

# Annual Housing Report

2022-23

Sunderland  
City Council







**We're committed to improving the lives of our tenants and ensuring they have a house they can call a home and be proud of.**

In recent years we've seen the challenges people and businesses have faced due to the continued effects of the Covid pandemic, the increase in energy bills and other cost of living factors. We fully understand that this has been and continues to be a very difficult period for our tenants to navigate.

We aim to provide healthy homes and communities where people can thrive. We actively engage with our tenants on many issues to make sure that the services we deliver meet their needs and expectations.

We're investing in existing homes to make them modern, safe and energy efficient. Our development programme is delivering high-quality properties to meet the needs of a variety of tenants, including supported housing and homes for those who have experienced sleeping rough.

Over the past year we've made several significant achievements. We welcomed our 100th tenant, increased our rough sleeper accommodation by six units and redeveloped a derelict school into modern accommodation for adults with support needs. We've developed a more proactive approach to help residents who live in properties that have damp and mould problems and the Housing Operations Team was also shortlisted for Team of the Year in the Housing Heroes awards 2023.





# 100th residents move into new council home

Alison and David Step became the 100th residents to move into a new council home. The couple each live with a number of medical conditions that impact their mobility and general health. As a result, they needed a level access home with no stairs and we supported them to secure a two-bedroom bungalow in Arnay Court, Southwick.

The couple's one-storey new-build, one of 16 new homes in Southwick, has given them a new lease of life. The homes were built as part of Sunderland City Council's £59m Housing Delivery and Investment Plan (HDIP).

The five-year HDIP sets out housing ambitions, one of which being that vulnerable residents can live in properties that support them to live independently for longer, in which they are supported to live happy, fulfilled lives.

Having moved from a third floor apartment with 51 stairs to navigate to access their home, the couple can now enjoy an enhanced quality of life. Alison said: "We are absolutely tickled pink with the house.

Our apartment was becoming difficult for us to access, which meant we were increasingly isolated.

"I think, in the end, we were becoming quite depressed, so the move to a home that meets our needs has lifted our mood and we're starting to live again, which is lovely."



# Helping rough sleepers and the homeless in Sunderland

We've been working in partnership with Oasis Community Housing on a project to support people who are homeless or sleeping rough in Sunderland. Having a safe and stable place to call home is so important to breaking the cycle of homelessness.

We carried out outreach programmes to identify people in the city who are, or at risk of sleeping rough. Once we knew who these people were, we worked with them to assess their needs to determine if they were suitable for the scheme which will provide them with supported accommodation for up to three years, as well as other types of help.

Once they've received this three year temporary support, we're aiming to help these people even further by identifying suitable properties that meet their needs, and that they can live in long-term.

One lady has already benefitted massively from the scheme. Through the scheme, she was identified as homeless and was provided accommodation. She has been one of our tenants for over 20 months now and has completely turned her life around. She now volunteers in the community with several organisations, including the Salvation Army.

Phil Auton from Sunderland City Council said, "Working in partnership with Oasis has shown that a multi-agency approach can benefit those in housing crisis, the outcomes we have gained for our tenants has improved both the short- and longterm housing aspirations."







# Old school gets new lease of life

An old school building has been stunningly restored, providing much-needed homes for vulnerable adults in Sunderland.

The major programme of work to restore and extend Washington Old School on Albert Place has delivered 15 new specialist apartments. The project is part of a council-led programme that has delivered scores of new homes across Sunderland.

The building - originally known as Biddick School - was built in 1893. It closed in 1993, after which it temporarily housed the Washington Church of Christ before being left vacant and falling into disrepair.

The school has stood empty for 20 years, and neighbours a cluster of new bungalows that the council developed to boost the number of homes for older people and those with physical disabilities in Washington.

The 15 apartments are designed as medium to long-term accommodation and provide a vital sense of ownership for the residents. The scheme also includes overnight accommodation for support staff, and office and meeting space. It can also be adapted to house older and vulnerable residents on a more permanent basis, to provide flexibility depending on the needs of its residents.

The development also boasts a stunning landscaped courtyard for all the occupants to enjoy, including seating designed by a local artist.



# Damp and mould

In response to the Housing Ombudsman's report on damp and mould in October 2022, Sunderland City Council has adopted a more proactive approach to help residents who live in properties that have damp and mould problems.

Tenants who report issues with damp and mould will now receive an intrusive survey where required. They will have one point of contact with us while the issue is being resolved and will receive advice and guidance on how best to maintain their home during an aftercare visit. The service can also be tailored to the tenants needs.

This new policy has been developed using the government's guidance 'Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home'.







# Housing Team shortlisted for award

Congratulations to our Housing Operations Team for being shortlisted in the Team of the Year in the '0 to 1,000 Homes' category of the Housing Heroes Awards 2023.

The team was formed just over year ago, and since then have made a huge positive impact to how our housing stock is managed and how our tenants are supported.

They've worked hard to ensure that all the necessary systems, procedures and policies are in place to manage our properties properly.

A major review of working practices and procedures they carried out has improved the service they offer.

The team has provided high quality customer service for all our tenants, including those who are vulnerable.

Although the team didn't win the award at the awards event, being shortlisted is testament to just how far they've come in such a short space of time.

# 2022-23 Facts and figures



23

Refurbished homes



86%

Repairs complete within set timescales



100%

Annual gas safety checks



100%

Electrical safety checks



£173k

Total money spent on repairs



54

New tenancies

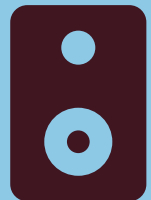


54

Affordability assessments carried out

115

Annual customer care visits



8

Anti social behaviour cases dealt with



1,967

Housing applications processed



£8.3m

Money spent on developing new homes



3

Complaints received



# Get in touch

If you would like to speak to us, please get in touch:

Email: [sunderlandhousing@ Sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:sunderlandhousing@ Sunderland.gov.uk)

Call: 0191 520 5551

Visit: [www.sunderland.gov.uk](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk)

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