

2021/22 ANNUAL REPORT

New council housing at The Valley in Stanmore

Welcome...

As the Cabinet Member for Community and Housing, I am delighted to present this Annual Report.

The successes highlighted in this document are testament to the council's dedicated team of housing staff and the on-going involvement of residents who provide invaluable feedback which helps to ensure we deliver a housing service that continues to meet your needs.

Whilst celebrating our achievements we also recognise there are challenges ahead, and therefore this document also looks to the future and how we develop robust responses to those challenges. From supporting our residents with the cost of living crisis,

to building more affordable properties, responding to the climate emergency and ensuring our council neighbourhoods remain places where residents feel safe and proud to call home.

You can read more about our successes over the past year inside this Annual Report and discover more about our exciting plans for further improvements centred around the new 'Charter for Social Housing Residents', which aims to ensure tenants are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes, and know how to make a complaint when things go wrong.



Cllr Paula Ferguson

Cabinet Member for Community and Housing



Produced in partnership with
Winchester City Council tenants and leaseholders



Winchester
City Council



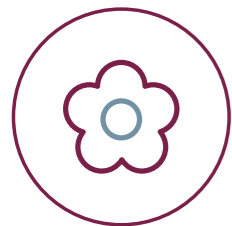
Our priorities

Our priorities for housing align with the council-wide ambitions outlined in the Local Plan, including:



Carbon neutrality

To help reach our aim of becoming a carbon neutral council by 2024 we are making important changes to the way our housing teams work, such as using electric vehicles in Neighbourhood Services.



Biodiversity and the natural environment

We are helping to protect wildlife by installing bat and dormice boxes and enhance biodiversity by planting wildflowers and trees to attract more wildlife to our council neighbourhoods.



Homes for all

With an acute need for more affordable housing in our district we are developing more properties which are both affordable and environmentally friendly. Currently 130 new council homes are under construction in Winchester and North Whiteley.



Promoting sustainable transport

To help reduce carbon emissions from vehicles we are encouraging residents to consider alternative ways to get around by installing charging points for electric vehicles on council estates and increasing cycle storage.



Living well

We work to support the health and well-being of all residents and this includes helping people manage the cost of living crisis. We are increasing our tenancy support services and rolling out a Retrofit programme to improve the energy efficiency of existing council homes which will help to lower fuel bills.

Year in photos

A month by month look at some of our key achievements, successes and milestones



April
2021

Launch of scheme to provide specialist support for tenants with hoarding behaviour



May
2021

Initiative to loan IT equipment to involved tenants



June
2021

Over 200 trees planted on housing land across the district, including planting at sheltered schemes for the Queen's Jubilee Canopy



July
2021

Joint campaign with Hampshire County Council to promote the benefits of living in an Extra Care Scheme
www.winchester.gov.uk/extra-care



Aug
2021

New tenants begin moving into our new development of 35 affordable homes at Hookpit in Kings Worthy



Sept
2021

Communal areas in White Wings sheltered housing are redecorated



A year in photos...

Oct
2021

Our Welcome to the Neighbourhood booklet (offering advice on anti-social behaviour, fly tipping, waste management and being a good neighbour) goes digital to reach a wider audience www.winchester.gov.uk/student-information



Nov
2021

Assist Grant scheme rolled out providing grants to help tenants in financial need



Dec
2021

Celebration event to mark the 100th anniversary of the first council houses built at The Valley in Stanmore



Jan
2022

New staff join our Tenancy Sustainment Team to offer more support and promote social and financial inclusion



Mar
2022

Tenant Involvement Steering Group established

Feb
2022

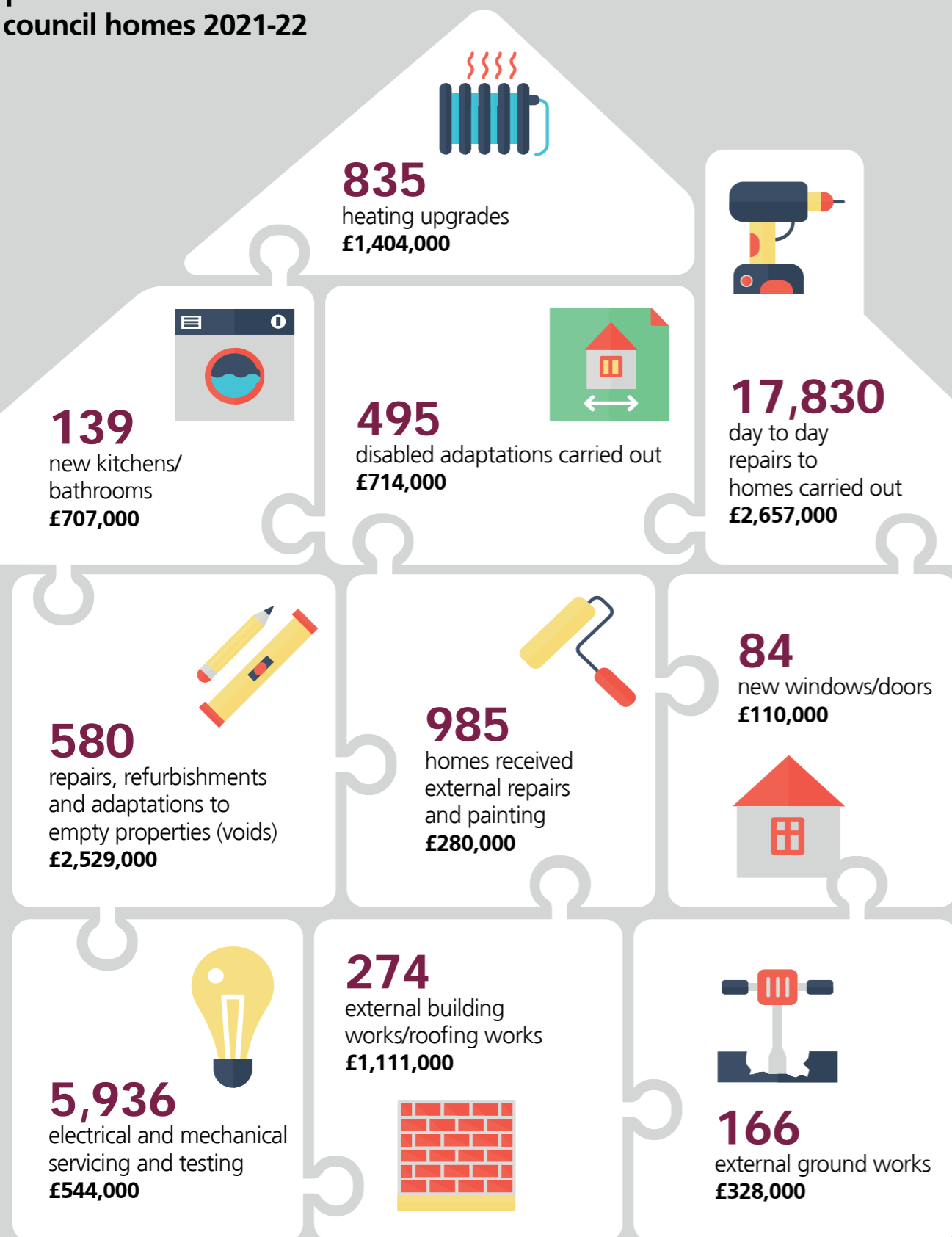


Parking improvements completed thanks to Estate Improvement funding



Investing in your homes

Improvements carried out in council homes 2021-22

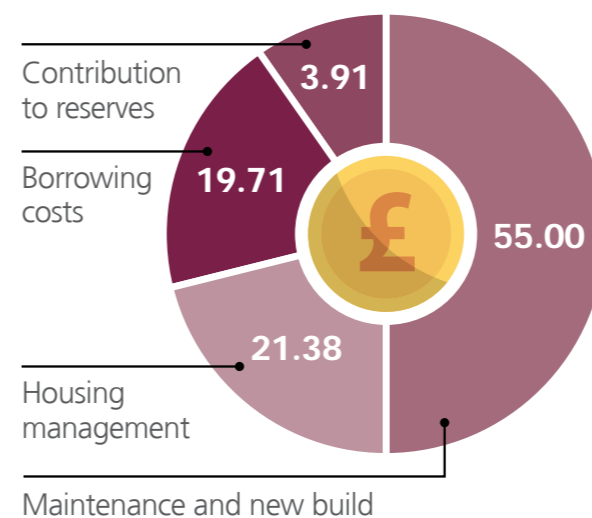


Our performance

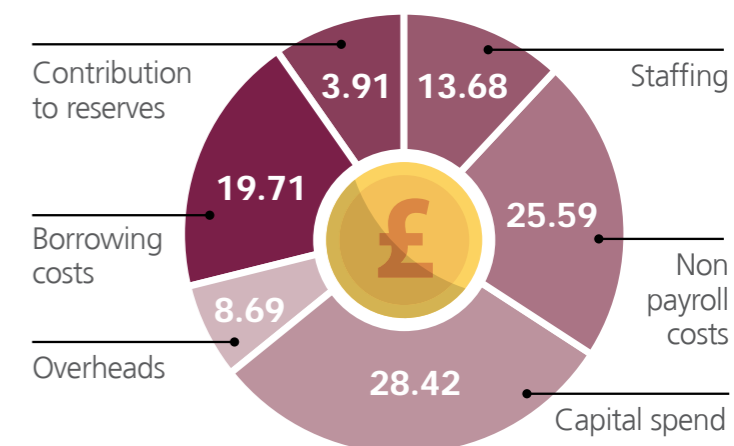
	Our performance in 2019/20	Our performance last year 2020/21	Our performance this year 2021/22
Rent arrears (as a % of total rent due)	2.30%	2.63%	2.06%
Average time to complete a repair	7.7 days	12.9 days	7.24 days
Average re-let time for council homes	13.6 days	27.72 days	18.75 days
Average cost per property of Housing Management	£229.78	£281.51	£233
Average direct cost per property for responsive repairs and empty homes	£771.95	£801	£895

Where we spend each £1

Where it was spent



What it was spent on



Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety

We work hard to keep neighbourhoods safe, clean and green to ensure our council neighbourhoods remain places where you feel secure and proud to call home.



Achievements

- Increased the ways for you to provide feedback on how council teams and contractors manage communal spaces (eg satisfaction surveys and block briefings). We'll use your responses to make improvements.



- Planted trees and wildflowers, installed bat and dormice boxes to attract more wildlife to our urban neighbourhoods.



- Ordered 5 new electric vehicles to create an all-electric fleet for Neighbourhood Services.
- Made improvements to communal gardens including new planting, benches and raised beds at The Valley and other schemes.



Giving you a voice

Engaging with and listening to residents is a key focus for the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Team. We've increased the range of opportunities for you to provide feedback on how council teams and contractors manage your communal spaces. These include satisfaction surveys and block briefings. Your voice counts and we will continue to develop a variety of engagement opportunities so you can give us continuous feedback.

Fly-tipping



This is a blight on local neighbourhoods, causing an eyesore and potential dangers for the environment, wildlife and local communities too. Our team work to tackle the unsightly issue and ensure perpetrators are punished. During the year we:

- Issued **2** fixed penalty notices and **3** cautions
- Took **9** cases to court which resulted in: **8** successful prosecutions and **1** custodial sentence and around **£10,000** in financial penalties for the culprits

Car parking

We know that car parking is a big issue in many areas and so we have used Estate Improvement funding to ease the problem by improving and creating additional parking spaces. The funding was used at:

Chiltern Court,
New Alresford

£175,526



Dickson Park,
Wickham

£45,120



Community Safety

- We organised resident meetings, block and street briefs as community reassurance in hot spot locations.
- Working with partners including the police, fire and youth services we launched the annual anti-social behaviour summer campaign to tackle hot spot locations and reassure local communities.

Tackling anti-social behaviour

- 11** Referrals to Mediation service
- 8** Notices of seeking possession
- 3** Approved management moves

To find out more about estate improvements visit www.winchester.gov.uk/estateimprovements

Neighbourhood Services

Looking ahead we will:

- Increase opportunities for you to provide feedback online and set up focus groups to review responses.
- Improve safety by introducing estate improvements that aim to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour.
- Procure a new cleaning contract that will deliver value for money and a quality service.
- Encourage wildlife by planting hedges and wildflowers at schemes including Pound Road in Kings Worthy, Simonds Court in Abbots Barton and Orchard Close in Coldon Common.
- Develop Phase 1 of improvements at Winnall flats.
- Install additional bike storage in council neighbourhoods.
- Install Electric Vehicle Charging Points at Chiltern Court and develop plans to install more points across our housing estates.



- Continue with our district-wide tree planting programme.
- Roll out a trial to reduce grass cutting at New Alresford and Badger Farm to improve ecology on verges.
- Encourage wildlife such as birds and bats at Winnall Woods.
- Refurbish external areas at Pound Road, Kings Worthy.
- Improve external communal areas at Simonds Court, Abbots Barton.
- Create additional parking at Claylands Road, Bishops Waltham.
- Improve the bin stores at Trussell Crescent in Weeke, Chiltern Court in Alresford and Milford House, Winchester.
- Improve the communal gardens at Orchard Close in Coldon Common, St Bedes Close, Winchester and Bartholomew Close, Winchester.
- Improve paved areas at The Gardens, Hambledon.
- Install new play features on the sculpture trail at The Valley in Stanmore.

To find out more about estate improvements visit www.winchester.gov.uk/communitysafety

Sheltered housing

We have 12 sheltered housing schemes across the city plus 3 extra care schemes.

Keeping active

Our regular activities programme and the successful wellbeing service both help to keep tenants active mentally and physically, whilst reducing social isolation. There's an activity for everyone; from keep fit to computers and bingo to coffee mornings.



Looking ahead we will:

- Visit more residents more frequently.
- Work with the Wellbeing and Inclusion Officer to enhance the activity programme and further reduce social isolation.
- Ensure the most vulnerable residents are supported to maintain their tenancy.
- Set up a Project Board to suggest ways to help prepare tenants for the digital switchover and work with residents to trial new technology.

To find out more visit www.winchester.gov.uk/extra-care



Improving schemes

We have improved accessibility at schemes, enhanced many communal areas and redecorated at Matilda Place, Makins Court and Richard Moss House.

Assisting residents

The team have been helping more older people to move into suitable accommodation by assisting with housing applications, placing bids, attending viewings and carrying out pre-tenancy assessments.



Tenant Involvement

Listening and responding to your feedback is an essential part of improving the housing service, so our Tenant Involvement team play an important role in collecting tenants' views and understanding what's important.

As Covid continued to effect tenant involvement activities throughout the year (with face to face meetings only starting again in July 2021 and

restrictions on the numbers permitted in place until March 2022) we adapted in order to enable tenants to engage virtually.

To get involved please visit www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/get-involved/improving-services

Achievements:

- Hybrid meetings for tenants who prefer to join virtually.
- Digital surveys to encourage more tenants to give us their views.
- TACT Committee induction process established.
- Tenant Compact finalised, setting out how we work with tenants and leaseholders to improve the housing service.
- IT equipment loan initiative rolled out to lend devices to tenants.
- Tenant Involvement Steering Group established.
- Plans to reduce the carbon footprint of Tenant Involvement ready for discussion.
- Tenant Involvement Priorities digital survey completed.
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey completed.



Looking ahead, we will:

- Learn from what residents told us at the 'Listening to views' focus groups on how best to improve.
- Learn from sector leaders how best to improve our service.
- Introduce annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures surveys.
- Make the Tenant Involvement webpage more user friendly.
- Agree an area of the service to put through a detailed examination, based on what tenants have told us.
- Develop our tenant training programme and deliver life skills for all tenants.



Property Services

Looking after your home

100% of council homes meet the government **Decent Homes standard**

Repairs



17,830
total number of repair jobs



908
out of hours calls received



88%
of emergencies and call-outs were completed the same day, and **94%** within a further 24 hours.

The Deep Retro Fit Trial

2 homes in Bramdean received insulation, new cladding and new heating systems to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency.



Left: before
Above: after

Fire Safety

528 new fire doors fitted over the last two years as part of our fire safety programme.

Knowing what to do in the event of a fire and understanding how to reduce fire risks at home will keep you and your neighbours safe. If you have any concerns about fire safety please visit: www.winchester.gov.uk/fire-concern

Retrofit Ready programme

A programme to retro-fit poor energy performing council homes was launched. As homes become empty they are assessed and receive work as necessary to make them more energy efficient. This could include new insulation, extractor fans, doors or windows.

Looking ahead we will:

- Fit 158 fire doors in 2022/23. We aim to replace all fire doors by 31 March 2024.
- Continue our programme to improve the energy performance of homes as they become empty.
- Continue our programme of external repair and painting – see when your home is due to receive work: www.winchester.gov.uk/housingrepairdates
- Introduce a compensation policy.
- Work to ensure we adhere to the new Building Safety Bill which introduces new and more stringent requirements for residential buildings. The Bill, which was developed in response to the tragedy at Grenfell Tower in 2017, overhauls existing regulations and outlines how residential buildings should be constructed, maintained and made safe.



Support for tenants

With the cost of living crisis affecting so many people, our teams are on hand to help with money advice, claiming benefits and applying for financial aid during this challenging time.

We provide support and advice to help you maintain your tenancy and keep your home and we also work with a range of partner organisations to ensure those

who need it can access extra support to maintain mental and physical wellbeing.

Financial help

- 53 households who had been hardest hit by Covid and ill health received financial help to clear their rent arrears, giving them a chance to get back on their feet again. This was organised by our Rent Accounts Team using £70,000 of funding from the Hampshire County Council Hardship Fund.

Personal support

- Personal support provided to help tenants who fall into arrears. For example when one tenant reached pension age her Universal Credit stopped and she found herself with no income and unable to pay her rent. Our Rent Accounts Team liaised with the Pension Service to organise Pension Credit until her pension payments came through.

Never forget a rent payment

If you're having trouble paying your rent, our Rent Accounts team are here to offer support and help work out a way forward so you don't lose your home. The easiest way to pay your rent is by Direct Debit, simply call **01962 848 205** or visit www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/paying-your-rent

Looking ahead we will:

- Review the process for renting a garage.
- Introduce a new system to monitor the number and type of tenancy cases we manage, and also gain and use feedback to improve the service.
- Implement a 12 month pilot scheme to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle white goods and furniture to help reduce waste within our housing stock.
- Continue to ensure we support tenants through the cost of living crisis in any way we can; from helping people maximise their benefit income to accessing food and fuel vouchers.
- Identify low-income households and offer support to maximise their incomes.
- Reduce isolation amongst older people through an activities programme.
- Work with partner organisations to combat digital poverty and measure the social impact of the work we're doing.
- Work in collaboration with partner agencies to build stronger support pathways out of hospital, prison and homelessness.



Achievements:

- Pilot scheme launched in partnership with specialist hoarding support services to provide extra support for tenants struggling with hoarding issues.
- Improvements made to the pre-tenancy and sign up process to provide a much smoother and more customer-focussed service.
- Successful campaign to reduce the number of empty garages. If you would like to rent a garage visit www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/garages-applications
- Assist Grant scheme launched for council tenants in financial difficulty, facing an immediate crisis or needing short-term financial assistance. Since October 2021, 58 tenants have received a share of over £30,000 of grant funding.



- New staff appointed to promote well-being and financial inclusion amongst tenants.
- Pre-tenancy screening introduced to identify new tenants who need extra, ongoing support to maintain their tenancy. Going forward we aim to provide outreach support in trusted places.

Putting things right when we've got something wrong

It is important our complaints process is effective and fair so we asked tenants to help us scrutinise the service and assess our website.

We also conducted a survey amongst people who had made a complaint to the housing team in the last 18 months which showed 74% of respondents were dissatisfied with the way we dealt with complaints.

As a result we are making improvements including improving communication with customers throughout the process and raising awareness of how to make a complaint.

- **191** complaints received by the Housing Service in 2021/22:
- **70%** closed within 10 days

To find out more or to make a complaint visit <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/complaints>

To find out more about estate improvements visit www.winchester.gov.uk/tenancy-sustainment

New homes

112
new affordable
homes were
completed in
2020/21

The Valley, Stanmore – 77 new homes for affordable rent and shared ownership including three homes designed for wheelchair users. The new low carbon and energy-efficient development includes solar panels and electric vehicle charging points.

Snug Architects/Fotohaus

Hookpit, Kings Worthy – 35 new homes comprising one, two, three and four bedroom homes for affordable rent, shared ownership, and discounted market sale.



Our waiting list

1,286
households registered on the waiting list as at 31/3/22

2 years 6 months
average wait in band 3 for a 3 bed house

Lettings

599
number of lettings new to social housing

201
number of lettings to existing tenants

Looking ahead, we plan to:



- Develop 130 new homes for Whiteley and Winnall.
- Build an eco-friendly Passivhaus scheme of 6 flats at Micheldever and 4 homes in Witherbed Lane, near Segensworth.
- Develop new homes at Woodman Close, Corner House and Dyson Drive (all currently in the planning process).
- Conduct a wetlands mitigation project at Micheldever to ensure nitrate levels aren't increased as a result of the nearby development.

Leaseholders

In 2019 The Housing Quality Network (HQN) reviewed our Leasehold Services to ensure we were compliant and to identify areas for improvement. Since then we have been working hard to implement their recommendations, and last year we carried out an internal audit which found a sound system of governance, risk management and control in place.



Looking ahead we will:

- Launch an online portal for leaseholders to access their account, make payments, report block repairs and anti-social behaviour and direct message the Leasehold Team.
- Introduce satisfaction surveys for Leasehold and Right to Buy services.
- Establish a new Home Ownership Service to cover leasehold, shared ownership, Right to Buy, Partnered Home Purchase (PHP), freehold and requests to purchase housing land (under license).

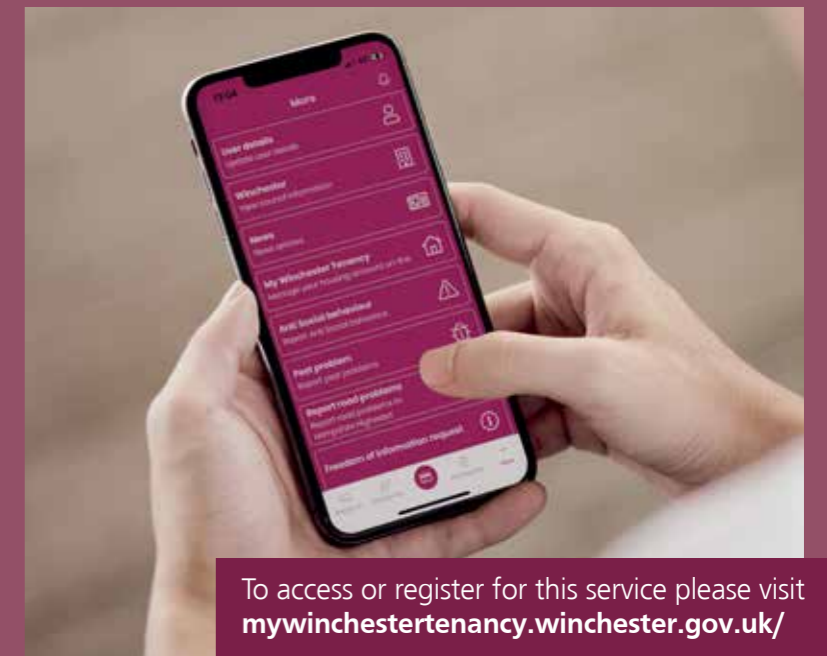
For more details visit www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/leaseholders



Digital inclusion

It has never been easier to access our services at the touch of a button, saving you time waiting on the phone. You can access the following services 24/7:

- Check your account balance
- View and print rent statements
- Report a non-urgent repair
- Check repair appointments
- Make payments
- Update your personal information
- Send and receive messages



To access or register for this service please visit mywinchestertenancy.winchester.gov.uk/

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Thank you to everyone who completed our recent satisfaction survey – we received nearly 500 responses. Here's a snapshot of the results:

77%

overall satisfaction with the service provided

Here is what you asked us to improve:

1. Keep communal areas clean, safe and well maintained
2. Improve the time taken to complete a repair
3. Listen to views

And here's how we're responding to your feedback:

1. We're finding out what improvements are needed to plan estate improvements. We're inviting residents to help us procure cleaning services and we're asking contractors to gain continuous feedback by using QR codes so you can quickly and easily give your views. Plus, we're ensuring staff will be on site more often to make it easier for you to talk directly to the council as an alternative to completing a survey. Just look out for council officers in their plum shirts.
2. We are introducing a compensation policy to reimburse you for service failures and unacceptable delays. We are identifying common causes of delays so that we can agree an action plan. We're establishing performance indicators for planned and major works as a way to measure our performance.
3. We are increasing the ways you can give us feedback and will carefully consider all comments to help us make important improvements.



Get in touch

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