

Tendring Reports

Latest news for Council tenants in Tendring

December 2024

HONEYCROFT SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME



Our housing development in Lawford has been completed, creating 13 new single-storey bungalows on the site of the former Honeycroft sheltered housing scheme in Waldegrave Way.

The environmental sustainability of this scheme is a key aspect of its success as we have implemented innovative solutions that will benefit the environment, keep running costs low for the tenants who live there, and set a standard for future projects.

We made a commitment to those who moved out of the former sheltered scheme on this site that they would have the opportunity to move into the new homes – and we are delighted that two former residents have taken up that offer.

The homes have been designed to the principles of the former lifetime homes standard meaning residents can remain in their community as their physical needs change and features include storage and charging points for mobility scooters.

As well as the new homes, the site also has a small community building, landscaping and car parking with electric vehicle charging points.



Environmental features abound at the site, with bat and bird boxes and hedgehog holes; while solar panels and water butts help to keep utility costs low. Solar panels have also been installed on the Honeycroft bungalows, which have remained occupied throughout the development, for the benefit of existing tenants

RIGHT TO BUY - AN UPDATE

The Right to Buy scheme was introduced in 1980 by then-prime minister Margaret Thatcher and it allows council tenants, who meet certain eligibility criteria, to buy their council home at a discount.

When you can buy your home under the Right to Buy

You can apply for the Right to Buy scheme if you have a secure tenancy and you:

- live in a house, bungalow, flat or maisonette which we own;
- are purchasing either in your sole name; or jointly with other people named on the secure tenancy;
- occupy the property as your only or principal home; and
- have the minimum qualifying tenancy period of 3 years public sector tenancy. The 3-year period does not have to be consecutive and can include your current tenancy and any previous public sector tenancy

Reasons why you might not be able to buy your home

- if you or someone you hold the tenancy with is subject to an order of the court for possession of the property
- if you or someone who is joining in the Right to Buy with you is subject to a bankruptcy order, has a bankruptcy petition pending or is an undischarged bankrupt

There are also some circumstances where the Right to Buy does not apply. You can find a list of the exceptions to the Right to Buy <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/68/schedule/5>.

How much discount will I get?

In the budget in October, the Chancellor announced a significant reduction in the maximum discounts that apply to the Right to Buy and, in the East of England, this has reduced from £102,400 to £34,000. The reduced maximum discounts will be applied to all Right to Buy applications received after 21 November 2024.

You'll usually have to repay some or all your discount if you sell your home within 5 years.

Things to consider

Buying your home is a big decision and it is important to remember that there will be a number of expenses to consider as part of the buying process. There will also be the ongoing costs of owning your own home. You can get impartial financial and legal advice before buying from

- <https://www.gov.uk/right-to-buy-buying-your-council-home> and helpline 0300 123 0913
- For legal matters contact your local Citizens Advice <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- For budgeting and financial advice, contact the Money Advice Service 0300 500 5000; <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/work/employment>

How to apply for the Right to Buy

If you want to apply to buy your property under the Right to Buy, you will need to complete the application form (RTB1) and our Financial Information Form. You can find out more on our website and at: <https://www.gov.uk/right-to-buy-buying-your-council-home>.



Decent Homes & Stock Conditions Survey

The **Decent Homes Standard** sets minimum standards for the condition of all council and housing association homes and also provides guidance on what we need to do to make sure that our homes are decent.

There are four main criteria:

Fitness for habitation

This means that your home must meet legal standards for housing, making sure it is free from serious health and safety risks, referred to as category 1 hazards.

State of repair

Your home should be in a reasonable state of repair. The Decent Homes Standard states that key building components such as the roof, walls windows, doors, chimneys and heating systems should be functional and not in immediate need of repair

Modern facilities and services

Your home should have reasonably modern facilities and services, which include:

- A reasonably modern kitchen (around 20 years or less)
- A reasonably modern bathroom (around 30 years or less)
- An appropriately located bathroom and kitchen
- Adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem)
- Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

Thermal comfort

Your home needs to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort, which includes effective insulation and efficient heating

How do we check that our homes meet the decent home standard

We are currently carrying out stock condition surveys of all our properties to help us understand what improvement works are needed. A stock condition survey is a visual inspection of the inside and outside of our properties to collect information about its condition and this will include an assessment of the age and condition of major elements such as the kitchen, bathroom, windows and doors.

Once these surveys have been completed, this data will show us where and when we need to carry out improvement works and help us plan future investment programmes.

We have surveyed about a quarter of our properties to date and will be surveying the remainder over the next three years. We will write to you when your home is due to be surveyed and would appreciate your co-operation in allowing access to your home.

From the initial surveys carried out, we found that 4.4% of our properties did not meet the Decent Homes Standard and needed to have remedial works.



JOIN US ON AN ESTATE WALKABOUT

Estate walkabouts involve groups of tenants and our staff walking around an estate to identify what could be improved.

Estate walkabouts are:



Your opportunity to have your say about what's good and what's bad about where you live



Helpful in identifying your concerns



The opportunity to point out issues such as fly-tipping, graffiti and ASB hotspots so we can work to address them

If you would like to get involved and come along on one of our estate walkabouts, email tenant.involvement@tendringdc.gov.uk

Silver-level Housing award in the prestigious RSPCA PawPrints Award

Tendring District Council (TDC) has been handed a Silver-level Housing award in the prestigious RSPCA PawPrints Awards.

The honour underscores our continuous efforts to provide exceptional animal welfare services.

The RSPCA PawPrints Awards, the only scheme of its kind, celebrates local authorities and public bodies for their pioneering work in animal welfare across England and Wales.



TDC was recognised for our pet-friendly housing policies and support for responsible pet ownership among council tenants.

Lee Gingell, public affairs manager at the RSPCA, added: "We are thrilled to recognise Tendring District Council with the Silver-level Housing award in this year's RSPCA PawPrints Awards. Their commitment to animal welfare is truly commendable and reflects the high standards that the PawPrints awards aim to celebrate. By winning this award, Tendring District Council has demonstrated outstanding dedication to protecting, promoting and enhancing animal welfare, and we hope their achievements inspire others to strive for excellence in this vital area."

Anti-Social behaviour involving hate crime

A hate crime is any behaviour that someone thinks was caused by hostility, prejudice or hatred of their:

- disability including physical impairments, mental health problems and learning disabilities
- gender identity (people who are transgender, transsexual or transvestite)
- race, skin colour, nationality, ethnicity or heritage
- religion, faith or belief, including people without a religious belief
- sexual orientation (people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual etc.).
- lifestyle and dress i.e. such as an alternative sub-culture



Anyone can be a victim of hate crime if they are targeted because of who they are, their friends or family or even who the perpetrator thinks they are.

Hate crime can include:

- name calling or verbal abuse
- graffiti or abusive writing
- damage to property
- threats or intimidation
- bullying or harassment
- physical attacks or violence, including sexual violence.

What can I do if I've been a victim or witness of hate crime?

Report it to the police – hate crime is a criminal offence

We encourage victims of hate incidents, or those that know of someone who is, to report it. We will work alongside agencies including the Police, Victim Support, HIRC (Hate Crime Incident Reporting Centre), Community Safety Partnership and Outhouse East to investigate and help resolve any hate incident. We will also supply the 'Stop Hate Crime' information that offers further help and support.

The Housing Team provides a variety of ways for tenants to report

ASB and Hate Crime:

- By emailing housingASB@tendringdc.gov.uk
- Online Tendring District Council | Hate crime ([tendringdc.gov.uk](https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk))
- Telephone: 01255 686488
- In person at our Reception, Council Offices, 88-90 Pier Avenue, Clacton which is open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays between 10am and 1pm
- To Council officers, support workers or carers using any of the methods above.
- You can contact your local councillors to ask them questions about what's happening in your area or to share a concern

We don't tolerate any form of harassment or hate crime, and we encourage people to report any hate crime that they experience or witness. We take all complaints seriously and we investigate them thoroughly. We will also carry out a Risk Assessment which will identify a response timescale in accordance with the following priorities. For hate incidents this would be within 1 working day. We agree an action plan with victims, explaining what will happen next and considering immediate legal action to protect victims. We arrange for hate-motivated graffiti to be removed within 7 working days.

We empower victims of hate crime to make informed choices by offering advice, information and support.

We work in partnership with other agencies and the police to ensure services and support are available to people suffering from hate crime.

New housing policies approved

As part of our preparation for the Regulator of Social Housing's new Consumer Standards, we have been reviewing and writing a number of housing policies. All of these have been written to comply with legal and regulatory requirements and also to improve your understanding and satisfaction with our services

Rent Setting & Collection Policy

This aims to:

- To outline the method of calculating fair & affordable rents to maximise income & provide an efficient and effective housing service.
- To ensure tenants prioritise their rent payments.
- To work in partnership to support and signpost tenants to maximise their income, manage debts, sustain tenancies and prevent rent arrears.
- To keep rent arrears to a minimum by early intervention thereby minimising the risk of homelessness.
- To operate a firm but fair approach to provide tenants in arrears with support and advice and offering practical, affordable repayment plans.
- To take action appropriate to the level of rent arrears

Neighbourhood Management Policy

This aims to:

- Develop a pro-active approach to the management of Council properties & neighbourhoods.
- Ensure the grounds and communal facilities the Council manage are well maintained.
- Involve residents and other parties to understand neighbourhood needs and requirements to create sustainable neighbourhoods.
- Ensure that all residents are aware of their respective responsibilities and encourage local initiatives to resolve long-term or entrenched issues impacting individual areas.

Domestic Abuse Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out how the Council will protect victims of domestic abuse and prevent homelessness by providing safe and secure accommodation for tenants
- Enable an early intervention to tackle domestic abuse and prevent further abuse and facilitate the necessary help and support for victims and their children
- Set out how the Council will hold perpetrators to account for their actions in a way that is prompt, decisive and proportionate, with a focus on rehabilitation and maintaining the safety of the victim and their children
- Raise awareness of the issue of domestic abuse and enable relevant employees to provide appropriate support
- Ensure that a consistent approach is adopted when responding to any resident who is a victim of domestic abuse; and
- Ensure that all statutory and regulatory requirements are met

Helping those with vulnerabilities

Our Vulnerabilities Policy sets out the steps we will take to help vulnerable customers access our services and vulnerable tenants to maintain their tenancies.



Vulnerability refers to any individual who is or may be in need of help or support due to mental health difficulties, disability, age, illness or frailty and who are or may be unable to look after their home or their own wellbeing or protect themselves from harm or exploitation from others. It also includes those who may experience an exceptional life event, such as bereavement or domestic abuse, and who find themselves temporarily unable to manage without additional support.

We record any known vulnerability, particular communication or access needs on a tenant's record as well as whether there is anyone with delegated authority to speak to us on the tenant's behalf, such as a care or support worker. This ensures our staff will have advance knowledge of any additional factors to consider when delivering services.

There are a number of ways we can help those with vulnerabilities, and these include:

Signposting and referrals

When we identify a tenant as being vulnerable, we will signpost or refer them to appropriate support if it is needed. This may include referrals to health, welfare benefits or advocacy services

Communication

We will advertise and communicate about our services in a variety of ways and aim to engage with our tenants in a way that meets their needs. This includes making sure that our website is as accessible and user friendly as possible. We will also provide translations, interpreters or documents in alternative formats to meet identified needs, as appropriate. You can also ask us to send correspondence to someone who will act on your behalf.

Rent arrears

We will help those who approach us or who fall into arrears to maximise their income and will support them in managing their budgets. We will also agree a realistic plan to help them pay their rent and any arrears. When taking action to recover rent arrears, vulnerability risk assessments are completed early in the process, and these are reviewed at a management level prior to any decisions to proceed with eviction proceedings.

Repairs & Maintenance

When a tenant contacts us to request a repair, we will confirm if there are any disabilities or support needs that we need to take into account. We will pay for any repairs resulting from damage caused to a tenant's home during any incidents of domestic abuse. We will support the provision of aids and adaptations that help residents enjoy independence, privacy and dignity by accessing aids and adaptation funding.

Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour

Sometimes anti-social behaviour or harassment may be directed towards a vulnerable individual or household because of prejudices held by a perpetrator. We take a victim centred approach to all reports of anti-social behaviour and carry out a victim vulnerability risk assessment in all cases. This helps us measure any additional risks to vulnerable victims.

Some tenants may act in an anti-social way due to behaviours related to their vulnerability. If this happens, we will try to engage them as well as any relevant support services and carers to see if we can improve the situation before we take any enforcement action against their tenancy.

You can read our Vulnerability Policy on our website www.tendringdc.gov.uk

RENT PAYMENT

This is a 53-week financial year which means that there are 53 Mondays, and 53 weeks rent to pay.

Universal Credit only pay 4 weeks rent a month and so **if Universal Credit pay your rent** direct to the Council, these payments alone will not cover the amount of rent due in the year. To prevent the rent account going into arrears, **you will need to make additional payments.**

If you haven't already started making payments, we would recommend that anyone this affects tops up the rent account by £30 per month from December 2024 to avoid an unexpected rent bill in March 2025.

Please contact the rents team on 01255 686468 if you need us to send you out a new barcode so you can pay locally or need any further information.

SHELTERED HOUSING

All Sheltered Housing Officers will finish at 16:30 on the 24/12/2024 and will return at 8:30 on the 02/01/2025.

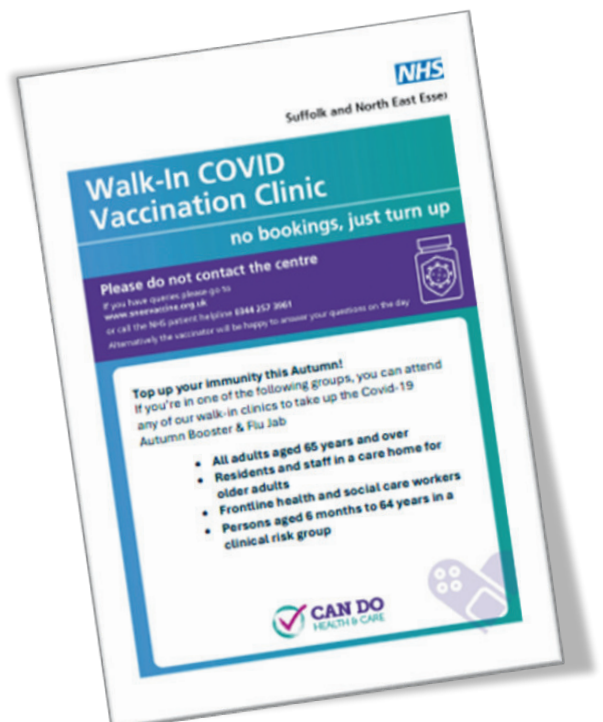
If you are planning to be away during the Christmas period, please pass details to the HUB by phone 01255 686888, by email shelteredhousinghub@tendingdc.gov.uk or your Sheltered Housing Officer.

If you have any emergencies throughout the Christmas period, you can contact Careline on 01255 222022, or by pulling a cord, pressing your pendant or via the red button on your Chubb box.

Pop up vaccination clinics have been for the residents in Sheltered Housing this Autumn. They visited all the schemes.

For the past 2 years the NHS have come along to the schemes to vaccinate against Covid 19 and more recently included the Flu jab.

We had a great turnout this year with many residents commenting that it has made their lives so much easier.



Condensation, Damp and Mould

This article explains how damp can cause mould on walls and furniture, make timber window frames rot, and increase the risk of respiratory illnesses. It focuses on damp caused by condensation and provides tips on how to minimise it to reduce the risk of dampness and mould growth.

What is condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. Warmer air will hold more moisture. When warmer air touches a colder surface or gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. You notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, on a cold can of drink or when the mirror mists over when you have a bath, you can't always see it when it forms on absorbent surfaces like wallpaper or plaster.



Is it condensation?

Condensation is not the only cause of damp. It can also come from things like:

- Leaking pipes, wastes, or overflows
- Rain seeping through the roof where a tile/slate is missing
- Water spilling from a blocked gutter
- Water getting in around window frames
- Leaking through a cracked pipe
- Rising damp due to defective dampcourse or no dampcourse

These causes of damp often leave a 'tidemark'. If you think any of these things affect your home, please contact us straight away for them to be repaired.

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Ventilate to remove moisture

Ventilation is key to reducing condensation at home. Keeping a small window or trickle vent open helps to get rid of moisture produced by breathing. More ventilation is required in kitchens and bathrooms, especially when cooking, bathing, or drying clothes. Open windows wider or use an electric fan if available.

If there is no extractor in the kitchen or bathroom, please let us know.



DON'T FORGET THESE KEY POINTS!

Produce less moisture

- Cover saucepans when cooking
- Don't leave kettles boiling
- Dry clothes outside when possible, or use an airer
- Ensure your tumble drier is vented to the outside



Ventilate or remove moisture

- Open windows when someone is in
- When using the kitchen and bathroom, open the windows wider, use the fan and shut the door
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes
- Wipe down any condensation that has built up overnight on any surface



Heat your home

- If possible, keep low background heat on all day
- Ask at the Job Centre about benefits, rebates and help with fuel bills, ask us to put you in touch with professional advice on money matters or to contact the Fuel Poverty Officer.

Venting a tumble dryer

If you need your tumble dryer venting to the outside, you can contact us and we will do the work free of charge as long as it is practically possible.

Please report any necessary repairs, disrepair or concerns about damp, mould and condensation immediately to the Housing Repairs team.

By email: housingrepairs@tendingdc.gov.uk If you can, please take some photos of the item/s that need repairing or are a concern and attach these to your email.

By 'phone: 01255 686477

By calling in person into reception at our Pier Avenue offices which is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (excluding Bank Holidays) from 10am to 1pm.

For emergencies, outside of normal office hours, you can contact Careline on 01255 2220222

Please note that online requests and emails can be made at any time but will only be dealt with during working hours.

**Please remember the more accurately you can explain the issue,
the better able we will be to send the right help.**

Tenant Satisfaction Measures: How do we compare?

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) recently published its analysis of social landlords' first year of Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

The TSMs are a set of questions that landlords need to ask tenants about their service as well as management information data collected by landlords about the delivery of key services. This information helps tenants to hold their landlords to account in important areas, including their repairs service, maintenance of homes and complaint handling.

Set out below you can see how we compared with the average score for all low cost rental housing providers against each of the TSMs in the last financial year:

Tenant Satisfaction Measure	National average	Our score
Satisfied with overall service from their landlord	71.3%	80.1%
Satisfied with overall repairs service	72.3%	83.0%
Satisfied with time taken to complete most recent repair	67.4%	81.6%
Satisfied that their home is well maintained	70.8%	75.1%
Satisfied that their home is safe	76.7%	78.2%
Satisfied that their landlord listens to tenants views and acts upon them	60.4%	64.2%
Satisfied that their landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them	70.3%	65.2%
Agree that their landlord treats them fairly and with respect	76.8%	75.7%
Satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaint handling	34.5%	45.0%
Satisfied that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.	65.1%	48.5%
Satisfied that their landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood	63.1%	56.6%
Satisfied with their landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	57.8%	53.0%
Homes where all required gas safety checks have been carried out	99%	99%
Homes where all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	100%	100%
Homes where all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out	100%	100%
Homes where all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out	100%	96.4%
Homes where all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out	100%	100%
Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	0.5%	4.4%
Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	81.3%	68.4%
Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	95.3%	68.6%
Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened (per 1000 homes)	35.5	177.9
Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened (per 1000 homes)	0.6	0.6
Number of Stage One complaints received (per 1,000 homes)	42.5	22.5
Number of Stage Two complaints received (per 1,000 homes)	5.7	4.2
Stage One complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	82.3%	73.9%
Stage Two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	83.6%	61.5%

NEED TO CONTACT US?



Rent account enquiries 01255 686468 rentsteam@tendringdc.gov.uk	Sheltered Housing 01255 686888 shelteredhousingteam@tendringdc.gov.uk
General enquiries housing.services@tendringdc.gov.uk	Tenant Alterations tenantalterations@tendringdc.gov.uk
Report a repair during working hours 01255 686477 housingrepairs@tendringdc.gov.uk	Housing Complaints councilhousingcomplaints@tendringdc.gov.uk
Report anti-social behaviour or other nuisance complaints 01255 686488 housingASB@tendringdc.gov.uk	Pet Applications petapplications@tendringdc.gov.uk
Report emergency repairs only outside of normal working hours 01255 222022	Garage enquiries garages@tendringdc.gov.uk
Housing Register or allocation enquiries 01255 686466	All Out of Hours queries Careline 01255 222022
Enquiries about housing adaptations 01255 686744	Find out more about getting involved in our services: tenant.involvement@tendringdc.gov.uk 01255 686690 between 9am and 4pm
Right to buy enquiries 01255 686298 rtb@tendringdc.gov.uk	

Operation & Delivery – Housing & Environment

Tendring District Council, Pier Avenue, Clacton on Sea, Essex CO15 1TN

Visiting:

Housing Reception at Pier Avenue offices in Clacton
between 10am to 1pm Monday to Wednesday.