

Tenants' Annual Report

2020-2021

Eastbourne
Homes

Southfields

19 new apartments in the heart of Eastbourne



The many ways that tenants can get involved...



- The Virtual 300
- Retirement Housing Forum
- TIE
- Area Panels
- Residents Voice
- Scrutiny Panel
- Surveys/Questionnaires
- Communications Panel
- Focus Groups
- Community Pop-ups
- Annual Tenants Day
- Quality Checkers

For more information on how to get involved, please see pages 16 and 17.



Introduction by Roger Eastwood The Chair of the Board of Directors



Welcome to this year's Tenants' Annual Report.

We have had another busy and challenging year, and much of it has been about managing services during the pandemic. I'd like to thank you again for your patience, understanding and support through much of this. Whilst it's clear there are still many concerns around Covid-19, we are gradually bringing our services back out to you, our customers, with a view to not only returning to some sort of normality but using the opportunity to re-invigorate and improve the services we deliver to you. Much of our focus continues to be around sustainability work and connecting Housing to a healthy environment on our estates.

It remains critical that we hear your voice and use it to develop and shape what we do. I would encourage as many of you as possible to get involved through the range of options available to you. It's clear we face many cost of living challenges over the next few months, but please be assured that we will do all we can, with partners, to support you and your families through this challenging period. As always, we welcome your feedback on this and any other issues you wish to discuss around your home and Eastbourne Homes services.

Thank you for your continued support.

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The **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard**

looks at how we **involve you** and **respond** to your needs

How do we know?

In May 2020 a proposal to move to annual tenant surveys was approved using the HouseMark Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) system to determine levels of satisfaction, gather feedback and comment on all the Homes First service areas. HouseMark is a nationally recognised system used by around 350 social housing providers across the UK. The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Panel (TIE) which is made up of tenant

representatives from Eastbourne and Lewes were consulted on the questions used, and the 12 they approved were used in the survey. Residents views are important to help us to improve our service, so we consult as regularly as we can through our forums, newsletters, and annual reviews.

Residents Voice is made up of tenant representatives from the Area Panels who worked with us last year to:

- Consider Homes First performance across Eastbourne.
- Involve more tenants in local decision making and increase the membership of Residents Voice.
- Agree areas of service which needed tenants to take a closer look (Scrutiny).
- Programme and deliver estate walkabouts.
- Ask questions of the Senior Management team.
- Help to review publications and policies

74.9%
of you were satisfied with the overall service provided by Homes First in 2020 – 2021

68.7%
of you said you were satisfied with the opportunities we offer to enable you to get involved

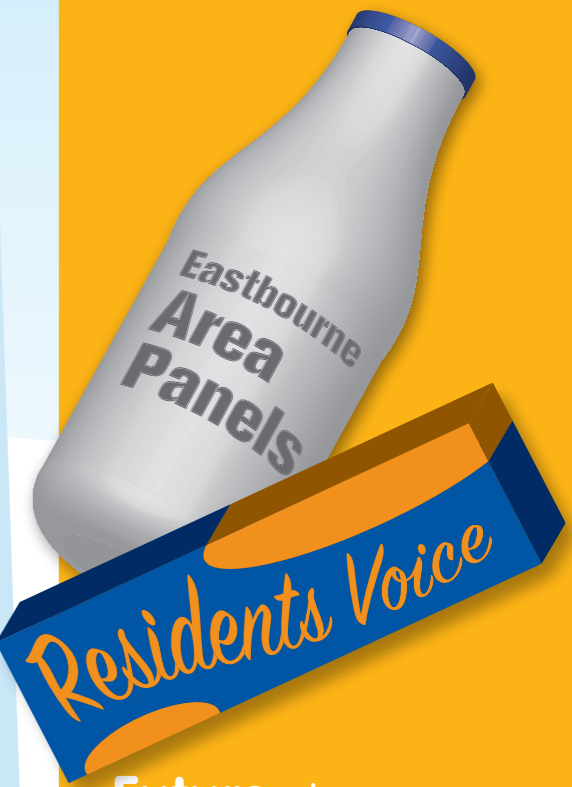
Did you know..?



One aim of the Tenant Involvement Strategy is to deliver excellent tenant involvement by making better use of technology, and due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this became a key priority. VITAL (The Virtual Involvement of Tenants and Leaseholders) was launched in July 2020 with the creation of the Virtual 300 online group. 52 Eastbourne residents have joined so far and taken

part in consultations on new policies, service improvement ideas and even competition judging. We've found that residents have enjoyed the flexibility of being involved in online activities as much or as little as they like, with the added incentive of points being awarded for their time, and a £50 prize given to the most active member every year. There's also the opportunity to be entered into regular draws for shopping vouchers and other prizes too. If you'd like to find out more, just email:

tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



Future plans

The role of Residents Voice and the Area Panels is currently under review with our residents. We are considering redefining the work of the Area Panels so they can focus on the community and support local initiatives whilst working collaboratively with other organisations. It is hoped this change will enable Residents Voice to focus on housing tenancy and service performance and improvements.



Did you know..?

Area Panels have a Community Improvement Budget of £40,000 to spend every year.

In 2020/2021 the Area Panels worked hard with other Eastbourne communities to meet the challenges brought on by the pandemic including support for mental wellbeing, finding work, loneliness, financial hardship, virtual IT connections, training, and education. Between April 2020 and March 2021, 17 new projects were approved in total including new seating at the Willingdon Trees Community Centre, art walks delivered by Compass Community Arts, flower beds at New Derby House, IT equipment for local schools and funding support for local initiatives such as *You Raise Me Up* to support families that have

suffered the loss of a young person aged 16-25 years. Headteacher Nicki Kaufman (shown right), who received IT equipment for Shinewater Primary School said 'you have no idea how happy this has made me. This will make a significant difference to some very deprived children.'



To find out more about how to apply for some community improvement funding, email:

tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

The **Homes Standard** looks at how we provide **homes** that are **safe**, good quality and well maintained

97.3% of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

73.3% of you were satisfied with the standard of repairs that we carried out

6948 Responsive repairs completed, of which...

868 were urgent...

2150 were emergency...

2541 were routine

How are we doing?

We completed **6948** responsive repairs – **2150** were emergency, **868** urgent and **2541** routine.

We also completed **41** replacement kitchens, **28** bathrooms, and **13** separate WCs.

The average amount spent on responsive repairs per property was **£411**. The average amount spent on planned improvements per property was **£822.72**.

73.5% of tenants were satisfied with the overall quality of their home



Future plans

In 2020, a company called Faithorn Farrell and Timms (FFT) were instructed to complete a stock condition survey of all our Eastbourne Borough Council housing stock. The work was commissioned to give us an accurate breakdown of the type, age, and condition of our properties. Due to the global pandemic, it was difficult to gain access to every home, but despite this 72% of the housing stock was surveyed. Going forward Property Services will be recruiting an in-house Stock Condition Surveyor to look at the remaining 28% of our properties and finish the work. Once the exercise is completed, we will have a comprehensive picture of the overall stock condition which will be used to schedule planned maintenance works such as kitchen,

bathroom, and window replacements.

As part of our Value for Money strategy, we will be reviewing our maintenance contracts to explore any opportunities for savings and efficiency gains to make sure our contract management is fit for purpose and delivering to our tenants. The Customer

Did you know..?

Our **Property Services Area Surveyors** are very experienced and undertake regular training on various technical issues to stay up to date with current guidance and technologies. They possess excellent knowledge and proven experience alongside the ability to analyse problems and identify solutions. There's rarely one typical day for a Maintenance Surveyor, and their work can involve everything from dealing with day-to-day repair issues, advising on structural repairs, dealing with planning applications, advising on property law, and keeping your home safe and secure.



Maintenance Surveyor Alex Bassey, with extendable ladder.



Experience Team and Property Services have supported this initiative by working closely with Mears to identify ways to improve performance and ways of working. Weekly meetings have also been introduced with Mears to improve service and the customer experience. Homes First is committed to continuous improvement and to deliver this aim we collect key performance data monthly on the:

- Percentage of homes with a valid gas safety certificate
- Percentage of domestic properties with EICR certificates up to five years old
- Number of emergency repairs completed in month
- Number of non-emergency repairs completed in month
- Percentage of repairs completed right first time
- Overall satisfaction with repairs

Did you know..?

Eastbourne Borough Council has **1398** flats in **328** blocks, **1688** houses, **29** bungalows, **292** Retirement housing properties, **631** leasehold properties, **37** shared ownership homes and **44** garage blocks managed by the Homes First team.

If you have an emergency repair out of office hours you can still get the help you need:

- For general emergency repairs you can use the main contact number which is **01323 410000** – listen for the out of hours message.
- For heating and hot water breakdowns only, you can call BSW Building Services on **01444 836036**.
- If there is a gas leak you can contact the National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999**.



The Tenancy Standard

looks at how we **let** and **manage** homes, including the **tenancies** we offer and arrangements for **allocations** and **mutual exchanges**

Between April 2020 and March 2021, we let **74** general needs homes:

- 4** Studio properties
- 31** One-bedroom flats, bungalows, and maisonettes
- 24** Two-bedroom flats, houses, and maisonettes
- 14** Three-bedroom houses
- 1** Four-bedroom house

We also let **32** retirement housing homes, which included **22** one-bedroom flats, **5** two-bedroom flats and **5** studios.

35 tenants were helped to mutually exchange their home and move using HomeSwapper (the UK's leading exchange service for tenants). In response to Covid-19, we also introduced *SwapTracker* which extended the functionality of HomeSwapper with an online portal to manage the sharing of information. This helped tenants to track the progress of their mutual exchange application quickly and easily.



During the Covid-19 pandemic, works to bring empty properties back into use were initially suspended. Subsequently, delays were experienced due to our main contractor furloughing staff and delays and shortages in the supply of building materials. The average number of days taken to re-let our empty properties was 48.5 days.

Homeless Applications

We actively assisted **457** households homeless or at risk of homelessness in 2020/21 by providing advice and assistance, producing personal housing plans, signposting to services and in some instances offering loans. The outcome of every application is different depending on what the need is, but we successfully enabled **118** households to remain in existing accommodation or find a new property, and another **270** households were relieved from homelessness by the local authority taking reasonable steps to help the applicant secure suitable accommodation for at least six months. **69** households had a Main Housing Duty decision (i.e., they were provided temporary accommodation until this duty ended) or if owed Full Housing Duty they were offered temporary accommodation until settled accommodation could be identified. The others were found to have No Local Connection, Not in Priority Need, Not Eligible or Intentionally Homeless.

Value for Money

Homes First is committed to continuous improvement and to deliver this aim, we collect key performance data on how much we spend on emergency accommodation every month.

Between April 2020 and March 2021 we let **74** general-needs homes...

31 One-bedroom flats, bungalows, and maisonettes...

4 Studio properties...

24 Two-bedroom flats, houses, and maisonettes...

14 Three-bedroom houses and...

1 Four-bedroom house

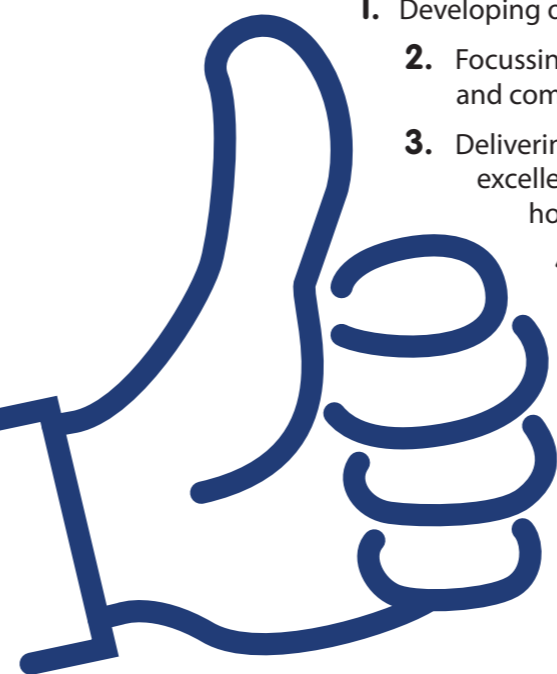
75.6% of you said that you were satisfied with the safety and security of your home



Future plans

Our new Value for Money Strategy will make sure our services work as efficiently and effectively as possible to provide our tenants with good quality homes. The strategy will also help us manage the challenges we continue to experience with the supply of materials for void work and staffing. When reviewing our strategic goals, we will make sure Value for Money commitments are addressed by:

1. Developing our people
2. Focussing on our customers and communities
3. Delivering operational excellence and quality homes
4. Providing good value
5. Ensuring a quality environment



Rough Sleeping and Covid-19

'Everybody in' was a Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) emergency directive to accommodate all rough sleepers in Eastbourne at the height of the Covid19 pandemic. This was followed by the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), which enabled Eastbourne Borough Council, working with the County-wide Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI), to secure capital funding to purchase three units of accommodation used as Housing First – hfe.homeless.org.uk – for former rough sleepers.

Having worked closely with our partners to accommodate all rough sleepers during the Covid19 pandemic, our focus now is to secure more suitable move on and support for all those we have accommodated so far. The Rough Sleeping Accommodation programme (RSAP) has enabled Eastbourne Borough Council to secure additional funding to purchase eight one bed/studio flats in Eastbourne, which will provide ongoing support in 2022 to those housed by the scheme.



The **Neighbourhood** and **Community Standard**

looks at how we **manage** and **improve** your neighbourhood and **deal with** anti-social behaviour

We are active in our communities and provide opportunities for our customers to engage positively, including, where possible, preventative measures relating to antisocial behaviour. Last year the tenancy management team helped to resolve 261 cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Eastbourne. The team also

completed 60 Hate and ASB Risk Assessments (HARA) with the Police, Adult Social Care, Mental Health, Children's Social Care, Victim Support and Drugs and Alcohol services. 36 'formal tenancy actions' were taken to combat ASB, including Notices of Seeking Possession. There were also 60 referrals for safeguarding made, and 24 referrals for mediation delivered by the Brighton and Hove Independent Mediation Service: www.bhims.org.uk.



Case study provided by the Brighton & Hove Independent Mediation Service

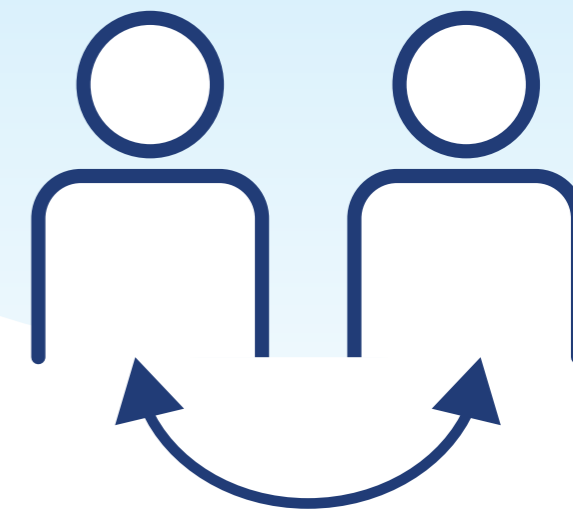
Communication between two neighbours had broken down, and both were making anti-social behaviour complaints against each other.

Their shared communal garden had been a source of tension and bad feeling, and this increased during the Covid-19 lockdown. Each tenant was willing to engage in mediation, so individual calls were arranged to let them speak about their situation. Person 1 suffered from anxiety and depression and felt their neighbour's actions were premediated and planned. Person 2 denied this but welcomed the mediation to explain how the allegations had made them feel. While both parties wished to continue the process, neither had access to video conferencing and face-to-face meetings were not

possible due to Covid-19 restrictions. The mediation team felt that shuttle mediation was not appropriate given the complex emotional issues at play, so more individual meetings were offered to discuss options and plan the next steps. Person 2 said that although they would be happy to have a mediation meeting with Person 1, they did not want to continue with

shuttle mediation. This was because they believed this would make things worse because Person 1 would not trust what was said in a message. Person 2 used their second call to talk through ways to reduce further conflict and respond calmly if more complaints were made. They told the mediator they felt much better for being able to talk things through.

Person 1 understood that the mediation could not continue, but was disappointed and concerned about the impact of ongoing stress on their wellbeing. They accepted an offer of three conflict coaching sessions which were used to talk about the different issues causing difficulties. This led to counselling for stress, a focus on wellbeing, and an undertaking not to take matters so personally. In the last conflict coaching session, Person 1 reported that things had been much quieter since the mediation, which had helped them gain perspective and avoid antagonising their neighbour. In a final call Person 2 also reported no recent issues with the neighbour and said talking to a mediator had helped reduce tension for both parties. Although face-to-face mediation was not possible in this case, both neighbours benefited from the process.



Future plans

We are committed to providing excellent customer service with our residents at the heart of everything we do. We will monitor the impact of the new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy on our most vulnerable customers, and work with Adult Social Care to signpost and deliver services in support of our customers good mental health. No matter what your experience of our services, we welcome the opportunity to hear your views so we can learn and continually improve



The Value for Money Standard

looks at how we collect rent and other charges and how we provide value for money

Homes First is subject to a range of regulations and standards it must achieve which are set by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). These include an assessment on whether the auditor is satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources. Consideration is given to financial sustainability and governance arrangements that demonstrate services are of value for taxpayers.

The three 'E's are the components of value for money:

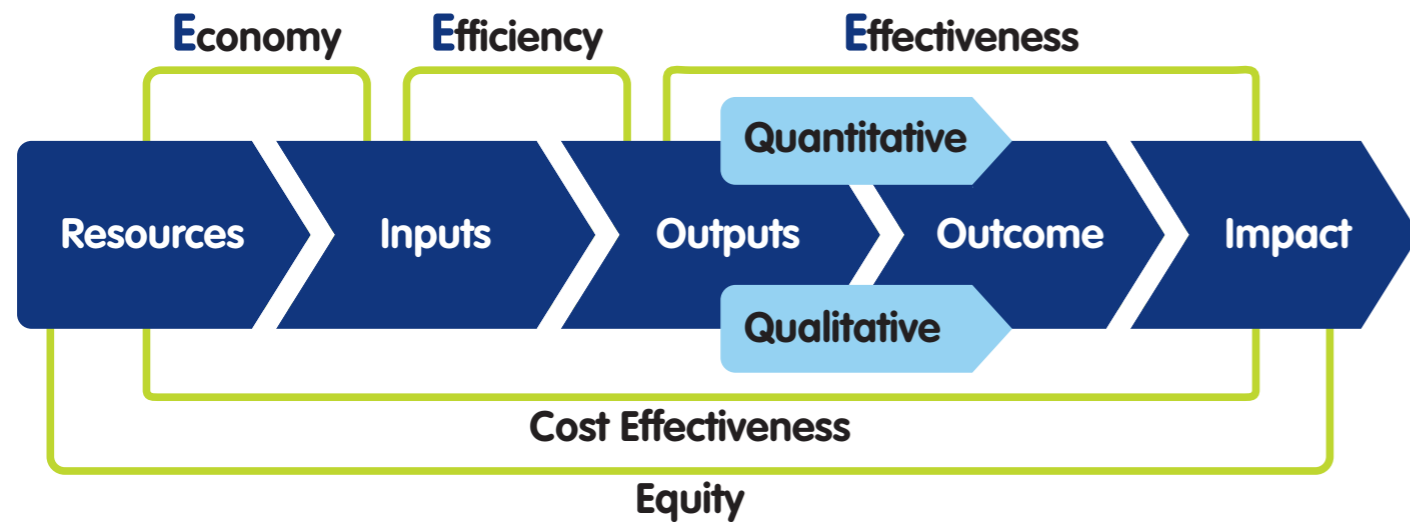
Economy (Less) – the price paid for what goes into providing a service. (for example, staff salaries, material costs).

Efficiency (Well) – a measure of productivity, i.e., how much you get out in relation to what is put in. (for example, the efficiency of services such as rent, and arrears collection may be measured by the cost of the service compared to the total rent collected).

Effectiveness (Wisely) – the outcome for customers. (for example, satisfaction levels among residents with tenant participation arrangements).

Therefore, value for money is high when there is an optimum balance between all three – relatively low costs, high productivity, and successful outcomes.

This diagram shows how the three 'E's link together to help services to demonstrate Value for Money...



How are we doing?

We collected **96.50%** of our rent.

85.1% of tenants were satisfied that their rent provided value for money.

The average weekly rent for an Eastbourne Homes property is **£85.32** (this is the average for all properties from bedsits to five bed houses).

The average weekly rent for properties in the Eastbourne Borough private rented sector is **£190.38** per week (Office of National Statistics).

96.5%
Rent Collected

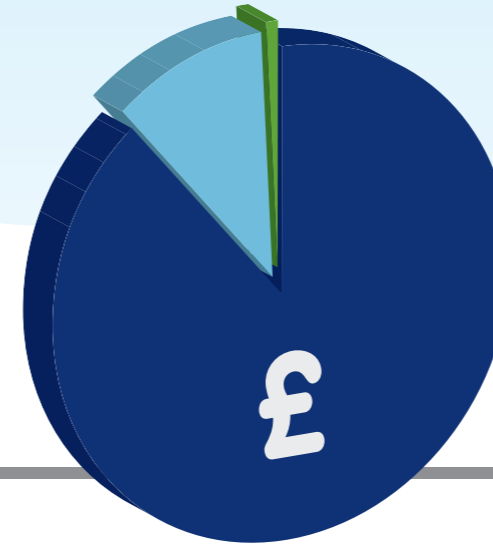
81.5%
of tenants were satisfied that their rent provided value for money

£85.32
The average weekly rent for Eastbourne Homes property

Value for money strategy

We have developed a **Value for Money Strategy** to make sure that value for money is 'everyone's business' and at the heart of everything we do. The strategy will help us to understand the costs of our services, reduce these where possible, and improve performance and service delivery to increase customer satisfaction. In summary we will spend your money wisely and provide the best possible services to our customers.

This is how we raised our income...



7,700,000	Eastbourne Borough Council This is the management fee paid to Eastbourne Homes by EBC. It is funded from the rents that tenants pay.
860,000	ESCC - East Sussex County Council This is funding provided by ESCC to run STEPS in 2020/21.
310,000	Other Income
8,870,000	TOTAL

How income is spent...

How much from each £100 raised is spent on repairs, management costs, etc.



Governance and Risk Management

Robust governance is essential to achieving Value for Money, so Homes First has arrangements in place to monitor performance, and challenge risk, through Eastbourne formal governance frameworks. In addition to this, residents can influence decisions, identify areas for improvement and review services through Residents Voice, the Area Panels, the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment panel, the Virtual 300 and a range of surveys. Homes First has recruited a Quality & Value for Money Lead to report progress directly to the Head of Homes First and develop a Value for Money risk register in line with government Code of Practice.

Future plans

We have plans to increase our housing stock in Eastbourne by 102 homes including affordable energy efficient flats and houses, as well as much needed rough sleeper accommodation.



The Charter for Social Housing Residents

In November 2020, the Government unveiled the much-anticipated Social Housing White Paper – The Charter for Social Housing Residents – which brings together a range of measures aimed at improving the experience of people who live in social housing. There are seven chapters in the Charter which outline the things every social housing resident should expect from their landlord:

1. Being safe in your home.
2. Knowing how your landlord is performing.
3. Having your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly.
4. Being treated with respect.
5. Having your voice heard by your landlord.
6. Having a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.
7. Being supported to take your first step to home ownership.

Whilst some aspects of The Charter require legislation before they can be implemented, over the last year Homes First has been preparing by:

- Commencing a full Stock Condition Survey
- Implementing a range of safety works to proactively address the anticipated requirements of the White Paper and the Building Safety Bill which will bring a new accountability and make clear where the responsibility for managing safety risks lies through the design, construction, and occupation of buildings in scope – www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-building-safety-bill
- Developing a Homes First Performance Management Framework with improved data gathering and reporting that aims to improve performance and enable us to share



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information about how we are performing to you.

- Establishing the Customer Experience Team, whose remit draws together many of the key aspects of The Charter (Performance Management and Reporting, Complaints, Pro-active Consumer Regulation, Tenant Involvement).
- Working towards publishing a new Tenant Involvement Strategy for 2022-2025.

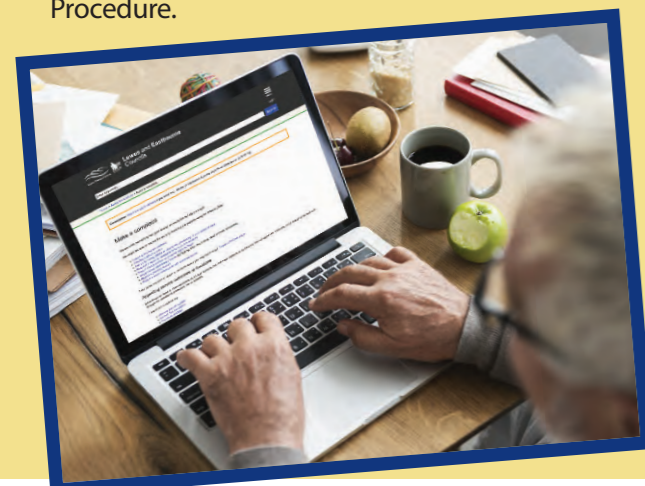
Future plans

- For 2021-2022, we have increased the capacity of the Homes First Customer Experience Team to ensure complaints are addressed within the timescales detailed in our Corporate Complaints Procedure.

- We will continue to work closely with colleagues, Mears and all our contractors to improve complaints handling times and will aim to make initial contact within 24 hours of a complaint being logged.
- We will implement the Resident Scrutiny Team's Complaints Improvement Plan to effectively respond to their recommendations.
 - Customer Experience Specialist Adviser's will support Homes First colleagues to improve performance and customer experience,

learning lessons from complaints to implement practical solutions to poor service standards and service failures.

- The Customer Experience Team and involved residents will assess the feasibility of establishing a Residents Complaints Panel to support service and performance improvement.
- During 2021-22, Homes First will work with involved residents to develop its own charter and set out a range of service commitments which meet or exceed anticipated regulatory expectations.



Complaints handling

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by Eastbourne Homes, our staff, or those acting on our behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents. Anyone who uses or receives a service or is affected by a service from any part of Eastbourne Homes can complain. We do our best to resolve any complaints we receive informally, but sometimes this is just not possible. When a formal complaint is made, this is allocated to a member of our Customer Experience Team so that a stage 1 investigation can take place and hopefully a resolution found. In situations where a customer is dissatisfied with the result of the stage 1 process, they can request a second stage 2 investigation, but this usually requires more

information to explain the reason for dissatisfaction with the investigation that has already been carried out.

Last year we received **183** complaints, and **9** of these moved to a stage 2.

To give an idea of the range of complaints we receive, above is a breakdown of the numbers for the 2020/2021 period:

Please note, the Eastbourne Homes figures do not include complaints concerning Homelessness, Housing Applications, Banding & Bidding and Private Sector Housing as these are not services delivered by Eastbourne Homes. The number of complaints received by Eastbourne Borough Council in relation to these services was 57 in total.



Of the **181** closed complaints, **37** were about poor service, **20** were about our staff or contractors, and **14** were about repeated service failures.

Overall, **51%** of our complaints were closed within our target times. To improve our service and make sure your complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly, we have:

- Worked with Mears to improve service and customer experience, and introduced weekly meetings.
- Worked closely with Mears to identify ways to improve performance and ways of working.
- Reviewed and improved the

handover process and communications between repairs and major works teams.

- Reminded Mears and their sub-contractors to issue appointments in a timely manner when works orders are provided.
- Restructured the Housing Needs and Standards Team to deliver a focus on customer experience and address backlogs which have led to complaints.
- Begun developing staff training to improve customer service and better identify the communication needs of our residents.

We value customer complaints and see them as valuable feedback that we can use to improve our services. If you need to make a formal complaint you can use an online form on the website:

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/about-the-councils/make-a-complaint/

There are many ways to get involved and make a difference



The Virtual 300

The Virtual 300 is a way you can get involved and have your say without leaving home. We regularly email members to ask what they think about new policies, service improvement ideas and even competition entries. You can get involved as much or as little as you like, but to encourage involvement we give a £50 prize to the most active member every year.



Jacqui Astridge from Eastbourne with her prize for being the most active member of the Virtual 300 last year.

Report it

You can provide quick and easy feedback by using the 'Report It' app on your mobile when you're out and about. Just use the app to provide a photo of the issue and the location so that it can be directed straight away to the right member of Neighbourhood First staff.

REPORT IT



Transactional surveys

We have developed a 'moment in time' feedback approach to capture your thoughts on a service you have received. Asking for feedback when the experience is fresh in your mind gives us great insight and helps to improve and develop our services. We are currently running transactional surveys for our complaints service and planned maintenance works via email and text.

Communications Panel

This forum helps us make sure that our newsletters and reports are easy to understand and free of jargon and mistakes.

Focus Groups

These are informal, but structured discussion groups with other tenants which allow you to share your views and shape key services, such as our allocations process.

Community Pop Ups

Look out for our Homes First gazebo at community events and local consultations. Our staff will be on hand to chat to you about issues in your local community.

Annual Tenants Day

Every year we aim to hold an event which all tenants are welcome to attend, like our Annual Conference for example. This is a great way to keep up to date with our services, meet the teams, and network with other tenants.

Quality Checkers

We are piloting an approach to involve residents in checking the quality of our communal cleaning service in retirement housing. Once the pilot is complete, we will review how it went and explore how to extend the approach to other schemes – watch this space!

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment (TIE) Panel

TIE Panel members work with senior managers to discuss issues affecting tenants across Eastbourne and the Lewes District to make sure that tenant interests are fully considered in all aspects of strategic decision making. We are actively looking for Eastbourne representatives on this strategic group.

Residents Voice

Residents Voice represents the views of residents in Eastbourne. The group meets quarterly, and we are currently working with members to review how we engage in Eastbourne and support residents to influence Homes First policies, services, and performance. Meetings are now open to all Eastbourne Homes tenants and leaseholders in Eastbourne, which has encouraged new people to become involved and have their say. Every meeting also has a virtual connection via Microsoft teams which some have found a valuable aid to participation.

Area Panels

Area Panels currently provide residents with the opportunity to get involved in local community activities and provide a forum for learning about Homes First services.

Along with Residents Voice, we are working with members to re-define the role of Area Panels acknowledging that many prefer to contact Homes First direct with their questions rather than attend meetings. However, the value of social networking opportunities and getting involved in local communities has been recognised. Currently the panels allocate the community improvement budget in their area for the benefit of local organisations and residents.

Tenant Scrutiny Team

Tenant-led scrutiny reviews are overseen by the TIE Panel, who commission trained tenants to carry out in-depth service reviews on a service area, such as repairs. The scrutiny team make evidence-based recommendations to the Homes First Senior Leadership Team, and agree improvement plans, which are monitored by the TIE panel.

Retirement Housing Forum

We hope to agree a joint retirement housing forum which will work across Eastbourne and Lewes which will be made up of representatives from all the retirement housing schemes. Every April members are elected to represent and discuss the views and specific needs of their scheme at the forum.

Benefits of getting involved...

- Tenant members of our scrutiny team have made several recommendations to improve our services. Recently they worked with Property Services on ways to make it possible for tenants to report and track the progress of communal repairs. They also recommended changes that have been adopted to help us speed up how we deal with complaints.
- Tenants who join our tenant groups are best placed to make local improvements in their community. Eastbourne successes from the last year include:

- Supporting local foodbanks
- Providing laptops and tablet computers to primary School children in Tollgate and Shinewater schools
- Supporting local art walks to promote mental health wellbeing and social networking via Compass Community Arts
- Supporting the purchase of a new vehicle for East Sussex Wildlife Ambulance to support nature in Eastbourne parks
- Providing outside furniture and raised planting beds for several retirement housing schemes
- Supporting those with learning disabilities to access tennis via Defiant Sports
- Providing the Hampden Park and Langney Sheds with funding to repair or renew equipment
- Wildflower planting

Tenant Groups and Meetings –

We will continue to offer hybrid meetings giving tenants the opportunity to meet face-to-face or join meetings online using Microsoft Teams.

The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Panel (TIE) meets three times a year – 2022 dates to be confirmed.

Residents Voice meets quarterly -

- 18th Jan 2022 'Meet the Board' event to be held at Devonshire Park Tennis Centre
- 19th Apr 2022 (10am -12pm) – provisional - date and venue to be confirmed
- 19th July 2022 (10am -12pm) – provisional - date and venue to be confirmed
- 18th Oct 2022 (10am -12pm) – provisional - date and venue to be confirmed

Retirement Housing Forum meets regularly – 2022 dates to be confirmed.

Someone who made a difference...

In Memorium – Cecile Slater

This is really sad news. We will very much miss Cecile who worked selflessly for many years to support residents through her work as Chair of Residents Voice and the Old Town Area Panel. She worked with great skill and grace, and always made sure tenants had a strong voice and had their interests represented.

Ian Fitzpatrick (Managing Director of Eastbourne Homes Limited)

I was truly saddened by the news of Cecile's passing, and my thoughts flooded with happy memories of our times together. She was a pillar of the Area Panels, championing the residents of Old Town, local groups, and charities, but most of all she showed such love and warmth to all who had the pleasure of her company. I will look back on the happy times when she kept us in line and in fits of giggles on a stall of chocolates and wine, cellophane wrapped teddy bears and a lucky dip tombola. We will all miss you Cecile.

Sarah Tye (Project Manager – Commercial Business Property & Development)

In her capacity as a volunteer and as a friend, her selfless hard work on behalf of residents was never ending. She was the same with staff too, using her personality and diplomacy to achieve the very best for residents. I will always remember Cecile as will my family every time we eat her lemon tart recipe.

Nikki Wickham (Specialist Advisor – Tenant Involvement)



Useful Information



Money Helper

Money Helper

www.moneyhelper.org.uk

Tel: 0800 0113797

An independent service that provides free, unbiased money advice on credit cards, loans, mortgages, insurance, pensions, savings & investments, tax and benefits. You can chat online or by telephone.

citizens advice

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.cab.org.uk

Adviceline (England) 0800 144 8848

Gives advice on managing debt, bankruptcy, mortgage problems, credit problems, enforcement agents (bailiffs), debt management companies, court action for debt, budgeting and more.

NATIONAL DEBTLINE

National Debtline

www.nationaldebtline.org

Tel: 0808 808 4000 / Webchat also available

Gives free, confidential, and independent advice to people with debt problems.

Step Change

Step Change

www.stepchange.org

Tel: 0800 138 1111 / Webchat also available

Offers free advice to help people who are in financial difficulty.

debt support trust

The Debt Support Trust

www.debtsupporttrust.org.uk

Tel: 0800 085 0226

This charity gives expert debt advice and support if you are struggling to manage your debts.



Age UK – Money Matters

www.ageuk.org.uk

Tel: 0800 678 1602

Independent money management and benefits advice.



Debt Advice Foundation

www.debtadvicefoundation.org

Tel: 0800 043 40 50

Offers free, confidential advice on any aspect of debt.



Wave Community Bank (East Sussex Credit Union)

www.wavecb.org.uk

Tel: 0300 303 3188

A not-for-profit savings and loans co-operative helping you to save money and offer cost effective and flexible loans, which meet your individual needs.

Welfare Benefits Helpline

0333 344 0681 (calls cost no more than national rate calls)

Benefits advice.



Foodbanks in Eastbourne

www.eastbourne.foodbank.org.uk/locations/

Everyone needs to have a valid foodbank voucher provided by a referral agency to receive help. You can find your nearest foodbank and learn more on the website.



Trouble with energy costs?

Living in a cold home can harm your health and make health conditions like heart problems and asthma in children worse.

The East Sussex Warm Home Check service is available all year round and offers free telephone advice and money saving tips for



anyone struggling to afford to keep warm at home.

You can apply for a Warm Home Check service by texting **WARM** to **80011**, or by calling **0800 464 7307**.



There's also a website with lots of helpful information - warmeastsussex.org.uk



3VA

www.3va.org.uk

An organisation that supports social and voluntary action in East Sussex, prioritising those in greatest need. Their work is based on collaborative partnership using an asset-based and community-led approach. You can find out more on the website

Not Costing the Earth



HOMES FIRST

Working together to reduce our carbon footprint

This project has been developed to promote cost effective carbon reducing resources and support that tenants are interested in, which include:

- Growing food at home and Community Growing projects
- Food security, seasonal eating, your food carbon footprint, and upskilling
- Reducing Food Waste
- Biodiversity
- Sustainable transport
- Household energy saving

To find out more and get involved, email **Jo Wunsch**, Community Development and Sustainability Advisor, on: jo.wunsch@ad.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



HOUSING JUSTICE

Housing Justice

www.housingjustice.org.uk/get-help

Tel: 0808 800 4444

If you are experiencing homelessness or you are at risk of homelessness it is important that you speak to an expert who can give you accurate advice about your situation.

Did you know..?

The Customer Service Team answered **104,764** calls from Eastbourne customers this year.

In addition, **26,000** webchats were conducted, **73,127** emails were received, and **16,500** documents and letters were scanned by the team.

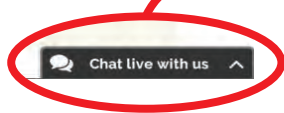
Useful Contacts



Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, a reduced number of Customer Advisors have been available to answer telephone calls. To enable us to assist customers who cannot access online services, we would ask all tenants who can do so, to report issues via our website – www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk – and follow the links to the online service you need or use the **Webchat** option.

With our **Webchat** service, you can avoid the call queues in our busiest periods!

Webchat is a fast and easy way to contact the Councils for assistance and to get the information you need. Operators are available between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday and will be able to assist with quick-queries or direct you to webpages with the information you need. Between these times, you can access our webchat service from any page on the website; just click on the 'Chat live with us' tab at the bottom right of the page to start a chat with an Advisor. You will need an email address, but you don't need to sign up for an account. You can even request a copy of the chat transcript to be sent to you, so that you can easily refer to any instructions or information you are given. Just head over to www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk to give it a go.



Eastbourne Borough Council main number: **01323 410000**

Option 2 – For repairs, including communal repairs. Please note that for emergency repairs after 5pm or at weekends (including heating) you will then need to also select Option 1.

Option 3 – Council tax queries and paying council tax – except council tax reduction.

Option 4 – Benefit enquiries and council tax reduction.

Option 5 – Planning.

Option 6 – For anything else.

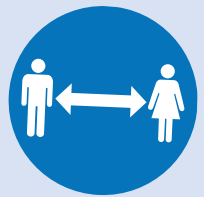
Covid-19 remains a serious health risk.



HANDS



FACE



SPACE

You should stay cautious to help protect yourself and others.

Let fresh air in if you meet indoors. Meeting outdoors is safer.

Wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces where you come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

Get tested and self-isolate if required to.

If you haven't already, get vaccinated.

Emergency numbers:



- Gas leak: **0800 111 999**
- Electricity power cut: **105**
- Mains water leaks: **0333 000 0365**
- Homelessness
After 5pm or at weekends: **01323 410000**

Other useful numbers:

- Non-emergency police: **101**
- NHS Non-emergency **111**
- East Sussex County Council: **0345 608 0190** for highways issues such as road maintenance, pavements and street lighting, adult social care, mental health services, schools and education services, grass verge cutting.
- Shelter – Housing advice: **0808 800 4444**
- Samaritans – **116 123**