

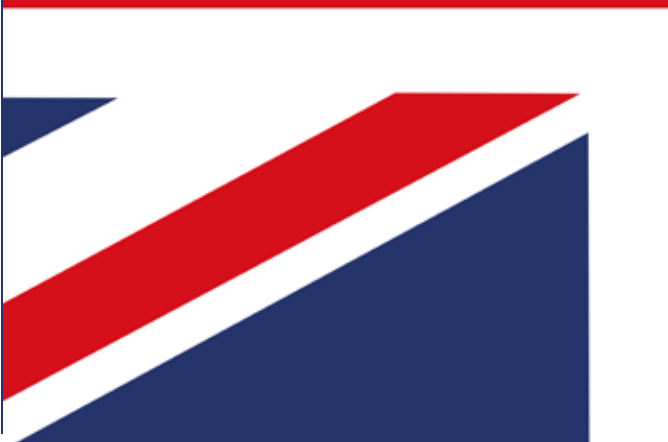
# Skyline

Summer 2023

for tenants of South Kesteven



Essex Road, Stamford, Sheltered housing scheme



# Your tenant update

Welcome to the Summer 2023 edition of Skyline – we hope you find it informative and relevant.

In this edition you will find an update on our ongoing progress in relation to the Regulator of Social Housing covering all aspects of our regulatory compliance.

It was great to see so many of you enjoying the recent Coronation weekend - our communities really came together and celebrated this historic event.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you all to take the time to let us know your comments and thoughts in relation to our performance as a landlord by completing the soon to be issued Tenancy Satisfaction survey. Your opinion really does matter, and the results will inform the way that we shape our future service delivery.

There is an update on the ongoing work to improve our fire escapes and the introduction of service charges relating to building safety. We also explain how we need your help to provide access for our contractors undertaking important gas and electrical safety checks in your homes. These checks are required for regulatory compliance and ensure your homes are maintained to a safe standard.

Your opinions matter. Elsewhere,

we have included a section explaining our complaints process and the timelines within which you should expect to receive a response.

It is important that we still recognise and understand the impact of the increasing cost of living and have again included an advice section covering the numerous agencies and support opportunities available to those in need of aid.

We have some exciting updates in relation to recently completed temporary accommodation near to the Riverside area of Grantham delivered in partnership with Homes England; along with our Earlesfield Estate project where properties are undergoing extensive renovations and improvements.

We have recently secured significant funding to enable us to provide 21 properties to assist with the ongoing migration crisis through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), and we have also secured funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to undertake energy efficiency improvement works to more than 330 of our properties.

We close this edition sharing some recent news in relation to the successful use of anti-social

behaviour powers delivered by our tenancy team in partnership with the police.

I do hope you find this edition informative and should you have any comments or feedback that you would like to share then please send me your comments to [craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk)

I hope that you all have an enjoyable summer and look forward to the next edition of Skyline which is due to be with you before Christmas 2023.

*Best wishes*



**Craig Spence**  
Acting Director of Housing  
✉ [craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk)

**SK**  
COMMUNITY  
Awards

**Celebrating community champions**  
Make your nominations at  
[www.southkesteven.gov.uk/SKawards2023](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/SKawards2023)

# New measures raise standards

Registered providers of social housing must meet certain standards on key aspects of compliance, with seven of the eight areas reaching over 99% for South Kesteven District Council's most recent inspections.

The Council's Chief Executive and Acting Director of Housing continue to meet monthly with the Regulator of Social Housing updating on our extensive progress.

We have now engaged an external auditor to verify our compliance position with a view to enabling the lifting of the regulatory notice, which was put in place to

ensure improvements to the service.

As part of the drive to make improvements, the Council put in place a series of measures in a new housing action plan. These include a dedicated team to respond to queries; bringing in new systems and processes to ensure repairs and inspections are managed more effectively; commissioning a housing stock survey; and making new staff appointments to take the service forward.

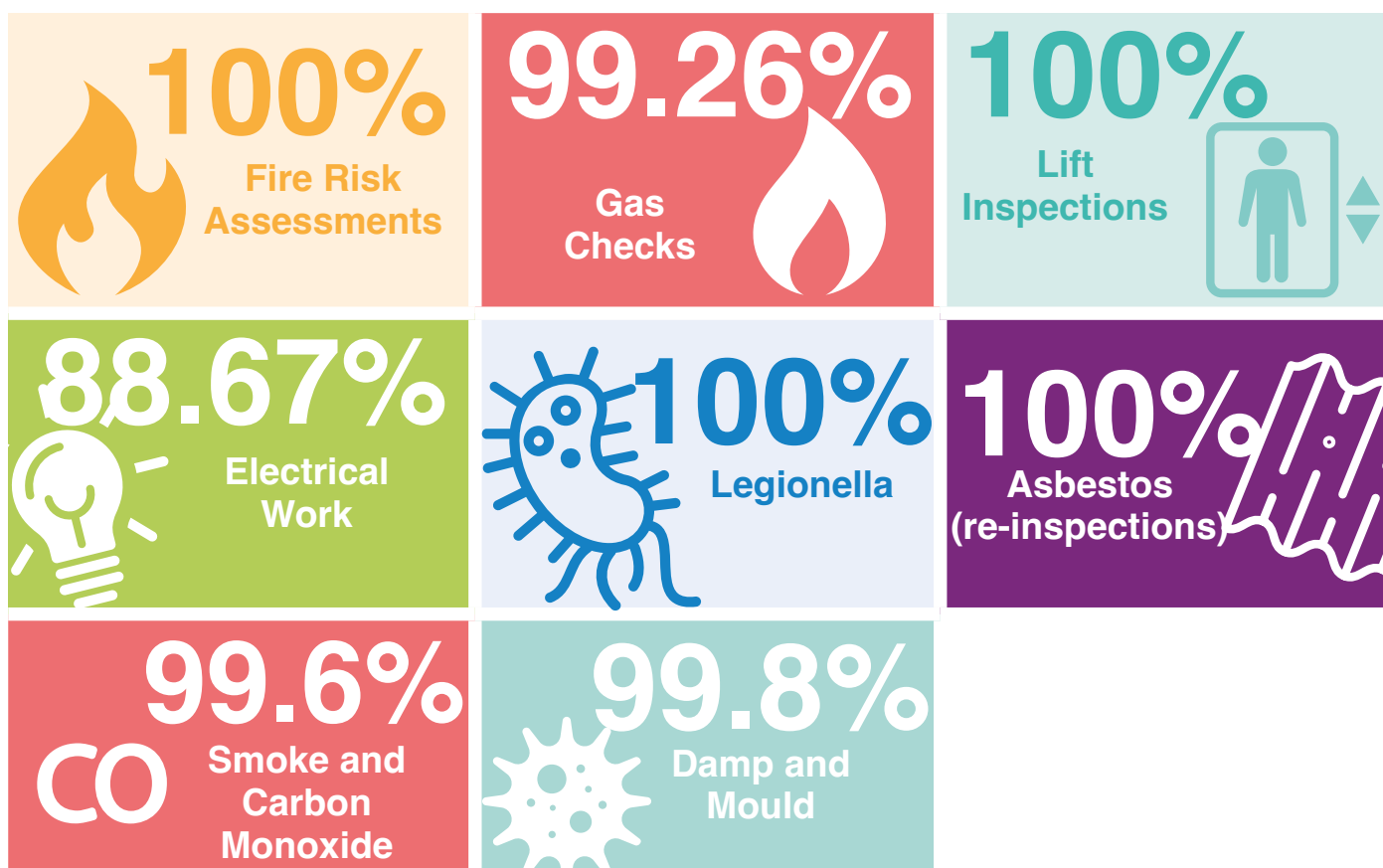
We take immediate and appropriate action to ensure the safety of tenants during this process and beyond.

For your safety, we continue to share the latest performance figures for landlord health and safety – gas servicing, water hygiene, electrical safety, asbestos re-inspections, fire risk assessment, lift inspections and smoke and carbon monoxide detection – along with updates on the various improvement plans that are being delivered.

Some of the figures are below 100% mainly due to limited access to homes.

Up-to-date reports, improvement plans and performance figures are available on the Council's website at <https://bit.ly/RuralOS>

## The latest figures reported to the Regulator for Housing Compliance in April 2023 are:



**If you have any questions**, we have a dedicated team to help.

Email [housingaudit@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:housingaudit@southkesteven.gov.uk) or call us on **01476 40 61 23** or **01476 40 60 80** from Monday to Friday 8.45am to 5pm, press option 3 and then option 4.

# Help shape landlord services for a chance to win £50 vouchers

As you know, SKDC is committed to providing high quality housing services to our tenants.

To do this we need to hear your views, which are important opinions in helping us shape the landlord services we offer and ensure that we provide value for money for the tenants and leaseholders of South Kesteven.

Your views will tell us what we do well and where we need to improve. We also want you to tell us what additional things you think we should be doing.

You will soon be receiving an invitation to complete a short survey of around a dozen questions. You might get this through your door, via email or in a phone call from our trusted partner **Acuity** who are running the survey for us.

They will ask about your home,

value for money, our contact and communication with tenants, repairs and maintenance, how we can improve – and your overall satisfaction with the work we do as a team.

You don't have to take part, but the more responses we get, the better the feedback will be and the better decisions we can make based on this. We would like to hear from as many of our tenants as possible – this is your chance to tell us what you think.

Please rest assured that your response will remain anonymous, unless you ask us to act on something specific that we need your details for, or you wish to supply your details to take part in future feedback projects.

Every response will go towards helping improve the housing service

at SKDC. As well as promoting action in key areas, we will also publish the results in Skyline, so that you can see what other people thought – and what we will do as a Council to continue to improve our service.

Every completed entry will go into a prize draw to win one of four £50 shopping vouchers – so by helping us you can also help yourself! But please respond when we ask, or you may miss the deadline.

- This survey is designed to help the Council to meet regulatory requirements to collect tenant satisfaction measures on an annual basis.
- Please note that any information you provide will be held by South Kesteven District Council securely and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

## Music In Quiet Places



£16 (£14 concessions) £8 under 26s

June/July 2023

This popular concert series is back for another year showcasing talented musicians, performing in some of the most beautiful and historic churches in the area.

[guildhallartscentre.com](http://guildhallartscentre.com) | [stamfordartscentre.com](http://stamfordartscentre.com)

01476 406 158 | 01780 763 203

# Safety first in the event of a fire

**S**outh Kesteven District Council takes its fire safety responsibilities as a landlord very seriously.

Every effort is made to ensure buildings are safe – and this is regularly reviewed by a competent, independent person.

We must ensure that we are ready to act in the event of a fire and this is where you can help us and play your part.

In the unlikely event that a building would need to be evacuated it is crucial that fire exits, the corridors inside the building to the fire exits and the escape routes outside, are kept free from any items that might impede or delay residents and guests of those in the buildings.

This includes trolleys, scooters, or packages being left in corridors or items and furniture in communal areas being moved near to, or blocking, fire exits.

We understand that everyone enjoys being outside and using the communal spaces provided but it is important to remember that these spaces form part of routes that allow people to make it to a place of ultimate safety. We would again ask you to help us by not blocking these



routes with garden furniture, pots or any other items that could create hazards for fellow residents.

## What you can do stay safe?

Fire safety is everyone's responsibility, so the Council asks all residents in South Kesteven to follow these tips to stay safe at home:

- Test your fire smoke alarm
- Take care when cooking, as most fires start in the kitchen
- Never leave unattended candles burning

- Make sure cigarettes are properly extinguished
- Take responsibility for rubbish and make sure it's disposed of appropriately
- Know your escape routes should they be required in an emergency – and make sure everyone who lives in your home knows how to escape

## If you discover a fire:

- Do not tackle the fire yourself unless you are properly trained and it is safe to do so
- Alert everyone else and leave the area, stay together and close doors behind you if possible when you leave
- Do not waste time by stopping to collect valuables or investigating what has happened
- Before you open a door use the back of your hand to check if it is warm. If it is warm do not open the door as there may be a fire on the other side
- Dial 999 and ask for the fire service (or in sheltered schemes raise the alarm at the nearest fire alarm point)
- Leave the building by the nearest exit



# Allowing home access will avoid risk of financial penalty

Sometimes the Council needs access to your home to allow our team to make important checks in order to protect you and your family.

This may be to service an appliance, make a gas or electricity check, assess the property as a whole and in case any maintenance work needs carrying out.

The services we provide as a responsible landlord are completely free when we work together and get the job done first time around.

Anyone who doesn't let either Council staff or our contractors into their home are breaching their tenancy agreement, which costs us time and money, as we need to rebook. The associated costs of an abortive or missed appointment can be charged to the tenant.

We usually write well in advance when we need to get in for essential maintenance or gas/electric safety checks. But we continue to experience an increase in the number of properties where we cannot get access.

If we have made multiple attempts and still cannot get in, SKDC can serve Court papers to get an



injunction or warrant which gives us a legal right to enter your home. The costs of this can be significant, and we aim to recharge all our costs for legal action and missed appointments back to tenants.

In extreme cases we could pursue eviction, which puts you at risk of losing your home.

Taking tenants to court is always a last resort which can easily be avoided. Either make sure you will be home for your appointment or,

if you cannot make it, rearrange the appointment to avoid any charges.

Please rest assured that SKDC works hard to ensure its tenants are safe.

We would like to thank everyone who helps us with our work to carry out surveys and services by granting access – and if anyone would like to discuss this with us, please contact the Compliance Team on **01476 406080 (extension 6433)**.



# How to make a complaint

We always welcome feedback letting us know when we are doing something right or if there are areas in which we can improve.

This helps us know how well we are performing and also enables us to improve our service.

The best place to register a complaint is online at [www.southkesteven.gov.uk/feedback](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/feedback) or via our Customer Service team if you don't have online access.

There are two stages:

## Stage 1

- The Customer Services team will acknowledge your complaint within three working days
- A senior officer will investigate and provide a response directly to you within 10 working days
- If it is not possible to respond this quickly, we will contact you and give you an estimated response date, which will not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason

## Stage 2

- If you are not happy with your Stage 1 response, you can request Stage 2
- This must be received by the Council within three months of getting the Stage 1 response
- Your complaint will be referred to a director or a business manager not involved in Stage 1
- They conduct a further thorough



- review of the complaint and the original response
- They will write to you with the outcome of their investigation within 15 working days
- Where it is not possible to respond within this time, we will contact you and advise you of an estimated date of response, which will not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason

Complaints are not usually accepted where the issue occurred more than six months previously, because such a lapse of time makes a full investigation more challenging.

The Housing Customer Feedback Policy sets out how we deal with customer feedback. It can be found online via [www.southkesteven.gov.uk/housingfeedback](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/housingfeedback)



If you feel we have not dealt with your complaint satisfactorily, you have the option of taking your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman, who will investigate.

In most circumstances the Ombudsman will expect you to have followed the Council's complaint process first. You can contact them directly or you can ask your local councillor to do this for you: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## Complaints procedure for Council tenants



# New roles to help tackle cost of living

Two experienced staff have started work in new roles to help South Kesteven residents cope with increases in the cost of living.

The posts have been funded for 12 months from the UK Support Prosperity Fund and will ensure a dedicated resource is maintained.

Cost of Living Co-Ordinator Funmi Reilly and Support Officer Stella Darker will take their lead from the Council's dedicated working group, to set up and ensure the smooth operation of a range of projects.

They will also provide advice and support with:

- Household budgeting, money management and welfare benefits
- Helping residents to claim benefits that they may be due
- Completing income and expenditure assessments to access Government support
- Working with charities and community groups to help the vulnerable
- Debt advice

SKDC's online cost of living advice can be found at:



[www.southkesteven.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/costofliving)

Information includes energy saving, financial support, health and wellbeing, support for older people and grants.

## Household costs

South Kesteven District Council administers several schemes which can help local people with the costs of council tax and rent. They include:

- Council Tax Support Scheme
- Household Support Fund
- Discretionary Housing Payments (additional payments to those in receipt of Universal Credit/ Housing Benefit)

To find out more about these schemes please go to

[www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk) and search for Council Tax support scheme, household support scheme and/or discretionary housing payments

☎ 01476 40 60 80

✉ [customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk)

## Utility bills

Households can check to see if they are entitled to switch to a social tariff. These include:

- Basic/Essential Phone and Broadband packages
- ☎ [www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs)
- Help to pay water bills
- ☎ [www.ccw.org.uk/save-money-and-water/help-with-bills/](http://www.ccw.org.uk/save-money-and-water/help-with-bills/)

## Energy costs

- Ofgem has announced that from July 1<sup>st</sup> the energy price cap for an average dual fuel household paying by direct debit based on typical consumption will be set at £2,074 until the end of September.

☎ [www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/customers-pay-less-energy-bills-summer](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/customers-pay-less-energy-bills-summer)

- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. SKDC has been awarded £3.4m from the Government to install energy efficiency upgrades in its social housing stock that is currently below an energy performance certificate D rating. If your property is eligible, you will be contacted.

## Dealing with debt

Support is available from various voluntary sector providers. These include:

- Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire
- ☎ 0808 278 7996
- ☎ [www.citizensadvice.southlincs.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.southlincs.org.uk)
- Money Advice and Pensions Service
- ☎ 0800 138 7777
- ☎ [www.maps.org.uk](http://www.maps.org.uk)
- Step Change Debt Charity
- ☎ 0800 138 1111
- ☎ [www.stepchange.org/contact-us](http://www.stepchange.org/contact-us)
- Christians Against Poverty, Stamford
- ☎ 0800 328 0006

## Unemployed or on a low income

- Check if you're eligible to claim Universal Credit:

☎ 0800 328 5644

[www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

- Apply for new style Jobseekers Allowance:

☎ [www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance)

- If you're on the minimum wage, check your pay:

☎ [www.gov.uk/am-i-getting-minimum-wage](http://www.gov.uk/am-i-getting-minimum-wage)

☎ [checkyourpay.campaign.co.uk](http://checkyourpay.campaign.co.uk)

## Benefits entitlement

Additional financial assistance includes:

- Three Cost of Living Payments of £300 for households on Universal Credit, Pension Credit and Tax Credits

☎ [www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment)

- Budgeting Loan – an interest free loan which can be used for various household purchases

☎ [www.gov.uk/budgeting-help-benefits/eligibility](http://www.gov.uk/budgeting-help-benefits/eligibility)

- Help to Save – a type of savings account. If entitled to working tax credit or in receipt of Universal Credit, the saver can get a bonus of 50p for every £1 saved over 4 years



- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/get-help-savings-low-income/eligibility](http://www.gov.uk/get-help-savings-low-income/eligibility)
  - Job Centre Plus Travel Discount Card – issued through your local job centre, this card entitles those eligible and actively seeking employment to a 50% discount on selected rail tickets.
  - 🔗 [www.nationalrail.co.uk/times\\_fares/jobcentre-plus-card.aspx](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/times_fares/jobcentre-plus-card.aspx)
- Don't forget to:
- Check that you're claiming all the benefits you're entitled to
  - 🔗 [benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk](http://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk)

## Health & wellbeing

Support available from various voluntary sector providers including:

- Connect to Support Lincolnshire
- ☎ **03455 564 144**
- NHS Lincolnshire Partnership – Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
- ☎ **0303 123 4000**
- ✉ [lincs.spa@nhs.net](mailto:lincs.spa@nhs.net)
- Wellbeing Lincs
- ☎ **01522 782 540**
- 🔗 [www.wellbeinglincs.org](http://www.wellbeinglincs.org)
- Help with Health Costs Helpline
- ☎ **0300 330 1343**
- 🔗 [nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-help-health-costs](http://nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-help-health-costs)
- NHS Low Income Scheme
- ☎ **0300 330 1343**
- 🔗 [nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme](http://nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme)

## Living with a health condition or disability

These vary according to an individual's circumstances but can include:

- Disability Living Allowance (currently being replaced by other benefits and now only available for those aged under 16)
- ☎ **0800 121 4600**
- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children](http://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children)
- Personal Independence Payment (if not reached state pensionable age)
- ☎ **0800 121 4433**
- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/pip](http://www.gov.uk/pip)
- Attendance Allowance (if state pensionable age or older and

- not claiming Disability Living Allowance)
- ☎ **0800 731 0122**
- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance)
- Employment & Support Allowance
- ☎ **0844 811 3390**
- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance)
- Disability Cost of Living Payment A payment of £150 will be made to those eligible during summer 2023. Eligibility is dependent on being in receipt of specific benefits on a particular date.
- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment#disability-cost-of-living-payment](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment#disability-cost-of-living-payment)
- Learning Disabilities
- ☎ **0808 808 1111**
- ✉ [helpline@mencap.org.uk](mailto:helpline@mencap.org.uk)
- 🔗 [www.mencap.org.uk/help-with-food-energy-and-money](http://www.mencap.org.uk/help-with-food-energy-and-money)

## Marriage Allowance

Check that you're claiming the Marriage Tax Allowance. This lets you transfer £1,260 of your personal allowance to your husband, wife or civil partner

- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/marriage-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/marriage-allowance)

## Help for children

- Free childcare 15 or 30 hours of free childcare for children aged 2,3 and 4 (dependent on eligibility)
  - 🔗 [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)
  - 🔗 [www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds](http://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds)
  - 🔗 [www.gov.uk/apply-30-hours-free-tax-free-childcare](http://www.gov.uk/apply-30-hours-free-tax-free-childcare)
  - Tax free Childcare
  - 🔗 [www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare](http://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare)
  - Child Benefit
  - ☎ **0300 200 3100**
  - 🔗 [www.gov.uk/child-benefit](http://www.gov.uk/child-benefit)
- If you have children and are claiming Universal Credit you may also be eligible to:
- Claim back up to 85% of costs of childcare
  - 🔗 [www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-childcare-costs](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-childcare-costs)

- Free school meals
- ☎ **01522 782 030**
- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals](http://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals)
- Access to free activities and food in school holidays
- ✉ [HAF@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:HAF@lincolnshire.gov.uk)
- 🔗 [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-pupil-support/holiday-activities-food-programme](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-pupil-support/holiday-activities-food-programme)
- Healthy Start Vouchers
- ☎ **0300 330 7010**
- ✉ [healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk](mailto:healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk)
- 🔗 [www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/)
- Help with maternity costs
- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/sure-start-maternity-grant](http://www.gov.uk/sure-start-maternity-grant)

## Help for pensioners

There are various schemes to help pensioners. They include:

- Winter Fuel Payment Cost-of-Living Payment of between £150 and £300 (paid alongside the Winter Fuel Payment)
- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)
- Pension Credit - check eligibility
- ☎ **0800 99 1234**
- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/pension-credit](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit)
- Housing Benefit - check eligibility
- 🔗 [www.gov.uk/housing-benefit](http://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit)
- Free TV Licence (eligible if 75 or over and in receipt of Pension Credit)
- ☎ **0300 790 6117**
- 🔗 [www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/aged-74-and-over-aud3](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/aged-74-and-over-aud3)
- National concessionary travel pass
- ☎ **0345 456 4474**
- ✉ [concessionaryfares@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:concessionaryfares@lincolnshire.gov.uk)
- 🔗 [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/public-transport/apply-free-bus-pass](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/public-transport/apply-free-bus-pass)

Don't forget to check that you are claiming everything you're entitled to

🔗 [www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/Intro/Home](http://www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/Intro/Home)

## Caring for someone

Check if you're eligible to claim a carer's allowance

🔗 [www.gov.uk/carers-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance)



[www.southkesteven.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/costofliving)



Riverside units - Housing Options officers Helen Brown and Pippa Bryden



Riverside units interior

## Revamped building brings flats to relieve homeless pressure

Three single-bed units are now available in Grantham where South Kesteven District Council can accommodate its most vulnerable homeless individuals.

This follows extensive redevelopment of a property with Homes England support funding of £62,000.

The units are developed to an excellent specification in a prime location in town to ensure that key support and facilities can be accessed during challenging times in an individual's life.

The units are fully furnished to meet basic needs and add much needed extra properties to enable the council to offer accommodation as part of our statutory obligations to support homeless people.

Cllr Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning said: "SKDC works both with the homeless and with those at risk of becoming homeless.

"This accommodation offers a more stable environment than the hotels or B&Bs that we currently use and will give individuals a real opportunity to make changes to their current circumstances.

"People will be supported through a personal housing plan to enable security and future stabilisation, this could include access to education and or employment and future secure accommodation.

"Ultimately, our role is to prevent homelessness wherever possible, by helping those at risk to solve whatever problems may lead to an individual or family becoming homeless."

The funding enabled redevelopment of a former derelict building adding much needed

one bedroom accommodation to SKDC's housing portfolio.

Cllr Dilks added: "By purchasing and developing a derelict building the council has made a difference, helping to improve its neighbourhoods and grow communities."

The units are owned by the Council and form part of its temporary accommodation offer, relieving the burdens on the current homelessness crisis that has an increasing impact on the District.

Anyone currently homeless should call the Council on **01476 40 60 80** for assistance. If you have nowhere to stay tonight and it is outside of our usual office hours, please call our Emergency Helpline: **01476 59 00 44**.



The SKDC Housing team driving forward improvement in the Earlesfield area



# Home refits take shape as tenants move back in after upgrades

The first tenants to benefit from refits in a £3.28m housing project from South Kesteven District Council have returned to their refurbished homes.

Replacement kitchens and bathrooms are being fitted in 143 homes, with electrical, heating, and door upgrades in a similar number – as well as removal of asbestos materials from these and a further nine post-war built properties.

United Living Group is carrying out

the improvements for the Earlesfield Estate Capital Works Project which will deliver numerous benefits for our tenants and is further evidence of the wider improvements we continue to see from the SKDC Housing service.

Around 112 households are being temporarily rehomed to allow the work to take place using ten vacant properties on the estate on a rolling programme. Another property is being used as an estate office

where residents can find out more and keep up to date with progress.

There has been detailed consultation with tenants to understand any vulnerabilities, particular housing needs and personal circumstances. SKDC has also contributed to all the associated additional costs of removals and utility bills during the process.

Cllr Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, said: “This important work is part of our clear commitment to improving their homes as we work to provide good quality housing that meets the needs of all residents. We recognise there is significant inconvenience for many of the affected residents, for which we apologise.”

Work being carried out includes:

- New kitchens including wall tiles, floor covering and extractor fan
- New bathrooms including wall tiles, electric shower, extractor fan and floor covering
- New toilet and basin plus floor covering for the downstairs cloakroom
- Full rewire where required
- New heating system where required
- New front and rear composite doors





Local families support a Peace Walk for Ukraine in Stamford.

## New social housing will help evacuee families and increase Council stock

**T**wenty-one new homes are being purchased as South Kesteven District Council expands its social housing stock.

They will initially provide homes for refugee families as the Council works to ease the national homelessness crisis.

As they move on, the new housing will pass to people on the SKDC Housing Register.

Families fleeing war-torn countries will be the first to be provided with temporary homes offered to them through a Government scheme.

SKDC will invest £4.482m to purchase the new-build homes thanks to an allocation from the Government-funded Local Authority Housing Fund, supplemented by its own financial reserve.

The initial use will be by Afghan and Ukrainian evacuee families

who have arrived legally in the UK.

Cllr Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, said: “Afghan resettlement prioritises those who assisted the UK with military operations in the country, plus those at greatest risk from the Taliban.

“Schemes to assist Ukraine nationals focus on legal resettlement and support for women and children refugees displaced by the conflict.

“The Local Authority Housing Fund is to ease pressure on local housing demand and create a new and permanent supply of accommodation for local authorities to assist UK nationals in the future.”

The idea is to help refugees in their hour of need and create a lasting legacy by providing housing to help address local

demand, and then reduce future homelessness pressures for local people as the evacuees move out of the system.

South Kesteven residents provide homes for the highest number of Ukraine refugees in the whole of Lincolnshire.

The Local Authority Housing Fund helps provide affordable accommodation for legal evacuees until their visas expire in around 3-5 years’ time, by supporting local authorities. SKDC expects to approach developers with a view to purchasing 19 two- or three-bedroom new-build homes and two four-bed+ properties.

SKDC is one of three local authorities in Lincolnshire, among just 180 nationwide to be selected to benefit from this fund, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.



## Green light for energy efficiency thanks to £7.26m funding package

More than 330 Council houses across South Kesteven are to benefit from a £3.4m Government grant to fund energy efficiency upgrades.

The funding comes after SKDC identified a programme of energy efficiency and low-carbon heating upgrades.

Cllr Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, said: “There will be clear benefits to tenants including an improved living environment and reduced energy consumption to help address cost of living pressures.

“With recent rises in energy bills, there’s never been a more appropriate time to make the homes of our tenants easier to heat. These improvements will make a real difference to them.

“This project also takes forward the Council’s wider work to reduce carbon emissions.

“Although the homes outlined for the bid are not included in the Council’s own carbon footprint, energy efficiencies will be achieved through delivery of the project.

“The funding will allow us to make substantial improvements to improve the quality, efficiency and safety of our social rented

homes which will not only support householders but leave a positive environmental change in the area.”

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 grant of £3.4m will be supported with £3,847,516 from the Council’s Housing Revenue Account.

A programme of energy efficiency and low-carbon heating upgrades has been prepared for the 333 homes identified for this work, spread across predominantly rural areas of the district.

This investment, which could pay for improvements such as loft insulation or new windows, will help households to heat their homes for less and keep them warm for longer.

The money will go towards improvements to vulnerable households and off-gas grid homes with an EPC rating of D or below and could save tenants between £220 and £400 a year on energy bills.

Work is expected to begin this summer with upgrades taking place through a two-year programme.

It dovetails with the Council’s revised Climate Action Strategy, which focuses on specific areas relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

SKDC’s target is to reduce its own carbon footprint by at least 30% by 2030 and endeavour to become net-zero carbon as soon as viable before 2050.



# Housing Team on call round-the-clock

With over 100 services to deliver, across 365 square miles, no two days are the same for staff at South Kesteven District Council.

Our dedicated Housing team supports thousands of tenants by providing a safe and comfortable place for them to call home, organising emergency and regular repairs – and by providing advice and help on all kinds of topics, 24/7.

## 8am – 10am

The first task is to assess all incoming enquiries and make contact with those in need of help, whether that is a request for a repair or homelessness advice.

For the Tenancy Services team, this could include welcoming new tenants or progressing mutual exchange applications.

## 10am – 11am

It is now time for our Tenancy Services team to attend a multi-agency panel, alongside some of the Council's key partners, including education, social care and medical providers, and Lincolnshire police.

## 11am – 12noon

An important part of the Housing Options team role is to source both emergency and long-term accommodation. This can include organising nightly paid accommodation, managing allocations from the Housing Register or liaising with private landlords to seek alternative,



affordable places to live.

## 12noon – 3pm

Housing Officers are often the first point of contact for many tenants, whether it's a concern about anti-social behaviour or for advice about managing their finances.

They can even put tenants in contact with the Revenues and Benefits Team at SKDC or external experts like Citizens Advice.

Housing Officers also make home visits to ensure everything is working as it should, and that we all comply with national safety regulations and the law, including for gas and electrical safety, or dealing with damp and mould.

## 3pm – 4pm

As well as providing rough sleepers with a temporary place to stay, the Housing Options and

Tenancy Services team can support them in their transition into a long-term and settled future, assisting with managing finances, beating substance abuse and offering benefits support.

## 4pm – 5pm

Our Housing Services Team complete regular training so that they are fully informed of all changes, whether big or small, to social housing legislation and policies.

## 5pm – 8pm

In the daytime, tenants can speak to a member of our Customer Services Team. There are also online forms to fill in during the day or after the offices close.

Out of hours in an emergency, tenants can phone the emergency line and there will always be someone on hand to resolve the problem.

Through the night (8pm – 8am SKDC staff respond to emergency calls, organise urgent repairs and provide an outreach service to rough sleepers, as well as for neighbouring districts as part of the Change4Lincs partnership.

This includes the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP), which when activated allows staff to identify and respond to reports of rough sleepers and quickly find them suitable accommodation.

Urgent repairs are carried out day and night



# Court backs Council efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour

South Kesteven District Council obtained possession of a flat from where there was significant anti-social behaviour at Eastwell Place, Grantham.

A warrant was executed on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and the property is undergoing renovation so it can be made available again for an applicant on the Housing Register.

Care will be taken to ensure that the property is let sensitively to minimise the possibility of future anti-social behaviour in the area.

It follows a series of incidents and a court ruling after partnership work between the Council's Housing Services department and the police regarding several tenancies at Eastwell Place.

A dossier of "significant issues," video footage and police statements

were presented to Lincoln Magistrates on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023. Evidence included records of anti-social behaviour, CCTV footage, street violence, neighbour complaints and witness statements from Council staff.

The eviction was secured at an earlier hearing when the Council was granted possession of the flat.

A spokesperson for the Council said: "This robust and successful partnership action with the police means that our tenants and their neighbours are once again able to live their lives without the regular disruption caused by these tenants and their visitors.

"We take instances of anti-social behaviour very seriously and as a responsible landlord have a duty to all our tenants to deal with that.

"It is very important for the other

residents of Eastwell Place to know they are supported by their landlord and that incidents of this nature are taken very seriously.

"The situation there was unacceptable and with support from the courts, we will take action where necessary to allow people to feel safe at home and in their neighbourhood."

The Full Closure Order meant the tenant could not live at the flat for six weeks ahead of potential eviction. A Partial Closure Order at a second flat prevents named visitors at the property, which if breached could ultimately result in eviction.

A copy of the Closure Order is displayed outside each property and anyone breaching the order could be arrested and, if found guilty, face a punishment of up to 51 weeks in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

# SKtoday

for residents of South Kesteven

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## Our services

### South Kesteven District Council

You can contact the Council about benefits, rent or other issues. We are open by appointment only for Council services as follows:

#### Grantham:

Monday - Friday 9am to 1pm

**Bourne:** Monday 9am to 5pm,

Wednesday 9am to 6pm

Friday and Saturday, 9am to 1pm

Bourne is also for library services

☎ 01476 40 60 80

**Out of hours 01476 40 60 40**

✉ [customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk)

### Tenant Engagement

Contact Ken Linford, Community Engagement Officer

☎ 01476 40 60 80

✉ [HousingFB@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:HousingFB@southkesteven.gov.uk)



### Emergency repairs

☎ 01476 40 60 80 / 01476 59 00 44

### Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour

☎ 01476 40 60 80

🌐 [www.southkesteven.gov.uk/nuisance](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/nuisance)

✉ [HousingManagement@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:HousingManagement@southkesteven.gov.uk)

For other kinds of anti-social behaviour, such as criminal activity, you should contact the police - use **101** if it is not an emergency. (**999** if it is an emergency)

## Other organisations that can help:



### Age UK (Lincoln and South Lincolnshire)

Companionship, advice and support for older people.

☎ 01522 696 000

🌐 [www.ageuk.org.uk/lincolnsouthlincolnshire/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/lincolnsouthlincolnshire/)

### Lincolnshire County Council

Information and advice on council services and support available in Lincolnshire.

☎ 01522 552 222

✉ [customer\\_services@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer_services@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

🌐 [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk)

For advice and support to live independently, contact the county

council's adult social care team.

☎ 01522 782155

🌐 <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/adult-social-care/social-care-support>

### Grantham & District Poverty Concern Group

Supports vulnerable members of the community to relieve both poverty and homelessness.

Contact Chris Thomas on

☎ 07517 943 792 or via

✉ [granthampovertyconcern@gmail.com](mailto:granthampovertyconcern@gmail.com)

🌐 [www.granthampovertyconcern.org.uk](http://www.granthampovertyconcern.org.uk)

## National advice lines

### Citizens Advice

☎ 03444 111 444

🌐 [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us)

### Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

☎ 0345 606 0265

🌐 [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions)

### Victim Support

☎ 0808 506 1688

🌐 [VictimSupport.org.uk](http://VictimSupport.org.uk)

### The National Domestic Abuse Helpline

☎ 0808 200 0247

### NHS- non-urgent medical need

☎ 111

🌐 [www.111.nhs.uk/](http://www.111.nhs.uk/)

### Scope

Provides support, advice and information to disabled people and their families.

☎ 0808 800 3333

🌐 <https://www.scope.org.uk>

### Shelter

A nationwide charity which provides advice for tenants

🌐 [https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/council\\_housing\\_association](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/council_housing_association)

### If you are online

You can find the latest information, and browse our services on our website at [www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk)