



Annual Report

For Council tenants

Improvements that matter to you



The results of last year's Tenant Satisfaction Survey focussed our minds on the Action Plan we put in place to deliver improvements that matter to you.

67% of people responding to the Tenants' Satisfaction Survey said they are satisfied with the Housing service. Please see the Action Plan on page 4.

During the year the Council was awarded £1.2 million Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding. We are currently writing to those residents who will benefit

from more energy efficient homes.

Last year we also achieved accreditations from the Housing Quality Network for helping residents keep their tenancies.

We invested in new play areas at Middlesex Court, Addlestone, Edgell Close, Virginia Water and Beomonds, Chertsey (above).

Don't forget to have your say by completing this year's satisfaction survey, carried out by our partner Acuity Research. More details on the Council's website.

• There were 9 successful Mutual Exchange moves last year. We added the online Tracker service to our Homeswapper offer, to help you find the swap that's right for you.

• We manage 2,842 homes: collecting rent, repairs, planned maintenance, upgrades, health and safety, letting new tenancies and servicing communal areas.

• We reviewed our current cleaning specifications, ready for a new contract next year. Residents will be consulted throughout this process. If you wish to be involved, contact us.

To request this report in a different format, or for anything else we can help with, contact us on Listening@runnymede.gov.uk 01932 838383 or at the Civic Centre, Addlestone, KT15 2AH.

Rent

Value for money

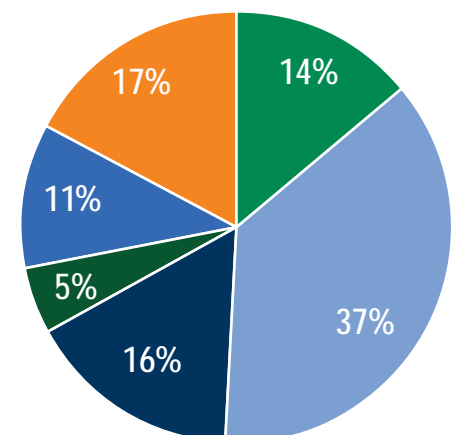
As a registered provider of social housing, the Council must comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard.

This sets out how landlords can set and increase rents in line with Government policy. Our Rent Setting Policy can be found on the Council's website.

The average social rent for a one-bedroom Council home in Runnymede is £106. The average for a three-bedroom Council home is £137.

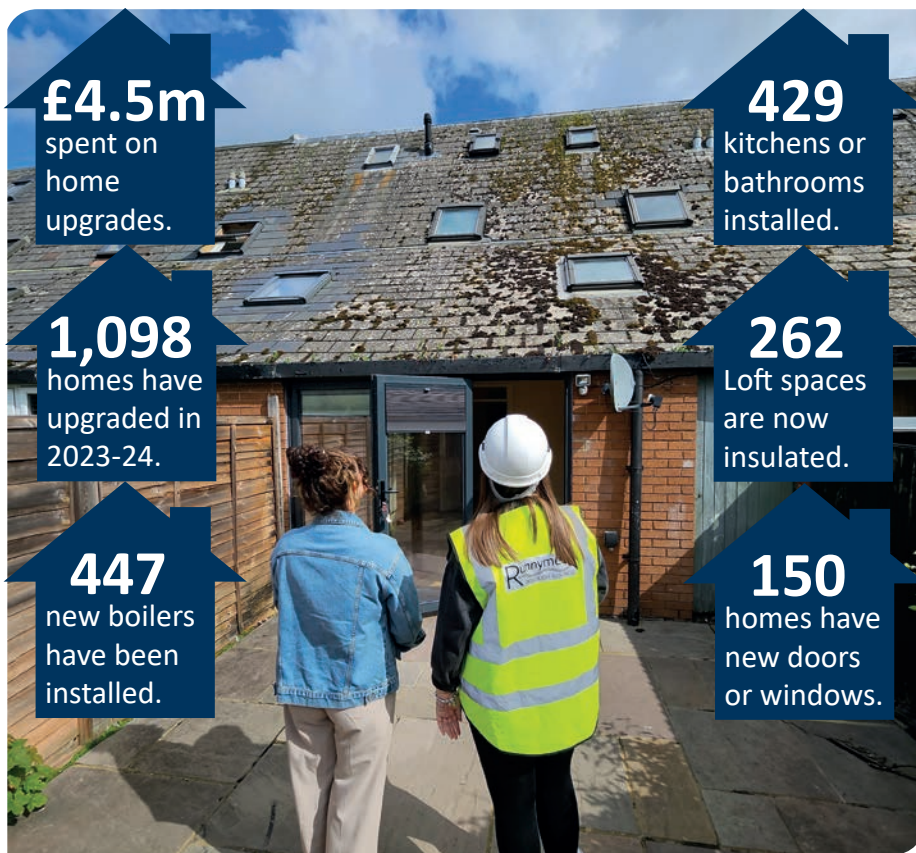
We process more than 17,000 rent transactions every month. Of the payments in March 2023, 57 per cent were by Direct Debit – the best way to pay your rent.

This pie chart shows how your rent is used.



- Boiler upgrades
- Gas and Electric Servicing
- Supplies and Services
- Properties and Adaptions
- Staff
- Kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors

Raising the standard of homes



£4.5m
spent on
home
upgrades.

429
kitchens or
bathrooms
installed.

1,098
homes have
upgraded in
2023-24.

262
Loft spaces
are now
insulated.

447
new boilers
have been
installed.

150
homes have
new doors
or windows.

71% of tenants told us they are satisfied that the Council provides them with a home that is safe.

We are tackling the backlog of upgrades and health and safety compliance. While 29.7% of homes did not yet meet the current minimum Decent Homes standard, the new contracts started means this will improve greatly in the coming years.

Check our Runnymede Housing Investment Standard on the web and see more details of new boilers, fire doors, solar panels, upgraded kitchens and bathrooms.

MCP, our contractor for most 'day to day' repairs completed 3650 routine repairs during the year. 67% of tenants said they were satisfied with the overall service. Visit the web for improved reporting of repairs.

- ✦ We reached gas safety compliance for all homes in December.
- ✦ Asbestos checks were carried out on every home requiring one.
- ✦ Every home needing one had a fire risk assessment carried out.



Responding to people's changing needs

Our Home Improvement Agency team helps residents who need improvements or adaptations to continue to live independently and safely in their own homes.

They had 48 referrals for Council tenants during the year.

One example was Mr A, who is disabled and was struggling with the steps into his home and the stairs to the first floor.

The team assessed Mr A and a stairlift was installed indoors and a ramp and rails outside.

Improvements were also made to his disabled parking bay.

The adaptations greatly enhanced Mr A's ability to get out and about, increased his independence with the stairs, and improved his overall wellbeing.

47

Tenants transferred to new homes.

25

Tenants moved to Retirement Living.

8

Tenants downsized to smaller homes.

8

Family sized homes bought by the Council.

6

Tenants evicted for not paying their rent.

5

Homes sold under the Right to Buy process.

Enforcing tenancy agreement rules

The Council is committed to promoting social, environmental and economic wellbeing in its neighbourhoods, and to tackling antisocial behaviour. We do this through partnership working with the police and other agencies.

Responding to antisocial behaviour

We reviewed the way we deal with complaints about antisocial behaviour. This resulted in a new job being created and there will soon be a new member of staff to respond promptly to your reports of antisocial behaviour.

We worked closely with different teams across the Council and the Police to resolve a number of complex cases.

We supported a family who were experiencing high levels of antisocial behaviour: "I wanted to say how my life has turned around since moving and I would like to thank everyone who was involved in supporting me and helping me move, I am very grateful to you all".

We helped a survivor of domestic abuse move quickly to a safe property while her ex-partner served five months in prison. Joint working with the Police secured a Community Behaviour Order.

We successfully demoted the tenancy of a tenant charged with possession of drugs. This means the Court can be asked to evict the tenant if they re-offend.

Listening and acting on your views

During 2023 we carried out our second Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

Thank you to the 772 people who gave their time to have a say on how we provide services to you.

Following the survey, we created an action plan and are already working on making changes where they are needed, or celebrating what we do well.

You can read what we have done, and what we are planning to do on the next page.

The survey was a single point in time survey of all tenants which was carried out by Acuity Research and Practice Ltd.

Four tenants who completed the survey were picked at random to each receive £50 shopping vouchers.

A total of 123 responses came by phone, 432 via the internet and 217 by post.

The survey met all of the Government's Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey requirements and technical requirements. Full results: www.runnymede.gov.uk/housing/tenant-satisfaction-survey-results-2023.

Turn over to see how we're taking action on the comments you made in our Tenants' Satisfaction Survey →

Learning from complaints



We want to provide excellent housing services, but we know we don't always meet the high standards we expect.

Your complaints are important to us as they help us identify why things have not gone well and what we can do to improve.

We received more complaints than in the previous year and 41 per cent were either upheld or partially upheld. The most frequent complaints were about repairs or the way staff had handled issues.



We completed a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code in March. You can find this and our Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for 2023-2024 on the Council's website.

Please contact us if you need to make a complaint. If you don't think we've handled your complaint correctly you can contact the Housing Ombudsman.



Accountability

Strategic decisions about how Housing services are run are made by your elected Councillors at Housing Committee meetings. These are open to the public and you are welcome to attend. There were 6 meetings in 2023/24.

Satisfaction Survey Action Plan

We have	What next?
Issue: Dealing with antisocial behaviour	
Reviewed our Antisocial Behaviour Policy, Procedure and Customer guide with tenants.	Investment in our computer systems in 2024/25 to improve case management, monitoring and communication.
Issue: Customer service	
Invested heavily in our computer systems to modernise our processes and speed up responses.	On-going system enhancements will ensure all contacts are recorded, categorised, and are only closed when the appropriate action is completed, providing better accountability.
Created more digital options including transactions through One Account.	You will be asked for your preferred contact method and this will be used when possible.
Kept you informed, including two newsletters a year plus the Annual Report to tenants.	More news online to keep down costs, but paper versions for those who prefer it.
More useful information on the website.	Regular updates.
Call recording.	Phone calls recorded for training and monitoring.
A new Repairs Handbook.	A new Tenancy Handbook planned for 2025, to follow on from a new Tenancy Agreement.
Issue: Communal areas	
A new Estate Improvement Policy, available online.	Estate improvement budget secured for 2025/26.
A new agreement for grounds maintenance	Clearer information available on jobs which are, or aren't covered by Council crews.
Estate Action Days.	More planned for 2025.
Looked into whether outsourcing cleaning of communal areas would be more effective.	Specification to be costed. Opportunity for joint inspections with residents / contractors / Council.
Looked at the options for a Tenants Incentive scheme.	Reward scheme for tenants who leave their home in a good condition – launch planned for April 2025
Issue: Complaints handling	
It is now easier to make a complaint and for staff to track complaints.	Closer scrutiny of complaints responded to by repairs contractors.
Learning from complaints is included in the Complaints Performance Report available online.	
The Self-assessment of complaints handling is available online.	Tenants will be invited to get involved in next year's assessment.
Issue: Listening to tenants' views	
Progress, including launch of new Tenant Groups, was reported to Housing and is available online.	Resident involvement specialist TPAS to assess how we are doing and suggest improvements
Prepared to consult tenants on new estates' cleaning contract.	Residents will be provided with a specification for their own communal areas.
Issue: Repairs and maintenance	
Performance Notice served on MCP	Strengthened contract management and scrutiny of performance.
Improved repairs reporting online or by phone.	More first time fixes and more checking by the Council of quality of contracted work.
Implemented Recharge Policy.	Tenants who don't keep their homes in good order will be charged, to keep costs down for everyone.
Improved Decent Homes levels.	Extend programme to fit new kitchens, bathrooms, rewiring and boilers.