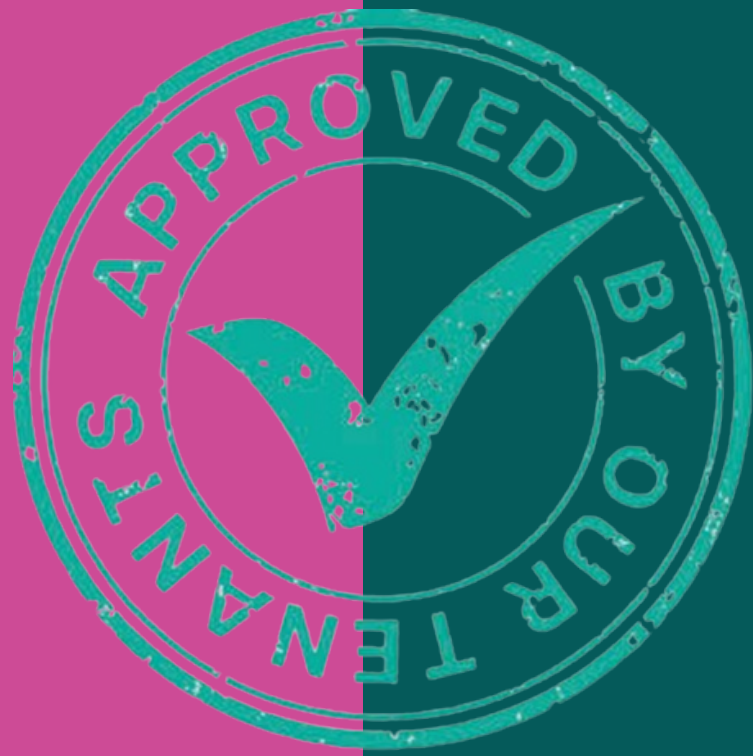


Babergh Housing Annual Report

2023/24



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Welcome

I am proud to introduce this year's Annual Report to Tenants, a testament to our commitment to transparency and accountability in our housing services. Covering the financial year from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, this report, crafted with valuable input from our dedicated Tenant Board, reflects our ongoing efforts to enhance tenant engagement and improve the services we provide. We are particularly focused on ensuring safety, maintaining properties to high standards, and effectively responding to tenant concerns and complaints, as highlighted by the performance metrics shared within. Our collaboration with tenants has never been stronger, and we remain committed to listening to your feedback as we strive to deliver homes and communities where you feel safe and valued. I would like to thank our Tenant Board for their continued support and engagement with our work.

Councillor Jessie Carter (Babergh)
Housing and Property Portfolio Holder



Welcome to the Annual Report to Tenants 23/24. The Tenant Board are happy to present this report.

When I first joined the Tenant Board Babergh and Mid Suffolk had two separate Boards, we have since joined together. Now after many challenges and establishing ourselves, we have a group of strong tenants who hold Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to account.

This year we have worked hard by re-launching the Tenant Board, creating a new Terms of Reference and conducting two improvement projects on the Annual Report and the Tenants Handbook. Our work will continue, and we are excited to show you this in the following Annual Report. I have noticed that tenants now, more than ever are encouraged to speak up, if you feel that you would like to get involved in any tenant engagement opportunity, please [email the Tenant Engagement team](#) or call 0300 123 4000, option 3.

Liz Perryman
Chair of the Tenant Board



Chapter 1 - Maintaining building safety

You told us:

Tenant satisfaction that we provide a well-maintained home.



Tenant satisfaction that we provide a safe home.



During 2023/24, we:

- Carried out **476** inspections on our communal areas to ensure that they comply with health and safety, working to ensure they are free from hazards.
- **83** schemes received Fire Risk Assessments with nine of these schemes being Sheltered Housing.
- We carried out **49** Water Hygiene Risk Assessments.

As of 31st March, we carried out the following checks to ensure our homes remain safe:

| | Babergh |
|--|----------------|
| Percentage of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out | 98.8% |
| Percentage of homes with a satisfactory Electrical Installation Condition report (EICR) under five years old | 95.8% |
| Percentage of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out | 96.4% |
| Percentage of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out | 100% |
| Percentage of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out | 100% |
| Percentage of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out | 100% |

As your landlord, we must carry out health and safety checks on your home.

In November 2022, we made a referral to the Regulator of Social Housing after we undertook a review and found issues with our health and safety compliance.

This resulted in a Regulatory Notice. The Regulator is monitoring us until it is assured sustainable, long-term improvements are embedded.

We have been meeting monthly with the Regulator to ensure we are moving in the right direction. So far, we have:

- Recruited a specialist to support us in making sure our new contracts offer better value for our tenants and meet our requirements.

- Ensured we have more robust data and systems across all health and safety areas, helping us to manage our properties better.
- Reduced outstanding health and safety checks.
- Relocated the damp and mould work to the Compliance Team and worked with a special contractor so urgent cases can be actioned promptly.
- Completed a review of our Compliance Team and a restructure to ensure we have the right people with the right skills in place.

We are continuing to engage fully with the Regulator, and we continue to work on plans to deliver full compliance.



Please remember, if we contact you to carry out a safety check or repair on your home, then please do let us have access. Our staff and contractors will always show ID before requiring access to your home.

Looking forward...

- A new contractor for fire safety; Openview will be servicing and maintaining all emergency lighting, fire extinguishers and fire alarm systems within our Sheltered Housing, blocks and other communal areas.
- PFL are replacing Signix as our electrical contractor completing repair and electrical testing within your home. They started in August on a three year contract which is always reviewed at the three years stage checking value for money and service.
- Gas Call replaced BHC as our domestic gas service from 1st November and also on a three year contract.
- We are currently tendering for a maintenance contract to service all our solar panels.
- We have restructured our compliance team so there are dedicated contracts managers for each of the seven safety areas.

With all these changes we have seen a dramatic increase in compliance and are now around 98% complaint on gas and electrical inspections and servicing.



Chapter 2 - Keeping properties in good repair

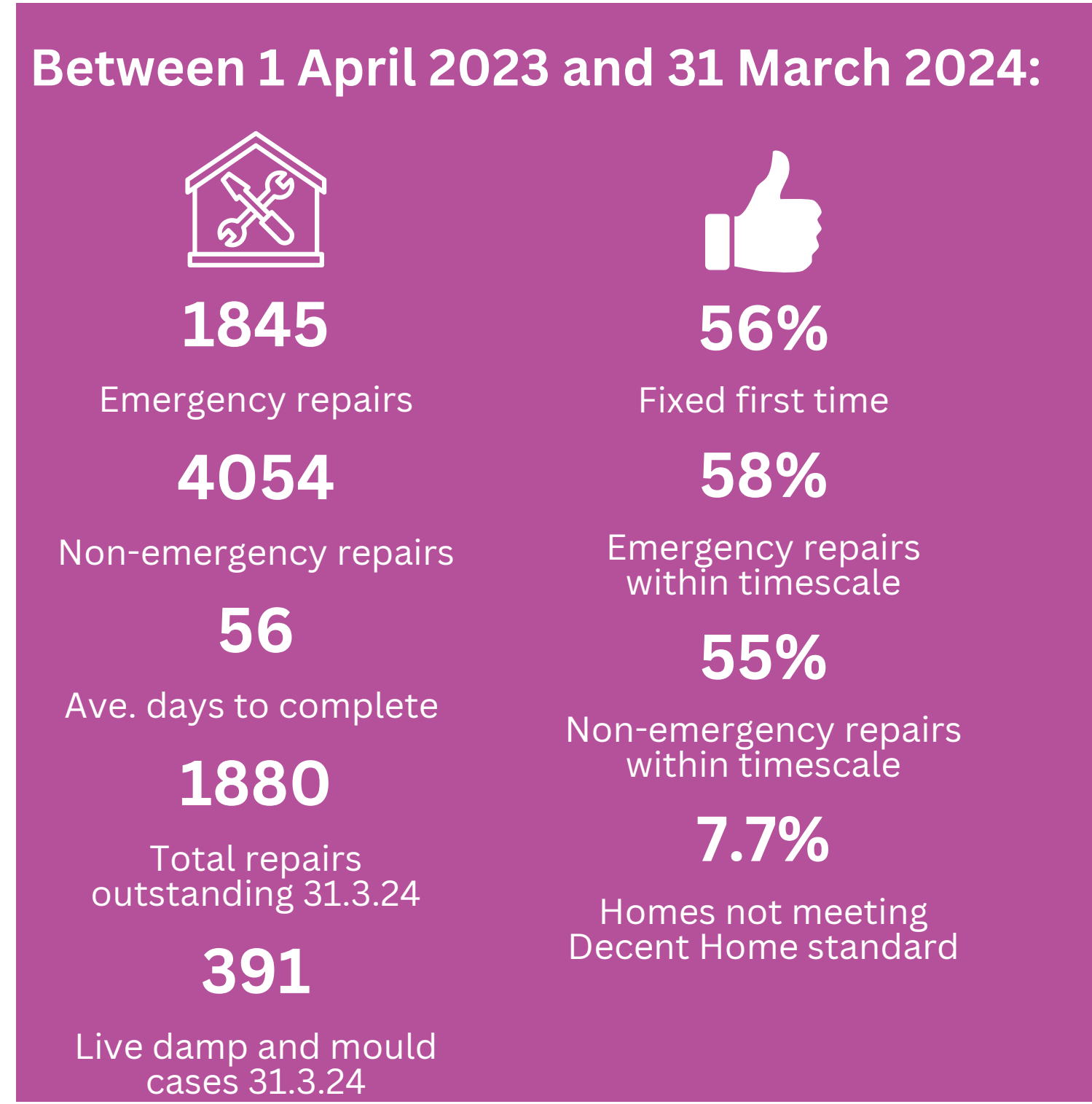
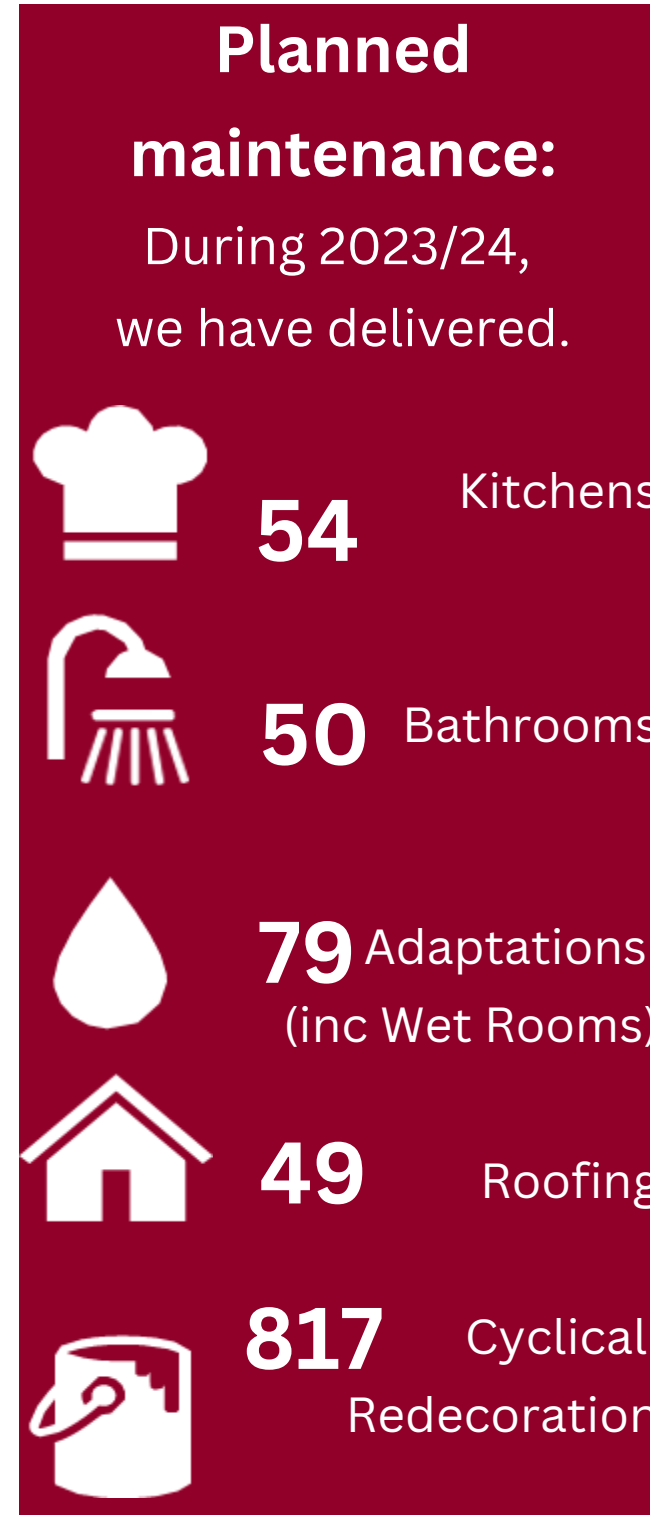
We know our performance in the way we repair and maintain your home needs to improve. This is why we are carrying out a review of the whole service. We want to provide the very best service for our tenants, whilst providing homes that are safe and well-maintained.

You told us:

Tenant satisfaction with repairs services in last 12 months.



Tenant satisfaction with time taken for repairs.



Looking forward...

Stock Condition Surveys

We are currently in the process of surveying all our properties to assess the condition. We are 91% of the way through this process and aim to have it completed by April 2025.

Once we have all the reports back, we will have a clear picture of what is needed in terms of planned maintenance. This will shape our asset management plans for the next few years.

Something to report

If you have a repair to report, or see something that you think needs our attention, please get in touch. You can [report on our website](#) or call 0300 123 4000, option 3.



Chapter 3 - To know how your landlord is performing

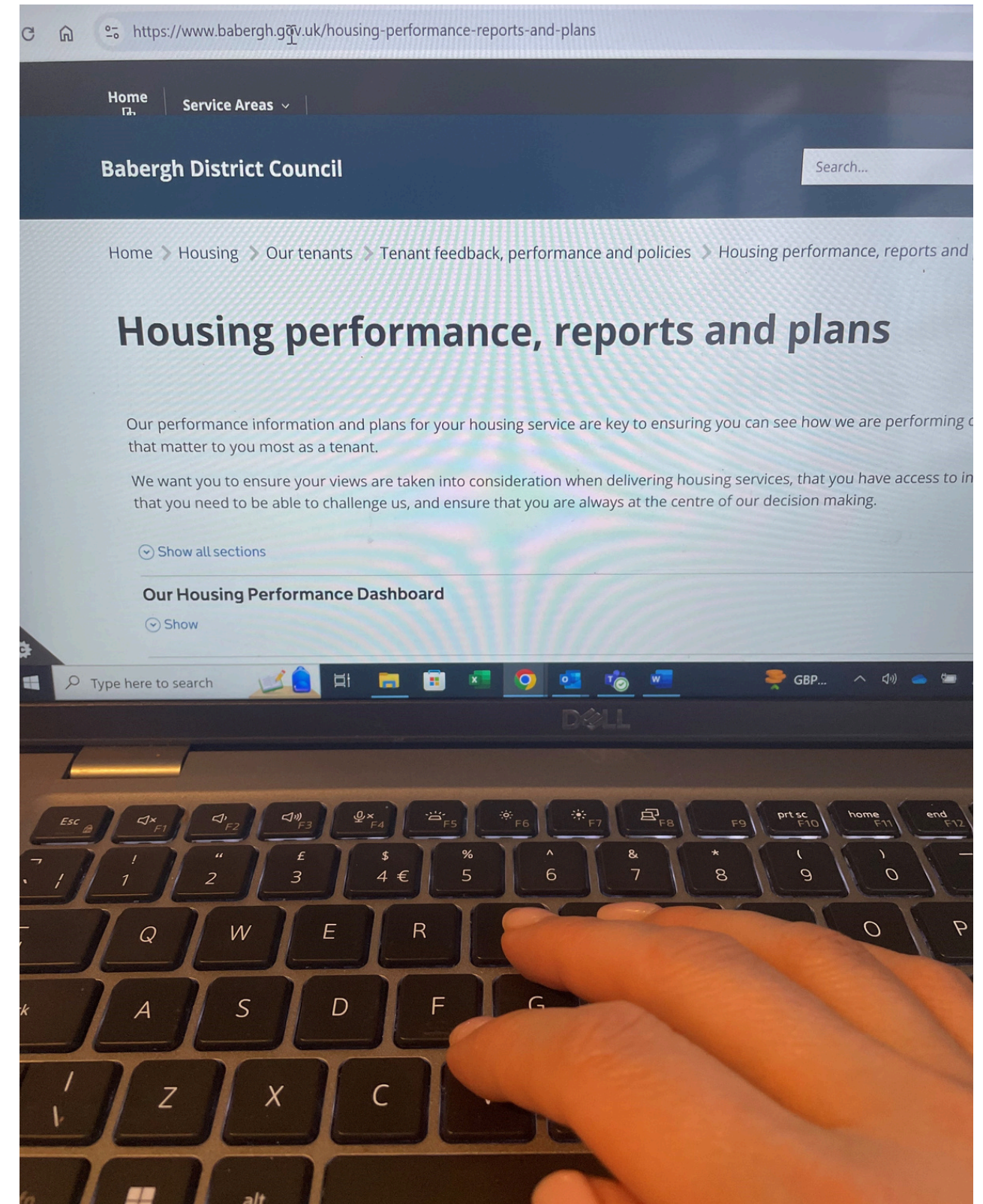
Since April 2023, we have been collecting our Tenant Satisfaction Measures data to submit the Regulator of Social Housing following changes to the way we are regulated. If you would like to see how we have performed, you can [visit our website](#).

The Regulator will be using this data to see how all landlords of social housing are performing and highlight where there may be issues that they need to investigate. It will also be useful for our tenants to see how their landlord is performing in relation to other social housing providers.

Every three months we publish our performance on our website based on what you told us was important to you through our Housing Performance Dashboards for tenants. These help you to understand how we are performing with matters that are important to you and your home.

We also make you aware of these through our tenant e-newsletter, My Home Bulletin. If you don't receive this, sign up now by emailing: myhome-noreply@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

To view the dashboard, or to provide us with feedback on what performance information you would like to see, [visit the dashboard page on our website](#).

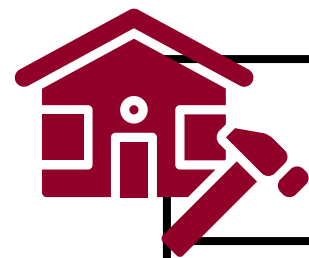


How satisfied are you with our services?

As well as our quarterly satisfaction survey, we carry out three surveys each month on specific subjects. These surveys ask tenants for their views on:

- their recent repair
- their move in to one of our homes
- their experiences of our handling of anti-social behaviour case

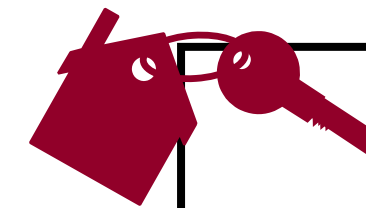
We have asked 750 tenants from across the two districts for their views in 2023/24. Here is a quick overview of the satisfaction results:



| REPAIRS | % |
|--------------------|-----|
| Ease of reporting | 87% |
| Appointment kept? | 80% |
| Easy to deal with? | 81% |
| Quality of work | 91% |
| Kept informed | 81% |



| ASB | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Ease of reporting | 71% |
| Kept informed? | 54% |
| Easy to deal with? | 71% |
| In reasonable time? | 66% |
| Satisfaction with outcome | 38% |



| NEW LETTING | % |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Info and advice beforehand | 84% |
| Kept informed throughout? | 84% |
| Easy to deal with? | 85% |
| Condition of home | 68% |
| Outstanding repairs on move in | 56% |

As with all the feedback we receive, we use this to understand what we can do to improve services for all our tenants and want to thank every one of you who has taken the time to participate. To find out more about the surveys and results, [visit our website](#).

Looking forward...

Improving tenant satisfaction

Now we have two years' worth of tenant satisfaction information, we are looking at what it is you have told us. This is to see how we can improve the services you receive and increase satisfaction across all our services.

Through the feedback we have received from over 1200 tenants, we have developed improvement action plans which are available on our websites, so tenants can monitor our progress.

The Tenant Board will also scrutinise our work and help us identify things that are going well, and where we need to focus out attention.

We held two focused improvement sessions in 2023/24 where staff and tenants came together to look at Complaints and targets which is on our website.

We looked at our complaint handling to improve our performance and time taken to respond and lessons learnt. As a result all Managers have completed training to further develop their knowledge in this area and support a better handling of complaints.

We have also developed an action plan to drive improvement which is being monitored.

We plan to hold three more Improvement Days in the next year, focussing on areas where tenants have told us we must improve.

You can [find out more on our website.](#)



Chapter 4 - Effective handling of complaints

You told us:

Compliments, comments, and complaints help us to improve the service we provide.

We continue to promote how to make a complaint through our e-bulletin tenant newsletter so that tenants can easily inform us when things aren't going well. We have also promoted the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints campaign 'Make it Right' through our e-bulletins.

Tenant satisfaction with our complaint handling.

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| 2023-24 score | 26% |
|----------------------|------------|

Stage 1 and 2 complaints

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Stage 1 complaints | 373 | 90 on time |
| Stage 2 complaints | 39 | 10 on time |

We know our performance against the Ombudsman code must improve, and we have been working on our performance so that you receive a prompt and fair response when you have told us things have gone wrong. Most of our complaints are in relation to delays in carrying out repairs and poor communication, both issues we are hoping to address with the work being done as part of the service review and investment in new repair reporting technology.

Looking forward

In June 2024, we implemented a new complaint handling system for all complaints received by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. We believe that this new system will improve our performance and boost satisfaction.

Over the next twelve months the Councils will look to improve the collection of our lessons learned from complaints and share these with our teams not just within

our Housing team but across the whole Council.

The improved collection of lessons learned from complaints, will be shared with our Complaint's Taskforce, which is made up of members of staff, tenants and councillors that continue to meet quarterly. You can see the [figures, themes, trends, and actions from the taskforce on our website](#).

We, as landlords, must now complete a self-assessment on our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. You can [find this on our website](#).

Need to make a compliment, comment or complaint?

Please go to page 23 for details on how to contact us.

Chapter 5 - Respectful and helpful engagement

We want you to have a voice on how we deliver your housing services. We are always looking for tenants and leaseholders to work with us, to help us improve our services for all residents.

You told us:

Tenant satisfaction that we listen to views and act upon them.









Tenant satisfaction that we keep tenants informed.



Tenant satisfaction that we treat tenants fairly and with respect.



Our highlights for 2023/24:

| | | |
|---|---|------|
|  | Total number of tenants engaged with in Mid Suffolk and Babergh | 1279 |
|  | Babergh 23/24 | 625 |
|  | Surveys | 837 |
|  | Recruitment and Misc. | 44 |
|  | In your community | 321 |
|  | Resident Readers | 77 |



Our highlights for 2023/24

Tenant Board

We have strengthened our Tenant Board increasing the numbers from four to six members in total.

We meet monthly, online, and out of office hours, and this year issues such as our forthcoming Tenant Handbook, performance monitoring, changes to service charges and this report have been discussed.

If you want to find out more, [email us](#) or call us on 0300 123 4000, option 3.

- Strengthened our Tenant Board by recruiting three new members.
- Improved our application process.
- Created a new Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.
- Created a scrutiny structure so the Tenant Board could improve the way they review matters and make recommendations for change.

- Moved to monthly Tenant Board meetings on the last Wednesday of the month, in the evening, to ensure our working Board members could attend.
- External attendees from across the Council have included the Housing Portfolio Holders, Compliance team, Complaints team, Tenancy Services team, Data and Policy team and Housing Director.



Looking forward...

Tenant Board

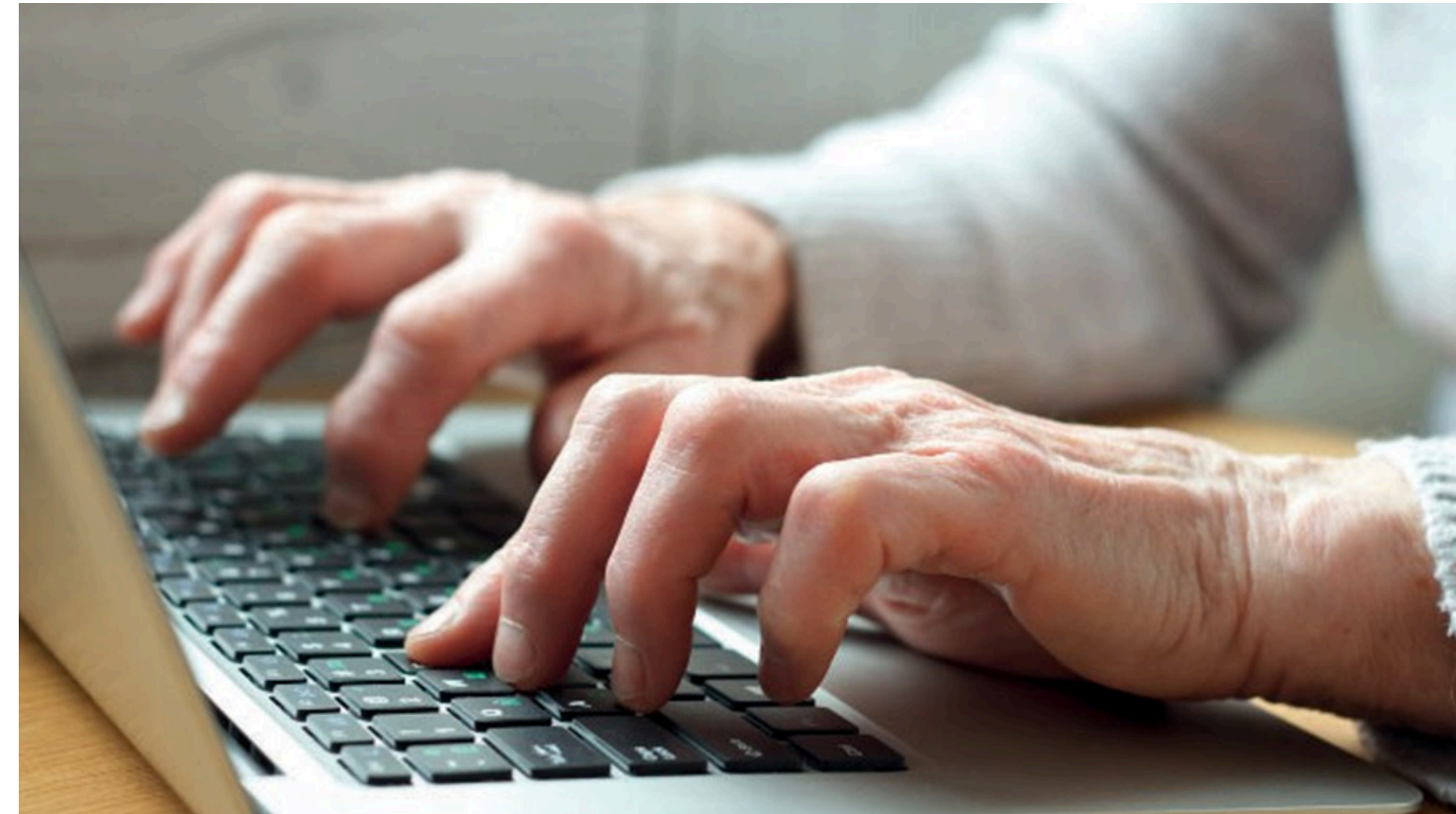
The Tenant Board will be undertaking a minimum of three review projects in 2024/25.

The review on the new Tenant Handbook is complete and by the time this report is published, the handbook should soon be launched.

We are hoping to also complete a review on the Anti-Social Behaviour policy/procedure and our complaints process. Please contact us if you're interested in getting involved.

This year we will also be setting up a web page where all of the Tenant Board meeting agendas, minutes and presentations will be available for all tenants to see, so you can understand the role they play in making sure our tenants have a voice and can influence services.

The Board will now be reporting into Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Chief Executive will attend when required by the board.



Want to influence the way we do things?

We are always keen to hear from you, especially if you have an interest in your local community and want to make a difference. Just [send us email](#) or call us 0300 123 4000, option 3 and ask for the Tenant Engagement team.

Chapter 6 - Responsible neighbourhood management

You told us:

Tenant satisfaction that we make a positive contribution to neighbourhood:

2023-24 score

59%

Tenant satisfaction with our approach to handling Anti-social Behaviour:

2023-24 score

51%

Tenant satisfaction that we keep communal areas clean and well-maintained:

2023-24 score

51%

We want to be a landlord that provides good quality homes and neighbourhoods that people are proud to live in.

This year we:

- Supported **101** tenants with anti-social-behaviour cases - helping people feel safe and happy in their neighbourhoods.
- Babergh built **13** new homes in our District

Domestic Abuse Support

- **149** households referred to the Domestic Abuse Link Worker services.
- **81** of these households contained children, with a total of **155** children overall referred as part of a household experiencing, or at risk of, domestic abuse.

Tenancy Services

- **47** Mutual Exchanges completed
- **447** Sign ups completed
- **238** Pet permission requests

Neighbourhood Team

We carried out **476** health and safety inspections of the communal areas in sheltered and general needs in Babergh.

Across both districts we completed **184** inspections per quarter.

Successfully recruited 1 full time and 1 part time Officer so the team spend more time in your communities.

The Neighbourhood Team have been working closely with tenants to ensure our internal communal areas remain clear from clutter and safe to those who live in our blocks.

Community Action Days

In the 23/24 period, we have held eight Community Action Days across both Districts with these four in Babergh:

- First and Second Avenues, Sudbury
- Blackfriars, Sudbury
- Cavendish Way and Minden Road, Sudbury
- St Andrews Drive, Chelmondiston

These events have allowed us to work with residents to improve the overall appearance of their neighbourhood. They also give us the opportunity to speak to our tenants to find out what they would like to improve about their neighbourhoods.

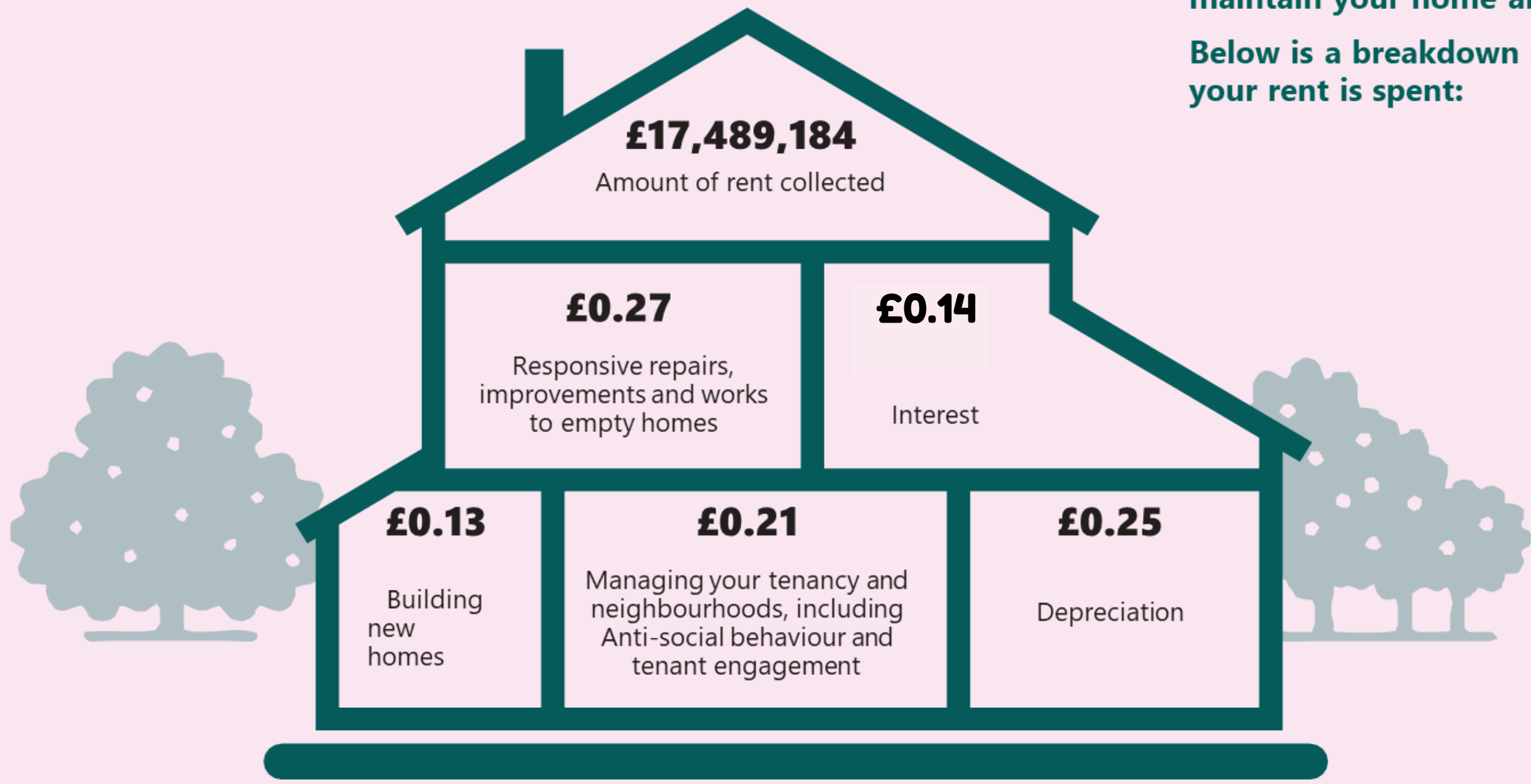
Areas are identified where we have received high levels of dissatisfaction in the Tenant Satisfaction Survey we run each quarter.

These are great team-building exercises, and provide co-working opportunities with our Public Realm Team and volunteers from across the council including our Councillors.



Chapter 7 - How we spend your rent

During 2023/24 it cost on average £5,598 per property to manage and maintain your home and tenancy.
Below is a breakdown of how £1 of your rent is spent:



The Council is committed to transparency and open access to information. Salaries of senior staff can be found here:

www.babergh.gov.uk/w/senior-salaries-information

Chapter 8 - Keeping you informed

We have continued our monthly e-bulletins and communicated and engaged with tenants on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

- Currently 5,278 tenants receive our e-bulletin.
- Published more than 80 issues of our e-bulletin and other standalone communications concerning updates to our services.

Our contact centre continues to operate for Babergh and Mid Suffolk tenants.

During 2023/24

Number of calls made to us:

47,311* calls were made to our Housing line for the period April 2023 to the end of March 2024. This figure is solely calls made by tenants. Tenants may also call other lines for different matters which is not captured here.

Total calls answered by us

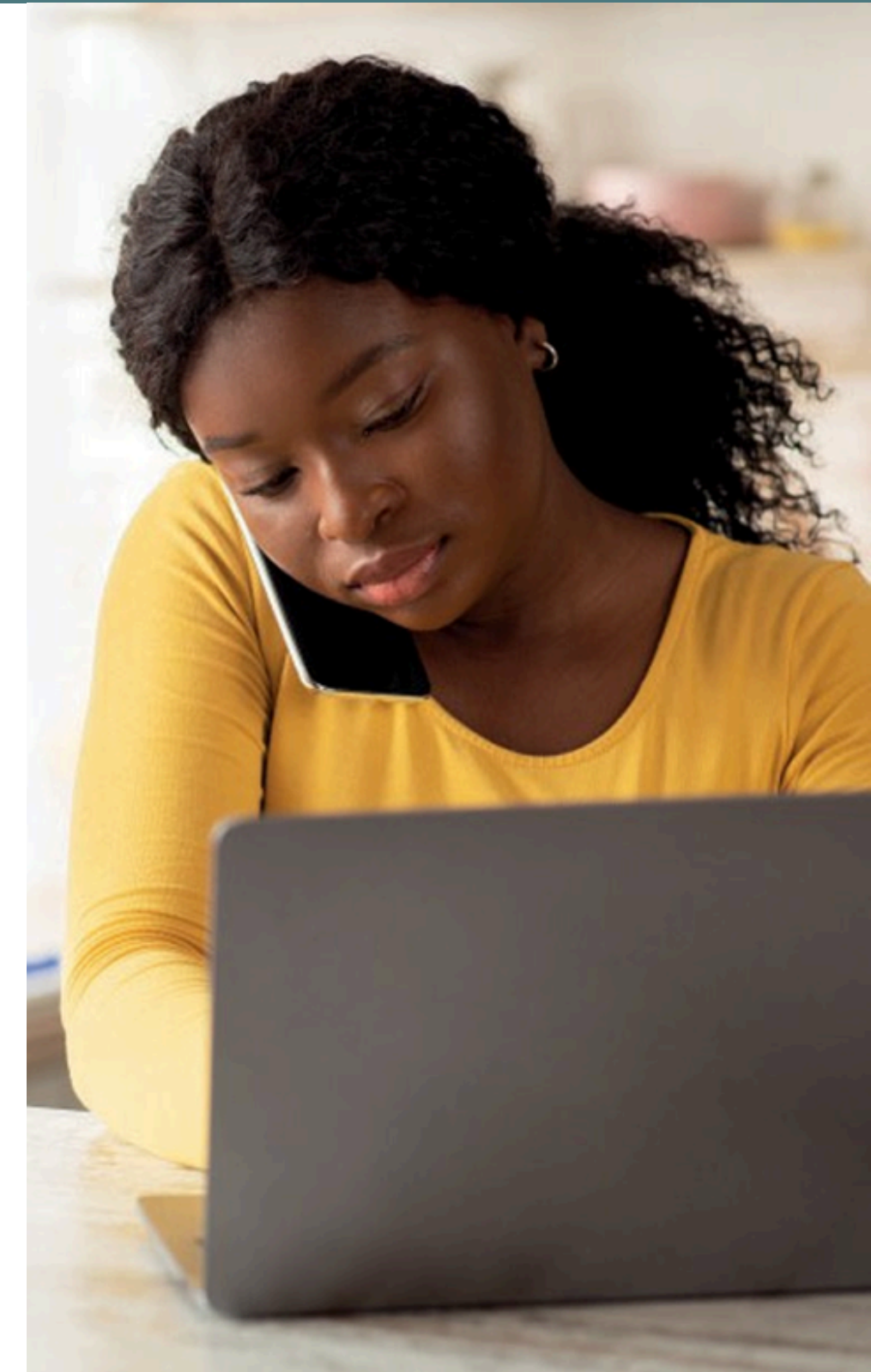
Actual calls accepted were 41,656*. Our abandonment rate on the Housing line for the 23/24 financial year was 11.36%.

Wait time before we answer

The average wait time for the 23/24 financial year on the housing line was 2 minutes and 41 seconds*. The average wait time for the previous financial year (22/23) on the same line was 4 minutes 52* seconds. This financial year so far the average wait time on the same line is 50 seconds so we are continuing to see improvement.

702 Babergh tenants have an active My Home portal account

*Total for Babergh and Mid Suffolk.



Looking forward...

We have been developing a Tenant Handbook which has information about our services all in one place.

This has been designed and created with tenants. It will be especially useful for our new tenants. Sheltered Schemes will receive a hard copy in their communal areas, and it will be kept updated and a link will be shared via our e-bulletins. We are also exploring having hard copies available in places such as libraries, Citizen Advice Bureaux's and our customer access points.

It will also be useful to ensure that tenants are receiving a fair service, and a consistent approach is being taken regardless of who you speak to about your home, tenancy or neighbourhood.

We are also looking at ways to ensure our tenants who aren't on-line, or have different communication needs receive information from us and are able to influence landlord services.



Chapter 9 - the Regulator for Social Housing's Consumer Standards

In April 2024, the Social Housing Regulation Act (2023) was made law. All providers of social housing including local authorities with more than 1000 homes will now need to prove to the Regulator that we are complying with specific expectations and delivering the required outcomes to our tenants through four new Consumer standards which are:



The Safety and Quality Standard - which requires landlords to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.



The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard - which requires landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, when necessary, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account. This standard incorporates Tenant Satisfaction Measure requirements and ensuring that tenants understand their rights.



The Neighbourhood and Community Standard - which requires landlords to engage with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.



The Tenancy Standard - which requires landlords to engage with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.

Accompanying the standards, requirements and expectations is a code of practice which will help landlords understand more about what is expected of them to evidence to prove to the Regulator that they comply.

Following an inspection by the Regulator, at least once every four years, a regulatory judgement or grading will be given to each provider between C1 and C4. C1 means that we are meeting the requirements and C4 means that there are serious failings in how we are performing. Any grading below a C1 will require landlords to work with the Regulator to improve their grading in the areas required.

Looking forward...

The council's staff, including our members and involved tenants are continually monitoring our compliance with our new regulations and how we can prove this to the Regulator. With the help of you, our tenants and all the work mentioned in this report, we are working towards ensuring we deliver the best outcomes for you. We hope that this will all mean that we are meeting the standards required.



Keeping in touch

All our tenants have a right to expect good quality services, to be treated fairly and courteously, to receive a reply within a reasonable time and have promises kept. If, for any reason, you feel that we have let you down, you can let us know about it.

You can contact us in the following ways:

- Go to our website: www.babergh.gov.uk and click on Contact Us at the top right of the main screen.
- Email us: feedback@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk
- Call us: 0300 123 4000 and select option 3 for Housing.
- Visit us: at one of our Customer Access Points in Ipswich Street, Stowmarket or Sudbury Library, by appointment only. Call [0300 123 4000](tel:03001234000) to make an appointment.
- Write to us:
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich IP1 2BX



If you have a repair to report, please complete the form on the website or call us on:
0300 123 4000.



| | |
|------------|--|
| English | If you would like this document translated or require an accessible format such as large print or braille, please call 0300 123 4000, and select option 3. |
| Kurdish | ئەگەر دەتەوئیت ئەم بەلگەنامەیه وەر بگێردریت یان پتووستیت بە شیوازیکی دەستگەیشتن ھەمە وەك چاپی گەرە یان نووسینی نابینایان braille، تکایە پەيوەندی بکە بە 0300 123 4000، و بژاردە ی 3 ھەلبژیرە. |
| Polish | Jeśli chcesz, aby ten dokument został przetłumaczony lub potrzebujesz innego dostępnego formatu, takiego jak duży druk lub alfabet Braille'a, zadzwoń pod numer: 0300 123 4000 i wybierz wewnętrzny 3. |
| Portuguese | Caso pretenda esta informação traduzida, ou em formato acessível como impressão grande ou braille, por favor ligue para o número 0300 123 4000 e selecione a opção 3. |
| Pashto | که چیري ددغه سند ژباړه غواړئ یا پې لویې چاپې یا بریل بڼې ته اړتیا ولری، مهربانې وکړئ 0300 123 4000 ته زنگ ووهئ او 3 اېشن یا غوراوی وټاکئ. |
| Romanian | Dacă doriți ca acest document să fie tradus sau dacă aveți nevoie de un format accesibil, cum ar fi caractere mari de tipar sau Braille, vă rugăm să apelați 0300 123 4000 și să selectați opțiunea 3. |