



Summer 2022

Housing Matters

Better homes, better neighbourhoods, better lives



The Housing Energy Efficiency Programme update

Nadder Close garden improvements with Wessex Electrical

SIB's continue to deliver outdoor communal improvements across our housing stock

Council House Build Programme continues to grow



Welcome

Welcome to the summer printed version of Housing Matters. The cost of living crisis is at the forefront of people's minds at the moment and we are committed to do what we can to help you out.

Our housing energy efficiency programme (HEEP) was developed before energy prices increased but, aimed to make homes more efficient and cheaper to run, it will help reduce some of the increased costs that you will face when you buy gas or electricity.

If you are still struggling financially, we have a tenancy sustainment team who help people maximise their income. If you are living in a home that is too big for your needs as family have left and you are struggling to cover the costs of running it, you could make the decision to downsize. If you do, we are ready to help and support you, so please get in contact with your neighbourhood officer.

The next STAR survey is coming out later this year and we encourage you to take part, so we know what you think and where you want to see us improve our services.

One thing that you often tell us is the impact that anti-social behaviour has on the enjoyment of your home. We know what a priority this is and we will be investing more resources into dealing with it soon.

I hope you find this edition information and helpful, and as always please don't hesitate to get in contact if you have ideas, comments or concerns.



Simon Hendey,
Director of Assets and
Commercial Development



Cllr Phil Alford,
Cabinet Member
for Housing

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Useful contact information

The iHousing Portal:

<https://ihousing.wiltshire.gov.uk>

The Wiltshire Council Website:

www.wiltshire.gov.uk

General Housing enquiries:

hsgmail@wiltshire.gov.uk

Housing repairs emergencies and out of hours:

0300 456 0117 – option 2

Non urgent housing repairs should be reported

via the iHousing Portal at

<https://ihousing.wiltshire.gov.uk>

You can write to us:
Housing Management
Bourne Hill
Salisbury
SP1 3UZ

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The Housing Energy Efficiency Programme update

The HEEP programme continues to improve the energy efficiency and cost of running of homes. At the time of publication, we have completely installed at 90 homes with a total of 207 measures installed across all homes to date. These measures are all designed to improve the quality and comfort of your home and make it more energy efficient. Your home will be warmer and more comfortable, which is better for you, it will be more carbon friendly, which is better for the environment and less energy usage means less cost, which is better for your pocket.

For example, one of our measures is to replace older, less efficient heating systems such as older gas and oil boilers with new, efficient Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP), smart hot water systems and solar panels in many properties. At the time of publication, with the cost of gas rising much faster than the cost of electricity, used correctly our ASHP's, combined with the benefit of the solar panels and new insulation means that, for the average customer and property, the utility costs for the converted property will be lower than if it was still using the old gas boiler.

Equally, our new Quantum storage heaters that are replacing the old night storage heaters are significantly more efficient and allow you much more control over your heating. For an average home and usage, each Quantum Heater saves over £1 a day compared to running the old-

style heaters. With the improved controls and new insulation installed, your home will be warmer and more comfortable.

But it's not all about the heating, our improvements to insulation and ventilation will help reduce the risks of condensation and mould, LED lighting upgrades use less electricity and last longer than other types of lighting and the smart hot water cylinders solar diverter means that if you have solar panels installed, any unused solar energy is put into heating the water rather than being lost. These measures all add up to gains for you, for your property and for the environment.

Council contracts staff discover more about the latest in Air Source Heat Pumps

Wiltshire Council are keen to explore the latest heating technology to enhance Council homes. Surveyors from the Contracts Team recently visited the Vaillant Training Centre near Bristol to find out more about their air source heat pumps.

Senior Surveyor Michael Kalvis says "At the moment many of our properties are heated using gas or oil. These release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere - which contributes to climate change. We are looking for ways to cut down on our use of fossil fuels - heat pumps are part of the answer. Our visit showed us that the technology is getting better all the time."



Council surveyors learning about the benefits of heat pump technology



Nadder Close communal garden gets a birthday makeover

We were delighted recently to team up with Wessex Electricals & Wessex Property Care to spruce up the communal garden of Nadder Close, just in time for its 30th anniversary.

We have worked with Wessex for over two decades and as part of our relationship, it undertakes volunteer projects as part of its wider Social Value Charter.

As a fitting tribute to the upcoming three-decade anniversary of Nadder Close, the Wessex teams turned their hands to gardening to reinvigorate and refresh the communal gardens.

Many of the residents' apartments face onto the gardens with the focal point being an impressive 30 year old wisteria over the central pergola, which provides a stunning array of colour and scent, as well as shade in the warmer months.

Following an initial consultation with Wiltshire Council Housing and the residents, the scope of the project was agreed, and plans put in place.

Having notified them about the Nadder Close project, Edmundson Electricals very kindly supplied all the materials needed for the garden refresh.

Over the course of three days, in true Ground Force style, the team jet washed the patios, mowed the gardens, weeded and planted new flowerbeds and pruned back the wisteria.

The team also undertook structural work to stabilise the pergola, replace and paint handrails and rebuild damaged raised flowerbeds. Lastly, the teams created a new gravelled terrace with seating in a sunny spot overlooking the new flowerbeds.

Wiltshire Council will be taking over the ground maintenance themselves from this Autumn and we're really grateful that Wessex have brought things up to a good standard that will be maintained going forward.

Nadder Close Resident Maureen, came to oversee proceedings including the pruning of the wisteria and offered wise advice, as well as cake for the team. She said "It's nice to have them here helping out, the gardens look amazing, and I am looking forward to sitting on the new bench in the summer. We are all really grateful."







The Friary Improvement Project

The Friary Housing Estate has been the focus of attention in 2021 with residents' and local elected members raising concerns about local issues affecting the estate.

Reported incidents on the estate have highlighted problems with fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour, including arson, which are contributing to concerns being expressed by some residents about their safety.

Also, due to the age, construction, and delivery standards of estate services there are also other issues that have been identified as requiring attention and action such as, inadequate provision of communal waste and recycling facilities and inadequate provision of storage facilities for residents in flats and grouped accommodation.

The project therefore aims to improve the sense of civic pride, the feelings of security, and the quality of life for the residents of The Friary.

Our objectives are to:

- reduce levels of anti-social behaviour
- reduce levels of fly-tipping
- improve levels of cleanliness
- improve standard of grounds maintenance
- improve recycling rates
- improve customer satisfaction with life on the estate.

How you can get involved

- If you are a Friary resident and would like to give us feedback about life on the estate and how you can have your say on the improvements you think are needed, please contact us at tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk.
- The Resident Engagement team is able to support you and your neighbours if you would like to set up residents' groups such as a neighbourhood watch scheme or a resident's association. You can find more details at Resident involvement - Wiltshire Council.
- Your block could apply for a small improvement bid to improve the external communal areas. These grants can be used for a range of communal improvements to improve wellbeing and community enjoyment. You can find more details on the application process at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-resident-involvement.

Works completed to date include:

- an inspection of the estate was carried out and general repairs observed during this inspection have been carried out by the Responsive Repairs team
- working with Salisbury City Council and the contractor iDverde, the housing department

has had additional maintenance of the bushes, shrubs and trees on the estate carried out. This work has been done alongside the standard yearly maintenance to improve look, lighting and line of sight across the estate

- the redecoration of internal areas in the blocks, such as the stairwells, sheds and bin stores including, fresh paint and new secure shed doors is under way by the Wiltshire Council Housing contracts team
- increased cleaning of the internal areas will keep them fresh and tidy. The new communal areas policy is being enforced to ensure items are not left in the communal hallways and stairwells where they could be a fire or trip hazard to other residents.

More works are planned and others are in progress at the moment

These include:

- improved up and down lighting on the estate which will discourage anti-social behaviour at night
- additional cleaning of the exterior of blocks including the balcony panels
- new bin storage using green roof bin stores located outside the blocks. This will reduce the smell inside, make the area look much tidier and secure the bins which will help reduce the flytipping of large items of furniture into them. The green grass roof tops will improve carbon capture and wildlife opportunities
- replacing some existing low walls and fences with hedges to provide a defined, natural barrier
- removal of other walls and fences around communal gardens to open up the spaces, allow for easier and better grounds maintenance and use of space



- new aesthetic up lighting on the blocks to help improve the overall look and style of the estate, which we aim to power via renewable energy sources
- a woodland walk along the rear of the estate, connecting the entrance to Carmelite Way from Exeter Street with Eyres Way and the footpath through to St Annes Street
- looking into a solution for the overgrown river channel that runs along the edge of the estate next to the dual carriageway which is currently half filled with self-seeded trees and bushes and rubbish which has been thrown into it
- a review of the storage sheds assigned to tenants to ensure everyone has space to store items safely and securely, like bikes and pushchairs
- a review of the internal drying rooms and cupboards across the estate, some of which has been out of use for a number of years and how best to make use of these spaces
- reviewing communal car parks provided by Wiltshire Council Housing with a view to improvements including fresh white line painting, better signage and additional spaces where possible.

We will bring more information to you online as it happens on our website at Resident involvement - Wiltshire Council.





The STAR survey 2022

Once again, Wiltshire Council Housing is conducting a Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) in 2022.

Expected to be hitting email inboxes and doormats in June and July, this survey aims to gather an idea of what you think about Wiltshire Council Housing as your landlord. This survey will be conducted by ARP Research on behalf of Wiltshire Council Housing.

The STAR survey has been developed to be an industry standard survey for the Housing Sector, and was revised in 2020, the last time Wiltshire Council carried it out.

Wiltshire Council will send all tenants and residents with a valid email address, a survey form and then follow up any who did not respond with a postal form to maximise the chances of response for as many of our tenants and residents as possible. We do this with the aim of getting an accurate picture as possible of the standards of our service, and what we are doing well, as well as what needs to be improved.

Taking this survey online is both secure and faster, with no trip to the post-box required. The email you receive will be from ARP research and will invite you to click a link to take the survey. More detailed instructions will be in the email and link.

Our Prize Draw is back once again, with 3 prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places winning £150, £50 and £25 in shopping vouchers, just for responding!

You can find out more about the results of the last survey Wiltshire Council Housing carried out in 2020.

[The STAR survey 2020 results - Wiltshire Council](#)

Why is the STAR Survey important?

The Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) is the nationally recognised industry standard survey of tenant and leaseholder satisfaction. It is carried out by over 300 social housing providers, councils, Housing Associations, and Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), all participate in STAR.

The survey enables the council to get accurate information from our residents about all the aspects the service they receive and how they feel it is delivered. This data enables Wiltshire Council Housing to understand the feelings of tenants across our stock on important issues such as repairs and maintenance, the neighbourhood, value for money from the service, how we handle communications and much more.

We're really grateful to all those who respond to the survey as it's really important we know what your priorities and thoughts are when we're looking at improving the service we provide you.

Once the results have been processed, they are published and the council will look at where we are performing well in the eyes of tenants and which areas need to be looked at again to ensure the quality of service is where we would expect it to be.

How did Wiltshire Council Housing respond to the results of the 2020 STAR survey?

The 2020 Star Survey was carried out between May and July 2020, with a census of all Wiltshire Council Housing tenants. In total 1,6871 tenants took part in the survey, with two fifths of the responses received online (40%).

Satisfaction was broadly the same - 81% in 2018 compared to 82% in 2020 with Value for Money remaining a big factor in how happy overall our tenants are with 87% of respondents satisfied with the value for money we provide. (53% of those were very satisfied).

47% of Wiltshire Council tenants also valued Energy Efficiency improvements as a top 3 priority for investment. Wiltshire Council is aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030 and the ten year Housing Energy and Efficiency program (HEEP) of housing improvements is now well under way to deliver more efficient and environmentally friendly homes.

There were declines in satisfaction on the quality of the home (was 81% now 77%), repairs and maintenance (was 77% now 73%) and the neighbourhood as a place to live (was 87% now 84%).

The main reasons given were issues with a lack of carparking, a rise in anti-social behaviour and that repair work was not being carried out "Right first time".

Wiltshire Council has been tackling these concerns around the quality of the home with the successful roll out of the Housing Energy Efficiency Programme which has been improving that quality, making our homes warmer and more energy efficient with our planned maintenance team continuing its work to keep our properties and buildings in the best possible shape.

We have been tackling concerns about neighbourhoods too. Our neighbourhood survey in 2021 was followed by a series of targeted visits to the areas tenants had raised concerns about. This has led to a rollout of works, both on a small scale such as where individual repairs were needed, to larger where repairs, maintenance and new improvements were needed such as at The Brambles in Salisbury and The Friary Improvement Project which is now fully underway.

The Small Improvement Bids are another way we are helping residents make their communities a better place and work has begun on delivery of the 2021 SIBS including groundworks for new carparking, bin stores and a community garden cabin with a lot more to follow. We encourage residents to discuss how they would like to see their communal spaces improved and apply for a bid. Full help and support is available from the Resident Engagement team.

If you would like to see the full STAR survey report, please go to our website - www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-council-housing.





Keep up to date with Housing Matters online

Housing Matters magazine is published quarterly with one bumper summer issue being sent out to all residents by post and the remaining three issues being available on our website in a variety of formats with hardcopies available on request.

You can find the latest issue of the magazine, as well as back issues, online at -

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-matters



Digital future – the Nadder Close digital booth

The communal room at Nadder Close, Tisbury will soon be home to a new set of interactive digital equipment for residents. A communal room computer will let tenants go online to access our digital services including the iHousing Portal and the Wiltshire Council website. Instructions will be provided, and the process simplified to make it accessible for all tenants to use, even if they have no experience with digital technology. Full training and information will be made available to all residents and the Engagement Team will be on hand to provide further support.

In addition to the computer, two digital information boards will be put up, one in the communal room and the other in the main hallway at the scheme entrance. These boards will display the latest information from Housing, letting us keep residents updated without delay or the risk of paper notices being covered or going astray.

This is a pilot project, but we hope to roll this out to all our sheltered schemes over time to enable access to our digital services for all sheltered scheme tenants.

If you would like to know more, please contact the Resident Engagement team.

Comms and Tech – tenant approved communication

We are looking for tenants and leaseholders to help us review how we communicate with you. We would like to hear your views on our quarterly housing magazine and the printed promotional posters and fliers we use.

We would also like to hear how you feel about the technology we use to communicate with you, such as online groups and meetings held through Microsoft Teams, and get your feedback about how we can make best use of it.

We have held some pilot meetings with interested tenants. The group has already looked at Housing Matters and put together a small survey asking what you think of the magazine and what you would like to see in the future. You will receive a copy via email if we have your email address. If not, you can complete it online here www.tinyurl.com/y74s8tbj or contact the team and we can send you out a copy in the post.

The iHousing Portal – what can it do for you?

The iHousing portal continues to provide the best way to quickly access your tenancy account and information at any time of day or night. Check your rent balance, arrange payments, and access our services at the touch of a button.

We would encourage users to report all non-emergency repairs via iHousing. It's quicker than phoning, you can report a repair at any time, not just in office hours, and you can follow the status of each reported repair on the portal.

The portal also contains links to our latest resident information and engagement opportunities. A banner displays any current news and information updates from the Housing team.

Do you need help with the iHousing portal? Having trouble registering your account? Not sure how to report a repair or check your balance? Our Resident Engagement team is here to help.

You can contact us by email or phone with any queries and a member of staff will help to resolve the problem. You can also book in an MS TEAMS video call and our staff will provide a step-by-step tutorial so you can see what you need to do. Just contact the Resident Engagement team for more information.



The importance of email

When we sign up a new tenancy, we always ask for the prospective tenant to provide their email address. We do this for reasons including:

- no delays in sending you important information about your tenancy and your messages to and from us are received immediately
- a reduced impact on the environment with no need for paper letters to be sent out
- cost efficiency savings for the council such as postage and handling costs. Savings made by us mean that you benefit as we can redirect any savings towards our properties and assets
- a valid email address is required to sign up to our secure iHousing portal which gives you access to all your tenancy services online.

If you would like to know more or for help setting up an email address, please contact the Resident Engagement team.





Your housing service wants to hear from you

Would you like to know how you can become more involved and help improve how Wiltshire Council Housing delivers services to you, our residents? Then consider joining one of our tenants and leaseholder groups.

All our groups are open to tenants and leaseholders to join, and you can give as much or as little time as you like. There are opportunities for one-off projects or being part of an ongoing focus group with regular meetings and reviews.

You challenge, we change! The tenants and leaseholder's scrutiny panel

The Challenge and Change Group is made up of tenants and leaseholders and looks at how we deliver our housing services and how we can improve them while remaining cost effective. You can take part on a full or part time basis and support and training is available from Ian, our Governance and Scrutiny Officer.

Previous projects have included looking at Sheltered Housing Service Charges and separately the group looked at the complaints' procedure, the documents in our new tenants' welcome pack, more flexible options for leaseholder services charges and new or tougher key performance indicators to ensure the best service is being delivered.

You can find out more on the group's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-hap

The communications and technology focus group

We are looking for tenants and leaseholders to help us review how we communicate with you. We would like to hear your views on our quarterly housing magazine and the printed promotional posters and fliers we use.

We would also like to hear how you feel about the technology we use to communicate with you, such as online groups and meetings held through Microsoft Teams, and get your feedback about how we can make best use of it.

Opportunities coming soon

Future focus group opportunities we hope to include:

- looking at how we build, repair, and maintain our housing stock, both the homes and the community around them
- looking at how we deal with Anti-Social Behaviour
- the chance for tenants to take part in Mystery Shopping to make sure the service we deliver is of the high standards we expect. Training will be provided.

You can find out more information about these and other opportunities and what your Resident Engagement team is doing for you on our website www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-resident-involvement or through the iHousing Portal by clicking on the community tab and selecting "Get Involved".

You can also contact us directly by emailing tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk or by calling 0300 456 0117 – option 5.



Resident Engagement team news

As many of you will already know especially those of you who live in our sheltered schemes, we said a fond farewell to two of the Resident Engagement teams officers.

Eamon has retired and Lydia is off to pasture's new within the council.

Rob and Kate will remain available to help with all queries and we look forward to welcoming new members of the team in due course.

Resident Engagement team back out in communities

Officers from the Resident Engagement team have been out and about on our housing estates and visiting blocks of flats in the

Salisbury area, delivering information direct to tenants about how they can get more involved with the housing service and the latest on how to apply for small improvement bids and other opportunities. They have also carried out inspections of the communal areas, reporting any repairs needed or other problems such as items in hallways that may pose a fire risk.

Our calendar of yearly Estate Inspections and the reports following these visits are available on our website along with the reports from recent inspections. If you would like an inspection in your area or for more information about how you can report problems identified in your community, please contact the Resident Engagement team.

Date	Location	Roads to be visited
24/06/2022	Idminster, Allington, Newton Tony and Cholderton	Horefield at Idminster, Bourne View at Allington, Amesbury Road and Edrics Green at Cholderton, The Croft at Newton Tony
15/07/2022	Bemerton Heath	Glyndebourne Close
29/07/2022	Ditchampton	The Hollows, Wishford Road, Philip Road, Olivier Road, Elizabeth Road
26/08/2022	Salisbury	Waters Road, Fairfield Road, Donaldson Road and Osborne House
30/09/2022	Tisbury	The Avenue, Queens Road, Court Street Close
21/10/2022	East Harnham	Ridings Mead, Old Street, Hollows Close
25/11/2022	Shrewton	Trinity Road, Far View Road, London Road, Hindes Meadow
16/12/2022	The Friary	Whitefriars Road, Blackfriars Way and Eyres Way

You said!

Residents at our sheltered schemes told us that our community club meetings were sometimes not booked in for the time that worked best for when tenants had other communal activities taking place during the week.

We did!

We have changed the dates on meetings where requested to better fit with the community activities already occurring.



SIBs continue to deliver community improvements across our housing stock

Wiltshire Council Housing are pleased to announce the continuation of our yearly Small Improvement Bids. This is a great opportunity for your community to be awarded environmental improvement works up to a value of £10,000 to cover the costs of improvements that benefit you and your neighbours.

Perhaps you want to have new hardstanding created to improve car parking, cut back the trees and bushes around the communal footpaths or, install some seating or picnic benches to improve the communal garden at your block for the benefit of all tenants.

Some successful bids from previous years include:

- a bid for communal areas behind a block of flats to be improved and a playhouse for local children to be installed
- a bid to have new hard standing areas created for additional car parking for residents
- a bid to improve a community garden, provide additional outdoor seating and create new community spaces for residents to enjoy
- a bid to resurface a play area and install a new basketball hoop
- a bid to have the local housing car parks cleaned and new white lines painted, with overgrown bushes cut back and tidied
- a bid from residents to have a ramp installed in the communal garden to make it easier for older residents to access the higher lawn area
- a bid to create patio areas in the communal garden, installation of new water butts for the gardeners to use and building new wooden planters.

The application process is simple

1. Residents decide what they would like to be done together as a community. You could

hold a community meeting in person or online or discuss plans via local social media.

2. Check out the Terms and Conditions on our website to see what we will be looking at for the bid to be successfully considered. If you do not have access to the website online, contact the Resident Engagement team to request a copy.
3. Complete the application form available on the website. Guidance is available and the Resident Engagement team are on hand to help with any questions. We can also send out a paper copy if you have no internet access.
4. You can include photos, drawings and any other relevant information to support the application. This should include a list of names and signatures from all local tenants agreeing and supporting what work they would like done. Without proof that residents are all in agreement, the bid may not be able to progress.
5. Choose if you would like the work carried out by Wiltshire Council, or if residents will organise the works and use their own contractor (subject to the terms and conditions).
6. Fill out all the sections on the form and submit it. Please ensure you have read all the documentation on this page before submitting.

Your Resident Engagement officer is on hand to help with any queries or to help with filling out the form. You can even book an online TEAMS meeting for an officer to speak to you and your community about the bid.

The forms are available on the website to download from www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-resident-involvement

Or you can contact the team to request a paper copy is sent out to you.

Contact us by email at Tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk via the iHousing Portal or by phoning 0300 456 0117 – option 5

Work has started on the latest batch of Small Improvement Bids across the county

Lanfear Close

Residents at Lanfear Close applied for the front area of their block to be smartened up including resurfacing of the carpark and some fresh white lines painted. They also asked for wooden screen fencing to be installed to cover the bin store which was outside the communal room windows.

Crane Lodge

At Crane Lodge in Salisbury, parking was a problem in the small carpark at the front. The bid by residents there involved the carpark being cleaned, with new lines painted on the bays to improve capacity. Some hedges were removed, and new tarmac laid to square off the space and provide additional parking. A bonus of this was the opening up of the front of the carpark to views across the road at the medieval bridge and into the town centre, making the carpark much lighter and giving a feeling of more space.



Before and during the clearing of the undergrowth at Crane Lodge

Downside

Over at Downside in Wilton, residents asked for a way to access the higher lawn sections, currently cut off from the path at the back of the scheme by a grass bank. Initially requesting some steps be installed, after consultation with residents, a new ramp with hand railing has now been put in so that residents can access the upper lawn safely. Working with the contractors and surveyor, residents agreed the layout and to have the ramp continue onto the lawn for some distance to provide a level section for easier walking. This has opened more of the garden space and means more residents can access the wooden planters and higher lawn areas.



Before and after improving access to the higher lawn sections at Downside in Wilton

More work continues to be delivered including a refurbished communal garden at a block of flats in Salisbury, new benches and garden improvements at our sheltered housing schemes and a log cabin for the community garden project on Bemerton Heath.

Tackling anti-social behaviour in our communities

At Wiltshire Council we are committed to working with residents to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). Some ASB can be nipped in the bud if problems are not dealt with quickly they can often escalate. Government has provided us with a variety of tools which are regularly used to tackle a whole range of anti-social behaviour. We understand how these tools work and how we can use them at the right time to protect neighbourhoods quickly. The first priority must always be to protect the community from ASB but we need solutions that work in the long term. Often the best way to do this is to offer support to people to change their behaviour. This support can get to the root causes and put an end to behaviour that damages other people’s lives. It is also important to note that many people find it stressful to make reports about ASB so we need to make it as easy as possible for you to kick start action by reporting incidents. This is especially important if court action takes place and someone is asked to give evidence. Victims of ASB are kept up to date regularly with progress of the case and offered

support by offering a referral to Victim Support. We are continuing to work hard to resolve ASB as and where it is reported.

What action did Wiltshire Council Housing taken in 2021 in relation to ASB?

There are a number of tools that are regularly utilised to tackle ASB that have escalating severity. When we receive a report of ASB we will respond using a multitude of tools.

ASB Power utilised	Quantity
Community protection warnings	14
Community protection notices	4
Injunctions	2
Closure order	13
Court undertaking	1
Notice of seeking possession	11
Cases pending outcome at court	3
Possession of Property resulting in eviction	1

What should I do about ASB?

You should report it to the Housing team as soon as it occurs. You can do this by phone, email or through the iHousing Portal - 0300 456 0117 Option 4 or email - hsgmail@wiltshire.gov.uk or visit - www.wiltshire.gov.uk/community-safety-antisocial-behaviour.

If a crime has been committed, you should always contact Wiltshire Police in the first instance by calling 999 for emergencies or if you fear for your own or anybody else’s safety and 101 for non-emergencies or on line at Report a crime | Wiltshire Police.

The council is committed to continuing to resolve anti-social behaviour as, where and when it occurs.



Carparking

You Said

We often receive complaints from tenants about a lack of parking. Whilst we appreciate that this is an increasing issue, we are not always able to provide practical solutions in so much as there may not be sufficient land available etc. However, we often receive complaints about “non-residents” using available spaces. This problem is often most acute in central Salisbury where our car parks become very attractive for shoppers, commuters and local residents who suffer from a lack of on-street parking. In some of our most abused locations we have installed barriers to prevent the issue but this is expensive, sometimes unattractive and often compromises existing parking provision.

We Did

We have listened to concerns and considered a range of ways to prevent inappropriate use of our limited car parking – intended for our tenants. We have embarked on a 6-month pilot project with All Parking Services to monitor and enforce the use of car parks.

Each flat will be issued with a permit to display in the tenants or leaseholder’s vehicle. The number of permits issued will depend on the number of flats vs the number of available car parking spaces. Clear signage will be erected by All Parking Services and any vehicle found to be parked in the car park without a permit will be fined. The majority of the revenue generated will be retained by All Parking Services and will pay for the monitoring and enforcement of the car parks in the scheme. Once the pilot has been tested, we will assess its effectiveness and potentially widen the scope to include other problem areas. If you feel such a scheme would benefit the area in which you live, please get in touch – tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk.

Unfortunately, we must stress that parking intended for residents is on a first come first served basis so whilst this scheme will help it will not guarantee residents a parking bay.

Whilst on the topic of parking – do you know that you can rent a garage? If you would like register please visit us at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-garages

The car parks which are taking part in this trial are:

- Osborne House
- Southbank House
- Wyld House
- Jubilee Court
- Woodstock Road (Flats)
- Wyndham Road (Flats)



Protect your property from damp, mould, and condensation

At any time of year, although more common in winter months, your home is vulnerable to damp and condensation leading to mould and other problems which can affect your home and your health. This can be avoided by taking simple precautions to avoid condensation build up and damp in the home.

What causes damp?

The most common cause of damp is due to condensation building up in the home.

Damp can be also caused by:

- leaking pipes, wastes, or overflows
- rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing
- spilling from a blocked gutter
- water penetration around window frames
- leaking through a cracked down pipe.

Rising damp can be due to a defective or missing damp-course or because there is no damp course. If earth or flowerbeds have been allowed to build up against the wall these can bridge the damp course and allow damp to enter the property. These causes of damp often leave a 'tidemark.'

How do I stop damp?

Regularly look up and visually check the guttering, roof, and walls of your property from ground level. If you can see water leaking from the gutters or an overflow pipe down the wall, if the wall looks wet or has patches that won't dry out or if you are able to identify a fault such as water entering around the windows or broken tiles then contact the Responsive Repairs team. Make sure plants, soil or other items are not piled up against the walls and creating a bridge over the damp course.

Inside, check your cupboards under the sink. Any unexplained puddles of water could be coming from the plumbing. Report any wet patches that appear internally on ceilings or chimney breasts. Even if it hasn't rained, there could be a plumbing problem.

By reporting them immediately to the Repairs team on the iHousing portal, we can respond to prevent any damage and damp from spreading.

What is condensation?

Condensation is caused by moisture in the air turning in to water droplets when it comes into contact with a cold surface. There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If the air gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. You may notice it when you see your breath on a cold day or when the mirror mists over when you have a bath.

Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather, whether it is raining or dry. The most obvious sign of condensation is mist on the windows, but it can also form:

- in corners
- in or behind wardrobes and cupboards
- on north-facing walls
- where furniture is pushed against a wall, such as beds or sofas.

Some simple changes you can make to avoid condensation forming at the property:

- Set your heating properly. By keeping your home at a steady temperature rather than having it heat up and cool down by a larger margin, you can help prevent condensation forming. If you need help with setting your heating or if the heating is faulty, you can contact the Responsive Repairs team who will be happy to help.
- You should keep your home well ventilated. Ventilation is needed to get rid of moisture being produced all the time. Keep the window trickle ventilator open all the time if possible, and especially when someone is in the room.

- Make sure your extractor fans are working and the fan is clean and clear of dust or blockages. The extractor fans fitted should never be turned off and are very energy efficient with very minimal running costs. Contact Responsive Repairs if the fan is not working.
- When cooking, to reduce the amount of moisture, cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling.
- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use even if your kitchen or bathroom has an extractor fan.
- Paraffin and portable flueless bottled-gas heaters put a lot of moisture into the air. One gallon of gas or paraffin produces about a gallon of water. As per your tenancy agreement you should not be using these types of heaters in your property for safety reasons.
- When washing clothes, hang outdoors to dry if you can. Or put them in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on. It is best to fit a fan that can be switched to run continuously for clothes drying. If you have a tumble dryer, make sure you vent it to the outside, unless it is the self-condensing type.
- Wipe moisture off surfaces such as windows every day.
- Allow space for the air to circulate in and around your furniture. Open doors to ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Leave space between the backs of wardrobes and the wall. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls, such as walls which have a room on both sides, rather than against outside walls.

If condensation and damp are left untreated, they can create conditions that are suitable for the growth of mould.

Mould can affect your health and should be dealt with as soon as possible for your safety and wellbeing.

How to tackle mould in five simple steps

1. First treat the mould already in your home. If you deal with the basic problem, mould should not reappear.
2. To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number.' Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely.
3. Dry-clean mildewed clothes, and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
4. After treatment redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould. Note that this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper. When wallpapering, use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth.
5. The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to eliminate dampness.

You can find out more about treating mould and damp in your home on our website.

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-maintenance



Communal doors – keep closed, keep secure

Across our housing stock, our communal doors are being upgraded from the older style doors to Bamfords composite doors with magnetic locks and an electronic door entry system. This allows residents to control access to their communal areas as visitors will call the flat and can be buzzed in by the resident, without having to leave their flat. The new electronic fobs are easy to use and can be replaced more quickly and easily than the old system of suited keys.

However, as the weather improves, officers visiting blocks are finding that these doors are being wedged open, either with bricks and stones, furniture, or wooden door wedges. This is especially true where doors open out to a communal garden.

While some residents have said that this makes it easier if you're going in and out of these doors on a regular basis, it brings a number of problems for the door and the safety and security of all residents in the block.

If these doors are propped open for long periods of time, then there is a danger of the door being damaged. This could be a warping of the actual door, damage to hinges or the closing mechanism, not to mention potentially damage to the finishes of the door and frame from bricks, or whatever the wedge is.

Replacing the doors and door frame usually costs in the region of £2000-2500 which comes out of the Housing budget, meaning less is available for other services and improvements. Tenants identified leaving the door wedged open could face a recharge for the costs of repairs or replacement. If a door in your block is being wedged open regularly, please contact your neighbourhood officer as soon as possible.

It is important to keep the communal doors closed properly as they provide security to tenants' flats, hallways, and any internally located sheds. If you have visitors, let them know how the entry system works ahead of time. Tenants should only be buzzing people into the block they know or are expecting.

There is also the element of keeping some heat in the communal areas reducing heat loss to flats though the communal corridor walls which will ultimately help save energy costs.

Some residents have asked about access for services such as the postal worker or delivery drivers. Royal Mail have access to the blocks, so this is not a problem. Delivery companies should not be leaving packages outside of flat doors as they should be being delivered to either tenants or neighbours as requested and therefore, they should be contacting the individual flat for access.

With regards to emergency services, most, if not all, the blocks have a fire switch which the fire brigade can use to open doors and Wiltshire Police have fobs to gain access. In the case of a power cut the door will "fail open." This means that during a loss of power, the maglock stops working and the door can be opened like a normal door to ensure residents safety and quick evacuation if needed.

For more information please contact the Resident Engagement team.



Your yearly boiler safety service

If you have a gas, oil or air source boiler in your home we will service it every year. The service makes sure that the boiler is working safely and efficiently. The service visit will usually take less than half an hour. You can help the engineer by ensuring an adult waits in for the service, making sure that there is credit on any pre-payment meter and checking that the boiler is easy to get to. Let the engineer know if you have any questions or issues about your heating or hot water.

Senior Contract Surveyor Mike Kalvis says: "Thank you to all our customers who support us by waiting in for the engineer to call. We have over four thousand service visits to carry out each and every year! I am proud of our British Gas engineers who go the extra mile to get the job done."

Have that chimney swept!

A small number of our rural properties have solid fuel stoves that provide heating and hot water. We sweep these appliances twice each year to make sure they are safe and efficient. If you use a chimney or your own solid fuel appliance YOU must arrange for it to be swept regularly. Only use an approved HETAS sweep and keep their certificate for your records.

Carbon monoxide - think safety!

Carbon monoxide is a deadly gas that kills around sixty people each year in England and Wales. The gas is invisible and odourless and breathing it can cause illness or even death. Possible symptoms of exposure can include headaches, dizziness, nausea and in severe cases loss of consciousness and death.

Carbon monoxide is produced when fuel is burnt. The fumes from oil boilers, gas fires and solid fuel stoves should be carried away from the building. Defective heating appliances can be dangerous. Follow this safety advice:

- Always have your boiler serviced each year. British Gas will write to you when the engineer plans to visit.
- Follow the engineer's advice – for example, to replace your own cooker if it is defective.

It's the law!

The Gas Safety (Installations and Use) Regulations 1998 require all our fossil fuel boilers to be serviced annually. Wiltshire Council has a contract with British Gas (P H Jones). Their experienced and highly qualified Gas Safe engineers carry out service and repair work to the highest standards. They will check that your heating system meets the latest safety standards and is working efficiently. Servicing is so important that we will even take legal action to get access to the property - if all else fails.

In an emergency!

If you think you can smell gas, call the free emergency number: 0800 111 999

- Allow British Gas to carry out any scheduled repair work.
- Do not interfere with your boiler or the ventilation in the room.
- Do not obstruct the boiler chimney (flue) – for example, by building a garden structure nearby.

The council is currently installing Carbon Monoxide detectors in all its properties with fossil fuel appliances. When the British Gas engineer visits they will fix a detector in the room with the boiler. This will reassure you that no harmful fumes are present. The engineer will show you how to test the alarm - by pressing the button on the front each month. If the alarm were ever to sound, you must leave the building straight away and contact the council.

Council House Build Programme continues to grow

During 2021/22 the council's Residential Development team have continued to develop a programme of new council housing. During the last year, the team delivered 21 additional homes to the council's stock. This included 10 brand new homes and 11 purchased properties.

Last year (April 2021 – March 2022) a huge amount of effort has been made to progress sites for delivery in this year (April 2022 – March 2023) which will include the delivery of 19 homes manufactured off-site and transported to 3 sites in Durrington, Rowde and Corsley. We have 5 homes currently being built in Salisbury on the old Youth Centre at Wilton Road and 6 homes also being built in Semington. This is in addition to the 10 at Upavon and 14 in Chippenham (as set out in the article overleaf).

Work is also ongoing to identify more land opportunities for development and the process

of finding a piece of land, de-risking the land, designing the site and seeking planning permission, can take approximately 2 years. Although much of this work is undertaken with very little early reward, the process itself can be extremely rewarding when you are able to progress a project through all of the stages to see the first spade in the ground. At present, we have a number of officers dedicated to identifying land opportunities across the county to help combat the growing housing need. Options are currently being explored in Devizes, Ludgershall, Mere, Corsham, Netheravon and Salisbury. If you are in housing need or aware of anyone in need of housing, it is important to ensure that they are registered for housing on Homes 4 Wiltshire (www.homes4wiltshire.co.uk) as this will help to determine where the greatest housing need is and focus our efforts in finding land opportunities.

Did you know that Wiltshire Council is leading the way with Zero Carbon development?

The Residential Development team have spent the past few years driving change within the construction industry. Wiltshire Council are registered members of the UK Green Building Council and a Business Partner of Construct Zero (part of the Construction Leadership Council). Our ambition to go beyond Building Regulation requirements and develop Zero Carbon homes has created a lot of opportunity to explore alternative ways of development. Our 19 homes manufactured off-site will offer zero carbon (in-use), with a fabric-first approach the homes are designed to be air-tight to reduce leaking energy and keep homes warm in the winter, thus reducing your energy bills. In

addition, homes are designed with air-source heat pumps in place of gas boilers. The energy consumption is then off set with solar panels. Therefore, it is anticipated that homes will be naturally warmer (requiring less energy to heat them) but with solar panels to help reduce any energy costs.

As part of the design process, homes are plotted to help orientate them in the most energy efficient design and our ambition to build "beautiful neighbourhoods" creates a focus on designing our land opportunities to offer inviting places to live, work and play.



Occupations at Upavon

Wiltshire Council is in contract with Redcliffe Homes to provide 11 affordable rented and 7 shared ownership homes at Whistledown Farm, Upavon. The variety of affordable homes ranges from one-bed flats to four-bed houses. Each will be well built to a high specification and energy performance.

Phase one and two of this development is now complete with the completion of selling, and occupation of 7 two and three bed shared ownership homes this spring.

Phase three of the development remains under construction, this will deliver 11 one to four bed affordable rented homes this summer.

If you would like any further information about these affordable homes, you should contact Andrew M Mead, Residential Development Project Manager, at AndrewM.Mead@Wiltshire.gov.uk.



Construction continues at Chippenham

Wiltshire Council is in contract with Redcliffe Homes to provide 17 affordable rented and 11 shared ownership homes at Rowden Brook, Chippenham. The variety of affordable homes will range from one-bed flats to four-bed houses. Each will be well built to a high specification and energy performance.

Phase one of this development is now complete with 2 two-bed shared ownership houses sold, and 1 two-bed and 3 three-bed affordable rented houses already occupied.

Phase two of this development is now well underway, with the completion of 6 one-bed flats, 2 two-bed and 2 four-bed affordable rented homes scheduled for completion this summer.

This is part of Wiltshire Council's drive to provide 1,000 affordable homes over the next decade.

If you would like any further information about these affordable homes, you should contact Andrew M Mead, Residential Development Project Manager, at AndrewM.Mead@Wiltshire.gov.uk.



Downsizing from your current Wiltshire Council home?

Do you have extra bedrooms that you no longer use? Are your heating bills rising but you are heating rooms you no longer need? Is your garden getting a handful and costing more to maintain? Do you want a home closer to local shops and services to reduce your outgoings on fuel or public transport?

If the answer is yes, then moving to a smaller property that is cheaper to run may be a big help. It could provide you with a more manageable home that could also mean a reduction in the costs you pay each month. A smaller home means lower household bills, lower rent and council tax, avoiding bedroom

tax and less costs to clean and run. A home closer to shops or in a town or city can save you money on your travel by avoiding using the car or bus. It will also help to free up a much-needed family home on our housing register.

When comparing the average property, with the prices of gas and electricity at the time of publication, the difference between bills for a three-bedroom property and a two-bedroom property works out at around £200 a year. While many factors and circumstances apply to your energy usage, the below graph shows the overall average bills and potential savings per year just on your utility bills for downsizing.



We understand that it can be very daunting to leave a home that you've lived in for a long time and that choosing to downsize to a new home is a big decision. If you feel that you would like more information, please contact us on 0300 456 0117 Option 4 where we will be only too pleased to advise you further. If necessary, your local housing officer can visit you at home to give you further information and to help and guide you through every step of the process and can advise on any financial assistance available to help with the cost of moving.

Tips to help tackle the cost of living rises

It's been hard to miss news about energy bills over the past few months and the increase in the energy price cap in April. This has mainly been caused as countries began to recover from the pandemic, demand for gas started to increase again and could not be met due to a shortage in supply, causing gas prices to increase.

Although household bills have already reached a record high, the energy price cap is

expected to go up again in October. For many households, this is worrying news. An increase of this size could push the typical annual energy bill up to almost £2,000 per year.

Take a look at the Energy Savings Trust's tips and advice on ways to save energy and lower your bills. More information can be found at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Set your heating efficiently

Make sure you have your heating and hot water are correctly set up. If you have electric heating, make sure your tariff is set up correctly and be mindful of using booster functions such as the immersion heater in your cylinder during peak electricity usage times. If you need help and advice about how your heating system works, please contact the Neighbourhood Team. For more information about your tariff including how economy 7 and 10 plans work, contact your supplier.

Switch off standby

You can save around £40 a year just by remembering to turn your appliances off standby mode. Almost all electrical appliances can be turned off at the plug without upsetting their programming. You may want to think about getting a standby saver or smart plug which allows you to turn all your appliances off standby in one go.

Check the instructions for any appliances you aren't sure about. Some satellite and digital TV recorders may need to be left plugged in so they can keep track of any programmes you want to record.

Turn off lights

Turn your lights off when you're not using them or when you leave a room. This will save you around £14 a year on your annual energy bills. Replacing all the lights in your home with LED bulbs could help you save even more and is better for the environment as well.

Avoid the tumble dryer

Avoid using a tumble dryer for your clothes. Dry clothes on racks or lines outside to save £40 a year. Most of our blocks of flats have communal drying areas in the gardens or even internal drying rooms in some cases. If the washing lines are broken or missing, contact the Responsive Repairs Team. Remember to avoid drying items inside or on radiators as this can lead to damp in your home.

Reduce hot water usage

Keeping your shower time to just 4 minutes could save a typical household £45 a year on their energy bills. Don't leave hot taps running longer than necessary.

Be energy savvy in the kitchen

Kettles are one of the most used appliances in the kitchen. But many of us will admit that we at least occasionally boil the kettle with more water than we're going to use.

Avoid overfilling the kettle and save yourself £8 a year on your electricity bill. Alternatively, you can put the boiled water into a thermos to use later without having to boil the kettle again.

Help to tackle the cost of living rises

Plan your weekly shop. Make a shopping list and stick to it. Shop on a weekly basis, just topping up with essential fresh items in between.

Shop around for the best deals. Local shops and markets can work out cheaper than supermarkets for certain items and all shops may have shorter life items discounted towards the end of the day. Try switching to shops own brands rather than branded products. For toiletries and cleaning products, see if you can save money by buying a larger pack that will last longer.

Cut down on food waste when cooking. Buy loose fruit and veg where possible, to avoid buying large, prepacked quantities you won't use and may end up wasting. Keep a note of the food you use and what's left over each week so you can see where you can make savings. Batch cooking and freezing portions for later can also help you use up left-over vegetables and ingredients before they go out of date.

Check out the 2Good2Go app. The app lists daily unsold products from your local shops and restaurants which you can pick up for a bargain price. It also includes advice such as simple, affordable recipe ideas.

Eating out can be expensive, especially with larger families. Planning a home cooked version of your takeaway favourites means you can get the whole family involved in the cooking. Its more fun and can work out a lot cheaper.

Taking a packed lunch to work can deliver savings over time compared to buying lunches from shops, even those with meal deals. You can use leftovers in sandwiches or maybe batch cooked portions heated up as a quick and affordable alternative.

Take a flask of hot drink instead of buying from a shop or cafe. We all love a coffee or tea during a busy day but swapping just two shop-bought hot drinks a week for your flask could save you around £250 a year.

Consider subscriptions services you currently use. If there is more than one person in your household paying for subscriptions such as music or TV streaming, combining them into a family plan could save you money each month. Look at local recreation facilities in your area such as outdoor gyms in parks and open spaces that can be used for free. Information about leisure activities in your area can be found on our website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure.

Use your local library. Libraries are an amazing local resource that can be very under-utilised. They are a great place to spend a cosy afternoon or for school holiday activities without spending any money! Check out your local library on the Wiltshire Council website www.wiltshire.gov.uk/libraries-home for a full list of services such as free-to-use computers, classes and events for families running during the school holidays.

You may be eligible to claim Working From Home Tax Relief. If your employer has asked you to work from home in the last year, you could be eligible for up to £125. Find out more online at www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home Remember if you want to run your own business from a Council Property you need to have written permission from your Neighbourhood Officer.



Loan Sharks

If you have borrowed money from a loan shark you haven't broken the law they have. If you are worried about this talk to your debt adviser or call the confidential number below.

Remember loan sharks often:

- offer you a cash loan but do not give you any paperwork
- take your benefit or bank card as security on the loan
- don't tell you when you will finish paying
- increase the amount you owe even if you are making regular payments
- threaten or use violence to get money from you.

If you think you may have borrowed from a loan shark call the England Illegal Money Lending Team hotline and talk to us in complete confidence.

We can discuss with you any worries you may have and will listen, give information and offer advice on your particular situation. We help people make sense of what is happening to them and will explain to you the choices you can make and help you take back control from the loan shark.

Call us on: 0300 555 2222

Text: 07860022116 with your message

Email: reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk

Report a loan shark online at: stoploansharks.co.uk

Illegal Money Lending
Team England

STOPLOANSHARKS
Intervention . Support . Education



Tenancy Sustainment Service for Wiltshire Council tenants

Free
advice and guidance

Need help managing your finances and your tenancy?

What can we help with?

- Any debt or money difficulties.
- Maximising your income.
- Offering welfare benefit advice – making sure you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to.
- Help with applying for grants.
- We can offer advice and guidance on moving home through Home Swapper or Homes 4 Wiltshire.
- Help setting up a bank account/direct debit.
- Help you manage your money and make your rent payments by offering budgeting support.
- Offer advice and support to access employment and education.
- Referring and signposting you to more specialist services if appropriate.

How can we help?

- We are happy to arrange home visits, meet at our offices or offer support, where appropriate, over the phone.

How do I get in touch?

If you would like more information on our service, or would like to take advantage of the support on offer, please contact the income team on 0300 456 0117 (option 1) or email housingtso@wiltshire.gov.uk



Our success

Working with our Tenancy Sustainment Team can really make a difference.

In 2020/2021 we achieved a total financial benefit for the tenants we worked with of over £675k

Get in touch for more information.

You said!

168 tenants approached or were referred to our in-house support service for support, assistance and financial advice.

We did!

In 2021/2022 the Tenancy Sustainment team helped 168 tenants with financial advice and support. The financial benefit gained for these tenants totalled £796k and included:

Type	Amount
Grant funding secured	£63,500
3rd Party debts written off	£94,779
Benefit backdates	£156,528
Additional benefit secured	£481,444
Total	£796,251

If you have concerns about your finances and tenancy and think what we may be able to help you maximise your income, please do not hesitate to contact the team on 0300 456 0117 – option 1 or by email to – housingtso@wiltshire.gov.uk