

house talk

Summer 2024 • for council tenants and leaseholders • keeping you informed

Meet Eli

the Elephant!

**Find him in
Southsea,
plus more kids
activities**

Page 14

**What you
said and
what we did:
special annual
report included!**
Page 29 onwards



**Your answers to the
tenant satisfaction survey**

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**Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL**

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Resident Engagement Team

Shout about how great your neighbour is, ask a question, get involved with a community group, or give us an idea for an article - the list is endless. Plus, it's really easy for you to get in touch with us.

How to contact us

Send it to **The Resident Participation Centre, 37 Sharps Rd, Havant, Hants, PO9 5QJ**

Email resident.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or call **023 9283 4835**.

Follow us

Be the neighbour in the know by heading to our Facebook page at facebook.com/lovehousetalk

Competitions

Competitions in House Talk are open only to residents who live in a Portsmouth City Council property. They are not open to employees of PCC. One entry per household.

Recycle

House Talk is printed on 100% recycled paper using vegetable inks. Please recycle this magazine when you have finished with it.

Leaseholder services

Paulsgrove & Wecock Farm..... **9283 4561**
Buckland, Landport & Portsea **9283 4845**
City South **9284 1486**
Leigh Park **9284 1741**

Area offices

Buckland..... **9260 6500**
Somerstown..... **9260 6300**
Landport..... **9260 6400**
Leigh Park **9230 6900**
Paulsgrove **9260 6030**
Portsea **9260 6200**
Wecock Farm **9260 6100**
Out of hours **9282 4244**

Know anyone who needs this in a different language?

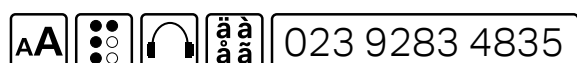
Chcesz mieć ten magazyn w innym języku?

想要这本杂志的不同语言版本吗?

একটিভিন্ন ভাষায় এই পত্রিকা চান?

Call/Dzwonić/称呼/কল: 023 9283 4835

House Talk is produced by Portsmouth City Council.
www.portsmouth.gov.uk



“



Hi all!

You might notice this issue is a little bigger than usual, and that's because you've got an extra 16 pages. From page 29 onwards, you'll find our annual report which gives an overview of your housing service, and how we've delivered services to you, in the past year.

I'll explain a bit more about the report, and your impact, on page 32. For now, I'll say thank you to everyone who shared their voice, and I hope you enjoy reading this summer edition of House Talk.

Sincerely,

James Hill, director of housing, neighbourhoods and building services.

YOU COULD WIN

£50 **£250**

1 chance to win £250, 5 more to win £50!

Your views matter. Tell us what you think of the homes and services we provide as your landlord.

Survey closes 31 December 2024.
Winner drawn 10 January 2025.

📄 Complete the survey online at **portsmouth.gov.uk** and search 'housing'

☎ For help, or to complete the survey over the phone **023 9261 6708**

Scan the code to take the survey



LOOK UP: The street art festival is coming back!

Portsmouth's street art festival is back on September 14-15, bringing world-class talent and a celebration of female and local artists. Like last year, you'll get to see a whole new range of colourful artworks go up in various spots across the city.

During the festival, you'll also have free access to:

- Spray paint and doodle workshops
- An open art studio where you can grab all the supplies you need to get creative

These will be held at Charter School, are suitable for everyone, and council residents get priority access.

Book a workshop now portsmouth.gov.uk/lookup

The results are in!

Last year, we asked what you thought about our services as your landlord.

We talk in loads more detail on pages 29-40 about the changes we made thanks to your feedback.
But here's a quick lowdown on what you think...

Repairs



82%

**of you are happy with
our repairs service**

Up from 76% last year

You can rate your experiences via anonymous feedback forms, which we use to help us improve.



Swift service – the contractors are always friendly, polite and extremely professional.



85%

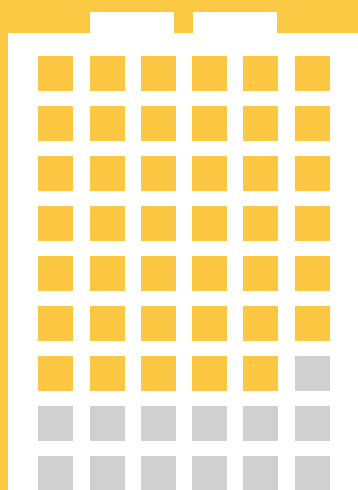
**of you are satisfied with
how long it took us to
sort your last repair**

Up from 72% last year

You decide when we come, and we'll ask if there's anything else that needs doing while we're there.

Our motto: to do the right repair at the right time!

Standard of home



79%

**of you feel your
home is safe and
well maintained**

80%

**of you think we
keep your
communal
areas clean
and well
maintained**

We run a demand-led service, meaning we clean what needs to be cleaned, when it needs to be cleaned.



69%
**of you think we
contribute to your
neighbourhood**

Up from 52% last year



Garden areas are kept clean, grass is cut, and there's no litter anywhere. Lots of trees around which is good - looks like a little park area.

We make sure to show you what we've been up to via this magazine.

About your landlord



90%

**agree that we
treat you fairly
and with
respect**



80%

**of you feel we keep
you informed about things
that matter to you**

We refreshed this magazine, created focus groups for you to join, and created a whole new strategy so we could communicate with you all better.



My housing officer is great at keeping me informed and reaching out at times of potential need.

We make sure to follow our core values of:

Respect
Integrity
Collaboration
Inclusivity
People-focused



Always been spoken to in a friendly and professional manner, with help always being provided when needed.

85%

**of you are
satisfied with
the services
we provide**



We need to run this survey every year, so we're always trying to be a better landlord. That's why the survey is officially live again! Head to page 2 for all the details.

Estate Walkabout



Did you know you can join your local estate warden for a walkabout?

They're the people who care for your community, and so it's a great chance to share what's happening in your area, highlight what you love, and point out any issues. The dates are advertised on posters in your blocks - you just need to show up!

Want us to visit a particular area?

Email housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk to request a stop.

Your next walkabout is Thursday 19 September at Portsea!

Email or call us on **023 9283 4835** if you're interested.

Just
turn
up!

Lunch, learning and certificates!

Want to have a say in your home and community but don't know how?

Join us for a Southcoast Training Day!

During a relaxed and friendly day, you'll:

- Meet other social housing tenants
- Get top training on things like mental health, housing law and loads more
- Learn how to better challenge landlords
- Get free lunch, refreshments and transport!

They're held in Southampton, and your next chance to attend one is on Saturday 19 October.

Interested? Email us now!

✉ housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk



“The event was brilliant
from start to finish”

Lights, camera, **ACTION**



You told us you don't like lots of text, so we made some cool videos for you instead.

Watch what happens when you visit a housing office, get to know the people working around you, find out how to get in touch with us - it's all your questions answered (hopefully!) in some brand new videos.

Watch them now

 at portsmouth.gov.uk/housing

 or via our Facebook page [@HouseTalk](https://www.facebook.com/HouseTalk)



Changing how we allocate housing

After asking for people's views last month, we're updating our council housing allocation scheme.

This includes updating the rules which decide if someone can apply for social housing, and how quickly they might get it based on their needs.

We want to make the process fairer by better matching people to the right homes, at the right time, and to ensure there's more availability.

We'll share the new scheme with you when it's ready.

"It didn't take long to receive a job offer"

Are you looking for work? Look no further than your local resident engagement team for invaluable support.

From expert CV help, to covering costs for things like work clothes and transport, they'll help remove the barriers to landing your next job. As one grateful tenant shared:



It proves there is help out there for people wanting to

work, so don't be afraid to ask. I am so grateful for their help.

Don't go it alone, contact the resident engagement team today for employment support.

Email housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or call **023 9283 4835**.



Seaside scoop

Have you spotted anything new at the seafront lately? Last month our Southsea Coastal Scheme team opened the brand new area of seafront around Southsea Castle!

The new sea defences here are helping to protect more than 10,000 homes and 700 businesses from future flooding.

Please enjoy the features of this area, including the 'Theatre of the Sea' promenade, swing benches and accessible seating and tables throughout.

Note - until the end of 2024, accessible access and exit for this area is only via the ramp at Blue Reef Aquarium.

Start your own club with our help!

Our resident engagement team can offer you funding and support to create social groups, thanks to **CommunityFunds4U**.

They can help you with locations, budgeting or start-up equipment.

So whether it's games, puzzles, or any other interest, contact us to bring your idea to life.

📞 023 9283 4835

✉️ housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

This must be the Playce

Portsmouth is now home to the UK's first PLAYCE!

You can find it at Lords Court, Landport, and it's a modern activity space designed to get you moving in new ways.

It's newly built, completely free for everyone to use, and allows people of all ages to get active.

In the future, schools, sports clubs, and others will also be able to use the space to exercise.



The playground in the sunshine looking vibrant



Anne (left) with her neighbours Mr and Mrs Anders.

Anne: Our latest super neighbour!

"Dear House Talk,

We're nominating our neighbour, Anne Warwick, as a super neighbour. Despite being in her late 70s, Anne always selflessly helps others. Anne has provided numerous lifts for our daughter, a young carer - a huge help to me and my wife.

She also supports a neighbour recently diagnosed with cancer, and adores helping with her own great-grandchildren's school runs, sleepovers and after school clubs. She does all of this without hesitation, with a heart of pure gold, and deserves recognition for her beautiful spirit and kindness.

Yours sincerely, Mr and Mrs Anders"

A huge shoutout to Anne - the impact you've made on your community is inspiring. Also a big thank you to Mr and Mrs Anders for your nomination - we love seeing people highlighting the good in our communities!

Have a neighbour you think is super?

Email us your nomination at

housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Learn how to plant with

Andy this summer

Looking to get outside and grow your gardening skills? Join Andy at our Leigh Park garden this summer!

As a longtime volunteer gardener, Andy has tons of fantastic vegetable growing tips to teach you.

You don't need any experience, just pop along and get stuck in! Plus, you'll learn how to make your own plant projects flourish.

Drop by the garden (full address on page 2) on these dates:

- 6 and 20 August, 1-2pm
- 3 and 17 September, 1-2pm

Or simply email

becky.collins@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Live nearer to Landport? Check out Landport Community Garden on Fyning Street!



Let's get social this summer

Here's a whole host of low-cost events and activities to get stuck into this summer.

Portsmouth

Children's drawing for wellbeing workshops

📅 Every Wednesday during summer holidays, 12–4pm

📍 North End Library, PO2 9AX

☎ 023 9268 8057

Free art workshops for children aged 7–16 who are neurodivergent or have additional emotional needs.



Free 'Build a Fort' sessions

📅 Every weekend of the school holidays

📍 Fort Nelson

📱 Book your free tickets at royalarmouries.org

Creative workshops for families

📅 Saturdays 11am–1pm

📍 Aspex Portsmouth, PO1 3BF

📱 aspex.org.uk/whats-on

Eastney Engine Houses Open Day

📅 28 July, 10am–4pm,
27 September, 12–4.30pm,
27 October, 10am–4pm

📍 Henderson Road, PO4 9JF

📱 eastneyenginehouses.co.uk

Restored 1887 Victorian machinery showcase.

Southsea Castle Makers Market

📅 11 August, 11am–3.30pm

📍 Southsea Castle, PO5 3PA

📱 visitportsmouth.co.uk/whats-on/markets

Discover heaps of local talent and get free entry to Southsea Castle Museum.

Pontoon Open Day

📅 10, 11 August and 26, 27 October, 10am–4.30pm

📍 Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, PO1 3LJ

📱 portsmouthhq.org/events

Head down to Boathouse 4 in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard for a look around its operational boats on the pontoon.

Victory At The Portsmouth Museum

📅 14 August, 10.30am–4pm

📍 Portsmouth Museum, PO1 2LJ

📱 tinyurl.com/portsmouthmuseum

Free mini model railway exhibition - something for all the family to enjoy.

Port Solent Kids Club

📅 Every Thursday in August, various times

📍 Boardwalk Shopping Centre, PO6 4TP

📱 portsolent.com/whatson



Havant, Leigh Park and Waterlooville

Connect4Family fun days

📅 Various dates throughout August, 10.30am–2.30pm

📍 Park Community School, PO9 4BU

📘 facebook.com/Connect4Families

Summer family events for children 4–10 entitled to free school meals.

One Pot Cooking classes

📅 7 August, 10am–12pm and
4 September, 11am–1pm

📍 Resident Participation Centre, PO9 5QJ

✉ housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk



Craftology (ages 16+)

📅 7, 14 August, 4, 11, 18 September, 10am–12pm
 📍 Making Space, 2 Bishopstoke Road, PO9 5BN
 📧 makingspace.org/whats-on

Free craft sessions.

Bingo and Board Games

📅 21 August, 21 September, 11am–1.30pm
 📍 Resident Participation Centre, PO9 5QJ
 📧 housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

The Memory Lane Group

📅 29 August, 1.30pm–3.30pm
 📍 Tesco Havant Community Room, PO9 1TR
 📧 mydementiasupport.org/event

For people living with dementia and their caregivers to come together for activities, memories, tea and biscuits.

Ready Steady Walk

📅 Every Tuesday in Havant, 1.30–2.15pm
 every Thursday in Waterlooville, 1.30–2.15pm
 📍 Havant: Spring Arts & Heritage Centre, PO9 1BS
 Waterlooville: Wellington Vale Care Home, PO7 7TY
 📧 hampshirehealthyfamilies.org.uk

Free, fun and informal social walking groups for new parents.



Little Acorns

📅 Every Tuesday, 12.30pm–2pm
 📍 The Acorn Community Centre, PO8 9UX
 💰 £1 per family
 📧 acorncentre.org.uk/whats-on

Parent and toddler group with playtime, snacks and songs (foster parents and grandparents also welcome).

Arts and Crafts Club

📅 Every Thursday, 10am–1pm
 📍 Resident Participation Centre, PO9 5QJ
 📧 housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Gosport

High Street Events

📅 3, 10, 17, 24 August, 11am–3pm
 📍 Gosport High Street
 📘 facebook.com/discovergosport20

Free activities on the High Street including the return of the Go-Karts, Punch and Judy shows, facepainting, street performers and music entertainment.

Summer In Lee

📅 17, 18 August, 10am–10pm
 📍 Seafront Promenade, Lee-on-the-Solent
 📧 montserratevents.co.uk

Summer emporium, fun fairs and pirates, plus live music!

And remember!

There's loads of ways to travel cheap:

- Buses (loads of useful info on page 12) but you can also plan your journey at: myjourneyportsmouth.com
- Voi e-scooters and bikes - if you're on a low-income, a veteran or member of HM Forces, or employed by the NHS or emergency services, you can get 50% off: voi.com/voi-4-discounts
- Or stretch your legs by walking! myjourneyportsmouth.com/walk

Ditch the car keys



5 reasons to ride the bus this summer

1 Single fares only £2.50

Single bus fares have been capped at £2.50 until November 2024 - go go go!

2 Tap on, tap off is here

Simply tap your card or mobile wallet when boarding and again when you get off - you'll only pay for the distance travelled. No more overpaying or fumbling for change.

3 It's gone green

Catch one of 62 brand new electric buses running the:

- **Number X4** - from The Hard, Fareham and Southampton.
- **Number 1** - from The Hard to South Parade Pier via Fratton.
- **Number 3** - from Fareham to South Parade Pier.
- **Number X5** - from Gosport to Southampton via Fareham and the Eclipse route between Gosport and Fareham.

4 New ticket ranges to please everyone

Use them on all bus routes within the city and buy them at either the Stagecoach and First bus apps, or directly from the bus driver:

Pompey Hoppa90 £3
Individual ticket valid for 90 minutes of bus travel.

Pompey Group £12.50
A day ticket for unlimited travel for up to five people.

Pompey Night Owl £4
An individual ticket available from 7pm-4am.

5 Discounted tickets

- If you're under 19, you can get a whole range of new, cheaper fares. Visit tinyurl.com/under19tickets
- If you're disabled, you can travel free with a bus pass. Visit tinyurl.com/disabledbuspass
- If you're over 66, you can travel free 9am to 11pm weekdays and all-day weekends and bank holidays by with a bus pass. Visit tinyurl.com/over66buspass

Outside of Portsmouth? Plan your low-cost journey at myjourneyhampshire.com/bus

Mandy wins tenant of the year!

One of our lovely Paulsgrove tenants, Mandy Buxey (seen with her award in the photo), has been named **Tenant of the Year** at the Housing Heroes awards for her amazing community work.

A HUGE congrats to Mandy - what an achievement.
Read the full story at portsmouth.gov.uk/housingheroes









WHERE EVERY DAY'S A PLAY DAY

**THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL
SUMMER HOLIDAYS**

FREE for 5–16-year-olds eligible for benefits related free school meals. HAF funded spaces & pay-as-you-go too!

📍 FamilyLifePompey ✉️ HAF@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

To book go to pycportsmouth.co.uk/haffunpompey

Outside of Portsmouth? Find your nearest provider at hants.gov.uk/haf

Score big discounts with **FREE** leisure cards



Portsmouth Leisure Card

If you get means-tested benefits and live in PO1-PO6, this card unlocks up to 50% off at loads of facilities like sports centres, pools, golf, museums, beach huts and more.

Just pop by your local library or housing office with proof of benefits to apply, or head to portsmouth.gov.uk/leisurecard

Horizon Leisure discounts

This is Havant Borough Council's discount scheme, and works in a similar way. Find out more at horizonlc.com

Live elsewhere? Search 'leisure card' on your local council's website.



Let's laugh

What
kind of tea
do football
players
drink?

Penal-tea

Why shouldn't
you play football
in the jungle?

Because there's too
many cheetahs!

What's a ghost's
favourite football
position?

Goalkeeper

Why don't
grasshoppers
watch football?

They prefer cricket

Where to play?



At the beach



In my local park



At a splash park?

How to play safely?



Away from roads

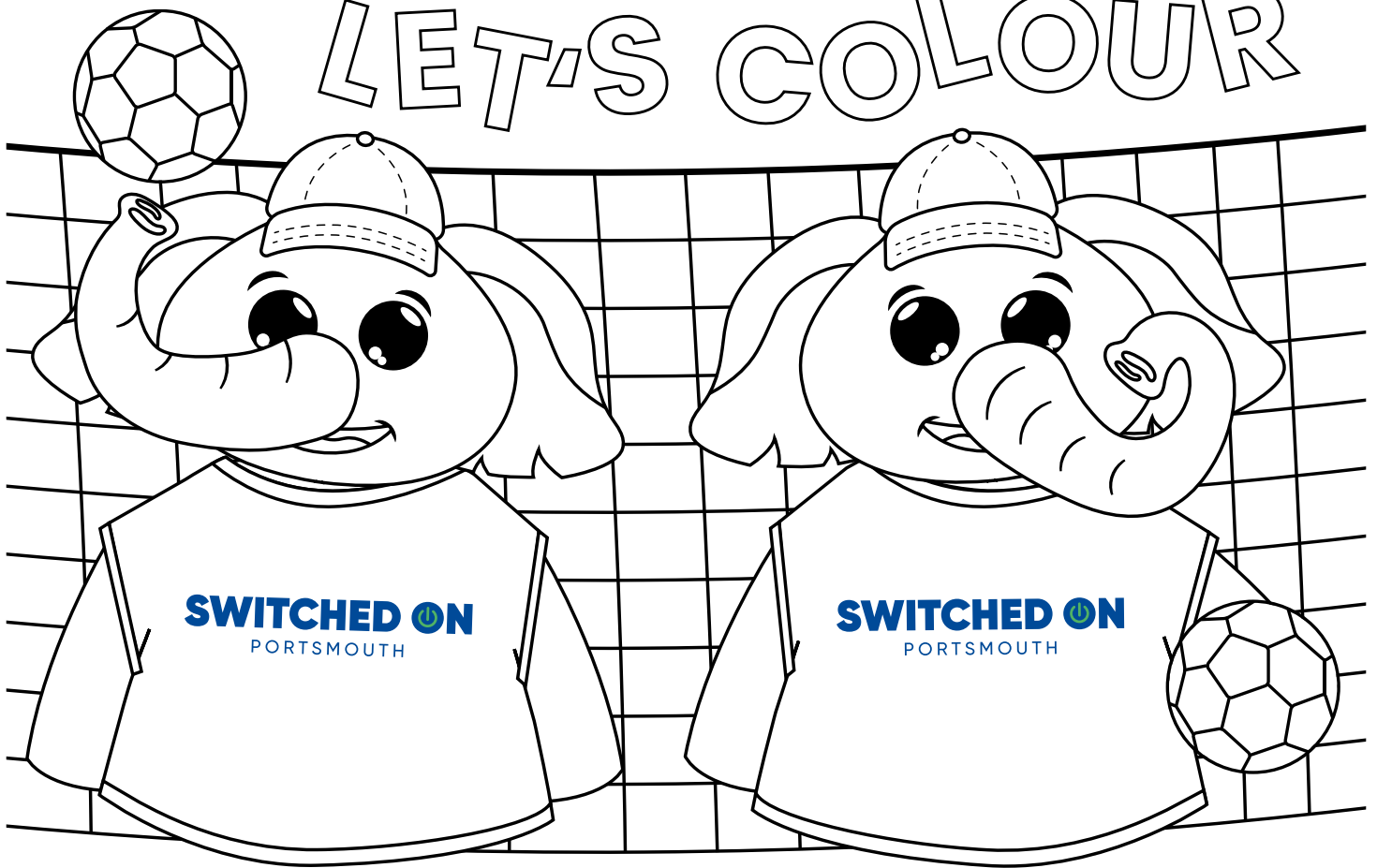


Not against
people's homes



Take a water bottle
to stay hydrated

LET'S COLOUR

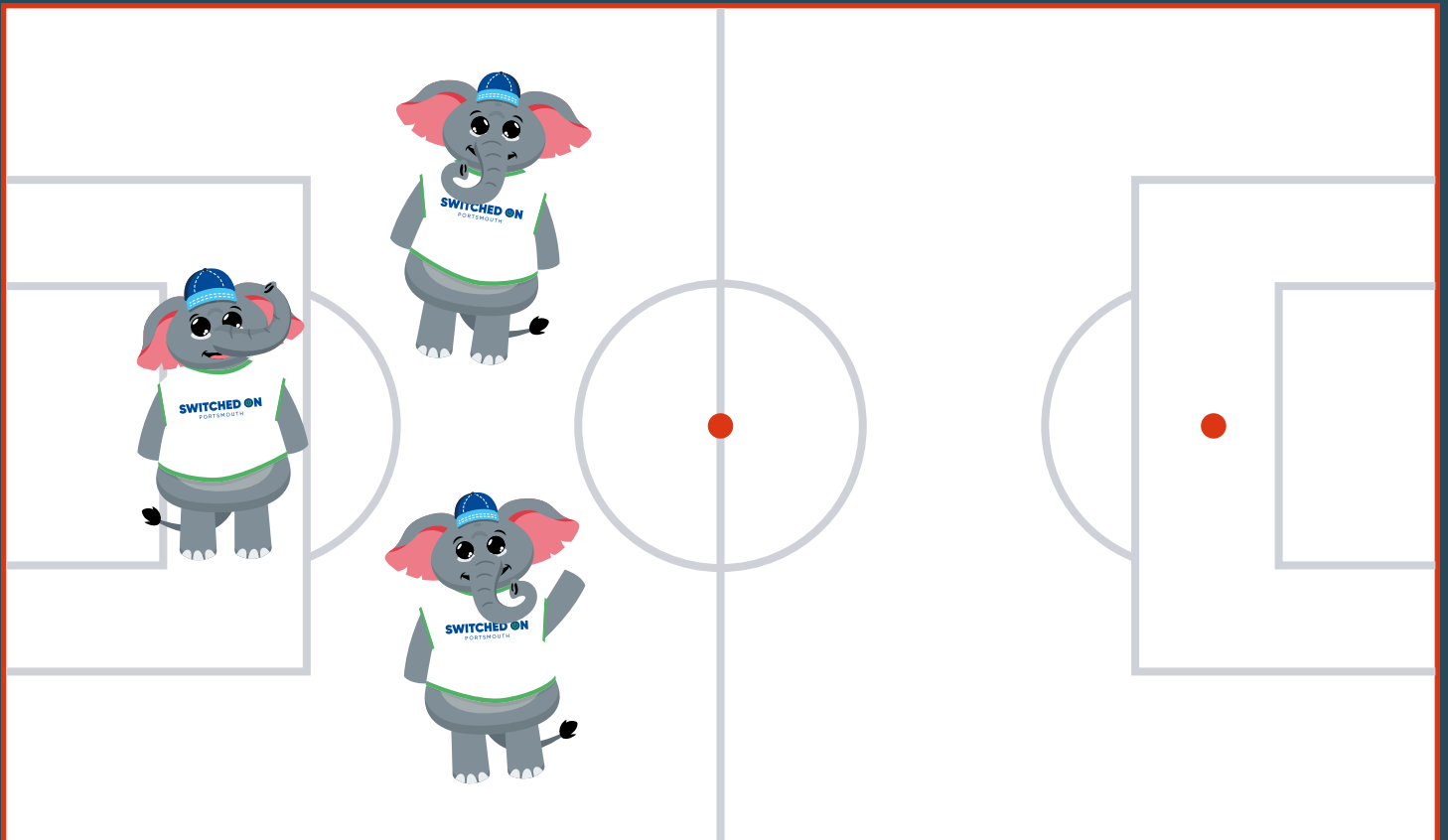


Please can you colour in and add some fun patterns to Eli's football kit?

📷 Snap a photo and tag @switchedonportsmouth

Three a side

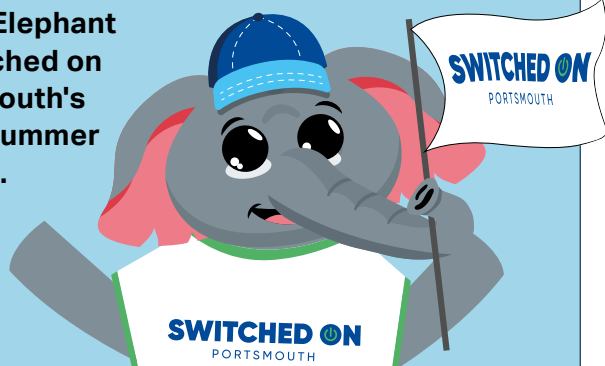
Who will be facing Eli's Switched on Portsmouth club?
You decide by drawing their opposite team.



Eli's gone to Southsea!

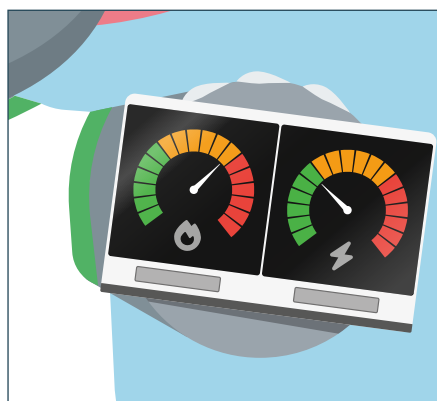
Can you find him this summer?

Eli the Elephant is Switched on Portsmouth's super summer mascot.



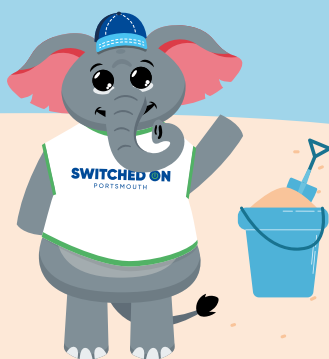
He's here to help us all save a bit of money!

By using a little less energy in our homes.

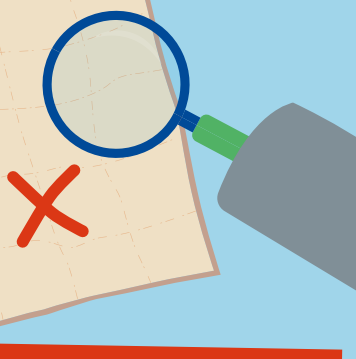


Eli's combined his two favourite things:

helpful advice
and the beach!



That's why he'll be in lots of locations across Southsea this month.



How many Elis can you find?

📷 Your challenge!

When you find Eli, snap a photo and tag **@SwitchedOnPortsmouth** on social media with the hashtag **#EliTheElephant**



Low-cost picnic ideas

Free or discounted food

- You can get all sorts of freebies on **Olio** to go towards your summer picnic - it's a great app which helps stop food waste.
- Use the **Too Good To Go** app to save bundles of food from local bakeries, restaurants and supermarkets from going to waste. We've tried it and found some great bargains.

Ditch the single-use cutlery

Save money (and the planet) by taking a few plates, bowls and cups from your cupboard on your picnic. They're far easier to eat off anyway!



Make your own picnic faves

Take scotch eggs for example - all you need is sausages (mash them up), bread (crumbled up and baked into breadcrumbs), and boiled eggs - voila!

You can probably get all those ingredients for free or very cheap from the apps above.

Where's your favourite park to picnic?

Let us know on our Facebook page! **@HouseTalk**

Or discover new picnic spots at **portsmouth.gov.uk/parks**

Why switch to a smart meter?

Make your life a little easier by getting a smart meter. It lets you track what you're spending on energy, and you don't need to be a tech wizard to use one. You don't even need internet!

A smart meter will also send your gas and electricity readings direct to your supplier - one less thing for you to worry about.

Getting a smart meter in social housing

If you live in social housing and pay your electricity or gas bills directly to your energy supplier, you can choose to have a smart meter installed. This includes if you're on a prepayment meter.

If you pay your landlord or housing association for your energy, you can speak to them to see what your options are.

If you need help from your landlord or housing association to get access to your meter for the installation, you should speak with them in advance to make sure they know about this.

Getting a smart meter

You should contact your supplier directly who can provide you with one. Eligibility may vary.

Want more information?

Talk to your local Switched On Portsmouth team:

☎ **0800 260 5907**

✉ **hello@switchedonportsmouth.co.uk**

Or find out more at
switchedonportsmouth.co.uk/smartmeters

Worried about energy bills?

Come and chat to Switched On Portsmouth in person!

On the first Wednesday of every month, you can stop by the Civic Offices to get free support from the team.

They can refer you to government lead schemes and offer loads of useful advice.

Take the stress out of energy bills and get real, in person support.

Stop by the Civic Offices in Guildhall Square anytime between 9am - 4pm on:

- 7 August
- 4 September
- 2 October
- 6 November
- 4 December

Want to chat to the team in the meantime?

💻 **switchedonportsmouth.co.uk**

☎ **0800 260 5907**

Outside of Portsmouth?

💻 **switchedonhavant.co.uk**

💻 **switched-on-gosport.co.uk**

💻 **energysavingtrust.org.uk**

Teen takeover



HM Government

Check out these **FREE** events, exclusively for 11-16 year olds in PO1-PO6, coming up this summer:



Portsmouth summer events funded by HAF and the Household Support Fund.

Roller disco and design your own skateboard competition

📅 31 July, 11am-2pm

📍 Pitt Street Indoor Skatepark



DJ, music, art and craft workshops

📅 8 August, 11am-4pm

📍 The Base @ The Guildhall



Pop-Up cinema and outdoor activities

📅 16, 23 August, 11am-3pm

📍 Paulsgrove Community Centre



Football games and skills school

📅 22, 27 August, 11am-2pm

📍 Goals, Tangier Road



Laser quest, archery and assault course

📅 24 August, 11am-2pm

📍 Peter Ashley Activity Centre, Fort Purbrook

Summer Sessions Wrap-Up Party

📅 28 August, 11am-2pm

📍 Pitt Street Indoor Skatepark



Don't wait - book now!

📱 eequ.org/portsmouthcitycouncilsummersessions

Outside of Portsmouth? Check out:

📱 For Gosport and Havant visit motiv8.org.uk

📱 For Waterlooville and Fareham visit tinyurl.com/YServices

Artwork spotlight: what music means to me

In the last issue we asked teens to draw or create something that answered the question: What does music mean to me?

Check out what local teen Deborah Fregene, age 15, made:

“

Music makes me feel alive because

it's my way of expressing everything

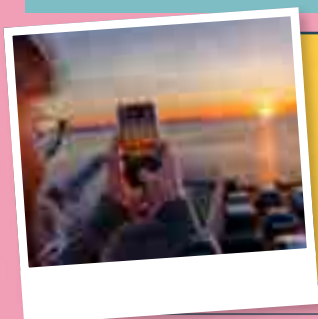
going on in my life.

We love it, thanks for your brilliant submission Deborah!



Summer Photo Challenge

Send us your favourite photo that you've taken this summer and you might get it featured in the next issue! It could be of a sunrise or sunset, a landscape, clouds - anything that gives you inspiration. Send it to katy.thorn@portsmouth.gov.uk by 11.59pm on 15 September, 2024.





Anti-social behaviour

**Two types of anti-social behaviour,
and how we can tackle it together**

1. Rough sleepers

in blocks

What we do:

We work with community wardens, homeless outreach teams, and the police to reach out and help find them a pathway back into permanent accommodation, also supporting any other needs they may have.

How you can help:

1. Don't assume we're aware of all rough sleepers, so please report issues to:
 - Your housing office (page 2)
 - Community wardens on **080 0085 3840**
 - The police via **101** or online reporting (**999** for emergencies)
 - Visit **thestreetlink.org.uk**
2. Remember to shut entrance doors properly. They're not security doors but they act as prevention.
3. Don't let tailgaters follow you into your block.

2. Child exploitation

Why it's important:

Children can be coerced into committing crimes that involve knives, drugs or gangs. It's called exploitation, and it's an issue we all need to be aware of.

What we do:

We have a dedicated youth detached team who respond to reports of youth nuisance in PO1-PO6. They're funded by Hampshire police (OPCC), and are trained to identify and educate communities on exploitation. They also report intelligence on drug dealing and knife crime to the police.

How you can help:

- Visit **hampshire-pcc.gov.uk/iycs** to learn more and report issues.

If you're a parent, you can also:

- Listen to your child without judgement - they should feel safe to talk openly.
- Pay attention to any behaviour changes.
- Know their friendships and look out for any secrecy around them.
- Know who's picking your child up in a car - get as much info as possible.
- Take an active interest in what they're doing online - check phones and internet history.

Let's start a conversation

Have you ever felt frustrated with a housing service and thought

“

there's got to be a better way?

As our tenants and leaseholders, you have a unique perspective that we really value. That's why we want you to get involved with scrutiny - the reviews, led by you, help improve how we work.

What is scrutiny?

Scrutiny puts the power in your hands. You investigate how we deliver services like repairs, estate maintenance, tenant engagement and more. You'll look at what's working well and find areas for positive changes. The goal? Making concrete recommendations so we can sort out issues and make things better for everyone.

Making an impact

Recent scrutiny panels have had a big influence. One group looked at our approach to damp and mould cases after tenants raised concerns. Their report helped us improve policies to sort problems more effectively.

We're recruiting new scrutiny panel members now

If you're passionate about improving housing for your community, we need your skills and experience.

You'll work with other tenants, look at services in-depth, and guide us on making positive changes. It's flexible, rewarding and creates real impact.

What needs a closer look?

Maybe repairs take too long, or communication could be better on estate issues. Perhaps you have ideas for improving disabled accessibility or energy efficiency.

Whatever your priorities, we want to hear them!

Interested in joining the tenant scrutiny revolution? Get in touch today by **023 9283 4835** or emailing **housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

Wait...you still don't have a TPAS account?

We're not hurt, just disappointed. Just kidding. But you should definitely check it out! It's free for all of you, and you'll learn about your rights as a tenant through easy videos and guides.

Head to **tpas.org.uk/tenant** to access your free account now.

Without internet? Call your housing office (page 2) for help.

Unhappy about something?

Let us help

1. Contact the relevant service team

They're usually the best way to sort your issue or concern in the quickest way. For example, if you've got a concern about your block's safety, you'd email the building safety team:

✉ **buildingsafetymanager@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

Or if you have an issue with damp and mould, you'd contact the repairs support team:

✉ **repairssupportteam@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

☎ **023 9284 1311**

Not sure which team to contact? Call your housing office (page 2) and they'll help you out.

2. Make a complaint

If things aren't sorted or you're still unhappy, you can raise a complaint:

📄 **portsmouth.gov.uk/complaints**

☎ **023 9260 6383**

✉ **hnblandlordcomplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

✍ **writing to:**

Hnb Landlord Complaints,
Floor 2, Core 2-3,
Portsmouth City Council,
Civic Offices,
Guildhall Square,
Portsmouth,
PO1 2ZX

Please allow 10 days for your complaint to be answered.

3. Tell the housing ombudsman

It's an independent and free service that considers complaints from people living in social housing, and you can contact them at any time

📄 **housing-ombudsman.org.uk**

Or the building safety regulator

They can help if you've got a complaint about the safety of a high rise (7+ floors):

✉ **buildingsafety.campaign.gov.uk**

Your new complaints lead

Her role is to ensure we listen to, understand, respond, and resolve your complaints at the right times.

Natalie previously worked as a complaints manager at the council, so is bringing a heap of experience with her!

"It's important to me to understand your needs and expectations, and if things go wrong, do all I can to make it right and ensure it doesn't happen again."



Meet Natalie

DOMESTIC ABUSE ISN'T JUST PHYSICAL.



Is your relationship healthy? Take our quiz to find out.

www.isthislove.org.uk



It can help to talk.

It's normal to experience different emotions and feelings after you've had a baby. You might be overwhelmed, sleep deprived and struggling to get to know your baby.

It can help to talk about how you're feeling.

#YouAreNotAlone

Not feeling confident as a new parent?

Ask your midwife, health visitor, GP, Family Hub or the Portsmouth Mental Health Hub for support.

Call **0300 123 6621** or visit www.mentalhealthinportsmouth.co.uk

Outside of Portsmouth? Head to tinyurl.com/HampshireHealthyFamilies

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Leaf it out

Keep your garden looking glorious and join Portsmouth's new garden waste collection service Leaf It Out.

No more messy tip runs

Let the council handle your leaves, branches and cuttings

Costs just over £1.30 a week (£70 a year)

Fancy signing up?

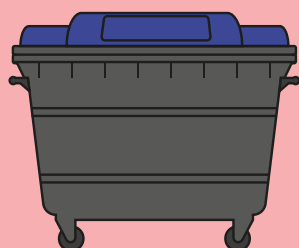
Call **023 9284 1105** and select option 4 to speak to the team, or go to portsmouth.gov.uk/leafitout

Note - If you've got a garden waste collection subscription with Biffa, please wait until it runs out before signing up to Leaf It Out.

Outside of Portsmouth? Search '**garden waste collection**' on your council's website to find services.

No more rubbish excuses!

We've been busy upgrading the Portsea bin stores to help residents recycle more and reduce overflowing rubbish. We now have:



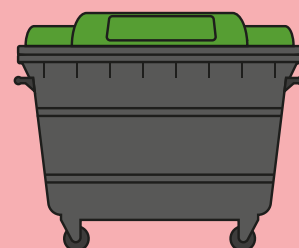
Fibre bin

For cardboard and paper only



Food waste

For leftover food



Dry mixed

For glass, cartons, plastics, cans, and aerosols

This is part of a wider look we're taking at other areas to see if we need to make changes there too. We want to make sure all residents are supported to recycle. Together, we can minimise waste and work towards a cleaner, more sustainable environment for everyone.

Want recycling info for your area? Head to portsmouth.gov.uk/recyclingandrubbish

Outside of Portsmouth? Visit hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling

Gas safety checks



We're legally required to give gas appliances annual safety checks in all our tenants' homes.

Liberty Gas Services carry out this important safety check, and they'll be doing them through the beginning of summer.

If you haven't been contacted already, Liberty will be in touch to arrange an appointment.

Please do your best to keep this appointment or contact Liberty to arrange a better time.

Remember, it's your responsibility to allow the engineer to enter your home to carry out this work.

To arrange a gas appointment, email repairssupportteam@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or call **023 9284 1311**.



Fire Training at Mill Gate House

Portsea locals - did you catch the recent fire training session we hosted at Mill Gate House and Sarah Robinson House?

Fire and Rescue teams from Cosham, Portchester and Southsea came together to refresh their knowledge on handling a fire in a high-rise building.

The firefighters were put into a realistic environment, making this sort of training critical for ensuring teams respond quickly and efficiently.

It was a successful day, and we hope to continue this sort of training to help protect the lives and property of those in high-rise buildings in the event of a real fire.

Balcony safety



When the sun comes out, we like to be outside and let the fresh air in. However, please remember the dangers this can bring living above the ground floor.

1. Keep balcony doors locked when not in use.
2. Consider installing a child-proof gate that you can keep locked when you're not in the room and don't want to lock the balcony door. You must never allow young children access to a balcony when an adult cannot be present.

Here's a few other things to remember to keep safe:

- Never lean over, sit, or climb on the balcony wall or railing.
- Never try to pass items to someone on another balcony.
- Never try to climb onto another balcony from your balcony.
- Keep balcony furniture away from the railing and heavy enough so children can't drag it to climb up on.
- Netting to prevent birds accessing your balcony is not safety netting.

Please make sure everyone, especially children, know the dangers of playing on a balcony or leaning over them.



Zero-tolerance in blocks

To make you safer in your homes, we've applied a zero-tolerance approach to escape routes and communal areas in blocks of flats.

You cannot store any belongings in shared communal parts of buildings such as stairways, corridors, communal balconies, or lifts.

This is to make sure you can escape safely in the event of an emergency and provide space for emergency services to set up safe systems to fight a fire.

If you have any queries or require support moving any items, please contact Estate Services on **023 9268 8444** so a visit can be arranged, and general fire safety advice can be offered.

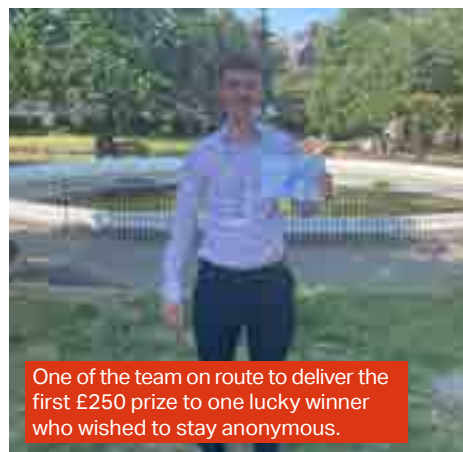
Home surveys could win you £250

You could win £250 just by letting our asset management surveyors visit your home. These visits are called stock condition surveys and they're important because they ensure we keep your home up to housing standards.

The team is checking all our council homes, and once you've had a visit, you'll be entered to win £250 which is drawn every three months. Easy!

Book your visit now by calling **023 9284 1311** or emailing **repairssupportteam@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

Or we'll be in touch if your property is on our list to survey. Any questions in the meantime? Contact your local housing office (page 2).



One of the team on route to deliver the first £250 prize to one lucky winner who wished to stay anonymous.

MONEY ADVICE

Knowing what help is available is the first step to making your cost of living more manageable. Here's the latest updates and support for you to know:

Move to Universal Credit: update

We mentioned it in the last issue, but the government is now moving more people over to Universal Credit (UC).

If you're still on an older style benefit, you'll probably be contacted soon to make a claim for UC. Here's a timeline of when each type of benefit is moving to UC this year:

June

Housing Benefit only



July

Employment and support allowance (income-related) with child tax credit



August

Tax credits (pension aged including mixed aged couples)



September

Jobseeker's allowance (income based)



Date tbc

Employment and support allowance (income-related) with no child tax credit

When you get a letter (a migration notice), check when the best time is for you to claim. You can get help from your housing office (page 2) or Citizens Advice's 'Help to Claim' service on **0800 1448 444**.

Need help with debt?



Getting in touch with a money advisor as soon as possible is the best first step you can take. Here's how:

Your housing office

Talk to your housing office about how the housing money advice team could help (page 2)

National Debtline

☎ 0808 808 4000

StepChange

☎ 0800 138 1111

PayPlan

☎ 0800 280 2816

Citizens Advice

☎ 03444 111 444

Advice Portsmouth

☎ 023 9279 4340

"I couldn't face opening all the letters I knew were from debt collectors. I was so stressed, but a money advisor supported me to deal with it all and changed my life".

Working and caring

for someone?

You can earn a maximum of £151 a week to get Carers Allowance. However, if you start earning more than this, you'll have to tell the DWP so you don't build up an overpayment by calling **0800 731 0297**.

If you get Universal Credit and meet the qualifying criteria for carer's allowance but earn more than £151 a week, you could still get a Carer Element. This is worth £198.31 a month.

You can contact Universal Credit via your journal to request this, or make a phone claim:

Universal Credit helpline

📞 Call **0800 328 5644**

📠 Text **0800 328 1344**

Relay UK

📞 (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone):
18001 then 0800 328 5644.



Struggling to afford essentials?

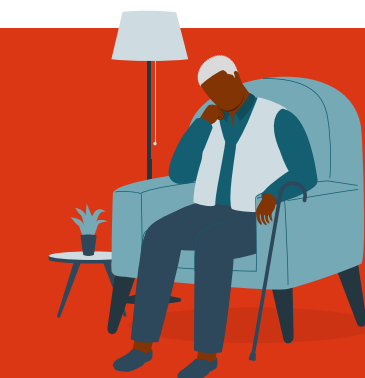
If you live in Portsmouth, you may qualify for an exceptional hardship payment from the council.

You can apply online at **portsmouth.gov.uk/HSF**

If you're getting money advice from your housing officer or a housing money advisor, they might be able to apply for you - simply get in touch to discuss what help is available.

Need more advice? Call Portsmouth's household support helpline on **023 9268 8010**.

Outside of Portsmouth? Search '**household support fund**' on **hants.gov.uk**



Living alone with severe mental health issues?

You could be exempt from council tax altogether. As long as you receive a disability benefit, your doctor can certify your condition and help apply the exemption.

Find out more by searching '**council tax**' on your council's website.



£60 child food vouchers this summer

You should also keep an eye out for the £60 per child food voucher scheme being distributed through Portsmouth schools and the council this summer.

Here's the key info:

- If your child is in years R to 11 at a Portsmouth school, and is registered for benefits-related free school meals, you'll be given their vouchers automatically by their schools.
- If you're pregnant or receive child benefits for a child who isn't eligible for free school meals, and you're earning less than £1,800 per month, you'll be able to apply for a voucher for your child.

Find all the latest information and register your interest at portsmouth.gov.uk/HSF

Outside of Portsmouth?

Search household support fund on hants.gov.uk

Even if you don't qualify for any of the payments or vouchers we've mentioned here, you can still get free support and advice with your cost of living.

Just visit

 portsmouth.gov.uk/costofliving

 023 9284 1047

Volunteers needed!

Can you spare a tiny bit of time and take part in a focus group for us please? It's only for a couple hours once every two months, and all you have to do is chat over free tea, coffee and biscuits.

It'll be in Portsmouth, but we'll help you get to and from the meeting if you'd like.

What happens in the focus group?

1. You learn about one of our housing policies. This could involve topics like pets, mobility scooter storage and so on - things that affect you and your homes.
2. You give us your thoughts on that policy. Things you like, dislike - things you'd change.
3. You're done!

Wait, what is a policy?

Local councils like us set rules and guidelines that manage many parts of community life.

They're called policies, and they help us make decisions about important issues (like your homes).



Sounds like an easy way to make positive changes. Where do I sign up?

Thanks for helping out! Just send a quick email to housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or call **023 9283 4835** if you're interested.

Your annual report

Inside this report is what we've been up to this year and how we spent your rent money.



Tenant Satisfaction Measures at a glance

The Regulator for Social Housing requires all social housing providers to provide them with figures against 22 indicators by June each year, and for us to publish them so that you can see them.

These are called Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The TSMs are intended to help you to scrutinise our landlord performance and to hold us to account.

Our 23/24 TSM results are:	
Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out.	98.6%
Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out.	99.8%
Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out.	*94.6%
Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out.	100%
Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1,000 homes.	62.3
Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes	1.8
Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard.	2.6%
Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale.	83.3%
Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale.	99.1%
Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes.	12.7
Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes.	1.9
Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales.	76.3%
Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales.	**70%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall service from their landlord.	85%
Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service.	82%
Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair.	85%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is well maintained.	79%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is safe.	79%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them.	75%

Our 23/24 TSM results are:

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them.	80%
Proportion of respondents who report that they agree their landlord treats them fairly and with respect.	90%
Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling.	53%
Proportion of respondents with communal areas who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.	80%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood.	69%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour.	58%

**BS03 asbestos surveys/inspections result is now 100% - short-term resource impact at year end.*

***CH02 complex complaints which require an investigation requiring interviews/legal advice being taken may take longer than the prescribed timescales set down by the ombudsman.*

 You can view the full results of the survey, plus more info on the regulatory standards that we must meet, by heading to **portsmouth.gov.uk/residentengagement**



Responsible officers

Our named officer responsible for compliance with the regulatory standards is James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services.

We (Portsmouth City Council) are the "responsible person" for compliance with building safety regulations and Amy Holmes, building safety manager, leads on this area of work.

Amy is responsible for health and safety and does this in partnership with our corporate health and safety team.

Where to find

more information

Head to **portsmouth.gov.uk/counciltenants** for policy documents, reports and information about all your housing services.

Feedback

What do you think of this annual report?
Is it interesting? Too many statistics?
Anything we missed?

Let us know so we can improve it for next year. If you want to help us put it together next time, join our communication focus group. We know you've got some great ideas!

Tell us what you think:

 **housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

 **023 9283 4835**



James Hill, director of housing, neighbourhoods and building services



Councillor Darren Sanders, cabinet member for housing and tackling homelessness

Introduction from

James and Darren

This annual report covers some of the things we have been doing in housing over the last year. It can't cover everything, there is too much, but I hope it is enough to give you a flavour of the work we do with you, and for you.

Welcome all our new residents who have joined us this year. We are proud to have grown our housing stock, and secured our future financial position.

This is a time of change for social housing providers, with a strengthened housing regulator and building safety regulator, and new legislation and expectations to be met.

We are incredibly grateful to our engaged residents who have given up so much of their time, working with us to help shape our response to the changes.

Our first tenant satisfaction measures survey ran from July to December last year. We were so pleased to see that most tenants (85%) are satisfied with the service we provide you, with only 6% of respondents saying they are unhappy. 90% feel that they are treated fairly and with respect, with only 4% disagreeing.

We don't take this for granted and we know that some of you are not satisfied. We are committed to improving our services to you and learning from all the feedback you provide. We also know that there are many of you that chose not to use the survey method to give feedback and we will continue to listen to your feedback in every way we can.

In 2022/23 we consulted with you, and you said we needed to improve our communication. In this report you'll see that over the year we've worked hard to make changes and will continue to do so.

We learn so much from your responses to surveys. From looking at the way you use our services, to our consortium and panels, your voices will continue to influence what we do in the coming year. We would encourage all of you to get involved if you can. The TSM surveys are completed every year so look out for the next survey and have your say.

Did you know?

We don't just collect rent – we also have a responsibility to support your emotional, environmental and economic well-being. Read more on page 42.

Did you know?

We own and manage housing for people with learning disabilities in Portsmouth and Hampshire, and own and manage rough sleeping support in Portsmouth?

Housing management year: in numbers

 **99%** of our housing was occupied :  **98%** of rent was paid

 We moved **199** tenants into more suitable housing - **47** of those downsized!

 We let **641** homes :  and took **43** days on average per let

 There were **334** exchanges completed :  We did **2,400** tenancy update visits

 We evicted **7** tenants for rent arrears :  and **4** for anti-social behaviour

 We sold **28** homes through 'Right to Buy' :  This is **43%** less than last year

 We also repurchased **69** homes :  and acquired **747** homes from Clarion Housing

 We investigated **68** fraud cases :  recovering **15** homes

In total, as of 31 March 2024, we have 17,503 properties

 **15,622** are rented :  **1,792** are leaseholder :  **89** are shared ownership

Out of hours

Our out of hours team are on hand overnight, weekends, and bank holidays to ensure that you receive services when you need them 24/7 365 days a year. Across 23/24 this is just some of what the team have responded to:

 **3,480** out of hours phone calls answered on average each month

 **7,733** out of hours repairs raised and responded to (lock outs/leaks/electric failures etc)

 **629** responses to calls for help from sheltered tenants which resulted in 262 welfare visits to homes by our out of hours operatives e.g. responding to falls, medical needs etc

 **140** out of hours communal area cleaning jobs (further jobs were attended to by Green and Clean staff)

 **203** fire alarm visits for local authority owned buildings

Did you know?

The out of hours team are contacted by emergency services to organise the housing response in crisis situations - last year this included responding to fires, floods, gas leaks and more!



75% of you are happy with how we listen to and act on your feedback

You said:

"I do attend resident meetings and know that views are listened to and actioned if possible."

We could improve:

"There needs to be anonymous feedback opportunities."

It's so important that you know who to talk to and when, so your views are heard.

If you have an issue, the first port of call is usually your housing office, and if the issue is urgent, you can use our 24-hour service.

Thanks to your feedback, we've got:

- ✓ direct phone numbers
- ✓ one number per housing office that can transfer you to the right service
- ✓ A personal and tailored service, delivered by local people who care.

Every day we work to ensure you feel listened to and that services are what you need.

We do this by:

- offering flexible tenancy start and rent payment dates
- responding to your requests for advice, support, communal cleaning and gardening ASAP
- giving you a repair appointment at a time that suits you.

How you took part in formal meetings

This past year was a busy time with lots of change, and your views were represented across our work.

Our resident's consortium met regularly, requesting presentations and information from services and asking many questions!

We held focus groups where we invited feedback on everything from repairs to communication to rent rises and other major decisions. Our new policy officer consulted on changes to policies and began work on creating new policies alongside residents.

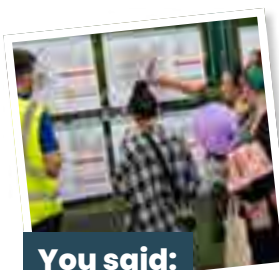
Decision and information reports were made publicly available for comment in advance of the Housing and Tackling Homelessness committee, and your views were represented at this committee by three elected members of the resident's consortium, alongside opposition members representing the views and experiences of residents that they are in contact with.

Did you know?

We offer you training so you have the knowledge to work with us and hold us to account. Last year's training included building safety and social housing regulation, scrutiny, and mental health.

How we communicate and listen to you

80% of you are satisfied that we keep you informed when needed.



You said:

"Portsmouth City Council continually invites its tenants to share their views and the council provides contact details through its publications and website."



We could improve:

"I don't always understand the letters."

Our resident engagement team is out and about all year round talking to you.

This past year they've attended:

-  Party for The Warren
-  Party for Hilsea
-  PO6 Super Summer Party
-  Summer Fun Day in West Leigh
-  Live Well events
-  Community Cuppa events
-  Plus many more

Over the past year the resident engagement team has supported over 30 major projects, and 2,305 tenants. They've also supported Amy Holmes, our Building Safety Manager, to consult with residents across our 22 high-rise buildings on how they want to be kept informed and involved in decision making, developing our building safety engagement strategy. We've also reached out to every single one of you through our magazine, House talk.



You made real change to rents this year

We usually just use House Talk to ask what you think of the new rent proposals. But this year we also sent a letter to every one of you, giving us lots of responses which we passed onto Cllr Sanders for review.

Thanks to this (plus your feedback from some busy resident consortium meetings), the proposed increase to your service charges was reduced by half.

In a 2022-2023 survey, you asked us to improve how we communicate.

So we:

- ✓ made a new communications strategy
- ✓ changed House Talk and social media posts
- ✓ set up a communications focus group
- ✓ gave you the chance to feedback on our phone system
- ✓ started offering you estate walkabouts so you could meet people in charge and talk about your area

Did you know?

We've created video content for all of you. It's on our website and social media channels and shows what we do as a landlord, and how we put you at the heart of everything we do.

You said:

"House Talk was difficult to read and the content wasn't hitting the mark."

So we:

"Changed the look of House Talk alongside those of you who give us feedback and ideas."

Repairs, maintenance, and keeping you safe

You said:

"Always on time, quick responses on jobs... always very friendly."

We could improve:

"Some of the repair service is great, some isn't."

Investing in our homes and maintenance

This year we purchased **747** properties from Clarion Housing Association, with **818** properties due to be purchased in total. These will help secure the long term financial future of our housing service.

This year we've been moving calls for repairs to a specialist repairs support team to try to improve the service you receive. Average call waiting times are less than one minute.

We had £28.6m allocated to maintenance works including:

- day-to-day response repairs
- servicing and compliance - including gas safety, electrical testing and fire risk assessments
- planning revenue works - external repairs and decoration to properties

We've completed:

- **94,322** repairs and services undertaken of which **41,816** were called in by you
- **768** properties made ready for new tenants

We have

💧 **13,554** gas safety checks in date

🔧 **7,999** fire risk assessments in date

And we've installed

🍳 **346** kitchens

💧 **380** bathrooms

🔧 **550** boilers

♿ **193** disabled facilities

The right repair at the right time

- 😊 **41,816** response repairs completed.
- 😊 **83%** of repairs fixed first time.
- 😊 **9.55/10** customer satisfaction recorded by contractors' own tenant satisfaction survey.
- 😊 **82%** of you are happy with your repairs.
- 😊 **82%** of you are happy with how long they took.
- 😊 **79%** of you feel your home is well maintained.

Of the formal complaints that were received about the repairs service the reason for the complaint being made was:

- **44** quality of workmanship
- **6** condensation/mould
- **7** damage caused by contractor
- **4** staff behaviour
- **2** leaks

We work with our repairs contractors to resolve and learn from all complaints.

Up next...

We'll soon be choosing our new gas and compliance suppliers, and our repairs and maintenance company. We'll be asking for your feedback, so get involved!

Resident voice: We said goodbye to Meredydd Hughes as Assistant Director for Buildings and welcomed Adam Hardwick into the role. Resident representatives joined the recruitment panel, making sure that Adam was the right person for the role and ensuring that he had residents' interests at heart.

Did you know?

Our contractors, such as Comserv, Liberty Mountjoy and Corrigenda give back to our local communities by donating goods and services for free! Plus, most of our contractors live in the communities they work in!



- **97.6%** of relevant properties now have a carbon monoxide monitor.
- **98%** of dwelling and communal electrical safety certificates are up to date.
- **98.6%** of homes have had all the required gas safety checks.
- **99.8%** of homes have had all required fire risk assessments.
- **100%** of homes have had legionella risk assessments.
- **100%** of homes have had communal passenger lift safety checks completed.

Future developments

Whilst we have plans for new build development the current financial climate means that building is challenging as we have seen an increase in labour and material costs. This impact is also felt in our repairs and buildings maintenance service.

Nevertheless we have continued to look for opportunities and have designs and plans submitted to planning in Havant, Waterlooville and Portsmouth so that when the economy recovers we will be in a position to progress schemes.

We have held engagement events in Somerstown, Hilsea and Leigh Park to understand what you want to see from new developments and what your priorities are for the area.

Large projects

We completed 30 larger projects last year, including window and door replacement, refurbishment, larger scale maintenance and improvements. We worked with the resident engagement team to support residents and complete satisfaction surveys.

You said:

We need to improve our communication during planned works: "Wish there were more updates on current building work"

So we:

Introduced regular newsletter updates during planned works, which included the contact details of key people who could respond to queries or concerns.

Keeping You Safe

79% of you are satisfied your home is safe.

There have been lots of changes to laws and regulations around Building Safety and Fire Safety and we have been responding to the changes as they come in, along with working on all the things we normally do to keep you safe in your home.

Our 22 tall buildings have been registered with the building safety regulator and we have undertaken structural surveys and tests across all of them.

We have engaged with residents in our tall buildings and have developed a building safety engagement strategy. With the help of residents in our communications focus group we have designed new leaflets with safety messaging.

You said:

"We can go leaflet and poster blind, so use bold colours, fewer words - pictures help"

So we:

Have bright colours and pictures in our designs, with bullet points where possible.

Did you know?

The Estate Wardens regularly visit our buildings to complete safety checks. Across 2023/24 they completed **9,440** block checks.

Fire safety Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service have held two successful training days on tall buildings this year.

These are excellent opportunities for the team to test their response to a simulated fire in a realistic setting, and demonstrate the team's readiness to handle emergencies in high-rise buildings.

We could improve:

"The communal door is broken most of the time. It does get fixed but gets broken quickly again by other residents."

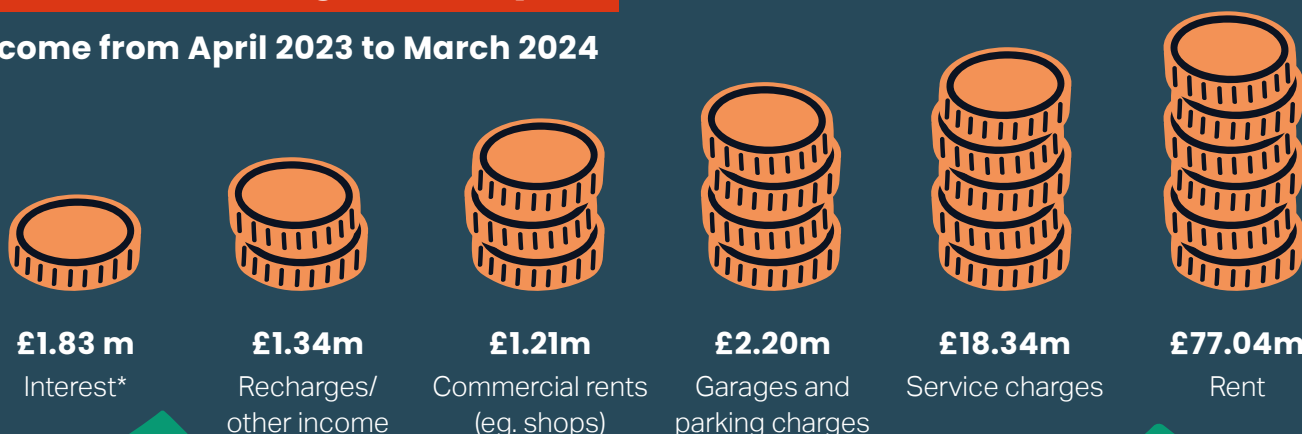
How we spend your rent and service charges (money)

In the Winter 2023 edition of House Talk, we forecast our spend for the year. Here's what we ended up spending.

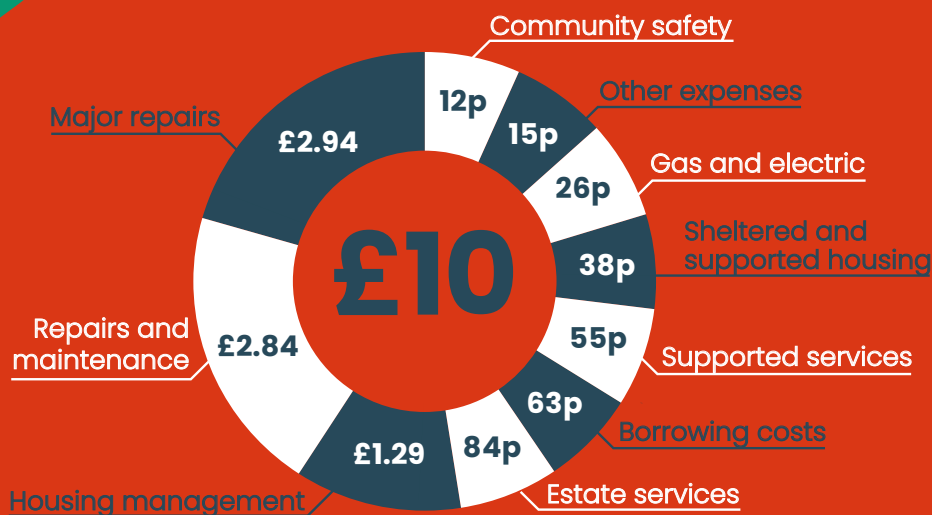
- 👍 Our estimated income was **£98.75m**. We actually got **£101.96m**
- 👍 This meant we could put **£1.91m** into our council housing reserves, funding services in current and future years
- 👍 And we didn't have to make a **£1.55m** withdrawal.

How much we got from you

Income from April 2023 to March 2024



How every £10 of that was spent**



*Interest is the money we earn on our cash balances (the money we have in our bank at any given time).

**Approximate figures.

It costs £7.58 per rented unit per year for our director, and £38.92 for our executive team. You can like-for-like compare this info with other social housing providers, but note that we get involved with other services that private social housing providers do not.

You said

Our planned service charge increase was too high, so we reviewed the service charges again and reduced the level of increase.

Complaints and compliments

You said:

"They tried very hard but I understand they can't always resolve the issue."

We could improve:

"My complaint got listened to, but the issues remain."

For the financial year 2023/24, there were 204 complaints made about our landlord services:

- **31** were progressed to stage 2 of the complaints process.
- **2** complaints went directly to the ombudsman.
- **1** came back to us to respond to with further detail, and one was closed after initial enquiries.

The typical complaints we received related to the service that had been provided, for example the quality of a repair or the response to a request; the conduct of staff/contractors or querying a policy or process that we follow.

Of the 204 complaints, in:

- 💬 Every case we apologised that the person felt like they needed to make a formal complaint
- 🔧 **159** cases we acknowledged that we had not dealt with something correctly
- 🔧 **61** cases we raised a repair/additional works order
- 💰 **21** cases we made a financial payment

76% of stage 1 complaints received a response within 20 working days. Some complaints will take longer than 15 days to investigate and reply to, particularly if the matter is complex, there is a need to interview staff or further responses or meetings are required to resolve the complaint. Of the 31 Stage 2 complaints progressed 68% were completed on time.

These numbers are different to our TSM reporting as here we have included leaseholder complaints in our annual reporting to you and the TSMs relate to tenants only.

Complaints are so valuable, helping us to understand and improve the services we provide. This could include changes in working practices, amendments to policy, changes to service and staff training.

Learning from complaints last year we:

- reviewed policy/processes
- provided additional training for individual staff or teams
- reminded the relevant team of the appropriate process to follow
- met with our contractors to review concerns and plan improvements

Did you know?

This year we created a complaints team just for housing, separate from the main council process.



Our response to emergencies

In September we supported SGN's response to a significant gas leak to Sarah Robinson House in Portsea. The evacuation required a rest centre to provide emergency relief for 120 flats.

The incident lasted 10 days and included a support hub, accommodation and food provision. Resident engagement door knocked after the event to learn if our response could have been improved.

We received 42 responses, mostly positive with some feedback to bear in mind for future incidents.

“Thanks to all the employees of PCC for all their efficiency, kindness and compassion, you were all amazing. Not forgetting SGN and Liberty Gas for fixing everything for us so we able to return to our homes”

Spotlight on dealing with anti-social behaviour

We want you to live in a safe and peaceful environment without fear, intimidation, threats of harm, nuisance, or unreasonable behaviour from others.



“If there's any sort of anti-social behaviour in the area, we're made aware and feel like it's dealt with”

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) takes many forms, including excessive noise or aggressive and intimidating behaviour. We know it impacts residents in different ways and we've been working hard with partners to prevent and resolve incidents in your neighbourhoods.

This year we've restructured our ASB team. We also reviewed our ASB policy for 2024 onwards.

Learning from complaints, this year we gave our frontline teams further training on ASB and hate crime meaning that officers have up to date knowledge. The resident engagement team (pictured above) will be conducting follow-up surveys to residents who have been impacted by ASB to understand how well the issue was understood and dealt with.

58% of you are satisfied with our approach to handling ASB.

- We responded to **979** cases of ASB, of which **29** were hate crimes
- We served **19** notices of seeking possession for ASB
- We referred **128** cases to Portsmouth Assessment Service for mediation
- We evicted **4** residents on ASB grounds.

Alongside this the estates services team responded to **1,596** requests for support with

ASB for example dealing with people sleeping in stairwells, graffiti, drug paraphernalia, or evidencing anti-social behaviour events, such as noise nuisance and drug use.

You said, we did:

Our resident policy focus group helped with the review of our ASB policy. They said we needed to consider our response in mixed tenure blocks and the new policy now covers this.

You said, we did:

At our Landport Courts playground project you said you wanted the big wall removing to design out anti-social behaviour. The wall has been demolished!

What you don't like:

“Kids still hang around shops and clubs and in gangs in parks”

Did you know?

We chair multi-agency meetings with a whole host of agencies such as housing providers, the police, probation, the coastguard, community wardens, youth teams to coordinate responses to anti-social behaviour and work together to identify problem areas and issues and target resources.



Supporting you

When you visit your housing office you can access all kinds of help, including money advice, help with benefits, help with anti-social behaviour, repairs support and help with relationships.

You said:

"Any problems I've had, my housing officer has always been more than happy to support."
"They normally do what they can to help."

Did you know?

Our housing office teams support residents impacted by domestic abuse and attend multi-agency meetings to try to find a way to support those most at risk. We are also on the strategic boards ensuring your experiences are represented when high level decisions are made.

Helping you into employment

This year we have supported **132** people with advice, support and training requests.

Money advice

Our money advice team has supported tenants **2,890** times this year. Key topics include:

- support with benefit applications
- advice around disability benefits and pensions
- applying for grants, and supporting with debt advice and intervention

Contents Insurance

We can help you find contents insurance. **5%** of tenants took up our contents insurance offer in 2023, but there are plenty of options out there - just ask!

Help with energy bills

Our Switched on Portsmouth team can help you save money on energy bills by accessing energy schemes.

Tackling Poverty

Did you know?

Our tackling poverty coordinator and money advice team chair monthly multi-agency meeting with agencies including DWP, utility companies and local food banks, in a bid to ensure that the schemes they develop meet your needs, and we're the first to know what's available for you to access.

We deliver the household support fund for Portsmouth (paid for by government grants). Whilst everyone in Portsmouth benefits, we make sure that these schemes benefit you, our tenants, and Leaseholders.

- The scheme gave out over **100,000** awards to people in need, totalling **£3.6m**, including emergency food parcels, supermarket vouchers distributed by schools, payments for people who missed out on the government's cost of living payments, cooking equipment and other essentials.
- Around **1,800** calls were answered by the council's cost of living helpline last year.
- The top five reasons for calling the helpline were food; energy costs; welfare benefit entitlements; housing costs; debt.
- Our online cost of living information hub had **94,000** views, from a total of over **44,000** users.
- We've provided **3,812** residents with face-to-face energy saving advice and access to schemes.



Estate services team

Building your community and improving your neighbourhoods

69% of you feel we make positive contributions to your neighbourhood.

80% of you feel we keep communal areas clean and well maintained.

You said:

"If I call to report littering they come straight away."

We could improve:

"The council needs to address those tenants who keep their properties in an unacceptable state."

Estate services: Helping keep your neighbourhoods safe, clean and tidy

Our estates services team has been busy planting across your neighbourhoods. Greening our spaces has many benefits including contributing to biodiversity and tree canopy (grass and trees) and reducing hard surfaces to improve drainage.

Did you know?

The gardening team carried out 6,983 gardening tasks across 2023/24.

They've also planted:

 323 Shrubs	 20 Trees
 250 Hedge whips	 7 Roses
 164 Perennials	 6 Sedums
 65 Hedges	 4 Ferns
 40 Sedges	 852m² of wildflower meadows
 22 Grass areas	

In addition, in Buckland, £80,000 was invested in landscaping sites including Linklater Path, Duke Crescent and Northbrook. Funding was sought and obtained via the Greening the City Fund.

The ambition is to help increase the tree canopy and reduce the amount of concrete used on estates by setting areas back to grass and shrubs. This in turn helps with drainage, as well as looking more appealing for everyone.

We recognise that to live comfortably, side by side with neighbours, we need to help tackle day-to-day challenges.

For example, our estate services teams have:

- responded to **366** calls to deal with and investigate dog fouling
- investigated and responded to **11,182** instances of fly tipping across our estates
- returned **1,900** shopping trolleys
- sorted out **9,643** contaminated bins so that rubbish could be collected
- carried out **70,529** cleaning jobs

Did you know?

We piloted a bin replacement scheme in Portsea, looking at how we can support you to recycle.



Northbrook improvements

Community groups

We wanted to help our tenants start their own community groups, which is why we started Community Funds4U - a project where we can help people get the right equipment, meeting spaces and promotion for their group or club idea. We now have a new coffee morning group in Paulsgrove, a Muslim men's group in Paulsgrove and a games club in Wecock Farm. This is alongside all our other activity in the community which saw the resident engagement team out and about. They also hosted a summer fun day at the participation centre in Leigh Park and joined in with Leigh Park summer play days.

Did you know?

As part of our resident training offer, we provided first aid training for residents. The training was especially important for Michelle who volunteers at the Food Bank in Havant.

Play and youth services

Within PO1-PO6 we manage the play and youth service which have spaces at the heart of local communities. This is part funded by the general fund and we also pull in grant funding where we can.

In 2023 there were around **91,778** visits to our adventure playgrounds and **22,018** visits to our youth clubs. We run fun activities, have workshops on serious topics, and create opportunities for young people and their families to explore and get involved in what's on offer in the city and beyond.

Within the youth service alone we:

- fed children **5,181** times
- had **6,857** conversations about education and training opportunities
- had **7,034** conversations about healthy relationships
- had **8,670** conversations about healthy lifestyles
- had **3,642** conversations about mental health
- had **8,349** conversations about drugs, alcohol, smoking, vaping and gambling

Did you know?

We also coordinate the Department for Education's Holiday Activity and Food programme on behalf of the council, making sure there's plenty of fun and free activities in the heart of our PO1 to PO6 communities. We also supported the HAF offer in Leigh Park through our play offer last year.

Community hubs

Our community centres across PO1 and PO6 and our resident participation centre serve as community hubs, and have provided space for you to come together for activities, social events, cups of tea, and to access IT.

We've hosted partner well-being services to make sure they're accessible no matter where you live.

Our Landport Playce project in partnership with the University of Portsmouth should complete in Summer 2024 and work should get underway on building our new Stamshaw youth building.

Did you know?

We secured **£500,000** from BAE to build a new youth and careers space in Stamshaw. We're due to start building after the summer!

Contractor social value

All of our large contracts set out that anyone that we contract to deliver services on our behalf have to give back to the community, support apprenticeships and take responsibility for the environment issues (which is why they have loads of electric vehicles and do their best to recycle).

This year our repairs and maintenance contractors have done a huge amount within your communities.

Here's just some of what they have done:

- Supported careers fairs and mock interview days at schools and colleges across Portsmouth, Havant and Waterlooville.
- Offered work experience, apprenticeships and also supported internships for young people with learning disabilities or who are care experienced, as well as leading on the Shaping Portsmouth apprenticeship bus initiative.
- Donated materials and essential items to local charities, schools and organisations and food banks such as Beacon View, the Roberts Centre and many more.
- Repaired and decorated community facilities, such as the Participation Centre and more.

Response plan

Tenant Satisfaction Measures Action Plan

Based on your feedback throughout the year and from the survey, we've made an action plan for improvement, based around the five themes in the survey. Here's a summary:

Safe and well-maintained homes

To improve our maintenance services, next year we'll:

- Employ a new head of asset management post who will complete a full stock condition survey and plan for long-term improvement and investment
- Continue to complete regular stock condition surveys to better inform us of works required
- Let you know what work we're doing and how we're investing in your homes

To improve our cleaning of communal areas and grounds maintenance, next year we'll:

- Make sure our cleaning and gardening services are responsive to need
- Continue to educate tenants about respecting communal areas and what it means to be a good neighbour
- Seek to increase the visibility of our estate inspections

To improve our repairs service, next year we'll:

- Use survey findings and complaint info to help our contractors improve
- Review our repairs performance and how we communicate this with you
- Get more of you involved in scrutiny of repairs performance and changes

To improve our communication and involvement, next year we'll:

- Meet with you as part of our annual tenancy update visits
- Review our web content and accessibility of information, and make sure House Talk is reaching every home
- Create a tenant handbook
- Find more ways for you to get involved, including scrutinies led by you

To improve our neighbourhoods and communities, next year we'll:

- Continue reviewing our anti-social behaviour cases so we can learn and improve
- Introduce a feedback survey for those of you who contact us about anti-social behaviour
- Let you know what we're doing to improve your neighbourhoods
- Find opportunities to support you in making improvements to your neighbourhoods and in building your communities

Complaints

- Our new complaints lead will seek to better understand and ensure learning from complaints leads to improvements

Our pledge to you

Over the next three years we'll:

- Improve communications
- Engage with more of you
- Ensure you're able to scrutinize
- Get to know our communities

Anything else planned?

We've spent the last year looking at how you use our services and considering whether we could deliver things differently. We'll continue this work, and will consult you if we consider any big changes.

Our plans include:

- Looking at digital communications
- Looking at our service charge model for tenants and leaseholders
- Reviewing results from the building surveys of our tall buildings
- Exploring grants and schemes available in Hampshire to support greening projects across your neighbourhoods
- Looking at how we can better support recycling across areas.