

Annual Report

2022-23

Welcome to our annual report

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Hi, I'm Anna and I'm honoured to have joined as chief executive of South Liverpool Homes (SLH) in November 2022. As I'm still pretty new to the organisation, I thought I'd share with you my initial thoughts on how we performed last year, where we are now, as well as some thoughts on the future.

One of our biggest challenges has been supporting tenants during the rising cost of living. I know we are doing some really good work supporting tenants with this, including maximising tenants' benefits through our benefits advice team, securing energy vouchers for those who are really struggling, promoting our low-cost community shop, The Market Place and creating a warm hub that people can use to socialise with each other in a cosy environment. We know everyone has been affected by the increase in cost of living and it's a worrying time, so please get in touch with us if you are struggling. The sooner we know, the more we can do to help.

One of my main areas of focus when I started was to strengthen the voice of tenants within the organisation; ensuring that we are actively listening to our customers so that their input makes a real impact on the services we deliver. We have strengthened this voice by refreshing the way our [tenant scrutiny panel](#) works and have recently created a customer services committee (CSC) which is a joint committee of board members and tenants who look at our performance and policies. They tell us where we need to improve, feeding their thoughts back to our Board so that they have an influence at a strategic level. You can read more about this on page 16.

We know that there is room for improvement in other areas of our business. At the moment, overall tenant satisfaction with our services is 77% which is lower than the previous year. We don't think this is good enough and have set ourselves a target this year to improve this.

We appreciate that some of you have been unhappy with our repairs service and the time it takes to complete a repair. This year, we are making it our priority to work harder on this, working closely with Avela Home Service to get to the root of the problem and find ways to make the service better for you.

I joined SLH not long after the news that a two-year-old boy, Awaab Ishak, died in Greater Manchester due to severe health complications from prolonged exposure to damp and mould in his home.

Front cover: A young person catching bugs in the wildflower meadow at Grow Speke, our community garden.

We, like all housing associations, have overhauled our approach to damp and mould, changing our processes to make it easier for you to report it, providing you with crucial information to help you spot damp and mould in your home and making our processes more robust when dealing with individual cases.

Our tenant scrutiny panel reviewed our new approach earlier this year and overall their feedback was positive, as well as identifying areas where we could do a bit more. It was great to get their insights and we will be acting on their recommendations.

We have made strides in reducing our carbon footprint so that we are on track to meet the Government's carbon zero targets by 2050. Our aim is for our homes to be as efficient as possible, and we are continuing to pilot retrofits to our homes, enabling us to gather energy-efficiency data for each home type, which will help tenants save money in the long term.

There will no doubt be further challenges in the year ahead but we will approach these with optimism and a positive outlook. Our focus will be to increase how satisfied you are with our services, particularly how we handle repairs to your home and how we deal with complaints. We will do this by getting to know tenants better and really listening to what you have to say about these areas. Another area of focus is to get to grips with any barriers our disabled tenants are facing, ensuring that the services we offer meet their needs now, and in the future.

Your feedback and engagement, whether that's scrutinising our services through our scrutiny panel or newly-formed customer services committee, completing surveys, voicing your opinions in consultations or making a complaint, is crucial in helping us achieve our vision of delivering great homes, strong communities and bright futures for our customers.

Please get in touch if you would like to be more involved in how we deliver our services. We hope you enjoy reading the report.

Anna Bishop
Chief Executive, South Liverpool Homes



"One of my main areas of focus when I started was to strengthen the voice of tenants within the organisation"

Measuring up



A bit more about the report

This report lets you know how we have performed from 1 April 2022 through to 31 March 2023, giving you an honest account of where we are doing well, as well as where we need to work harder.

In some sections of the report, we will let you know how we have performed against the yearly targets we set ourselves, how we compare with other local housing associations and whether we have performed better or worse than the previous year.

The information is taken from operational performance reports and surveys we carry out throughout the year, including independent monthly tenant satisfaction surveys that IFF Research undertake.

How we compare to other housing associations



We are performing better than other housing associations



We are performing the same as other housing associations



We are not performing as well as other housing associations

How we have performed compared to last year



We have performed better than last year



We have performed the same as last year



We have performed worse than last year

How have we performed against our targets

We set ourselves yearly targets in key operational areas.



We have achieved our target



We have missed our target

New Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Following the publication of the [Social Housing White Paper](#) in 2020, the Regulator of Social Housing worked with tenants and other stakeholders to produce a new suite of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), to better reflect what is important to tenants and standardise how satisfaction is measured across all housing associations.

In 2022/23, we have included these measures in our monthly tenant satisfaction surveys that independent market research company IFF Research carry out for us, revising our questions so that they match the TSM measures. We thought it was important to let you know how we are performing against these measures so far, by including them in this report. We have indicated which questions these are throughout the report with 'new' in yellow.



SLH Snapshot



We manage 3,830 homes

We have 118 homes for older people in our Independent Living Schemes.

77% satisfied with the overall services we provide.

We let 198 homes to tenants

We spent over £10m repairing and making improvements to homes

We built 17 new homes and refurbished 3 cottages

We employ 101 people

711 new customers applied for a home with SLH

1,344 customers on our waiting list

£21m turnover

Highlights of the year

Launched our five-year corporate plan

We launched our five-year corporate plan 2022-2027, which sets out our future plans under four themes – People, Place, Planet and Pound. Along with the plan we created a new vision ‘Great Homes, Strong Communities, Bright Future’ – which underpins everything we do, new values and a new logo!

New homes built in Speke

We completed a new development in Speke which consisted of 17 bungalows and the refurbishment of three historic Grade II listed cottages. Tenants have settled well into their new community.

Customer Services Committee bridges gap between tenants and board

A real highlight of the year has been launching our new Customer Services Committee to act as the customer voice to our board. The committee represents the voices of the local community, influencing our decision making on key landlord responsibilities, and enabling the customer voice to continuously improve the services SLH offers.

New chief executive for SLH

We welcomed Anna Bishop as the new Chief Executive of South Liverpool Homes. Anna previously worked as Chief Operating Officer at One Manchester housing association.

Upcycling workshop gets off the ground

Our new upcycling workshop, Build Me Up Fix Me Up, began in November at our community garden, Grow Speke. The weekly workshop takes old, unused, unloved, and sometimes broken items, and brings them back to life.

Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across the organisation

We have made great strides towards true inclusion in everything we do. We know we have more to achieve and our new EDI strategy and roadmap will help us achieve our ambitions over the next five years.



Looking after your home and investing in new homes



£10m improving your homes. This includes investment works such as new kitchens and bathrooms, day-to-day repairs and works such as external painting and roofing.

We know how important repairs are to you, and last year we spent over £10m improving your homes through day-to-day repairs and planned improvement works such as new kitchens, bathrooms and boilers.

Whilst this is great news, we need to get better with the time we take to complete a repair as we don't perform as well as other housing associations. We have also underperformed on completing responsive repairs in target. We have changed the way we track the timeliness of various types of repair, arranged a series of focus groups with dissatisfied customers and reviewed our communications around repairs, including 'we're on our way' messaging when our operatives are en route.

Keeping you safe in your home is a priority for us and we have recently changed the way we deal with cases of damp and mould, including robust measures to identify problems and clearer timescales for dealing with damp and mould issues. Thanks to our tenant scrutiny panel for carrying out a thorough review of our new processes. We have taken onboard your feedback which includes carrying out further follow-up visits in the winter months and providing surveyors with more detailed information before they visit homes.

Top investment spends

Kitchens
£1.9m



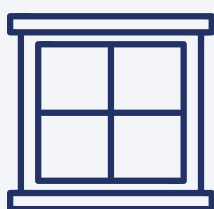
Boilers
£488k



Major adaptations
£433k



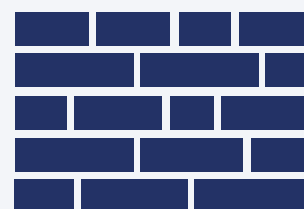
Windows
£439k



Bathrooms
£178k



Boundary walls
£318k



Our repairs and maintenance performance



Here's how we've performed against our repairs and maintenance targets, how we compared with other housing associations, and how our performance stacks up with the previous year.

Safe homes



86% satisfied that SLH provides a home that is safe.

Responsive repairs



84% responsive repairs completed in target. Target 99.7%

Well maintained homes



78% satisfied that SLH provides a home that is well-maintained.

Day-to-day repairs

9,308 day-to-day repairs carried out. The average number of repairs per home is 2.4.

Repair timescales



64% satisfied with time taken to complete most recent repair.

Gas safety checks



100% of homes with annual gas safety check completed. Target 100%.

Reletting homes



23 average number of days it took to relet homes to new tenants. Target 30 days.

Repairs satisfaction



78% satisfied with repairs and maintenance.

Quality of new home



89% satisfied with the quality of their new home. Target 92%

Protecting where you live

Last year, 314 cases of anti-social behaviour were reported to us. The types of anti-social behaviour cases reported were similar to previous years with harassment, such as threatening behaviour and neighbour disputes, being the highest concern, closely followed by noise nuisance. Our dedicated community safety team work hard to resolve these cases and it's pleasing to see we have improved on this compared to last year.

In summer 2022, we carried out community engagement events across Speke and Garston to address any concerns you had in your community, working with partners such as Liverpool City Council and Merseyside Police to tackle issues together. We focused on areas where we received the most reports of anti-social behaviour or where there was an increase in reports over time.

Each month, we carry out neighbourhood inspections to identify any issues such as faulty streetlights, fly-tipping, litter, untidy gardens, repairs, as well as any other issues that may impact people who live there. These inspections are important for both you and us, as we use this information to help us shape and prioritise improvement to the area where you live.



80% satisfied that we make a positive contribution to their neighbourhood.



73% satisfied with SLH's approach to handling anti-social behaviour.



99% cases were successfully resolved. Target 96%.



Working together to resolve noise nuisance

Earlier this year we received several noise nuisance complaints concerning one of our homes in Garston. Residents were constantly disturbed by noise and banging from a tenant and their partner, which made life very stressful for neighbours and the local community.

Working with residents to gather evidence, we successfully applied for injunctions against both the tenant and their partner, preventing them from engaging in anti-social behaviour and noise disturbances. This provided residents with protection and helped them to feel safe in their own homes again.

Following legal action, the tenant gave notice to vacate the home and since their departure, residents have commented on how happy they are and how they are enjoying living in a peaceful neighbourhood.

Learning from complaints



49% satisfied with the way we handle complaints.

210 complaints received

11 escalated to stage two

3 progressed to Housing Ombudsman (we are awaiting the outcome of these as at 31 March 2023)



We always welcome feedback and complaints from our customers as they provide a real opportunity to improve our services. There has been a 71% increase in the number of formal complaints received compared to last year. This is a pattern that housing associations across the country are experiencing and whilst we welcome complaints, we know that we have work to do to make the process of making a complaint as straightforward as possible.

Feedback from customers has resulted in a number of changes to how we do things.



YOU SAID



WE'RE DOING

A tenant was unhappy with the length of time waiting to receive an appointment date for works to be completed following a surveyor visit.



Avela Home Service is implementing a mobile surveying solution, that will enable surveyors to raise works and book appointments with customers directly during inspections.

A tenant had a number of issues occurring during their kitchen replacement, including damage to their home which they were dissatisfied about.



Quality inspections are now undertaken during all kitchen replacement work, to ensure customer homes are always being treated with respect.

A tenant was unhappy that they had to contact us multiple times to find out when their bathroom replacement would take place.



The scheduled bathroom programme has been provided to customer-facing colleagues to ensure information can be provided at the first point of contact.

A tenant had an ongoing leak issue in their bathroom that was not being resolved, despite multiple repairs being raised.



We are now monitoring homes with multiple repairs raised in a six-month period, to ensure we address any ongoing issues promptly.

A tenant was unhappy that there were outstanding repair issues in their home when they moved in.



We have reviewed our empty homes handover process and additional checks have been put in place to avoid such issues reoccurring.



All housing associations, including ourselves, are required to complete an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, to ensure our complaint handling remains in line with its requirements. [You can read our most recent self-assessment on our website.](#)



Supporting tenants

The increased cost of living and the rise in energy prices has hit our tenants hard.

We have helped tenants by signposting them to the range of support services we offer including saving money when they shop at our community shop, The Market Place, offering support through our energy and benefits advice team, giving out fuel vouchers to those who are struggling the hardest and holding a series of roadshows across Speke and Garston, where tenants could speak to us and our partners directly about their concerns.

We knew winter was when tenants would really start to feel the pinch. In addition to handing out over £23k of energy vouchers through collaborative working with key partners we also secured £16,250 for tenants over the age of 65 via the Citizens Advice Bureau's Household Support Fund where a £250 fuel voucher was given out to 65 tenants who received a state pension and were struggling to pay bills.

Other support included giving out essential emergency food boxes to 36 households and making a warm space available for tenants to simply come along and chat with each other over a cuppa, use our Wi-Fi or get involved with activities such as glass painting or upcycling projects.



3,867 visits to our community shop, The Market Place. 380 tenants visited The Market Place

480 people have received employability support through Reach

119 people have gone onto paid employment

65 volunteer hours per week through Grow Speke and The Market Place

2,536 engagements with health and wellbeing events

189 tenants received support in managing their home and tenancy

103 tenants have moved on from the service and now live independently

1,378 referrals to our benefits and energy advice service.

£1,624,791 additional income secured for tenants through our benefits and energy advice team

£23,667 energy vouchers given out

5 refugees and their families supported into a home

Reducing our environmental impact

We recognise that what we do has an impact on the environment and have launched our 'planet' strategy to ensure that we are collectively contributing to tackling climate change across all our business activities. Last year, we set ourselves targets to keep us on track to enable us to meet our goals.

Retrofitting our homes so that they are more energy efficient is key to our plans to help us reduce our carbon footprint. We spent £162k on retrofit investment, retrofitting a total of four homes where we will monitor their energy consumption over the coming months and years. These pilot projects will give us a clearer picture of the kind of retrofits that would suit our homes and tenants' lifestyles, building on learning through our collaboration with Liverpool John Moores University's Decarbonisation Monitoring Stepping Stone Project.

But it's not just about our homes. Projects like The Market Place and our community garden Grow Speke are having a positive impact on the environment.

Thanks to The Market Place, we've been able to tackle food waste while providing low-cost food to our tenants. Food and household goods destined for landfill benefitted 380 tenants, and equated to saving 112 tonnes of carbon being released into the atmosphere, smashing our annual target of 28 tonnes. Win win!

Grow Speke plays an important role in meeting our sustainability targets too. Growing fruit and vegetables for local people to use reduces carbon emissions as it minimises the need to transport food as well as providing habitats for local wildlife. Over 1,0000 items of fruit and vegetables were produced last year and distributed to the local community through The Market Place and other local community outlets.

As part of our environmental commitment, we have adopted the Sustainability Reporting Standard so that we can assess and measure our performance against key criteria. We have also subscribed to Sustainable Homes Index for Tomorrow (SHIFT), which is a sustainability standard for all housing associations, measuring our performance against CO2 emissions, water use, landfill waste, our response to climate change and more. We are currently assessed as 'Bronze' standard and striving for 'Silver' next year.

This year we have produced our first Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) report. The report demonstrates our commitment to the South Liverpool community and the wider environment, giving you an insight into everything we are doing now and the priorities we will be focusing on in the future.



122 tonnes of carbon emission avoidance
(Target 28 Tonnes.)



93% PV panels in operation.
Target 95%



100% new developments EPC B or above.
Target 90%



1.896m KWH (kilowatt hours) generation for PV panels .
Target 1.880m KWH



Solar panels could save tenants up to £399 per year

Some tenants had concerns about whether they were getting any benefit from the solar panels fitted to their homes, so we commissioned an organisation, called Sava, to carry out an independent report.

We felt this was the best way forward as we know that sometimes people need the views of an independent organisation to have full confidence in what they are being told.

The report revealed the potential impact solar panels have on the energy efficiency of 891 of our homes that have them installed. Using Sava's sophisticated modelling software, we input the details of our PV-equipped homes, including the home type, construction method, existing insulation and other factors to produce an overall SAP figure (the energy performance of our homes).

With PV panels in place, the average SAP increased by 19%, slashing carbon emissions by a tonne to 1.7 tonnes per year and average fuel cost savings of £399 per year.

“We're delighted to get some real figures on the impact of PV panels in our homes. With ever-increasing energy costs, we wanted to be able to assure those customers who have PV panels that they are a real benefit,”

Angela Perry, Executive Director of Assets and Development at South Liverpool Homes.

The Sava study was commissioned following a number of concerns raised by residents who were unsure how the panels were benefitting them financially.



[Learn more about solar panels on our website](#)



“With ever-increasing energy costs, we wanted to be able to assure those customers who have PV panels that they are a real benefit,”



The numbers

Over the last 12 months, SLH has continued to stay financially strong in an extremely challenging environment. Inflation and our costs rose by significantly more than we increased our rents and economic uncertainty grew over the course of the year, which has had an impact in terms of supply chains and the cost of materials for the business.

In addition, the local community and our customers faced growing pressure on their ability to fund day-to-day cost of living as fuel costs rose to levels we have never seen before. In response, we continued to focus on tenants' needs, investing £500,000 on support services to help those who were struggling to get by.

Financial pressures on the business meant that we needed to increase tenants' rents by 7% to ensure we could continue delivering essential services to tenants as well as ensuring the long-term viability of the organisation. It was a difficult decision, however, there was really no other choice as we simply couldn't continue to maintain your homes and achieve our objectives without increasing rents by this amount.

Securing a new loan agreement of £40m this year has given us some long-term financial stability and will help fund our 2022–2027 housing development programme to build 280 new homes across Speke and Garston. These homes are crucial to help us to meet the needs of the 1,300 customers on our waiting list, as well as meeting our legal duty to the Liverpool local authority who have over 15,000 people on their waiting list and record numbers of people living in temporary accommodation.

As part of this finance agreement, we have committed to meeting three Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) metrics which not only will help reduce our environmental impact but will provide savings on the interest rates on the loan.



£958k total arrears owed by current and former tenants. This includes rent, service charges, chargeable repairs and court costs.
Target £1,047k.



£150k efficiency savings. This is the reduction in the amount of money or time needed to complete a task or project.
Target £150k



84% of tenants think their rent is value for money.



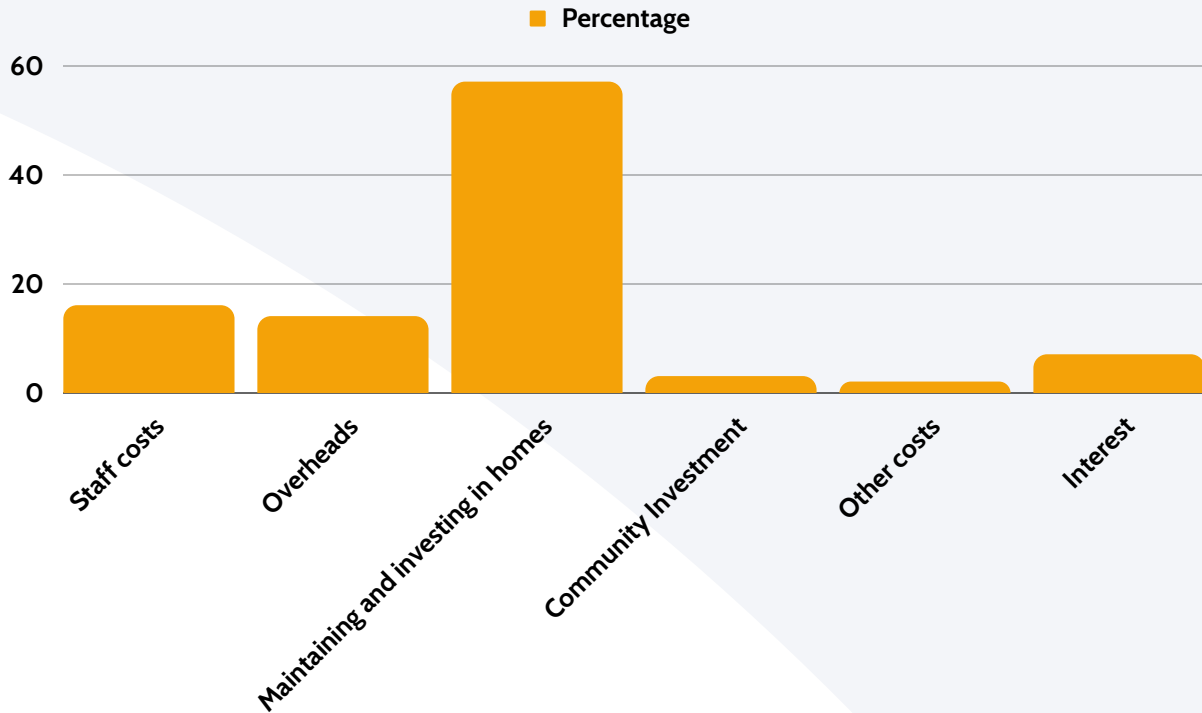
70% of tenants think their service charge is value for money.

13 homes sold through Right to Buy and 10 sold through Right to Acquire

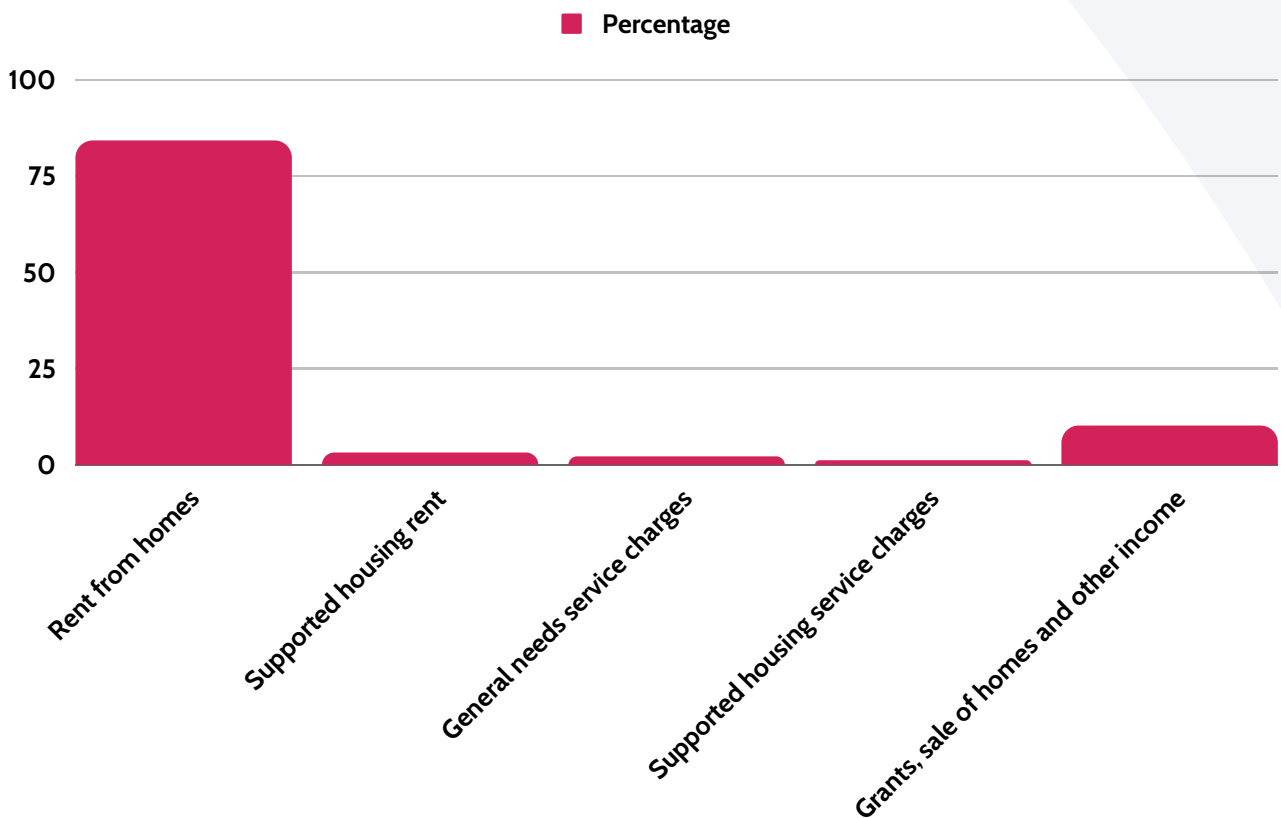
£21m Group turnover

20% surplus to reinvest back into our communities

Every £ of your rent is spent on...



Every £ we receive is from...



Get involved!

We need tenants to get involved with SLH to help us understand what we're doing well and where we need to work harder.

This can include anything from filling out surveys and coming along to consultation events, to more regular types of engagement like being part of our tenant scrutiny panel or our customer services committee.

If you'd like to get involved and have your say, email getinvolved@southliverpoolhomes.co.uk.

We'd love to hear from you!



Why get involved?

"Hi, I'm Debbie, Chair of the new customer services committee at South Liverpool Homes and live in an SLH home in Speke. This is a new committee that was created in January 2023, and as soon as I heard about it, I knew I wanted to get involved.

I know how important it is that tenants receive services that you deserve, ones that are high quality and are accessible to everyone. As a committee member I can help influence this by having a say on the services SLH deliver and reviewing policies, such as rent and repair policies, before they go to Board.

Two members of the Board sit on the customer services committee too. This really helps to bridge the gap between tenants and SLH as we can hear first-hand the strategic plans for the organisation and we are actively encouraged to challenge any decisions we don't agree with.

SLH are always looking for new people to get involved with SLH so why not get in touch and give it a go. It's brilliant experience and you get the chance to influence the services delivered to you, your home and your community."

Debbie Rees-Armstrong
Chair, Customer Services Committee

Get in touch



southliverpoolhomes.co.uk



info@southliverpoolhomes.co.uk



0330 303 3000

Get Social

