DU

Tuesdays 1pm - 3pm

Central Community Centre, Emlyn Square, Railway Village, SN1 5BP

Wednesdays 1pm -3pm

Meadowctroft Community Centre, Addison Crescent, Upper Stratton, SN2 7JX

Fridays 10am - 12noon





