



# Annual report to residents 2009/10



Unlocking the potential  
of people and places



**Residents from left to right**

Delia Warnes, Luke Trimby, David Webster, Mike Campbell, Chan Green, Bryan Harris

Whilst preparing this report we were assisted by a small group of residents who gave us ideas about what we should include, how we should present information and checked over the drafts for us. Their contribution was invaluable and we would like to thank them all for their input.

Comment from the Resident Annual Report Panel:

**“It was really good to be part of the process setting out the design of this year’s publication. Having residents playing a part in the production of material like this results in having a report which includes information that the residents want to see.”**



# Introduction



Over the past year housing associations have been getting to know their new regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). At Southern Housing Group, we very much welcome the new regulator

with its focus on the things that really matter to residents. One of the key requirements of the TSA is that we meet standards that are designed to ensure our organisation is financially sound, well run and that all residents live in good quality homes and receive good quality services. We are also required to make clear service offers to residents, tailor our services to local needs and report back to you on how we perform.

Providing high quality homes and services has always been a top priority for the Group. In 2009 we sent you a copy of our new Service Standards. The Standards were developed after consultation with our residents and set out the services that we provide and the level of service that you can expect from us. In this report, we re-visit some of our key standards, let you know how we have performed in the first year and give you the inside track on some of the improvements that we plan to make.

We also look at other important areas of our work, such as how we involve residents in developing and shaping our services, as well as what we are doing to get the best value for money to ensure your satisfaction and maintain the financial well being of the Group.

The information in this report has been carefully checked for accuracy and I am delighted to see that the report has also been given a seal of approval by a group of residents who kindly helped us to produce it.

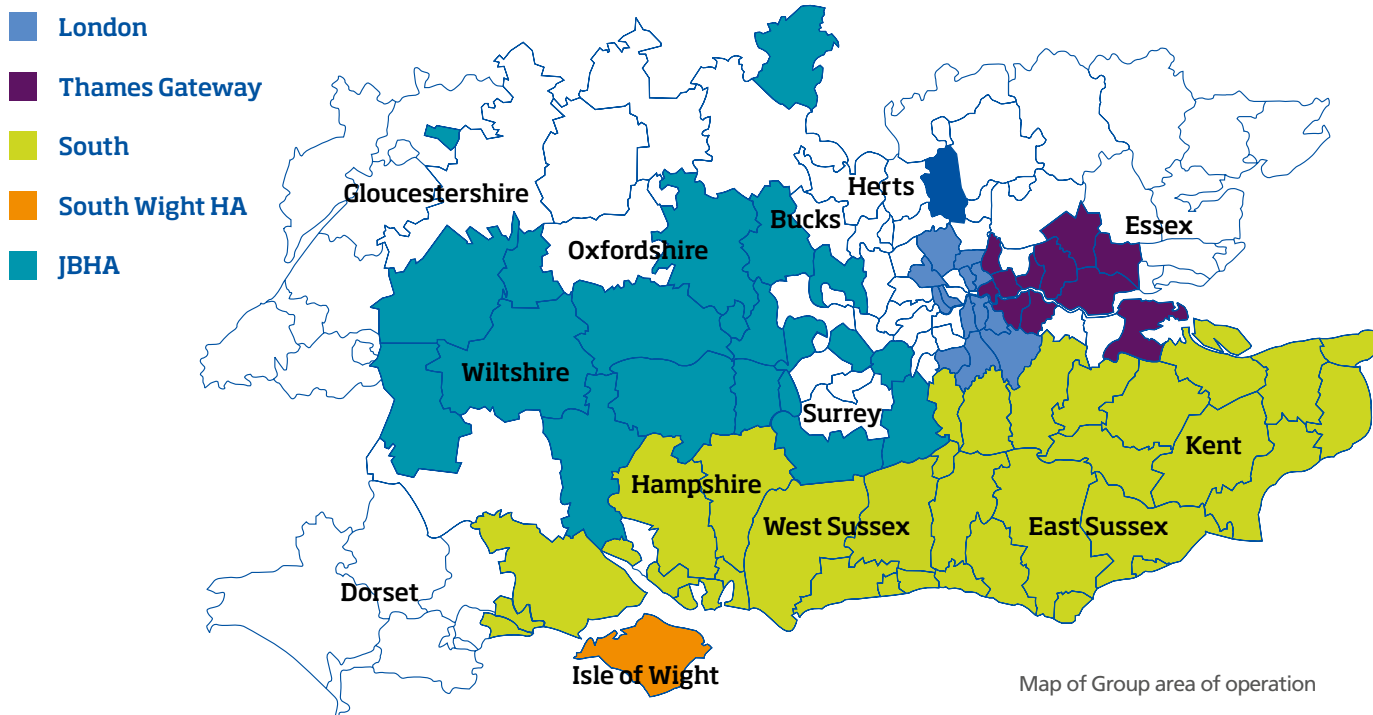
I hope that you find this report interesting and useful. We are always pleased to hear from you, so if you have any queries or comments you are welcome to call our Customer Service Centre or visit our website: [www.shgroup.org.uk](http://www.shgroup.org.uk)

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Dacey'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tom Dacey, Chief Executive

## Where we work



Liverpool Road, London

**20,314**  
Homes for rent

**3,051**  
Shared ownership homes

**1,852**  
Total number of homes let in the year (excluding market and intermediate rent)



Church Elm Court, Dagenham

## Our Service Standards

Our Service Standards form the basis of our service offer to you. The Standards let you know exactly what you can expect from us from a whole range of service areas such as repairs, paying rent and providing support. We asked residents which standards they felt were most important and these are reported in Open Door (see overleaf), so that you get a regular update on how we are doing. The table below shows our performance for 2009/10.



### TOP 12 service standards

April 2009  
to March 2010

1. If you write to us, we will respond within 10 working days	67%
2. If you email us, we will respond within five working days	92%
3. We will answer 80% of phone calls to the Customer Service Centre within 20 seconds	77%
4. If you visit our main offices, you will be met by a polite and professional member of staff wearing an identification badge with a photograph	80%
5. a. We will inspect where you live on a regular basis, as agreed between us (one month, three months, six months)	2933 scheduled
b. Scheduled inspections completed on time	97.2%
6. We will get rid of offensive graffiti within one working day of being told about it	89%
7. If you report an incident of anti-social behaviour that we think is high risk, we will contact you within 24 hours	50%
8. We will make sure your payment is on your rent or service charge account within two working days	100%
9. We will visit you within six weeks of you moving in to see how you are settling in	73%
10. We will check 10% of repairs each month	9%
11. We will offer you an appointment to carry out your repair	74%
12. We will try to get repairs completed in one visit	72%

## Keeping in touch with you

As well as our Service Standards, we provide all new residents with a comprehensive handbook containing essential information about their tenancy with the Group.

Each year we send you three editions of our popular resident newsletter, Open Door. We also report to you on how our resident involvement work has made a positive difference and let you know how we have worked with local communities to improve people's lives. All our publications are available on our website or through the Customer Service Centre.

A Group survey in 2008 indicated that

**96%**

of residents who responded read Open Door.

Three times each year we distribute around

**26,500**

copies of our publication Open Door to residents, staff and stakeholders. We also produce copies in large print and audio format for people with visual impairment.

Open Door covers



## Case study



We continue to improve the range and quality of information that we provide. We are working with our Disability Forum and other residents to develop an 'Easy Read' version of our handbook. The new format uses easy to understand language and clear images to help people who have difficulty reading or do not speak English as a first language. If the new format is a success we will look to produce more information in this way.

## Recent improvements

Contacting us on the phone is the preferred method of communication for most residents. So following resident feedback, in 2009 we introduced a new low-cost 0300 Customer Service Centre phone number. This saves you money because all calls are charged at the local rate and can often be included as part of phone company discount packages. We also have a dedicated phone line for Turkish and Bengali speaking residents.

**77%** of calls to our Customer Service Centre are answered by a real person within 20 seconds.

In 2009/10 our Customer Service Centre dealt with  
**260,980**  
incoming telephone calls.



CERTIFIED MEMBER 2009

This year our Customer Service Centre also achieved a global standards accreditation from the Customer Contact Association, a professional body for the call and contact centre industry, in recognition of our high standard of customer service.



Staff at our Customer Service Centre are on hand to answer resident queries

## Our offer, your choice

Our aim is to offer you as much choice as possible. For example:

- whatever we do, from redecorating the exterior of your home to changing your rent or service charge, we will consult you and tell you exactly what we propose to do and, whenever possible, give you a choice
- we aim to give you an agreed appointment for repair work so that you can choose when work is carried out
- wherever possible, the Group participates in choice based lettings arrangements, which gives more options to transfer applicants and other people looking for new homes.

Over time we aim to expand the range of choices on offer. Our current ideas include:

- working with residents to develop local service offers and greater choice at a regional level
- working with our Disability Forum to develop a repairs service that is in tune with the needs of disabled people
- encouraging communities to suggest additional services that meet particular local needs to help deal with local issues.

## Complaints

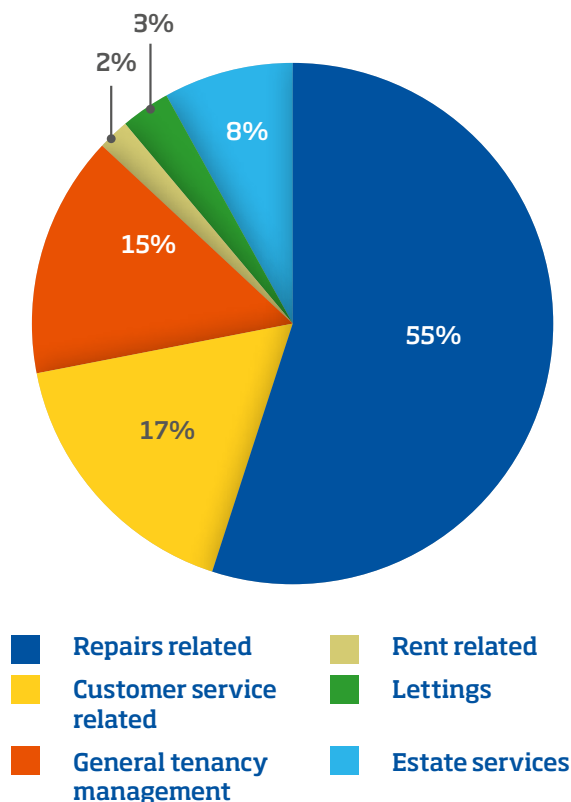
We want to hear from you if you are unhappy with any aspect of our service. If you make a complaint, we promise to investigate your concerns within a time frame that we set with you, and give you a clear decision as quickly as possible.

If we get things wrong we will always apologise and settle your complaint quickly. If you do not agree with our decision you have the right to appeal.

In the past year we received a total of

**2,371**  
complaints

### New complaints Group-wide by headline category



## Improving the complaints service

We are aware that our complaints service needs to improve. At present we are not responding to all complaints quickly enough, and residents are not always satisfied with our response. As a result of your concerns we have decided to make major changes to our complaints process and update our systems.

The aim is to improve our responsiveness and this should be reflected by improved satisfaction levels in the future.

To help us to continue to make the most of your experiences of our services, please make sure you give us your feedback.

In 2009/10 we paid compensation in

**345** cases.

The average amount of compensation paid was

**£150.00**

## Learning from complaints

On the positive side complaints are a good opportunity for us to learn how to improve our services. The most common complaints are about our repairs service. In response to this we are improving the way we work by moving to an arrangement where residents can call our repairs contractors directly to report a repair.

This means it is quicker and easier to book appointment times and you get to speak directly to the company doing the work for you.

In the coming year all our staff will undertake customer service training so that we are all focussed on providing residents with the best possible service.

In 2009/10

**41%**

of residents who complained were satisfied with our complaints service.

## Case study



We received a complaint from a resident in London about security within his block, as well as cleaning issues. As a direct consequence of this complaint we now display the caretakers cleaning schedule and sign off sheet on the estate, so residents are now fully informed about cleaning in their block. We intend to implement this improvement Group-wide.

## Case study

In Hackney we made major changes to our car parking enforcement contract and changed our contractor because residents had complained about the service. Changes included ensuring there is a proper appeals process, writing to car parking permit holders before their permits expire and putting warning notices on cars displaying permits that are about to expire.

Stephen Lee, Regional Operations Manager said:

**"We now have a process in place which is easier for staff and residents to follow. Consultation is continuing on some estates where residents have indicated they wish to review who should be eligible to park on the estate."**

## Involving you to help us improve

As a Group we offer you a wide range of opportunities to get involved and help to shape the services that we provide. These range from:

- customer involvement panels
- resident conferences
- contractor review panels
- customer service monitors
- local tenant and resident groups
- resident service panels
- estate inspections
- neighbourhood project teams and local youth forums and
- surveys.

Resident involvement is a key way you can help us to make changes to the services that matter to you.

## Case study

Last year, residents on the Isle of Wight joined forces with another housing association on the island to take part in a unique joint-working initiative to appoint a new gas servicing and maintenance provider, offering greater value for money.

Resident representatives worked closely alongside staff at every stage of the selection process, from interviewing contractors to going on site visits and having equal say on the final decision.

Gary McIntosh, Business Development Manager for Robert Heath Heating Limited who won the contract, said,

You can choose the type of involvement you sign up to, how often you are involved, and when. We want residents to get more involved in what we do. To enable this we provide training and opportunities to attend special events and conferences so that people feel more able to join in.

Last year we provided training to our Regional Customer Forum members in Health and Safety, and diversity issues. In total, 21 residents from across the Group took part in the training and gained valuable skills and knowledge, which they have been able to put into practice in their resident involvement work.

Each year we directly involve over

**400**

residents in reviewing our work.

“We were pleased to work so closely with residents at the start of this process, and we hope to continue providing an excellent service throughout the contract.”



## Are we getting it right?

Our Group resident satisfaction survey shows that overall satisfaction with our services has risen from 72% in 2006/07 to 78% in 2009/10. This represents good progress, but we still have more work to do to beat the national average of 81%.

In addition to this survey our Resident Involvement team also run a rolling programme of surveys across all our key services, reaching more than **10,000** residents each year.



Lucy Balcombe, Royal Woolwich Arsenal

Satisfaction performance	Southern Housing Group 2006/07	Southern Housing Group 2009/10	Housing Association Average
Tenants very or fairly satisfied with landlord services	72%	<b>78%</b>	81%
Tenants very or fairly satisfied that their views were being taken into account	61%	<b>65%</b>	64%
Tenants very or fairly satisfied with the way their landlord deals with repairs and maintenance	68%	<b>76%</b>	75%

## Offering local services

An important development in the way we involve you in our work is the on-going establishment of new regional Resident Service Panels.

The panels will be entirely made up of residents, who will scrutinise our performance on meeting standards in each region and hold regional managers to account.

The panels will also work with managers to develop regional service offers that meet local needs and, where necessary, tailored local service offers at estate or street level.

If you are interested in becoming a member of a panel please contact our Resident Involvement team.

For more information about any of the ways you can get involved in shaping our work and improving your community, please get in touch.



## Understanding and responding to diverse needs

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Our aim is always to make our homes and services fully available to as many people as possible. For example:

- all of our written information can be translated into other languages or produced in Braille, large print or audio file
- if residents contact us who cannot speak English we can arrange for interpreters to assist and we also have a telephone translation service available
- our main offices all have hearing loops in reception areas and meeting rooms
- our website is very accessible, with the option to increase text size, the ability to read out text using Browsealoud, and many of the key pages have been translated into Bengali and Turkish
- we routinely collect information about residents so that when they call us we already have a clear understanding of their preferences and needs and can tailor our services accordingly

- we are able to provide a service to adapt the homes of people with physical disabilities. We work with residents and their advisors to create the physical home environment that they need.

During the next year we will be publishing our new Diversity Strategy which will include a number of new initiatives such as:

- working with residents to develop local offers in key service areas that meet the special needs of disabled or vulnerable people
- fitting lever taps as standard for residents who are over the age of 60 or living in sheltered accommodation
- developing the involvement of young people in the governance of Southern Housing Group
- reviewing the Group Design Brief for both new and refurbished homes to ensure that they meet wider community and special needs.

## Maintaining your home

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We want to make certain that all of our homes are of the highest quality and stay that way.



Baden Powell, Dagenham

To achieve that goal we set out a number of key promises in our Service Standards, such as:

- to provide you with a good quality home that meets or exceeds the Government's Decent Homes Standard
- provide you with a 24 hour emergency repair service
- prioritise work on gas and fire safety
- repair your home quickly and, where possible, first time.

## How are we doing now?

Nearly all of our homes meet and exceed the Government's Decent Homes Standard, with only 533 properties at 31 March 2010 requiring work to be completed.

In 2009/10 we:

- carried out 45,172 day to day repairs on our homes
- fixed 72% of repairs first time
- carried out cyclical redecorations to 1,911 homes.

Over the next few months we will complete our Decent Homes programme so that all of our properties\* meet the Government's standard.

\* Excluding a small number of properties that are to be demolished, sold or re-modelled

The average end to end time to complete a routine repair is  
**15.9 days.**

During 2009/10 the number of Southern Housing Group rented properties with a valid gas safety certificate was over

**99%**

for the whole period.

A total of  
**£41.25 million**  
was spent on all  
repairs and maintenance.

## Case study

As part of our plans to meet the Government's 2010 Decent Homes Standard we carried out extensive works at our 100 year old Liverpool Road Estate in north London.

The work included renewing kitchens and bathrooms, electric wiring and heating upgrades.

Liverpool Road Resident Joanna Tripp wrote to us saying:

**"I wanted to let you know how delighted I am with the job that (the contractors) EPS Plc. are doing. Each and every one of you really seem to go the extra mile to please the tenant. So big thanks."**



## What's new?

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We have moved our repairs, maintenance, cyclical redecoration, and major repair works into one new department. This will enable us to provide you with a more joined up service and deliver better value for money.

We are also:

- establishing standard Group-wide arrangements to ensure greater fire safety
- starting work on developing our housing services so that we can offer a tailored service for people who are elderly, have special needs or are vulnerable in any way.

Developing our green credentials is also a key focus for us. On the Isle of Wight we are currently working in partnership with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation on a pilot project to fit 67 homes in Chale Green with air source heat pumps and solar panels.

As part of our Decent Homes work we have also installed highly efficient combined heat and power boilers to our sheltered housing scheme, Elisabeth Court in Theale.

The boilers provide heating, hot water and most of the electricity that residents need, all at a lower cost and with less CO<sup>2</sup> emissions than conventional boilers.

Project Officer, Nick Rendle said, "Our investment in boiler replacement is already paying off. The new boiler plant performs more efficiently with lower maintenance costs, and we are able to generate our own electricity and pass savings on to residents. This is an innovative system, which we hope to replicate in other housing schemes with communal heating."



Vincent Wedlock-Ward, Southern Housing Group Contracts Officer and David Green local resident, at the Chale Green community event

## Improving the repairs service

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We know that repairs are important to our residents and we are continually looking to improve our processes in this area. Over the next year we intend to:

- increase the percentage of repairs fixed first time
- concentrate on types of repair that typically take a long time to complete and devise ways of speeding them up
- introduce a new Group Standard for the facilities and equipment that we will install in homes when undertaking major repairs and improvements.



## Finding a new home

We have an excellent record of building new homes, often in partnership with local councils. Last year we built 789 new homes, and we have started work on a further 724 homes, which is ahead of our target.

We also work with local councils and other housing associations to give existing and new residents as much opportunity as possible to find a new home that suits their needs.

Over 50% of our vacant properties are now let through local choice based lettings schemes, so that more residents have a choice and a chance to bid for a range of properties.



New homes at the Ferrier estate, Kidbrooke, London

## Moving on

We are committed to enabling residents whose homes are either overcrowded or whose too large to swap their property, or be considered for a transfer to more appropriate accommodation.

For people who need to move for medical reasons we have made new arrangements with a firm of medical experts for all medical transfer cases to be independently assessed to provide a swift objective opinion on their needs and re-housing priority.

## Case study

Resident Jacqui Simmonds from our Thames Gateway region applied for a transfer when her son moved out of her home. She was offered a one bedroom house in Essex as well as an incentive payment for moving to a home with fewer bedrooms and a disturbance allowance towards the costs of her move.

Jacqui told us:

**“My flat was beautiful, but I kept thinking it could be a good home for a family. Finding out I would get payments for moving somewhere smaller took all the stresses away.”**

## Homelessness and housing need

Eliminating homelessness and alleviating housing need is a vital part of our work. During the past year over 80% of our vacant homes have been let through local authority nominations arrangements. These are designed to house those who are homeless or in the greatest need.



New homes at Southern Quarter, Isle of Wight

## New initiatives

A key issue for the Group is the unlawful subletting of our properties and we are taking steps to tackle this. Subletting unfairly prevents us from providing affordable homes to people who really need them. To get to grips with this issue we have joined the Government's National Fraud Initiative. We are now sharing information on our properties with a wide range of voluntary and public bodies and where we find possible cases of subletting we will investigate and, if necessary, take legal action to repossess our property. We have also employed an officer to work with local councils to seek out and put an end to unlawful subletting.

In 2010 we introduced a photo ID system for all new residents so that we know that the right people are living in our property. We regularly visit our properties to carry out tenancy audits to ensure that subletting is detected and brought to an end.

You can help if you think that one of our properties is being sublet without our permission by calling us on 0300 303 1774 and speaking in total confidence to our staff.

We will investigate and take action if necessary.

## Future improvements

Last year it took us an average of 40 days to re-let a vacant general needs property. This is far too long and we need to improve our service. In some regions our performance deteriorated in 2009/10. Our aim is to achieve an average re-let time of 32 days in all of our regions by March 2011.

We have a number of projects underway that are designed to improve the management of our housing stock.

These include:

- our Continuous Systems Improvement team, which works with staff and residents across the Group, is looking at our processes to see how we can remove waste and become more efficient
- we are reviewing our Choice Based Lettings processes with the aim of speeding up the letting of properties that become vacant.

### Average Void Homes Turnaround Time (General Needs & Supported Housing) in days

	2008/09 GN Re-lets	Supported Housing	2009/10 GN Re-lets	Supported Housing
Group-wide	40	74	40	60
London Region	45	119	54	54
South Region	35	57	44	65
Thames Gateway	28	50	27	21
JBHA	54	108	53	117
SWHA	40	35	24	41

**87%** of new residents are satisfied with our lettings service - an increase of 4% since 2008/09.

## Rents

Whatever people's circumstances, we aim to make their home as affordable as possible. Our rented property is covered by Government rules on how much we can charge for rent.

Our service charges cover things such as communal electricity, gardening, cleaning, lifts, and fire safety. For shared owners they also cover things like insurance, communal repairs and maintenance, redecorations and VAT. Our charges vary from year to year depending on how much we need to spend. If we collect slightly too much money one year we reduce the overall amount charged the following year.

We put a tremendous effort into collecting rent and service charges, thus keeping money owed to us as low as possible. This helps to ensure we can maintain affordable rents.

Where people get into financial difficulty we can ask one of our Financial Inclusion Officers to provide practical help and advice that can really make a difference.

For shared owners who have difficulty paying their mortgage we work with a specialist advice agency, and in some circumstances can make arrangements for people to revert to renting their home, thus preventing repossessions by mortgage companies.

Our rent arrears for 2009/10 amounted to **4.16%** of the total amount of rent charged.

The total amount of rent collected in 2009/10 was **£95,732,000**

### Table of rent arrears over the past 2 years

	Whole of Southern Housing Group	London Region	South Region	Thames Gateway Region	Southern Housing Group Ltd	JBHA	SWHA
2008/09	4.90%	6.35%	5.41%	5.01%	5.66%	3.17%	3.05%
2009/10	4.16%	5.35%	4.56%	4.08%	4.73%	2.93%	2.83%

## Improvements

Our rent collection record is good in comparison to other housing associations, but we still aim to achieve a modest reduction in the rent arrears owed by the end of March 2011 to 4.1%.



Our Income Recovery team based in Horsham

## Paying your rent

To help all residents pay their rent on time we offer a range of payment methods. These are:

- you can pay using our PayMate card at thousands of locations nationwide
- online at [www.allpay.net](http://www.allpay.net)
- over the telephone using our automated payment line
- by phone using our Customer Service Centre 0300 303 1771 or 0300 303 1772 for residents of the Isle of Wight

- by Direct Debit each month from your bank account.

We offer residents an incentive prize draw for having an up-to-date rent account and for paying by Direct Debit, so that we reward those residents who pay their rent on time.

**In 2009/10 94% of residents were satisfied with rent payment methods.**

## Evictions

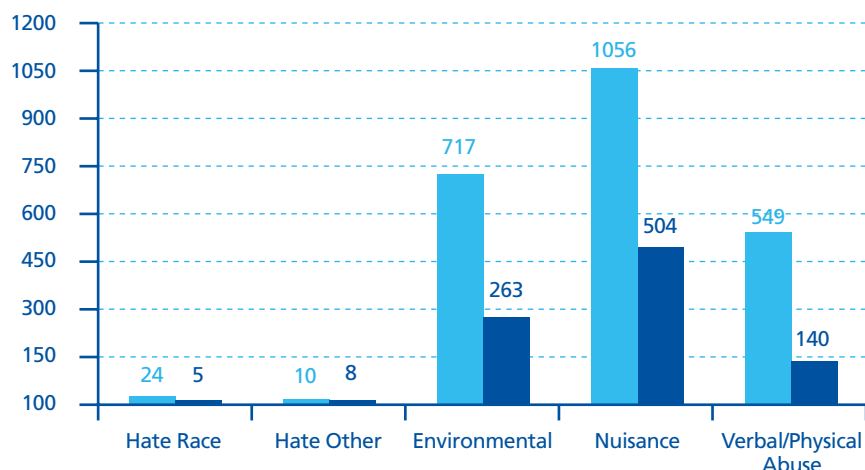
As a Group we do everything possible to avoid having to evict people from their homes. Eviction is a last resort, but occasionally we do have to ask the courts for possession. Last year we enforced 86 evictions.

Evictions 2010	Southern Housing Group	JBHA	SWHA	Whole Group
Rent Arrears	54	15	9	78
Anti-social Behaviour	4	2	2	8
Total	58	17	11	86

Not all evictions are for rent arrears. Some are because of anti-social behaviour, which we take very seriously. We employ two specialist staff to support our regional teams in dealing with the most challenging cases.

In 2009/10 we were contacted about 2,356 cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Many were dealt with amicably over the phone or by residents talking through issues, but around 900 cases were formally investigated by our staff.

### ASB types 2009/10



**In 2009/10 a total of 1,137 complaints about anti-social behaviour were because of noise.**

Received ■  
Open ■

## Case study

We dealt with a case where one resident built up rent arrears in excess of £2,000. Although we tried to work with the resident to sort out the problem by speaking to him, providing written information and offering debt advice and tenancy support, our meeting appointments were never kept and he failed to attend court hearings.

The resident's neighbours told us that he was rarely at the property, but that the property was allegedly used for drug dealing and drug taking.

We were then informed by the police that they had arrested the resident for suspected burglaries and involvement with drugs.

## Supporting your community

We have a dedicated Social and Economic Regeneration department which works with individual residents and community groups with the aim of improving lives and building strong communities where people want to live.

## Case study

A team of spirited young people and residents at one of our Reading schemes worked hard last year to encourage community cohesion on their estate and improve facilities. They opened a new playground on the estate with support from the Group, the local Neighbourhood Police Officer and Waverly and Guildford Councils, raising an impressive £58,000.

The Group has also had a successful year winning a number of awards such as the Best Community Project at the Surrey Police Local Heroes Award for dramatically reducing anti-social behaviour and crime in the year.

We obtained an eviction order from the County Court and the property has now been re-let to a family who were in need of housing.



Regular pay your rent campaigns remind residents of the importance of paying their rent and also advise where to go to for financial support and advice

The key priorities are:

- developing young people
- improving employment opportunities
- support for older people
- improving the external environment
- maximising opportunities from the 2012 Olympic Games.



Young residents enjoying the new playground on the Northbourne estate in Reading

## How do we compare with other housing associations?

It is difficult to directly compare our performance with other housing associations because we all do things slightly differently.

Below is a table that shows how we compare with large housing associations nationally on a small range of statistical indicators that are compiled in broadly similar ways.

	Southern Housing Group	Average Performance	Top Performance
Void re-let time in days	41	36	27
Emergency repairs completed on time	94.2%	94%	97%
Housing Management costs per property per year*	£402.19	£431.66	£410.49
Rent Arrears	4.16%	5.53%	4.55%
Overall satisfaction with services	78% (from our 2009/10 survey)	74.5%	79.82%

\* This is for rented stock only and does not include shared ownership or intermediate rent

## Local Offers

### Making a difference where you live

For many residents our Service Standards cover everything they need in regards to our services. We have a long tradition of working to make a difference locally and we are keen to offer tailored local services in areas where there may be specific issues that need to be tackled. Where that is the case we work with residents to agree a set of local solutions to local priorities.

The sort of issues that we can help with might be:

- tackling anti-social behaviour
- improving services that residents feel are below standard

- helping residents to do more for themselves
- better car park management
- where there are areas of significant financial difficulty working with residents to improve financial inclusion, help with budgeting and paying rent
- work with young people to provide play and sport opportunities
- work to improve the skills of residents thus improving opportunities to work.

## Case study

At Warner Road in London, residents felt that we could do a better job of looking after the estate. Our Resident Involvement team held a number of meetings with residents, agreed what was going wrong and how to put it right and improve the look and feel of the estate.

We developed the Warner Road Estate Agreement which is about delivering quality estate services that have been agreed with local residents.

The agreement sets out clearly the standard of service delivery that residents can expect from the Group.

It also contains arrangements for monitoring and reporting on our performance.



Residents Bob Parker and Val Perry from Warner Road, were involved in the developing the new estate agreement

## Our offer to you

If you think that there are issues where you live that might be dealt with by agreeing a local plan and standards then we want to hear from you. Contact our Customer Service Centre and ask about local plans.

Your Resident Services Manager will contact you and arrange to meet up and discuss local needs.

**email:** [servicecentre@shgroup.org.uk](mailto:servicecentre@shgroup.org.uk)

**Phone:** 0300 303 1771 or 0300 303 1772 for residents of the Isle of Wight

## Value for money

The majority of our funding comes from rent paid to us by our residents. We have a duty to ensure that we use that money wisely and that we provide residents with good quality services at the best possible price. To help us achieve our goal we have a specialist procurement team that works Group-wide and with residents to purchase services that offer real value for money. Examples of costs savings include:

- the cost of our new repairs contract for London is around 20% less than our previous contract.

It also guarantees an improved service and the contractor takes calls directly from residents at no extra cost

- working with other housing associations we have secured a deal to buy new central heating boilers at a reduced price. We estimate that we will save around £60,000 over three years.

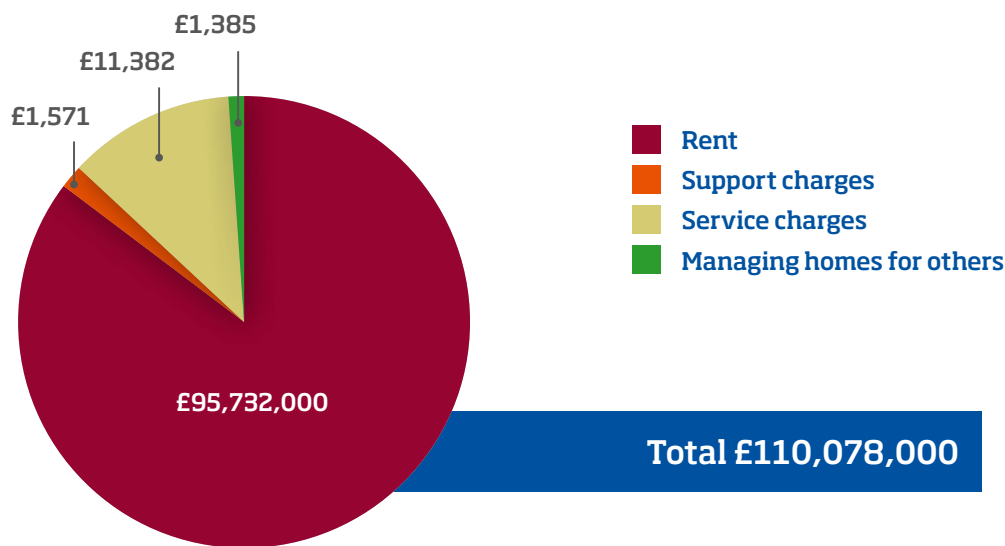
Our Continuous Systems Improvement team is currently reviewing our processes to improve the way that we work, drive out waste and make us more efficient. The team is a vital part of our drive to achieve ever greater value for money.

## Viability - Group Finances

The Group is a financially strong housing association. We always aim to keep our finances in good shape because that enables us to deliver good services to residents and build more homes for people who need them. Below is a summary of our housing services finances.

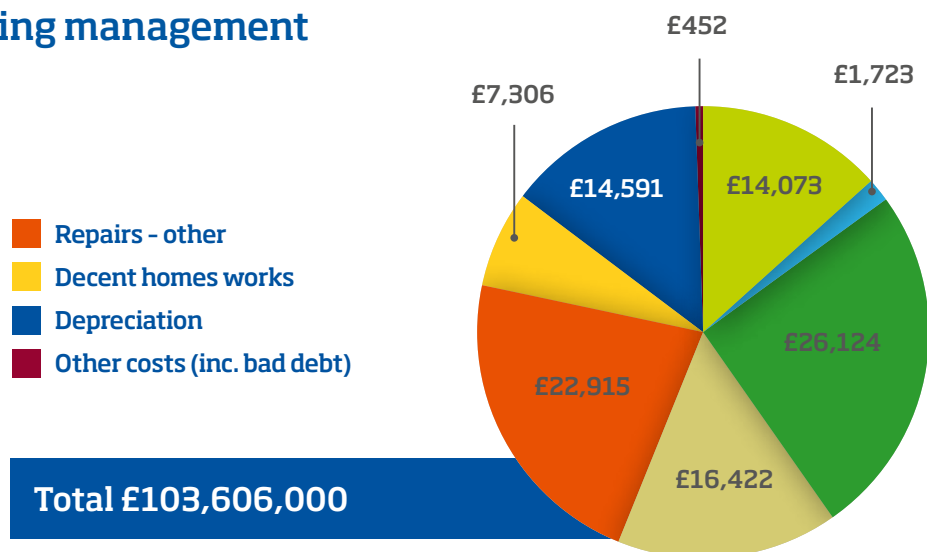
For more information we produce an annual financial report, which is available on our website or through the Customer Service Centre.

### Income from housing management 2009/10 (£000s)



### Expenditure on housing management 2009/10 (£000s)

- Estate services
- Support services
- Management of homes
- Repairs - day to day
- Repairs - other
- Decent homes works
- Depreciation
- Other costs (inc. bad debt)



## The Group Board

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Southern Housing Group is governed by a Board that sets the direction and strategy of the Group. The Board includes independent people, the Group Chief Executive and a resident.

A sub committee of the Board, the Customer Services Committee looks at the quality of services provided to residents and ensures that we deliver our promises and meet our objectives. The committee is made up of six independent members and six residents.

We are introducing Resident Service Panels, which will also be an important part of our governance structure.

## Shaping our future

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Over the last year, we have been reviewing the governance structure of Southern Housing Group to ensure that we are able to deliver the highest levels of service to our residents. One significant step being taken to achieve this is to amalgamate the Group's corporate structure by forming one main housing association, rather than have three separate associations: Southern Housing Group Limited, James Butcher Housing Association and South Wight Housing Association. The amalgamation will create a new legal entity called Southern Housing Group Limited and

Southern Housing Group has adopted the National Housing Federation Code of Practice which sets down strict standards about governance and probity.

In 2009/10 there were no cases of fraud reported in the Group and no failures of our financial or operational controls. We maintain clear policies for preventing and dealing with fraud. Board and committee members are required to follow a strict code of conduct.

will simplify governance and operational arrangements and reduce costs by creating efficiencies across the organisation.

Residents and staff were consulted and the result was overwhelmingly in favour of amalgamation. The proposal for amalgamation was then taken to the relevant Boards, and members voted in favour as did the shareholders of each company. The TSA granted approval for the amalgamation in August and it will take effect from 1 October 2010. We will be writing to all residents to inform them of the changes.

The way that we produce statistics is verified by HouseMark, an independent body that specialises in statistics in the housing sector. The financial information comes from our accounts that are independently audited by our accountants, KPMG LLP. Procedures followed by Southern Housing Group are periodically audited by our internal auditors, Grant Thornton LLP. The text of this report to residents has been considered by a panel of residents and members of the Customer Services Committee.

### Alternative Language formats

For a copy of the Resident's Annual Report in another language, in Braille, or in audio format, or for more information call our Service Centre on 0300 303 1771.

#### Arabic

للحصول على نسخة من التقرير السنوي للمقيمين بأي لغة أخرى أو بطريقة برايل أو تسجيل صوتي أو لمزيد من المعلومات يرجى الاتصال بمركز الخدمة الخاص بنا على الرقم 0300 303 1771.

#### Bengali

অন্য কোন ভাষায়, ব্রেইল-এ বা অডিও ফরম্যাট-এ রেসিডেন্টস অ্যানুয়াল রিপোর্ট-এর কপি বা আরো তথ্যের জন্য আমাদের সার্ভিস সেন্টারে 0300 303 1682 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

#### French

Pour recevoir un rapport annuel de résidence dans une autre langue, en Braille ou en format audio ou pour plus de renseignements, merci d'appeler notre centre d'assistance au 0300 303 1771.

#### Somali

Nuqul ku saabsan Warbixin Sannadeedka Deganayaasha oo luuqad kale ah, Farta Indhoolayaasha, qaab dhagaysi ah, ama macluumaad dheeraad ah wac Xaruntayada Adeegga ee 0300 303 1771.

#### Spanish

Si desea una copia del Informe Anual de Residentes en otro idioma, en Braille, en formato de audio, o si desea ampliar información llame a nuestro Centro de Atención Telefónica al 0300 303 1771.

#### Turkish

Konut Sakini Yıllık Raporu'nu başka bir dilde, Braille (kör alfabesi) veya sesli formatta talep etmek ya da daha fazla bilgi almak için 0300 303 1683 no.lu telefonu arayınız.

## Contact us

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