

Skyline

Summer 2024

for tenants of South Kesteven



**Safety first
for new
contractor**

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Warm welcome from new team

We're excited to have this opportunity to introduce ourselves as the new team in place to lead SKDC's Housing service on behalf of all our tenants.

I'm Alison Hall-Wright, your new Director of Housing, and I am delighted to be heading up a Housing service that meets the needs of all our tenants and is fit for the 21st Century.

Cllr Virginia Moran is the new Cabinet Member for Housing. She was previously Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee and, like me, is committed to continuing improvement in SKDC's housing provision.

One of our main action points will be to focus on getting repairs to your home done on time, in a way that matches our ambition to carry out the right repairs at the right time.

To keep track of this, I'm running a performance dashboard to show where we've improved the service - and any areas where we need to take action.

I'm passionate about getting things right and, working with Cllr Moran, we pledge to build on a very positive start.

Our Housing team is busy year-round with all kinds of work, from installing window locks to replacing kitchens and bathrooms. New staff are in place

to provide this important service and we have signed key contracts with a number of suppliers to get the work done.

We also have a new provider to keep your heating and electrics inspected and safe. Aaron Services have been appointed so please welcome them into your home for essential checks when they call (page 13).

Feedback is important to both of us; you can read about our tenant census below, and about other ways to contact us on the following pages. There is also a system for complaints for anyone who feels our service may have fallen short in some way.

We love to hear the views of those who use the Housing service, whether you are long-

standing tenants of many years or are among those we support by providing accommodation if you have become homeless.

We both know what great tenants we have across the 365 square miles of South Kesteven, and we're ready to help celebrate that! Turn to page 4 to find out more about our Good Neighbours Scheme, as well as a Gardening Competition (page 5) for those who have green fingers, or a little space for a window box.

Finally, I'd also like to celebrate the great strides made since last October, when our progress was noted by the Housing Regulator which removed a Regulatory Notice issued in February 2021.

We both look forward to working with you.



Alison Hall-Wright
Director of Housing

Cllr Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Complete your tenant census

It is vital that the Council holds updated and accurate information on all tenants, to ensure that we are delivering a service that meets the need of everyone.

To do this, we are preparing

a Tenant Census to collect and update the relevant information on our records.

If you are contacted and asked to provide this information, please take the time to respond as it helps us to ensure that the service

we provide meets your need. The information you share will be treated with confidence.

If you have any questions or concerns please speak to a Housing Officer or contact the Housing Team.

Specialist role provides support for victims of domestic abuse

South Kesteven District Council is offering vital support for victims of domestic abuse.

Operating out of the Housing Options Team, a Domestic Abuse Support Officer can help find alternative accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse, as well as providing specialist and confidential support to help keep people safe.

The service can also help those who may face barriers to accessing the support they need.

Cllr Rhea Rayside, Cabinet Member for Communities and People, said: "A thriving South Kesteven is one where all residents have opportunities to lead healthy and fulfilling lives in safe communities, both inside and outside their homes.

"The Council works in partnership with external agencies to help identify and address abuse, and to ensure all victims and survivors have

access to the support they need."


Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, and anyone can be an abuser. It can include one-off or a pattern of physical, emotional, financial and sexual abuse in couple relationships or between family members.

The Council's Domestic Abuse Support Officer works with agencies such as the Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Support Service (LDASS) to identify where support may be required such as additional security measures in the home or refuge for those fleeing abuse.

LDASS is commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council, with support from the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner and NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board, to deliver prevention, protection and recovery support for those suffering from domestic abuse.

A spokesperson for the service said: "Asking for help isn't easy but if you think you, or someone you know, is in an abusive relationship, getting in touch with your local support service can be an important first step.

"LDASS provides specialist support and advice for all families and individuals experiencing domestic abuse. Partnership working is a key part of that and the Domestic Abuse Support Officer role at SKDC helps us to deliver this consistent support for residents across Lincolnshire."

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, or you are worried that someone you know is, you can confidentially contact the Council's Domestic Abuse Support Officer by calling  **01476 40 60 80** in confidence.

Information about the service provided by LDASS is available online at:

 <https://ldass.org.uk/>



You do not have to wait for an emergency situation to find help. If you are being subjected to domestic abuse, it's important to tell someone - and remember, you're not alone.

Contact the Council's Domestic Abuse Support Officer by calling  **01476 40 60 80**.

Find information about the Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Support Service (LDASS) online at  <https://ldass.org.uk/> or by calling  **01522 510041**.

Contact the freephone, 24-hour Domestic Abuse helpline on  **0808 2000 247**.

In an emergency, call the Police (999).

Celebrating our good neighbours

Do you know a tenant of South Kesteven District Council who regularly helps others in their community and makes a difference? If you do, we want to hear from you.

Whether they are always on hand when needed, provide support to others, or modestly bring joy to their community, you can nominate them for our Good Neighbour Awards.

Cllr Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing, said:

“Good neighbours make a huge contribution to many people’s lives across South Kesteven.

They help lots of people with their

day-to-day lives, often selflessly without thinking of themselves.

“Good neighbours can be found in every community — you may even have a few of them in your local area.”

The Council wants to highlight the fantastic contributions made by tenants of all ages, right across the District, who have improved the lives of others and gone that extra mile.

If someone comes to mind that you want to nominate, please email your choice to:

HousingFB@southkesteven.gov.uk or write to **Council Offices,**

The Picture House, St Catherine’s Road, Grantham, NG31 6TT.

Make sure you mention your name and contact details, as well as the name and contact details of your nomination.

Don’t forget to include why you are nominating them.

Those nominated will receive a personalised certificate acknowledging their achievement and a mention in the next issue.

The closing date is 30th September 2024.



Don’t overlook fire safety guidance

Residents in South Kesteven are being reminded of the importance of fire safety in the home.

A new Fire Safety booklet shares guidance on what to do in the event of a fire and how to prevent a fire.

The booklet will be available on the Council’s website, as well as a printed version posted to those living in sheltered housing and blocks of flats.

Cllr Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing, said: “The safety of tenants is our number one priority which is why we have put together this comprehensive safety guidance to prevent and protect against fires in the home.

“It is really important that all tenants read and follow the advice so that they know what to do in the event of a fire.”

The booklet also focuses on how to prevent fires in the home. Some of the important things to remember include:

- You should test your home smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, using the test button on each alarm, every month, to make sure it works.
- Never store or leave items in the communal areas. These could cause obstructions and trip hazards, and be a fire hazard if they are combustible.
- Close all doors when not in use – this prevents a fire from spreading.
- Smoking is the most common cause of fire fatalities. Smoking is prohibited in all communal areas by law. In other areas, make sure that you fully extinguish your cigarette safely.

“We hope it never happens, but if it does, smoke alarms can give you valuable time to safely evacuate” said Cllr Moran.

“Please regularly test your alarm to make sure it is working and report any problems. If your home does not have a smoke alarm, please report this immediately.”

How does your garden grow?

It's time once again to celebrate our tenants' gardening skills - with prizes on offer for the best of those entered in our competition.

To enter all you need to do is send in five photographs of your garden looking its best – and don't forget to include your name and address. We will then draw up a shortlist of finalists from which the

winners will be chosen.

The competition is open to all tenants, whether you live in a house, bungalow, flat or sheltered housing and you can enter as an individual garden, or as part of a communal project.

The prizes will be vouchers that can be spent at a variety of shops.

Entries can be sent by email to: HousingFB@southkesteven.gov.uk or by post to: **Housing Team, Council Offices, The Picture House, St Catherine's Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 6TT.**

The closing date is 30th September 2024.



Court backs residents in anti-social behaviour case

Residents can be reassured that SKDC will do all it can to ensure safer neighbourhoods, and prevent tenants causing harm and distress in their local community.

Tenancy officers, along with Neighbourhood Officers and Lincolnshire Police, worked hard over several months to gain a Closure Order on a property at the Riverside complex in Grantham - a mixture of SKDC sheltered and general needs properties.

It came after months of anti-social behaviour and the Order restricts who can access the property in the future. This means that the tenant and other named individuals cannot return without facing the possibility of arrest.

Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Virginia Moran, said: "This was such a relief for residents.

"We are not prepared to stand by and allow individuals to cause ongoing harm or distress to the local community. We all hope that this closure order can reassure

residents that their safety remains a priority for us and sends a message that we will act on all such instances of unacceptable behaviour.

"As a responsible landlord, SKDC has a duty to support all our tenants to deal with any kind of problem that can arise.

"Anyone should be confident and comfortable reporting issues to the Council or the Police, knowing that we will take appropriate action to achieve results.

"I would urge residents to help us in this by always reporting any incidents so we can investigate, identify offenders and ensure they face the consequences of their actions.

"Our Tenancy Services team and Neighbourhood Officers worked hard on this case for almost three years, conducting patrols and gathering evidence and then standing up in court to present the evidence to the magistrates.

"They deserve a good deal of credit for making our community feel so much safer."



This was such a relief for residents. We are not prepared to stand by and allow individuals to cause ongoing harm or distress to the local community.

Cllr Virginia Moran,
Cabinet Member for Housing

The Full Closure Order was granted at Boston Magistrates Court under the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Any occupiers made homeless by a closure order can make a homelessness application and their case would then be assessed under Section 188 of the Homelessness Reduction Act.



Solar panel count hits 125 in energy upgrade boost

Solar panels to increase energy efficiency for Council tenants across South Kesteven have been installed at 125 homes.

They are part of a £7.26 million energy efficiency upgrade scheme, which includes money from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

The upgrades will result in lower energy bills and warmer, more comfortable homes at zero cost to tenants.

SKDC Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Virginia Moran, said: "With more to come in 2024/25, we have the opportunity to revisit and assess the impact the first installations have made.

"Each panel produces 410w of energy in optimum conditions. The tenants benefit directly from electricity produced, with excess going into the National Grid.

"Residents at Ellyslande, in Great Ponton, are very happy with these installations and their reduced electricity bills – one tenant has

told us that a washing machine cycle recently cost just 2p."

The Council is working with E.ON, who are managing the scheme on its behalf through contractor partner Advanced ECO, which carries out home assessments and final installations.

Other cost-saving measures include loft and cavity wall insulation, and heat pumps.

The work, also supported with money from the Council's Housing budget, will support SKDC's ambition to be net-zero carbon as soon as viable before 2050.

Upgrades available through the scheme could offer a range of benefits, including:

- Lower energy bills
- Improved energy efficiency
- Improved living environment
- Noise reduction for a quieter home
- Environmental through use of a renewable energy source

It is estimated that the energy efficiency measures could save tenants up to £400 a year on energy bills.

Eligible tenants have been contacted to arrange home assessments and to explore the options available to them.

For more information about programme go to:

www.southkesteven.gov.uk/climateneews





Allocations system offers residents more choice

A system introduced by South Kesteven District Council in October 2023 gives applicants more choice and control over the housing allocations process.

The Council's SK Home Choice scheme allows eligible applicants to register bids for suitable properties online and will help reduce the number of empty properties.

More than 375 properties have been advertised and allocated on the system since it launched.

Cllr Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "We're delighted that SK Home Choice scheme has helped us to provide residents in the greatest need with as much choice and support as possible.

"Applicants are able to register their interest on specific properties whilst they are being advertised. This level of detail was not available to them under the old system, so it is a much more transparent and fair way of allocating available properties."

The previous housing register system placed applicants into a band depending on their housing need. Applicants were then matched with suitable properties when they became available and only contacted at the point an offer was made.

The new system allows applicants to play an active and engaged role in the allocations process, giving them the chance to bid for a property that suits them.

They can access their account online, track their existing bids, see where they are placed on property shortlists and be notified if and when an offer is made.

It gives applicants a realistic view of the likelihood of having a successful bid allowing them to make informed choices of the properties they would consider.

The new system was launched in conjunction with a refreshed Allocations Policy which simplified the previous process.

In the policy, applicants are placed into four bands, which reflect their housing need.

Applicants can apply online:
www.skhomechoice.org.uk

Chance to challenge

One of the central themes around the regulation of social housing is ensuring tenants have the opportunity to shape and challenge the services their landlord provides.

If you would like to be involved in looking at how SKDC delivers its services to tenants, contact our Community Engagement Officer at HousingFB@southkesteven.gov.uk or go to

the Tenant Involvement page on the SKDC website.

There is a range of ways to get involved with meetings held both online and in-person.

We also plan to set up a new tenants' panel to help carry out reviews, consultations and projects.



The Council's Cost Of Living officers, Funmi Reilly and Stella Darker, provide help and support for those who need it most.

Dedicated team continues to offer Cost of Living support

To ensure that residents have access to all the information they need, SKDC has dedicated staff assigned to offer a wide range of help and support available that could benefit them, a relative, friend or neighbour.

One of their busiest roles is to assist with checking people are getting all the benefits they are entitled to.

They can help residents claim extra benefits to help increase their income, get discounts or find quick, simple ways to reduce outgoings.

Funmi Reilly and Stella Darker also assisted in the distribution of warm packs during the winter months.

Now, with an extension of the Household Support Fund, they are due to start distributing this in the District in the coming months.

This is a scheme where Lincolnshire County Council works with SKDC to decide how the additional funding is most effectively targeted to

residents most in need, in line with Government guidance. Those eligible must apply for this support.

A community food hub has opened its second base in the District, using funding from the UK Shared Prosperity fund, which is administered by South Kesteven District Council.

The Bread and Butter Thing offers members a choice of weekly groceries at reduced prices, and is now operating in Market Deeping, in an expansion of its service from the first South Kesteven hub, which opened in Stamford last year.

Cllr Rhea Rayside, Cabinet Member for People and Communities, said: "The Council is proud to support this growing initiative to help people meet the rising cost of living in South Kesteven, giving help to those who need it the most.

"What makes it more remarkable is that it sources supplies from food that would normally go to waste, from supermarkets, factories and farms."

Access to additional support is also available right across the District through third-party organisations.

To strengthen this support, the Council's Cost of Living Team can visit local venues as an outreach service. Community groups are encouraged to get in touch so that support from the Council and partner organisations is as far-reaching as possible.

Cost of Living Coordinator Funmi Reilly said: "We know there is a network of venues across the towns and villages of our District where local people without the means or ability to use public transport or their own vehicles, will be able to more easily access our knowledge and services."

Anyone hosting an event where they would like to offer a Cost of Living helpdesk should contact the team by email: CostOfLivingSupport@southkesteven.gov.uk



What do you think about Skyline?

The Council is currently undertaking a small consultation on its tenant magazine, Skyline.

This will help to tailor content to the needs and expectations of all tenants.

Cllr Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "It is really important that we hear from the people who read and engage with Skyline.

"We want to make sure we are sending you information and updates that you want to read, and that are important to you."

A survey is open for all tenants to share their views online at:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/skyline24

A paper copy of the survey is also available by contacting the Housing Team via email on HousingFB@southkesteven.gov.uk, or by telephone **01476 406349**.

You can also scan the QR code below.



Complaints point way to service improvement



Your feedback, whether positive or negative, is important to us as it tells us what is going well, what needs to be improved and what else you would like to see.

Like all social landlords, SKDC has a two-stage process for dealing with complaints, which is set out in its Housing Customer Services Policy.

Most complaints are resolved internally but sometimes they need to be escalated to the Regulator of Social Housing and Housing Ombudsman.

The two organisations work closely to respond to complaints made to them by tenants. A new Code of Complaint Handling guide sets out the process by which complaints should be dealt with.

In the guide, the Housing Ombudsman now defines a complaint as "any expression of dissatisfaction" on how your landlord has done something.

This includes work carried out on their behalf by contractors.

Another change is that a complaint must be acknowledged within five working days and a response provided within ten days from the date of the acknowledgement.

Landlords like SKDC will also have to provide a report to the Housing Ombudsman to show how they have performed in dealing with complaints over the past year.

Visit www.southkesteven.gov.uk/feedback to find out more.

Let us know how we're doing

As a major landlord SKDC is overseen by the Regulator of Social Housing, set up by the Government to implement a consistent standard across the social housing sector.

All social landlords are required to meet regulatory standards in four areas and show how they meet them. They are:

- Safety and Quality – covering home repairs and health and safety
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability – ensuring tenants are informed about services provided and have the opportunity to shape them, including how to address complaints
- Neighbourhood and Community – looking at estates/neighbourhoods and addressing anti-social behaviour
- Tenancy – how properties are

allocated and supporting tenants to keep their homes

Part of the regulatory role is a requirement to survey tenant satisfaction with key services measuring 12 performance standards. The results are submitted to the Regulator.

When you receive a survey, please take the time to complete it as the feedback helps us understand how we can improve the services we provide and better meet the needs of the tenants we work with.

The Regulator inspects each landlord on how they meet the required standards and has the authority to take actions against any social housing landlord who fails to do so.

More information about the Regulator of Social Housing and the role they play in supporting tenants is available at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing



Exploring new avenues to increase social housing stock

Work is progressing at pace on four one-bedroom apartments in Stamford that will add to South Kesteven District Council's housing stock.

There is a shortage of affordable social housing, which means suitable properties for people in need on SKDC's Housing Register can be hard to come by.

There is currently a significant number of people on the register with a single bedroom requirement who want to live in Stamford, where there are few social housing options.

Planning permission for the flats on Elizabeth Road, Stamford was granted in March 2022. The development comprises four one-bedroom, two-person apartments with landscaping and parking spaces and are due to be completed in August 2024.

Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Virginia Moran, said: "We are pleased to be providing more homes to meet the demand of specific groups of applicants on our housing register.

"Our greatest need at present is one and two-bedroom properties, particularly those which are fully adapted. Whilst this is a relatively small development, we will be adapting two of the flats for those who have a health condition or impairment."

New-builds are just one way that SKDC provides new housing – with a new fund established in September allowing the Council to purchase ready-built new affordable homes via developers in favour of going through what can be an expensive and time-consuming building process.

The £1m fund is paving the way for the Council to act quickly when opportunities to purchase affordable housing arise.

Individual houses have been acquired in Grantham, Market Deeping and Stamford.

This initiative offers a ready-made solution instead of building from scratch to help the pipeline of new houses in the District.

Cllr Moran added: "We have experienced staff to negotiate with developers of house building already under way to ensure we get the best value for council tax payers, while securing the range of property required. Decisions to purchase property are dependent on a business case and considered on a site-by-site basis.

"This is happening alongside further measures including bringing more void council properties back into use more quickly.

"We now have a housing growth

strategy with a range of options available to add – where we can – to our 5,865-strong social housing stock."

The move supports a Corporate Plan mission to ensure that as many residents as possible can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.

The Council has pledged to ensure its housing stock is high quality and remains suitable for tenants now and into the future.

Creating a pipeline of new-build housing through a hybrid approach of construction and acquisition maximises all available funding streams.

The Council's new build housing schedule also includes:

- 20 homes at Swinegate, Grantham (demolition complete and ground works under way)

Three further schemes are at the planning stage:

- 14 homes planned for Wellington Way, Market Deeping, starting 2024-5
- 19 homes at Larch Close, Grantham (work due to start in September)
- 6 homes at Gorse Rise, Grantham, commencing 2025, plans being drawn up.



Refurbished homes on the Earlesfield Estate in Grantham



Estate improvement programme on track for 2025 completion

Refurbished and revitalised homes on Grantham’s Earlesfield Estate are being handed back to tenants as good as new, as work progresses on a £3.2m improvement project.

More than 40 homes are complete and a new contract with United Living will monitor progress and ensure the project to complete the remaining properties is within budget and by March 2025.

The Council has a clear mission in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 “to ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.”

The timely delivery of improvements to its social housing stock, which includes those on the Earlesfield Estate in Grantham, is a key element of this.

Cabinet Member for Housing,

Cllr Virginia Moran, said: “A new year-long contract was signed to complete the project because the previous scope of work no longer met our requirements.

“Once we went in to look at the original work related to removing asbestos it became apparent this was the perfect opportunity to refit and refurbish whole properties.

“Our tenants are getting the equivalent of brand new houses. These properties are effectively having new kitchens and bathrooms fitted and the whole house renovated, refurbished and modernised in a worthwhile project.”

The work would have been challenging to complete with the tenants staying at home, which is why in most cases they have been asked to be move out of their home to allow for works to be completed safely. In some

cases the work is being left until properties become empty.

Some tenants have even moved to new homes better suited to their needs, releasing their original property for a new rental.

Cllr Lee Steptoe, Chairman of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, said: “After initial teething problems I am happy to say this whole process has been amazing.

“I’ve had only one tenant issue raised with me, which was resolved very quickly. There has been some fantastic progress made on this estate.”

Additional resources are being brought in to increase the turnaround of completed properties.

Monthly meetings and a revised set of targets have been scheduled with United Living and the Council to monitor the on-site work and ensure the project is delivered within the agreed timescale.

ASB policy in place to support communities

To help keep our tenants and communities safe, a number of housing policies are in place to offer guidance and provide support where it's needed.

Even at its lowest level anti-social behaviour (ASB) can have a serious impact on residents and communities, which is why the Council has a specific policy for dealing with it. It can affect people's quality of life as well as the way they feel about their own safety and security.

The objectives are to promote the wellbeing, safety and health of our communities, support vulnerable people and promote respect.

ASB can cover anything from parking disputes to high hedges, to actions that cause harassment, alarm or distress.

What is considered anti-social by one person can be acceptable to another. Such a wide range of behaviour means that responsibility for dealing

with ASB is shared by a number of organisations, in particular the police, councils and social landlords.

Details and guidance on ASB can be found online at <https://tinyurl.com/SKDC-ASB>

The Council will support anyone who makes a complaint by:

- Dealing with their complaint promptly, fairly and impartially
- Recording their concerns
- Allocating an officer specifically to deal with their complaint
- Respecting their confidentiality
- Keeping them informed throughout the process
- Advising them when a case is closed, and of the outcome

You can get in touch confidentially via: www.southkesteven.gov.uk/report-it

Safety measures for mobility scooters

The Council aims to treat everyone fairly and consistently, which is why it has introduced a policy regarding mobility scooters used by our tenants.

We have a duty to ensure they are being used legally and safely, with full responsibility being taken by the owner/user.

In residential buildings, mobility scooters can catch fire and pose a safety risk to tenants, leaseholders, employees, firefighters, and others, when stored in communal areas and fire escape routes.

The Council's Mobility Scooter Registration Scheme sets out how we consider requests from tenants to store their mobility scooters, plus the factors considered when allowing or refusing storage permission.

If a tenant is considering obtaining a mobility scooter, they must seek permission in writing from the Council first, to agree storage of the scooter. Spaces are allocated when they become available, and applications are considered in date order of request.

All the details are online at <https://tinyurl.com/SKDCscooter>

All Housing policies are online at www.southkesteven.gov.uk/policies



New faces to help with all your heating and gas issues

A new company is now working to provide gas safety checks, heating repairs and maintenance for Council tenants.

Aaron Services has taken on the work in an initial three-year contract.

They are a market-leading heating and hot water specialist, serving households across the East of England and the Midlands.

Their remit includes gas services and repairs, general maintenance, heating installation, annual gas servicing and safety inspections.

Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Virginia Moran, said: “South Kesteven District Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan to ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.

“Safety is paramount and alongside this, considerable work had been carried out to ensure that under the new contract there

would be marked improvements to the Council’s housing tenants.”

The new contract means you will see new faces entering your property to carry out gas safety checks and heating repairs and maintenance.

The process for booking one of these repairs has not changed.

If you are a council tenant and something is broken or not working properly in your home, you can request a repair online at www.southkesteven.gov.uk

For repairs to all gas boilers and fires supplied by SKDC, please call **01476 40 60 80** during normal working hours and select the ‘repairs’ option, or out of hours call **01476 59 00 44**.

If you smell gas inside or outside your home you should immediately call the National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999** any time, day or night.

There are a number of reasons why a central heating or hot water system might not be working.

Whilst all repair work should be carried out by a qualified operative, Aaron Services has put together a helpful digital checklist to help you solve some issues without needing to schedule an engineer visit.

The guide runs you through easy to answer questions such as whether your pre-payment meter is topped up, whether the fuses have been tripped or if your boiler pressure is low.

Easy to follow videos will talk you through how to solve the issue.

Cllr Moran said: “All repairs must be carried out by a professional but the handy online guide is a quick, easy and safe way to fix an issue yourself, if you can.”

The Resident Hub is available online at www.sureservegroup.co.uk/aaron-services/residents/resident-information/

AaronServices 
Part of the Sureserve Group

Home contents insurance brings peace of mind



Just imagine if you experienced a fire, a break in or a flood that caused significant accidental damage to the contents in your home and you were not insured.

What would it cost to replace your most prized possessions if the unthinkable happened? Could you afford to replace them?

All new Council tenants are urged to take out contents insurance when they move in, but SKDC is now reminding tenants to ensure they have adequate cover in place for all of their possessions.

With the right home contents insurance you might even be able to replace your damaged or stolen goods with brand new items, with no excess to pay.

Insurance can cover theft, water damage, fire, flood and other household risks such as damage

to internal decoration, and even accidental damage to fixed glass in doors and windows for which you are responsible for as part of your tenancy agreement.

No matter how careful you are, there is always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen so home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind.

Personal possessions, wheelchairs and mobility scooters and hearing aids can also be insured for an additional premium – and many policies offer monthly payment terms.

Before you take out a policy you need to work out how much cover you need, based on the cost of replacing all your possessions. Many people under-insure, so make sure you include everything,

even down to the contents of your garage or shed.

You may need several quotes before choosing a policy.

You must give your insurer as much information as you can about anything that might affect their decision to insure you, or how much to charge you. You must also tell them about any changes in your circumstances.

It is important to protect your belongings and you should look for providers regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Most providers can be found on comparison websites.

Contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline if you need more help deciding what kind of cover you need or what level of insurance you think you should be buying: 0808 223 1133.



The new decking in place in Stamford's Tenter Court

Outside space brought into use

Improvements have been made to a community space at Tenter Court in Stamford with work carried out by South Kesteven District Council.

The new non-slip decking will enable residents to enjoy the space outside the community room at the sheltered housing scheme.

Cllr Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "The benefits of the great outdoors cannot be overestimated and I am delighted tenants will be able to socialise and enjoy the new veranda."

Overlooking the River Welland, the veranda has created a welcoming space for residents to enjoy together.

Activities on offer in your area

There are lots of free or low-cost activities that are easily accessible for all, happening within local communities, at libraries, churches, arts centres and similar locations.

From coffee mornings and craft workshops to wellbeing walks and topical talks, chatting to neighbours, looking on social media and picking up leaflets could open up lots of great things to do.

Many clubs and groups offer free or subsidised membership or entry.

It is also worth checking local notice boards or social media groups for more information about upcoming events that might be of interest.

Connect to Support Lincolnshire is an online information, advice library and community directory for adults in Lincolnshire.

It offers signposting to groups, activities and support within local communities, relating to adult care and community wellbeing.

Telephone support is on **0300 3030 8789** (Mon to Fri 2pm to 7pm) and live web chat at www.lincolnshire.connecttosupport.org to help people navigate what support is available.

**Connect
to support
Lincolnshire**



Project in place to help public safety

An 18-month Safer Streets project is under way funded by Government money and supported by SKDC.

Work to help residents includes extending the Pub Watch Scheme and providing training for staff operating the Ask for Angela initiative where people feeling threatened in a public setting can seek help from bar staff or waiters.

Establishing a Home Safe scheme, to enable anyone who feels vulnerable or under threat to get home safely, is also a priority.

Other measures include:

- Protection against drink-spiking with Drinksafe covers
- Anti-spiking bottle stoppers and test kits
- Organisation of self-defence classes
- Provision of personal alarms and torches to women and girls to support safe journeys home

The Council's Safer Streets Co-Ordinator Peter Harrison said: "I am working alongside local venues, the police, public, businesses, charities and volunteer groups, as well as statutory agencies to make a difference to safety and how safe people actually feel."

Cabinet Member for People and Communities, Cllr Rhea Rayside, said: "These initiatives help improve the night-time economy in Grantham by making the area safer."

The overall initiative is mainly to cover Grantham but further patrols in hotspot areas across South Kesteven will be conducted where necessary.

District-wide work includes gathering intelligence to disrupt county lines, child exploitation and violence against women and girls, all closely linked to the night-time economy.

Our services

South Kesteven District Council

You can contact the Council about benefits, rent or other issues.

We are open by appointment only for Council services as follows:

Grantham:

Monday to Friday: 9am to 12pm

Bourne: Monday: 9am to 5pm

Wednesday: 9am to 6pm

Friday and Saturday: 9am to 1pm

Bourne is also for library services (no appointment needed).

☎ 01476 40 60 80

Out of hours 01476 40 60 40

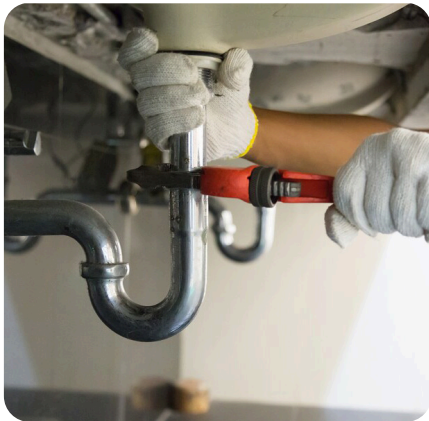
✉ customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk

Tenant Engagement

Contact Ken Linford, Community Engagement Officer

☎ 01476 40 60 80. EXT. 6349

✉ HousingFB@southkesteven.gov.uk



Emergency repairs

☎ 01476 40 60 80 / 01476 59 00 44

Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour

☎ 01476 40 60 80

🌐 www.southkesteven.gov.uk/nuisance

✉ HousingManagement@southkesteven.gov.uk

For other kinds of anti-social behaviour, such as criminal activity, you should contact the police - use **101** if it is not an emergency. (**999** if it is an emergency)

Other organisations that can help:



SKDC Customer Services

Help, advice and support

☎ 01476 40 60 80

✉ customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk

Age UK (Lincoln and South Lincolnshire)

Companionship, advice and support for older people.

☎ 01522 696 000

🌐 www.ageuk.org.uk/lincolnsouthlincolnshire/

Lincolnshire County Council

Information and advice on council services and support available in Lincolnshire.

☎ 01522 552 222

✉ customer_services@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Lincolnshire Resilience Forum

A county helpline for people who are self-isolating.

☎ 01522 782 189

✉ customer_services@lincolnshire.gov.uk

🌐 www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-support-services

Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service

A charity supporting the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals in Lincolnshire.

☎ 01205 510 888

🌐 www.lincolnshirecvs.org.uk/covid-19/

Grantham & District Poverty Concern Group

Supports vulnerable members of the community to relieve both poverty and homelessness.

Contact Chris Thomas on

☎ 07517 943 792 or via

✉ granthampovertyconcern@gmail.com

🌐 www.granthampovertyconcern.org.uk

National advice lines

Citizens Advice

☎ 03444 111 444

🌐 www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

☎ 0345 606 0265

🌐 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions

Victim Support

☎ 0808 506 1688

🌐 Victimsupport.org.uk

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline

☎ 0808 200 0247

NHS- non-urgent medical need

☎ 111

🌐 www.111.nhs.uk/

If you are online

You can find the latest information, and browse our services on our website at **www.southkesteven.gov.uk**