

# Tenants' Annual Report

2023-24



**Inside, read about:**

- Our role as a social landlord
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Complaints review
- Tenant involvement
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- National recognition and more...

Sussex not-for-profit support, care,  
and housing provider since 1972

**Southdown**

[www.southdown.org](http://www.southdown.org)

Easy Read version

## Welcome from Jim Aspdin



Jim Aspdin

I am delighted to present this year's Tenants' Annual Report, which highlights how we are making sure that every tenant and shared owner has access to a place they can truly call home, with the right support tailored to your needs.



Last year, we focused on understanding the condition of your homes and making plans for future improvements – whether that means upgrading kitchens and bathrooms, fixing damp and mould issues, or boosting energy efficiency.

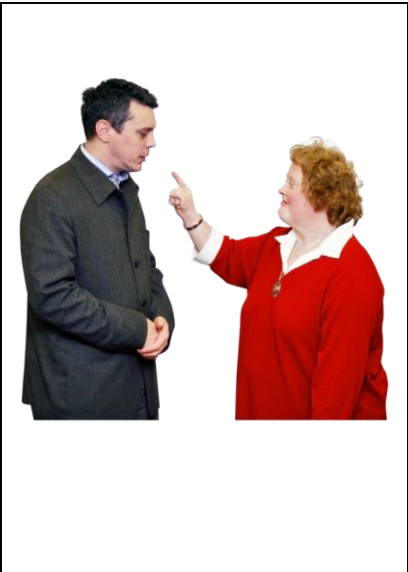


The safety and wellbeing of our tenants are our top priorities. We believe safe, secure homes are key to building strong communities.



We know that being a good landlord is about more than just buildings; it's about people.

Our goal is to offer housing support that's tailored to each tenant's needs, whenever it's needed. We want every tenant to feel safe and supported.



We don't always get it right, but we're committed to being open and responsive when things go wrong.

Your complaints and concerns help us learn and get better.

We aim to fix issues quickly and efficiently, using feedback to improve and avoid future problems.. Read our Complaints Review on page xx



**Your voice matters**

Whether through surveys, forums, or direct talks, your input is key to shaping our services.



Read more in this report about how you can help shape the services you receive. Thank you for your ongoing involvement, partnership, and trust.

## In our role as a social landlord

### Personalised Support



As a small supported housing provider, we offer our tenants a personalised service. We know our tenants well, and they know us.

We have 50 tenants for every one member of our Housing team. This enables us to listen, learn and adapt what we do to be the best landlord we can.



23% of our 502 tenants received extra support from our learning disability services.



We successfully helped 21 tenants move on to independent living, allowing us to offer supported housing to others in need.

### Southdown as a 'Force for Good'



One of Southdown's core values is to act as a 'Force for Good', which guides our lobbying activities locally and nationally on issues important to people who use our services including our tenants.



Over the past year, we have continued to advocate for long-term funding to develop new supported housing in Sussex and for fair funding to ensure Southdown and other care providers can pay care workers fairly.



Jim Aspdin, Southdown's Director of Housing and Assets, has chaired the East Sussex Housing Partnership's Net Zero subgroup, working to tackle fuel poverty and climate change.



We have created new housing and support options, in partnership with the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, for individuals who might otherwise be 'stuck' in mental health hospitals.

## Going the Extra Mile



One of our Housing Officers, Clive (*pictured*), received a deeply touching card from the family of a tenant who had sadly passed away.

Clive had visited the tenant in hospital, where he was receiving end-of-life care. The tenant who had lost contact with his family agreed to Clive's offer to locate them to see him in hospital. Clive successfully reunited the tenant with his family, allowing them to say their goodbyes before he passed.

The family's heartfelt card expressed profound gratitude for Clive's kindness and effort in making this reunion possible.

## Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)



Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) have been introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing in England to measure how well landlords are doing in providing good quality homes and services.



By looking at TSMs, tenants can compare landlords and question them about their performance. All social landlords must survey their tenants with the same questions and share the same performance data.



We will publish our comparisons with other providers on our website once this data is available.

## Safe and Secure Homes



Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our tenants is our top priority. We take great pride in maintaining the highest safety standards for all our properties.



In 2023-24: We reported 99.8% compliance with the Decent Homes Standard, the social housing benchmark for what tenants should expect from their home, making sure it is safe, warm, and decent.



We reported 100% compliance in our Tenant Satisfaction Measures Report for Gas Safety, Fire Safety, Asbestos Management, Legionella Safety and Lift Safety.



More information is available on our website at: [www.southdown.org/how-wehelp/housing/safeandsecurehomes/](http://www.southdown.org/how-wehelp/housing/safeandsecurehomes/)



To get feedback on our performance as a landlord, we sent a survey to our tenants during the summer of 2023. Thank you to everyone who participated. Your feedback is crucial for us to keep improving our services and remain a first-class provider of supported housing.



# Results



**79%**

Satisfied with the overall service we provide you.

## Keeping properties in good repair



**76.1%**

Satisfied with the overall repair service we provide you.



**75.6%**

Satisfied with the time taken to complete your repair.



**81.5%**

Satisfied that your home is well maintained.

**0.2%**

Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard.

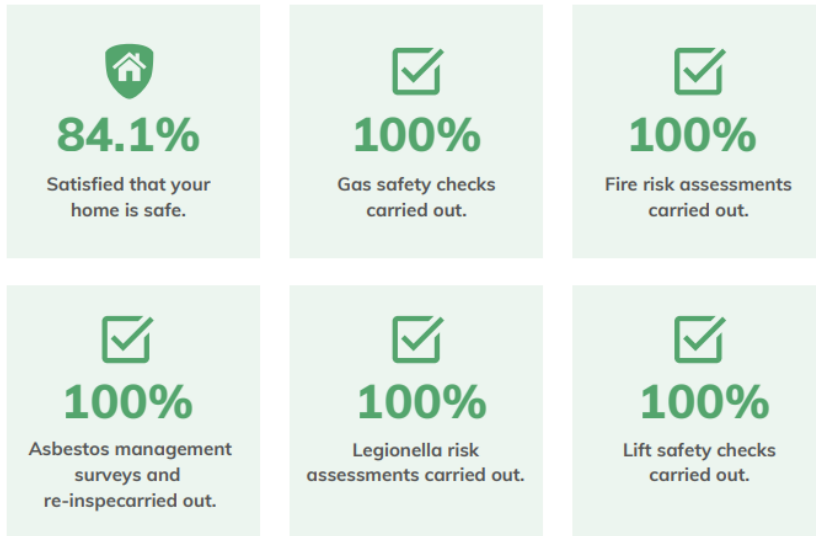
**93.2%**

Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale.

**93.6%**

Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale.

### Maintaining building safety



### Respectful and helpful engagement







### Responsible neighbourhood management



A copy of our Tenant Satisfaction Measures Report for 2023-2024 is available to view or download from our website at: [www.southdown.org/how-we-help/housing/safeandsecurehomes/](http://www.southdown.org/how-we-help/housing/safeandsecurehomes/)

## Complaints Review

 <p>The logo for Southdown, featuring the word "Southdown" in a black, handwritten-style font. The word is underlined with a thick green horizontal bar.</p>	<p>Southdown provided services to over 11,000 people during 2023-24.</p>
 <p>A photograph of two people standing and talking. On the left is a man with long dreadlocks, wearing a blue sweater and jeans. On the right is a woman with red hair, wearing a grey coat and a red scarf. They appear to be in a conversation.</p>	<p>While providing quality service is our main priority, we know that we don't always get it right.</p>
 <p>An icon of a spiral-bound notebook with the word "Report" written in a large, black, sans-serif font on the top page. Below the title are several horizontal lines representing text.</p>	<p>As a care and support provider and a Registered Provider of Social Housing for tenants and shared owners, our complaints review covers all complaints received by Southdown from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.</p>
 <p>A photograph of a young Black woman with a colorful beanie, wearing a blue jacket over a yellow shirt. She is smiling and holding a white document or piece of paper in front of her.</p>	<p><b>Complaints in 2023-24</b> A total of 21 complaints were received across all our operations, with four raised to Stage 2.</p> <p>There were three complaints relating to our housing operations, one of which was raised to Stage 2.</p> <p>Overall, there was an increase in complaints (two more than in 2022-23), but a 2% reduction in those that were raised to Stage 2.</p>



Due to the low number of complaints about our housing services, it was hard to identify any overall trends. A key takeaway from the complaints we received was the need for clearer communication about the service levels clients and tenants can expect, as well as ensuring consultation during any service changes.



In the coming year, we will improve our complaints handling to ensure we fully learn from complaints and make necessary service improvements. We will also include client and tenant representatives in our annual complaints review.



You can read the full Complaints Review on our website, at: [www.southdown.org/how-we-help/housing/safeandsecurehomes/](http://www.southdown.org/how-we-help/housing/safeandsecurehomes/)



Each year, we conduct a self-assessment based on the Housing Ombudsman's updated complaints handling code. This self-assessment shows how we comply with the code and outlines our actions to improve our complaint handling, learning from complaints, and sharing this information with tenants and other stakeholders.



You can read our latest self-assessment on our website, at: [www.southdown.org/how-we-help/housing/safeandsecurehomes/](http://www.southdown.org/how-we-help/housing/safeandsecurehomes/)

## Tenant Involvement



Client and tenant voice is important to us and is one of our four core Business Strategy priorities.



To talk about ongoing involvement and co-production initiatives, we held two interactive workshops. These sessions brought together Southdown colleagues, clients, and tenants to discuss best practices and identify areas for improvement.



One key outcome of the workshops was the decision to recruit a dedicated Client and Tenant Involvement Lead; a role designed to ensure these voices continue to shape our work.

Rebecca Sharma (*pictured*) took on the role in April 2024 and has since been working closely with our service teams to develop involvement opportunities.



In the coming year, we plan to involve tenants in the following:

- Reviewing complaints received and the related service improvement plans
- Co-creating an adaptations policy and a Code of Conduct for housing staff and contractors
- Conducting a shared 'together with tenants' client commitment self-assessment.



We'll be in touch nearer the time, but please feel free to get in touch with Rebecca if you would like to get involved or have suggestions of your own about how you can help us shape our services to you.



To contact Rebecca, you can:

Email: [CT@southdown.org](mailto:CT@southdown.org) or call 07458 146991

See last page for other ways of providing feedback



"Listening to our clients and tenants is essential. Their experiences and ideas help us create services that truly meet their needs. By involving the people we support, we can make sure our work focuses on what really matters."

Rebecca Sharma  
Client and Tenant Involvement Lead

## Sustainability



We are committed to minimizing our environmental impact and ensuring that all our practices and developments are sustainable in the long term.



Out of our 226 properties that need an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) energy ratings, 150 (66.4%) are rated C or above.

In the past year, five properties improved from a D to a C rating.

A good EPC rating helps keep energy bills lower.



In Worthing, we installed cutting-edge solar panel technology in our Southdown Steps accommodation and housing support service for people who have been homeless or living in temporary or supported accommodation.

## National Recognition



In 2023 we were recognised by the national Affordable Housing Awards as the Best Supported Housing Landlord. We were also 'highly commended' in the coveted Landlord of the Year award category which we were also shortlisted for.





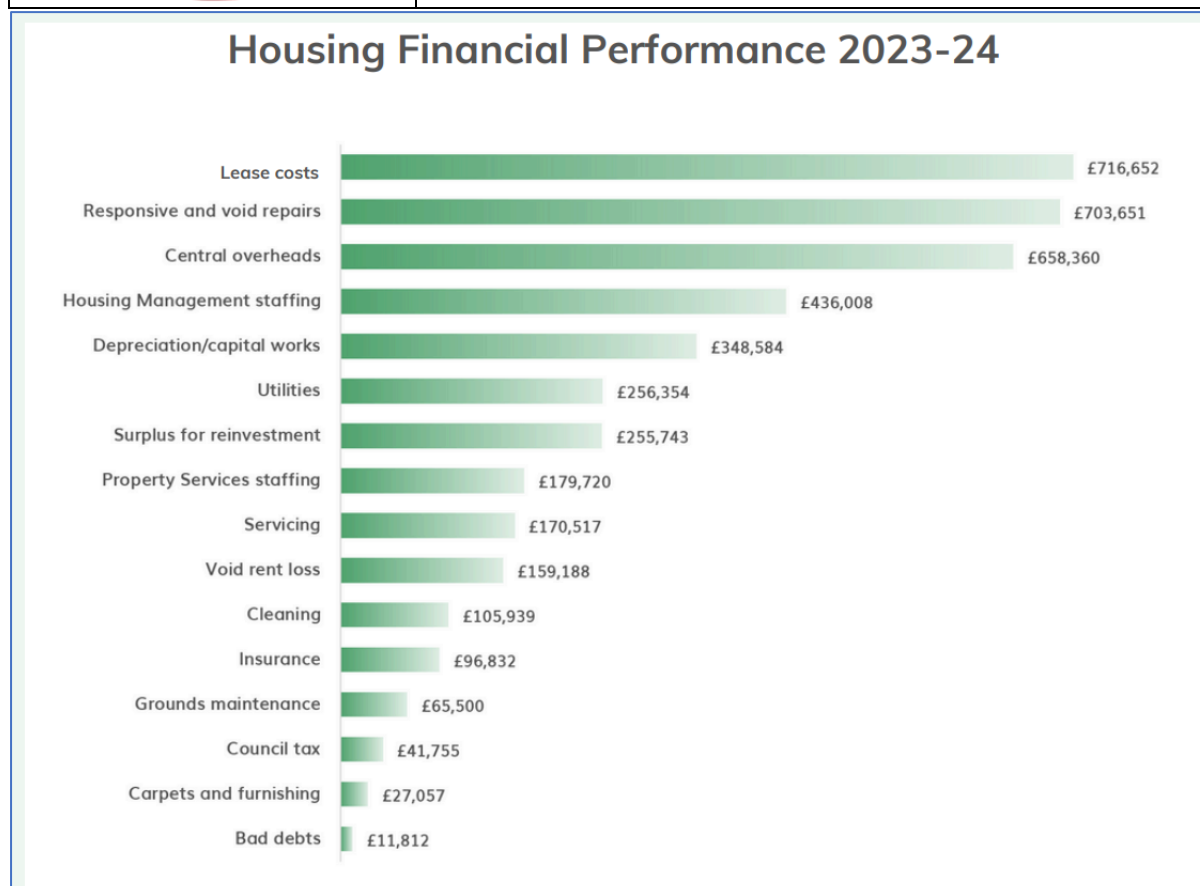
"Being recognised for our personalised approach and focus on partnership working to meet our tenants' needs is fantastic recognition of the hard work of our housing management, property services and client services' teams."

Jim Aspdin, Director of Housing and Assets



# Financial Performance and Reinvestment

	<p>Financial performance over the 2023-24 year was poorer than we budgeted for.</p> <p>This was mainly due to the impact of high utility costs, unbudgeted major works identified, properties being empty for a long time while work was carried out and difficulty in identifying suitable contractors.</p>
	<p>Costs for fire safety work remained high as we continued to resolve issues, particularly at a block taken on from another Housing Association.</p>



**We want to hear from you. Whether you would like to report a repair, make a complaint or provide feedback, please get in touch.**

### **Reporting a repair**

Contact our Property Services Team

**Call:** 01273 898 744

This number is available at any time of the day or night, during the week as well as weekends.

**You can also email us at:**

[property.services@southdown.org](mailto:property.services@southdown.org)

### **Feedback and general enquiries**

**Call:** 01273 405 800

**Email:** [housing@southdown.org](mailto:housing@southdown.org)

**Write to us:**

Southdown, 2 Bell Lane, Lewes,  
East Sussex, BN7 1JU

### **Tenant satisfaction surveys**

We send out tenant satisfaction surveys for every property services job as well as carry out random inspection visits to spot check the quality of work. Please take time to complete and return the surveys as they help us to ensure our contractors are doing a good job.



Scan for website



@SouthdownSussex

[www.southdown.org](http://www.southdown.org)