Sky inter 2024









Welcome

Here is the latest issue of Skyline, packed full of news and updates from South Kesteven District Council.

If you have any feedback about the magazine or any content you would like to see in future issues please get in touch.

For even faster news and updates why not follow us on social media? We're on all the popular platforms, including X and Facebook.



General enquiries

01476 40 60 80

Council offices

Grantham (head office) The Picture House, St Catherine's Road, Grantham NG31 6TT

How www.southkesteven.gov.uk



Your Tenant Update

South Kesteven District Council has a commitment in its Corporate Plan of ensuring that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.

Ultimately, everything we do in the Housing Team at South Kesteven District Council is designed to help us achieve that goal.

While we have made great progress in recent months we are not complacent and we accept there are areas where further improvements can be made.

One area in which we are always striving to do better is repairs and maintenance of our social housing.

We want to make sure properties are maintained to a good standard and both ourselves, as landlord, and you, the tenant, carry responsibility for ensuring this can happen. More information about why this is so important can be found on page 13.

In line with this we are proposing to amend our Repairs and Maintenance Policy to state:

"While there are outstanding requests to a tenant for access to the property they are living in to complete essential inspections/surveys to make sure the property is safe and well maintained, then the council will refuse to undertake non-emergency reactive repairs to that property."

By not allowing either Council staff or our contractors into your home to carry out essential checks you would be in breach of your tenancy agreement. Remember, we need to do this to protect you and your family.

We'll be asking for feedback on the proposed changes to the policy, please look out for details on how to respond.

With our pest wishes for the festive season,



Alison Hall-Wright Director of Housing and Projects

Cllr Virginia Moran Cabinet Member for Housing

Innovation helps bring additional council housing for those in need

Social housing stock to provide homes for those most in need of somewhere to live.

Innovative ways to acquire houses includes building them from scratch, buying new-builds from developers, using money generated through Right To Buy and grant funding from the Government for specific use.

Most recently completed and handed over to tenants were the four one-bedroom apartments at Elizabeth Road, Stamford, which includes accessible ground floor apartments.

Earlier this year the council purchased 36 newly-built homes for people on its housing register to help mitigate the loss of more than 40 homes a year as a result of Right to Buy.

They are part of a development off Swinstead Road, Corby Glen, and will be paid for and built in seven phases up to June 2028.



Kitchen facilities at Elizabeth Road, Stamford

They range from one-bedroom apartments to four-bedroom family homes and have been secured by the Council to make the best use of funds.

The first phase is due to be handed over to SKDC in December 2024.

In Swinegate, Grantham, the 20 new homes are progressing

start in January, with Mercer Building Solutions constructing a combination of apartments, houses and bungalows. Eleven new homes at Wellington Way, Market Deeping, and six units at Gorse Rise, Grantham, are currently in the process of applying for planning permission and work

well and due to be finished by

July next year. Lindum has been

contracted to build the one- and

two-bedroom apartments in the

Work on 19 homes at Larch

Close in Grantham is due to

town centre.

could start in spring, 2025. For the future, a total of 11 homes could be built on Kesteven Road, Stamford, and Bourne End Road, Colsterworth, where design work is

currently under way.

Section 106 Agreements made when planning permission is being discussed can also help add to almost 6,000 SKDC council homes.

The council has acquired a bungalow in Market Deeping under this process to be fully adapted with S106 Agreement receipts.



The finished homes at Elizabeth Road, Stamford.

Key steps to avoiding debt this festive season

which the cost of living prompting many families into borrowing money to pay for presents each Christmas, some will turn to credit to buy food over the festive season, making it easy to fall into pre- and post-Christmas debt.

It's important not to miss regular payments on household bills, or fail to make payments on any existing debt.

The best advice is to be proactive in order to manage Christmas finances. The key steps are:

- Plan for Christmas. Be realistic and budget accordingly. Work out how much you are going to spend on each person and stick to it. Manage expectations over what you, or Santa, can give.
- Don't forget the everyday bills - consequences can be severe if they're not paid.
- If you need more money, don't run up an overdraft without first talking to your bank or it will work out much more expensive.
- Keep things simple. If you can afford to pay outright by cash, cheque, or debit card, don't be persuaded to take out extended credit agreements unless they really do work out cheaper.
- Shop around. Try different places to find the best price. Buy what you want and not what other people say you need.

If you need advice on how to sort out a debt problem, Citizens Advice can help. Get online help from citizensadvicesouthlincs. org.uk or call 03444 111 444. You can also find out about



talking to a debt adviser via www.moneyhelper.org.uk

A debt adviser will:

- Never judge you or make you feel bad about your situation
- Always be happy to talk, however big or small your problem is
- Find ways to manage your debts even if you think you have no spare money
- Suggest ways to deal with debts that you might not know about

Sometimes, people may need specialist help if they are trapped in continuous debt

STOPLOANSHNRKS Intervention . Support . Education



with an illegal money lender. Loan sharks might employ tactics such as violence, threats or intimidation to enforce repayment.

Never use unlicensed lenders who:

- Refuse to tell the borrower how much they owe, how long they will be repaying for or the APR
- Do not give paperwork
- Add additional charges or increase the debt
- Take items such as passports, bank cards or driving licences as security
- Appear friendly at first, but resort to violent, threatening or extreme methods when payments are not met

The Stop Loan Sharks team can help. You can get help or anonymously report a loan shark by calling a 24/7 confidential hotline 0300 555 2222, text 07860 022116, visit **stoploansharks. co.uk**, e-mail **reportaloanshark@ stoploansharks.gov.uk**





External wall insulation being installed at properties across South Kesteven

Energy efficiency upgrades continue across the district

ouncil homes across South Kesteven are benefitting from cost-cutting efficiency upgrades as part of a £7.6m scheme delivered by South Kesteven District Council.

Once complete, funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 will provide energy efficiency measures for over 350 households across the District.

Alongside the grant, additional funding of over £3.8m has been met from the council's Housing Revenue Account.

It is part of the council's wider work to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change to meet its ambition to be net-zero carbon as soon as viable before 2050.

Cllr Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "I am delighted that we've made such positive progress with our

ouncil homes across South decarbonisation programme.

"As well as supporting us in our ambition to tackle climate change, these measures will also help tenants to reduce their energy usage, provide improved living environments and to lower energy bills.

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

Over 130 properties have already received solar PV panels, with other homes benefitting from cavity wall extraction and re-fill, loft insulation and ventilation measures.

45 air source heat pump systems have been installed across council stock. They provide a renewable energy system that is more environmentally friendly and could help tenants to reduce their energy bills.

The next phase of the project is now underway with Turnor Crescent in Grantham benefitting from the installation of external wall installation.

All upgrades available through the scheme offer a range of benefits, including:

- Lowering energy bills
- Improving energy efficiency
- Providing an improved living environment
- Reducing noise for a quieter home
- Protecting the environment with a renewable energy source

Eligible tenants have been contacted to arrange a home assessment and explore the measures available to them.

For more information about programme, please visit www. southkesteven.gov.uk/ climatenews



How we can work together to support rough sleepers

s winter draws closer, supporting those who have no access to accommodation becomes an even more vital role for South Kesteven District Council.

The council provides services to those who are rough sleeping and offers help and advice to help them transition back into accommodation.

But we can't always spot everyone who might need some help.

If you are or know of anyone that is rough sleeping anywhere in the District, please call Street Link on 0300 500 0914 anytime, or email directly to change4lincs@ southkesteven.gov.uk.

Give as much detail as possible so that we can locate them and offer our support.

If you think the person you are

concerned about is under 18, or is in immediate danger or needs urgent care, please call 999.

Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Virginia Moran, said: "Our rough sleeper support is offered through the Change4Lincs project, a partnership between four local councils.

"It enables us to support people known to be rough sleeping or who are at risk of having to do so.

"The team can intervene in the cycle of rough sleeping by providing a holistic support service with the aim of seeking suitable and sustainable accommodation.

"Change4Lincs help those who are perhaps not owed a statutory duty under the homeless legislation and can reduce the number of 'repeat' rough sleepers by helping people avoid becoming entrenched into this lifestyle. This can also improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing."

> Call or email Street Link if you are, or you know of anyone rough sleeping in South Kesteven:



change4lincs@ southkesteven. gov.uk

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Taking action to combat household damp and mould

A new team is in place at South Kesteven District Council to help tenants combat condensation and mould at home.

To provide practical help for its own tenants, the council inspects all its social housing where an issue has been reported, takes immediate action where necessary and then shares ventilation advice.

Staff keep clear records to help monitor the housing stock and keep tenants' homes free of damp and mould.

One of the main causes of condensation, damp and mould is poor ventilation.

Anyone can download the free Condensation, Mould and Damp Control leaflet produced by SKDC, with a key section on the many ways to reduce the amount of moisture vapour.

This and other home safety advice can be found online at www.southkesteven.gov.uk/ safehomes



Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Virginia Moran, said: "The health and safety of our tenants is a priority for us so it is important that we can gain access when required to help with damp and mould issues, which often stem from condensation through poor ventilation.

"Staff from our new team will visit to conduct inspections and book the work required to make improvements. They will assess any damp and mould issues and take forward all necessary actions.

"As a responsible landlord we are pleased to be able

to provide a consistent and timely response when an issue is reported to us by our council tenants.

"Fortunately, there is a lot that people can do for themselves to prevent mould forming. Ensuring the home is well heated and ventilated is the first step, which we can also advise on."

Condensation is when excess moisture in the air changes to a liquid and can occur in kitchens, bathrooms or bedrooms - in fact any room where the moisture is combined with cold surfaces and little ventilation.

The main activities which produce a lot of water quickly are cooking, washing and drying clothes, and having baths or showers. Where clothes are dried indoors the total moisture can be over 20 litres, or 36 pints, a day. It is important to open windows to allow moisture to escape and air to flow through.

In occupied rooms, some ventilation is needed all the time to get rid of the moisture being produced, including that produced by breathing. General advice is to keep a small window or a trickle vent open. This is the small vent usually part of the window frame. It will not combat condensation alone but will help the air to circulate.

Third affordable food hub launched to help residents on a budget

ood redistribution charity, The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT) launched its latest food club for the county in a bid to bring fresh, healthy affordable food to low income communities.

Funded by South Kesteven District Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), and Comic Relief, the new hub opened in August at the Earlesfield Community Centre on Trent Road.

This is in addition to sister hubs already operating out of Market Deeping and Stamford.

Cllr Rhea Ravside, Cabinet Member for People and Communities, said: "If you're looking for fresh, healthy, food that is easy on the purse strings, we urge you to come and check out any of their food clubs. We are very fortunate to have them here at a time when so many families are struggling."

TBBT chief executive Mark Game said: "We're delighted to be working with SKDC again and expanding our Lincolnshire offering.

"We're all about helping food budgets go further by providing our members with nutritious food that doesn't break the bank. Our members tell us they can save up to £35 a week by shopping with us, which frees up budget for other household priorities."

At its weekly hubs, members can access three bags of fruit and vegetables, chilled food and cupboard staples at discounted prices, to feed their families, improve their diets and save money for other household priorities.

TBBT is not a food bank. It focuses on providing family shopping which improves diets.

Members pay for a low-cost weekly shop that provides essential produce for family eating - fresh fruit and veg, fridge favourites and cupboard staples that allow members to eat better and cook more.

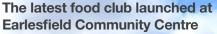
There are no joining criteria. Anyone interested in using TBBT's affordable food club just needs to register as a member. To do this. text 07860 063304 with their name, postcode and hub they would like to join: West Grantham. Stamford or Iron Horse. Once registered, members receive a weekly text offering the food service which they can then collect from their hub every week.

The Bread and Butter Thing South Kesteven Hubs are

West Grantham Fridays at 1pm at Earlesfield Community Centre, Trent Road, NG31 7XW.

Stamford – Thursdays at 2pm at Christ Church, Green Lane, Stamford **PE9 1HE**

Market Deeping -Tuesdays at 2pm at Scout and Guide Hut, Wellington Way, PE6 8LF







Cllrs Steptoe, Harrison and Stokes with donated furniture



Mick Townhill and the team at Grantham Fabrications

Revamped community centre gets off to a flying start

Renovation work by South Kesteven District Council is opening up new possibilities for the Earlesfield Community Centre on Trent Road, Grantham.

Events, meetings and parties are all on the diary following £100,000 of funding to support communities in and around West Grantham.

Improvements include new windows and fire doors; improved fencing for event safety; a full boiler service; re-laying uneven paths; a deep clean; and removal of graffiti.

A new kitchen, installed by United Living, has been fitted to enable lettings to community groups.

And the team at Grantham Fabrications has donated a sturdy bench and table unit for the garden.

The venue trustees are District and Grantham Town Councillor Lee Steptoe as Chair, joined by ClIrs Steve Cunnington, Tim Harrison and Paul Stokes, who is the Deputy Leader of SKDC.

Cllr Steptoe said: "I campaigned for funding for the centre from the end of Covid restrictions and was delighted when the new administration committed to it last year.

"It demonstrates the strength of cross-party collaboration and will allow it to become the local hub, with The Bread & Butter Thing food bank and Building Brighter Futures, already signed up as users."

Cllr Cunnington added: "The residents of Earlesfield now have a community centre fit for the community. We have more plans and events coming up and leading into next year, all of which are designed to benefit and brings the community together."

Cllr Harrison said: "This shows the Grantham Together community pulling together in response to the SKDC investment and we're looking forward to a bright future with such strong local support."

The first public event was at August Bank Holiday, when a barbecue and fun day party was organised to celebrate its reopening.

The Community Centre is a registered charity created to

provide services to the people of the Earlesfield Estate. Regular events include Line Dancing, Grantham Capoeira Club and Building Brighter Futures.

Bookings are being taken for individual parties and other group meeting space. Anyone interested in booking one of the rooms should call 07872 522039 or 07850 285772.

Supporters who donated time, goods or services to the Bank Holiday event include Hope Community Cafe, Grantham Capoeira, Cleaver Meats Ltd, Morrisons, Lance Coaten, The Castle King, Watkins Grantham, Paul O'Reilly, South Kesteven District Council and Grantham Town Council.

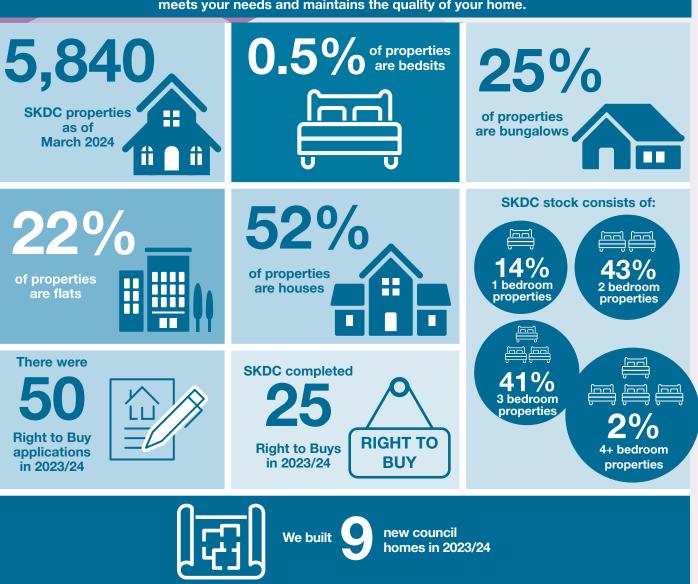
More than 150 Council houses are being refurbished and revitalised nearby in a multi-millionpound improvement scheme.

The £3.288m contract was awarded to United Living Group for the Earlesfield Estate Capital Works Project.

So far, 69 properties have been completed with a further 21 in progress. The overall completion date is set for 31st March 2025.

Annual report 2023/24

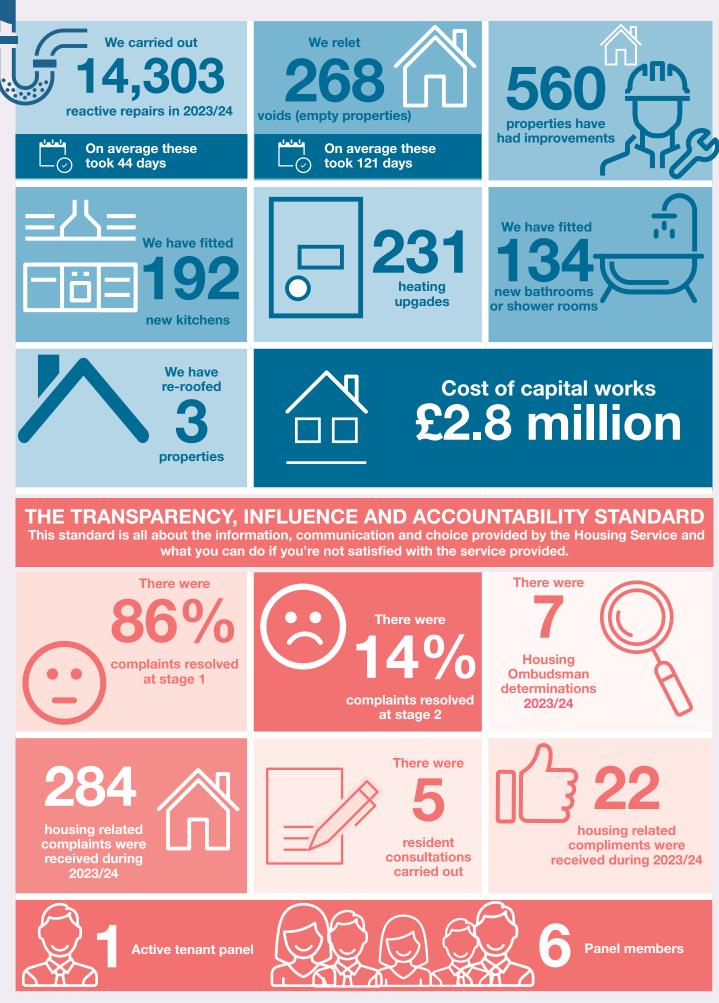
Welcome to the Housing Services annual report for 2023/24 which offers an insight into the work we do. South Kesteven District Council aspires to provide high quality homes and services to those who rent property from the council.

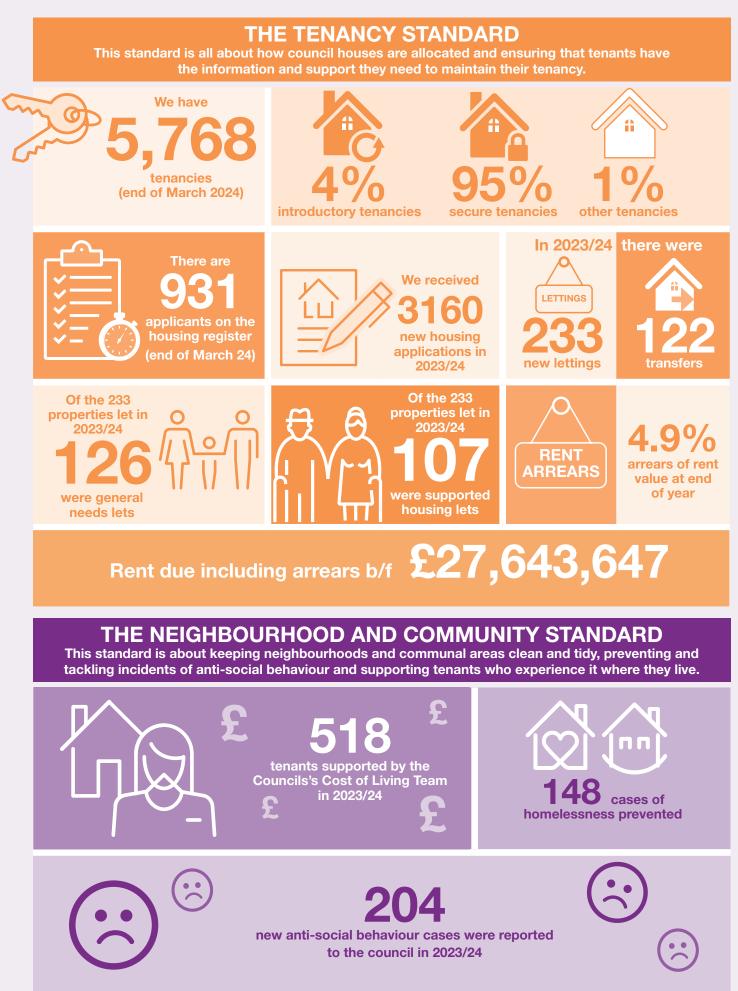


THE SAFETY AND QUALITY STANDARD

This standard is all about ensuring you have a decent home and a good repairs service that meets your needs and maintains the quality of your home.

Skyline Winter 2024 www.southkesteven.gov.uk







Allowing home access will avoid risk of financial penalty

Sometimes the Council needs access to your home to allow our team to make important checks in order to protect you and your family.

This may be to service an appliance, make a gas or electricity check, assess the property as a whole and in case any maintenance work needs carrying out.

Anyone who doesn't let either council staff or our contractors into their home are breaching their tenancy agreement. This can cost both time and money and sometimes the associated costs of an abortive or missed appointment can be charged to the tenant.

Cllr Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "We inform tenants well in advance of when council staff or contractors need to get in for essential maintenance or gas or electric safety checks but we continue to experience an increase in the number of properties where we cannot get access.

"Access is not just important for compliance reasons but it helps to keep you and your family safe. If we cannot check your home, we cannot identify and protect against any potential risks or hazards."

If multiple attempts are made and access is still not granted, SKDC can serve Court papers to get an injunction or warrant which gives us a legal right to enter your home. The costs of this can be significant, and the council aim to recharge all costs for legal action and missed appointments back to tenants.

In extreme cases this could also result in eviction, which puts you at risk of losing your home.

Taking tenants to court is always a last resort which can easily be avoided. Either make sure you will be home for your appointment or, if you cannot make it, rearrange the appointment to avoid any charges.

The council's gas servicing contractor Aaron Services operate a scheme to encourage access into tenants homes. Tenants allowing first-time access for essential compliance works are automatically entered into a monthly prize draw.

So far, eight lucky winners in South Kesteven have each received a £50 high street voucher.

"The initiative from Aaron Services not only helps us to ensure safety and compliance but rewards tenants for their cooperation.

"We would like to thank everyone who helps us with our work to carry out surveys and services by granting access and would encourage all tenants to both make and keep all appointments, where possible." Cllr Moran said.



There's still time to benefit from checking about Pension Credit

Pension Credit is valuable financial help that could also unlock the winter fuel payment – and may give access to a number of additional benefits.

It is one of the most underclaimed benefits in Lincolnshire and anyone can find out how to apply at: http://gov.uk/pensioncredit or call: 0800 99 1234.

People can also take steps to help their neighbours or family check their eligibility: it only takes a few moments and could make all the difference this winter.

SKDC Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Rhea Rayside, said: "South Kesteven District Council's Cost-of-Living team is currently assisting any pensioners who are also current housing tenants to check on their eligibility for pension credit – and help them apply if eligible.

"We can also give additional information on Attendance Allowance, social tariffs and other tips that will put you in a better financial position especially over the winter months.

"In the meantime, South Kesteven District Council has promised to write to the Government to reconsider its withdrawal of universal Winter Fuel Payments to pensioners."

Anyone not in receipt of Pension Credit and would like to check if they are eligible should contact the Customer Service Team on 01476 406080 who will put you through to the Cost-of-Living team.

It could be worthwhile because those who qualify for Pension Credit can also receive:

- Winter Fuel Payment
- Housing Benefit / Universal Credit
- Cost of Living Payments
- Support for Mortgage
 Interest
- Council Tax Reduction
- Free TV licence (75+)

- Help with NHS costs
- Warm Home Discount Scheme
- Royal Mail redirection discount

Anyone who already knows they will not qualify but are struggling financially should also contact the Cost of Living team, as there may be alternative assistance available from the council.

For instance, there are also discounts and exemptions available to council tax payers to reduce the amount of council tax they should pay. They do not depend on income but are granted if certain conditions are met. Householders can check at www.southkesteven.gov.uk/ CTdiscount

Anyone who believes they are entitled to any of the discounts listed, must continue to pay council tax while SKDC considers whether a discount applies.

Opportunities to help shape delivery of housing services

ike all social landlords, the council is required to meet the Regulator of Social Housing's Four Consumer Standards.

These set out the minimum standard that our tenants can expect from the Housing Service – covering how we allocate and maintain our properties and how we ensure our tenants can be involved in monitoring and challenging this work.

These standards are:

- Standard One Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- Standard Two Safety and Quality Standard
- Standard Three Tenancy Standard
- Standard Four Neighbourhood and Community Standard

Cllr Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "Our tenants are at the heart of everything we do. By working together to meet and exceed these standards, we can ensure a safer, more transparent, and high-quality housing service for everyone.

"I encourage every tenant to get involved and help shape a better future for our communities."

Standard One -Transparency, Influence and Accountability

- Customer Service, choice and complaints
- Involvement and empowerment
- Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants
- Access to Information
- Performance Information

Standard Three - Tenancy Standard

- Allocations
- Rents
- Tenure
- Mutual Exchanges

Standard Two - Safety and Quality Standard

- Quality of your home
- Repairs and maintenance
- Health and Safety
- Adaptations

Standard Four -Neighbourhood and Community

- Neighbourhood Management
- Local area co-operation
- Anti-social behaviour
- Addressing domestic violence

There are regular opportunities to share feedback with the council, such as through tenant satisfaction surveys or feedback requested following completion of a repair.

The council is also looking for tenants to join a register of Involved Tenants Panel from which a Task and Finish Group



can be established.

The group will look at key services such as how the council carries out repairs, responds to complaints, allocates homes and communicates with tenants.

If you are interested in being a part of the Involved Tenants Panel or the Task and Finish Group, or if you want to be involved in other ways, you can register your interest by contacting the council's Community Engagement Officer via email at **HousingFB@ southkesteven.gov.uk** or calling 01476 406349.

A mixture of in-person and virtual meetings will ensure that as many tenants as possible can be involved.

More information about how you can get involved can be found online at: https://tinyurl.com/ housing-get-involved

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 3pm **Bourne:** Monday and Wednesday, 9am to 5pm Saturday, 9am to 1pm Bourne is also for library services (no appointment needed). **10 1176 40 60 80 Out of hours 01476 40 60 40 Customerservices@ southkesteven.gov.uk**

Tenant Engagement

Contact Ken Linford, Community Engagement Officer **1176 40 60 80**

➢ HousingFB@southkesteven. gov.uk



Emergency repairs 2 01476 40 60 80 / 01476 59 00 44

Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour 2 01476 40 60 80

- 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:



Age UK (Lincoln and South Lincolnshire)

Companionship, advice and support for older people. 2 01522 696 000 3 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
 [^]⊕ https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/

Cost of Living Information and Support

SKDC's online advice portal for help with energy saving, financial support, health and wellbeing, support for older people and grants costoflivingsupport@ southkesteven.gov.uk 'the www.southkesteven.gov.uk/ cost-living-help-and-support

Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service

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

2 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 Total 7943 792 or via Granthampovertyconcern @gmail.com Toww.granthampoverty concern.org.uk

National advice lines

Citizens Advice 203444 111 444 10 www.citizensadvice.org.uk/ about-us/contact-us

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) ☎ 0345 606 0265 ^⊕ www.gov.uk/government/ organisations/department-forwork-pensions Victim Support 20808 506 1688 ⁽¹⁾ Victimsupport.org.uk

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline 200 0247

NHS- non-urgent medical need 2 111 [^]⊕ 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**