

Housing Matters

Newsletter May 2025



Introduction Councillor Jackie Hollywell, Portfolio Holder – Housing



Welcome to the spring edition of Housing Matters, our quarterly newsletter for tenants and leaseholders.

In this edition you'll see details and information on a range of issues, including areas that tenants have told us they would like to read about. This includes key dates for events taking place in and around the town over the next year.

There is information on how we are investing in homes, plans for an opportunity for you to tell us how we are doing, and a thank you to those who have helped us and contributed to our surveys too.

We have also shared information on how we are doing as a landlord and how we have used information and feedback tenants have provided to help shape or improve the way we do things.

Keeping residents safe and informed are top priorities for us as your landlord, and we hope this newsletter is helping us to achieve this.

Wishing you all the best and hoping you are able to make the best of the improving weather and enjoy some of the many events taking place in Stevenage.

Best wishes

Have your say

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in the 2024/25 Tenant Satisfaction Survey! Your feedback is helping us improve the services that matter most to you.

We are committed to listening and making positive changes based on your views which is why we're joining other social landlords across the country in surveying our tenants again in the coming year.

We are currently working through all the results from last year and we will publish these in the next newsletter, along with details of how we have used your feedback and experiences to help us improve services.



What you want to hear about!

Since the last newsletter we asked a group of tenants what they would like to see included in future editions and had some great suggestions. Thank you to those who responded.

The feedback included requests for information on:-

“Any local events, family fun days and as I have just moved into the area it would be nice to know where the local services are.”

“Dealing with anti-social behaviour and drug abuse.”

“General maintenance of properties”

“Policies, plans and procedures relating to priority status (more about how it operates) and on movements in waiting lists generally - just more information etc on these subjects.”

We will try to cover as many of these and other suggestions over coming months so we can give you the information and updates you have asked for.

Building Safety: engaging with our high-rise residents

Since the tragedy of the Grenfell Fire, the Government, councils and housing associations have been working hard behind the scenes, focusing on making sure those who live in high-rise blocks that we manage are safe. The council has five blocks covered by new legislation and requirements. These are: -

- Harrow Court
- Brent Court
- High Plash
- The Towers
- Highcroft

To help improve the way we engage with those living in these blocks about building safety, we have set up a new group that residents can attend. This is a great opportunity for people to work with the council to ensure that the blocks are safe. It also offers a chance to receive updates on plans relating to building safety and future planned works, providing a real opportunity for residents to scrutinise and have an input before they begin.

The first meeting held in March was attended by tenants, leaseholders and key council staff working on the projects. It gave residents an opportunity to share their experiences of living in the blocks and council staff explained how they will be working with residents to develop the plans.

If you reside in the one of the blocks and have any issues connected to the safety of the building, please ensure they are reported via the dedicated email address building.safety@stevenage.gov.uk.

Next high-rise resident meeting

6pm, Tuesday 24 June at the Council Offices, Daneshill House.

If you would like to attend or have any questions, please contact the Building Safety team at building.safety@stevenage.gov.uk or you can find more information on how to keep safe in your home on our website at Safety in your council home.

You said

We did

Decent Homes Programme

As part of the council's plans to invest in our housing stock we need to ensure that homes meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. The current programme of Decent Homes related works will run from 2025 through to 2030, and to start, some individual survey work needs to be undertaken, including: -

- Windows and doors
- Heating systems including boilers
- Kitchens and bathrooms

The planned programmes of work have been split between different contractors to cover North and South Stevenage. This will help to ensure flexibility in the schedule, as well as collaborative working across the borough. The appointed contractors are: -

- Heating works to be carried out by TSG (North) and Sureserve (South)
- Kitchen and bathrooms works are being covered by PiLON (North) and United Living (South)
- Window and door works are being covered by Chas-berger (North) and Etec (South)

If improvements to your home are identified, you will receive a letter. Letters are being issued on an annual basis as we work through the five-year programme explaining the works that are being surveyed and who your appointed contractor will be.

When the contractor is ready to start work, you will be contacted to arrange an initial visit. At this visit, a detailed survey will take place to identify and confirm exactly what improvements are needed. A street list for each programme to show the areas and years that will be included will be published on the website in the near future.

We want to say thank you to those who have taken part in meetings and/or drop-in events, helped us with surveys, and told us what is and what is not working well. This feedback is really important for us as it helps us to identify areas that we need to develop or improve.

We'd like you to see how we are listening to what you are saying and so below are a few examples of the feedback you have given and how we have used this to change things for the better.

Residents who need help with making adaptations to their homes asked for clear guidance on when and how we could help.

We have developed a new policy having received feedback from 131 people on areas covered including property size, costs and timeframes. The new policy which is effective from April 2025 clearly sets out details of the assistance available and how the process would work.

Some tenants raised concerns around how we were making some decisions about who could move to alternative social housing as their needs changed.

We have reviewed the process and provided additional guidance to staff, how the approach that should be taken in accordance with our new Allocations Policy.

We were asked to share details on up-and-coming events in the community.

Details of these are included in this newsletter, and we have sign posted to where additional details can be found online.

Tenants want to hear about how we can tackle ASB and our plans for investing in our homes.

Our ASB Policy is being updated with contributions from residents and we have provided details on plans for investing in our homes in this newsletter.

Through feedback provided as part of our programme of Tenant Surveys residents highlighted individual challenges and concerns

As a result in the last quarter we met with 56 tenants, picked up an additional 86 repairs and maintenance issues and 33 ASB issues, with each of these contacts being monitored and addressed.

What's happening in Stevenage this year

You have asked that we help keep you informed about up-and-coming events in Stevenage this year, so here are some of the key dates for activities and events that are planned.

Saturday 24 May	Dinosaurs & Princesses: Kid Zone
1 – 30 June	Stevenage Festival
Sunday 8 June	Stevenage Day
Saturday 14 June	Father's Day Special (Stevenage Indoor Market)
Saturday 21 June	Armed Forces Day
Saturday 27 July	Family movies & women's football screening
1 – 31 August	Summer Beach
Thursday 7 August	Play Day
Saturday 9 August –	Community Event: Barrio Fiesta
Friday 22 August	Summer Special: Kid Zone
Wednesday 27 August	Peartree Park Community Day
Saturday 13 September	Stevenage International Day
Wednesday 1 October	International Day of Older People
Saturday 25 October	Halloween-Tastic
Wednesday 5 November	Stevenage Fireworks Display
Sunday 9 November	Remembrance Sunday
Tuesday 11 November	Armistice Day Service
Saturday 15 November – Sunday 31 December	Stevenage Christmas Market
Saturday 22 November	Stevenage Christmas Light Switch On
Saturday 22 November	Christmas special
Saturday 29 November	Old Town Christmas Lights
Month of December	Christmas Trail
Saturday 6 December	Christmas Special: Kid Zone

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, X or Instagram to keep up to date with what's happening. Find out more at www.stevenage.gov.uk or www.stevenagetowncentre.com/

Investing in homes

The council will be investing more than £23m in 2025/26 in maintaining and/or improving homes and has plans to invest a further £62m over the next 3 years which will include:-

- 1,316 new kitchens or bathrooms installations
- 3,936 heating upgrades
- 1,014 window or door upgrades and
- 379 properties will receive energy efficiency works

As part of these plans, we will be completing

the improvement works to our flat blocks which have been taking place across the borough over the last few years.

Work is also underway to help tenants reduce their heating bills with new insulation and heating works planned.

As part of this programme, we have also started work with residents on plans for the refurbishment of the five high-rise buildings that we own. To help do this we have set up a dedicated stakeholder forum with tenants and leaseholders, but more information on that in the next article!

How are we doing as your landlord?

As a social landlord we are required to gather a range of data and information on how we are doing as a landlord, and these include Tenant Satisfaction Measures. These measures are reported annually to the Regulator of Social Housing and to the council's Cabinet. We also share this information with you both quarterly in the newsletter, but also in our Annual Tenant Report as part of wider update on what we have been doing over the last year.

As part of our commitment to be open and transparent with customers, we are publishing details every three months. The details below contain the first nine months of the financial year 2024/25. Further details are available in the [Tenant Satisfaction Measures](#) part of our website.

Homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard	Percentage of non-emergency repairs completed in target	Percentage of emergency repairs completed within target timescales	Water safety checks carried out
92.2%	85.82%	91%	100%
RP01	RP02(1)	RP02(2)	BS04
Gas safety checks carried out	Fire safety checks carried out	Asbestos safety checks carried out	Lift safety checks carried out
100%	100%	100%	100%
BS01	BS02	BS03	BS05
Number of stage 1 complaints	Number of Stage 1 complaints answered in target time	Number of Stage 2 complaints	Number of Stage 2 complaints answered in target time
516	493	57	51
CH01	CH02	CH01	CH02
Percentage of residents who feel safe in their home	Percentage of tenants who feel they are treated fairly and with respect	Percentage of tenants who are satisfied with the overall repairs service	Percentage of tenants who feel that they are kept informed
74.7%	72%	68.7%	60.2%
Number of ASB Cases per 1,000 homes	Number of ASB cases that involve hate incidents per 1,000 homes		
8.2	0.3		
NM01(1)	NM02(2)		

Note

- CH01 – Are the total received so far this year, there are some cases that we have received that we are still dealing with, and this means the numbers don't align.
- NMO1+2 – These are the number of cases for the year so far, so will continue to increase.

Repairs to your home

Caution on Claims Companies

You may have seen or heard adverts from claims management companies about making a disrepair claim against your landlord.

These adverts have recently featured on social media and radio. These companies may even have called or emailed you directly. Claims management companies target tenants, particularly those in social housing, and encourage them to make a claim for disrepair.

A housing disrepair claim involves a tenant taking legal action against their landlord for either failing to fix repairs to their home in a reasonable time frame or failing to complete them at all.

If you agree to pursue this, the claims management company may pass your claim to a solicitor who will act as an intermediary between you and your landlord (us) and handle

your claim, at a cost. Your information is shared with the solicitors as part of the investigation this will include any alterations completed by you and the repair history on your home including no accesses, waivers, refused works and rechargeable repairs.

Although the sales pitch from these companies may sound good, there can be many downsides to pursuing this, including:

- Hidden costs
- Fees if you change your mind
- Time taken and distress caused

If you need to report a repair you can do so either online, by phone or through the Housing Portal and you can find details on our website at [Report a Repair](#)

If you are dissatisfied with any housing or repairs services you have received from Stevenage Borough Council, please direct your concerns through our complaints process on our website at [Compliments and Complaints](#), or you can call us on 01438 242242.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Everyone who lives and works in Stevenage has the right to do so in a safe environment, and we understand that anti-social behaviour (ASB) negatively impacts this. As your landlord there are certain types of ASB that you can report to us, for a full list of things that are classed as low, medium or high ASB, please visit our website.

Remember if you, or someone else is in immediate danger call 999 and ask for the police. If it is not an emergency, you can call 101 or report [Antisocial behaviour here](#).

If the issues are between you and your neighbours in council-owned housing you can contact us. Reporting ASB to us is easy and you can find details on our website by visiting [Report Anti-Social Behaviour](#) or call us on 01438 242666.

Last year our team dealt with **270 ASB cases**, including **49 drug related** cases as well as nuisance, fly tipping and other activities that were causing concern to our residents.

In one case, the team received information that drug dealing may have been occurring from a house. So, we worked with the police, and shared information on people coming and going at all hours, shouting in communal areas, and taking drugs. There was a possibility that the tenant may have been experiencing cuckooing. This is where a vulnerable person is targeted by a criminal gang, and they then use their home to store and distribute drugs, often as part of a wider supply network.

After visits by both the police and the council and further investigation we found this was not the case and so we started formal enforcement against those visiting, as well as the tenant. We were able to provide additional security measures and support to those who were able to share details of the activities, and they were able to share with us critical evidence by keeping record logs which have allowed the police and the council to take action.

As a result, the behaviour has ended, and the vulnerable tenant has been able to engage with support organisations.