

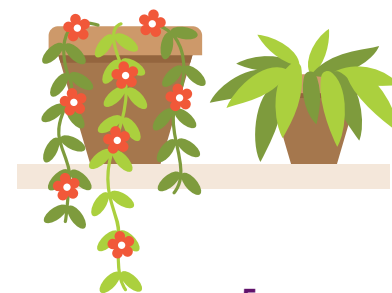
Tenant and Leaseholder Annual Review 2023/2024



Welcome to our Annual Review



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This annual report for council tenants and leaseholders sets out how Luton council housing services performed in the last financial year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The report covers a range of service areas, including how we have managed and maintained council homes, how responsive our repairs service has been, how quickly we are letting any empty homes, how many new homes we are building and how we are handling complaints about our services.

It is important that all tenants and leaseholders can see the data for themselves. With access to this data, you can hold us to account, challenge us and offer suggestions as to how we can improve housing services. We hope you find it interesting.



Welcome to our annual review for council tenants and leaseholders for 2023/24

Another year has passed quickly and perhaps not always as we expected, but, although there is more work for the Tenant Partnership Board to do, we are gaining a better understanding of your views and that that's helping us to identify where and how housing services need to improve.

There are currently nine council tenant and leaseholder members on the Board and together we bring a wide range of skills and experience to the group. Our common goal is to make sure your views are heard. During 2023/24 the council consulted on key housing service changes, and we helped to shape decisions made that affect you all. This included how budgets are spent, developing learning from complaints and monitoring housing service performance.



We need some specific skills for our role, and training sessions with external engagement specialists TPAS has helped us develop our knowledge. This combined with regular briefings sessions on regulation and with housing teams' work help us work more effectively.

In the coming year we will be strengthening our role, our membership and our knowledge, as we seek to promote our position more effectively with tenants.

We are always looking for more tenants to get involved. You don't need to have any special skills or experience to make a real difference. If this sounds like something you might be interested in, please contact the team on TPLuton@luton.gov.uk

Pam Holes
Tenant Partnership Board Chair





Regulation of social housing services

The voice of council tenants matters, and you should be able to influence how housing services are managed. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 reinforced this right by setting out regulatory requirements that all social housing providers must meet. The aim of regulation was to help ensure tenant involvement in driving improvements in the quality of housing and housing services.

The Regulator requires the council to measure and report on:

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) – we must provide certain information to the Regulator of Social Housing. There are 22 measures, which we are required to report on annually. Some measures are based on tenant satisfaction, others on our performance on housing services, repairs, safety checks and complaints. To find out more about how you scored our services in 2023 you can do so by reading the report [here](#).

Please look out for this flag opposite throughout the report to show where the tenant satisfaction measures are and how we are performing compared to others.

To find out more about how you scored our services you can do so by reading the report [here](#).

Tenant Satisfaction

Our score **74.5%**

Benchmark: **69.8%**

Consumer standards

In April 2024, further monitoring arrangements were put in place with new consumer standards setting out requirements that social housing landlords must meet: These are:

The Safety and Quality Standard

– we must provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.

The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard

– we must be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that they can access services, raise complaints (when necessary), influence decision-making and hold us to account.

The Neighbourhood and Community Standard

– we must engage with you and other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.

The Tenancy Standard

– sets requirements for the fair allocation and letting of homes and for how those tenancies are managed and ended by landlords.

The Building Safety Act

This came into force in October 2023 following the Royal Assent of the Building Safety Act 2022. This regulation came about following the tragic Grenfell disaster. Much of the regulations focuses on high rise buildings, that are more than 7 storeys high. The regulations puts more stringent controls, not just for new high rise buildings but also for works carried out to existing buildings. You can find more information [here](#).

Fire Safety Regulations

New Fire Safety Regulations were introduced in 2023. They introduced additional responsibilities under the original Fire Safety Order 2005. They include things like providing more information about the buildings to the local Fire Service, implementing a new fire door inspections regime and installing new wayfinding signage. You can find more information [here](#).



Tenant Participation



We believe that tenant participation and involvement is at the heart of improving housing services. Listening to you and using your opinions is an important part of making sure housing services improve and grow over time. By providing a variety of ways for tenants and leaseholders to get involved, we help ensure everyone can have their say. Communication is key to this and we use newsletters, the website, online and face to face meetings to keep everyone informed. We also use surveys, our text message question service, events and specialist groups to discuss and tackle issues.

Tenant Satisfaction measures

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them.

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them.

Proportion of respondents who report that they agree their landlord treats them fairly and with respect.

Our score:

59.8%

65.1%

75%

Benchmark:

58.4%

69.7%

76%

Housemark is an organisation that collects the tenant satisfaction measures (TSM) results from most social landlords across England. This allows them to compare our performance against other social landlords.

Our successes:



Launching a new community garden in Bristol Road.

Launching Estate Visits (formerly called walkabouts), which involve key council staff and tenants.

Working closely with council contractors to help us involve more people and improve communities.

Our challenge:



Getting younger tenants involved. If you have ideas on how we could achieve this we'd love to hear from you.



Our performance

The Task	The Numbers	An outcome
Scrutiny Panel meetings	8	Overview completed and planned next steps.
Tenant Partnership Board meetings	11	Involved in annual budget setting and proposed rent increase.
Key Customer events	5	Set up a disability forum. Increased number of Key Customer volunteers.
Tenant and Resident Association (TARA) meetings	22	Set up 3 new groups, held 5 community events.
Tenant Training	7	Increased volunteers' knowledge of housing services.
Walkabouts	11	Highlighted key issues for tenants.
Online Newsletters	8	Informed tenants of changes and proposals.
Surveys	22	Listened to you, before we made any service changes.



Newsletter subscribers:

Main newsletters: 1,200

Leaseholder Newsletters: 562

Social value 3 Projects

Key Customers 362

You said we did	Did you know
After meeting with our leaseholders, we have started a brand new newsletter just for them where by we keep them up to date on all things to do with leasehold in Luton.	Did you know we have a newsletter exclusively for our tenants? This newsletter is free to sign up too and you can do so on page 34.
	Social value is our contractors' way of paying back to our communities. If you have a tenants' community project that needs some support why don't you get in touch with us to see if we can help?

Key customers are involved tenants and leaseholders. We hold regular meetings with key customers and ask their views on areas we should focus upon. We also use a text system to message key customers simultaneously asking them to share their views on particular subjects and answer surveys. We notify them of upcoming estate visits and when we are hosting our next meeting.

In the coming year we are planning to:

- Publicise the results of the 2024 satisfaction survey
- Launch the tenant participation strategy 2024/27
- Work with you to improve communication on how we use your feedback to improve services
- Review participation and involvement structures to help ensure your involvement is at the core of how services are delivered.

For more information contact the team on TPLuton@luton.gov.uk

Allocations

Demand for council housing continues to be much higher than the number of homes becoming available, and this increases year-on-year, but the allocations team continue to take great pride in the knowledge that every property let will significantly improve the life of the successful housing applicant, and their family.

Our successes:



We have met our relet target, meaning council homes have been empty for the shortest time possible.

Our challenge:



Increase in demand for those requiring council accommodation along with the increase of people on the housing waiting list.

In 2023/24 a total of 475 households signed up for new social tenancies – 329 moving into council properties and 146 into properties owned by housing associations.

These households contained a total of 775 people who will all benefit from greater security of tenure, affordability, and the housing condition that the council or housing association homes offer compared to many privately rented homes.

We are still unable to meet demand. At the end of March 2024, 1,204 homeless households were living in temporary accommodation provided to them by the council and there was a total of 11,426 households on our housing registers.

Of the households registered for housing, demand for property sizes is as follows:

1 bedroom
No. of applicants



4,440

2 bedrooms
No. of applicants



3,604

3 bedrooms
No. of applicants



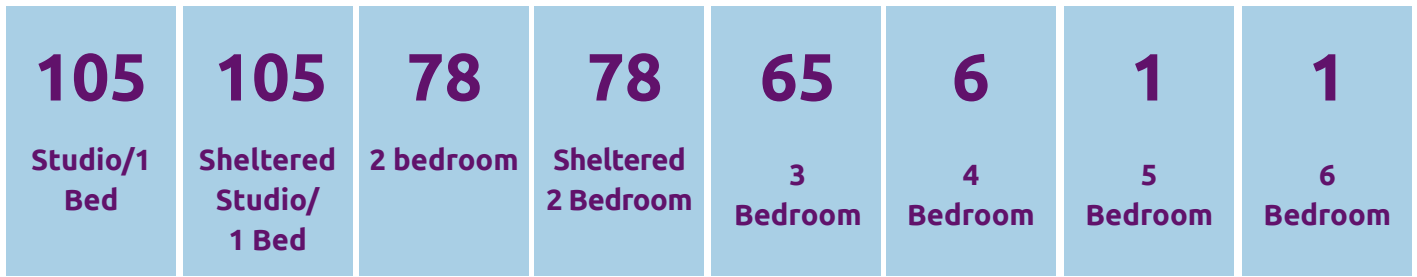
2,710

4 or more bedrooms
No. of applicants



672

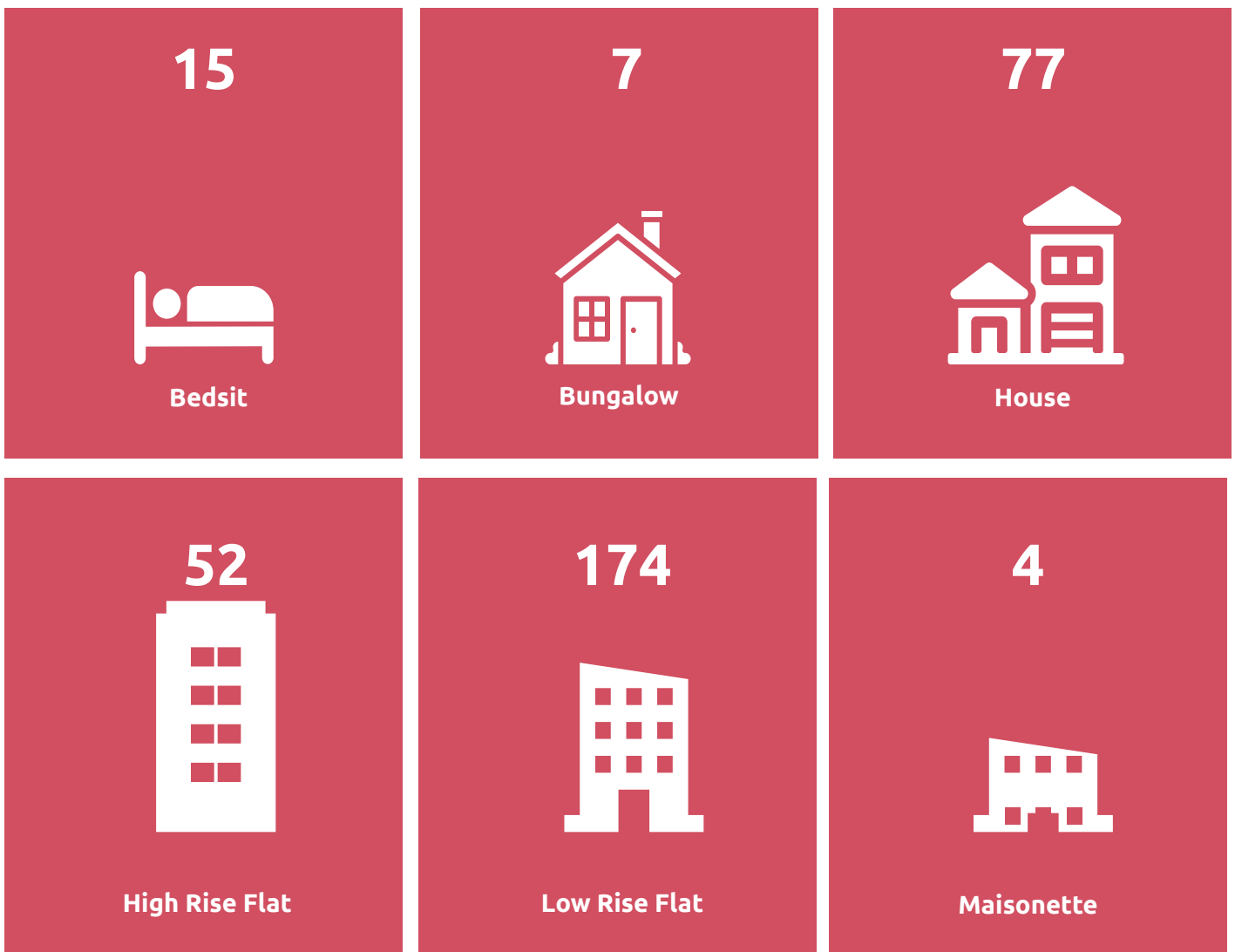
Council homes letting by bedroom size:



Housing Association lettings by bedroom size:



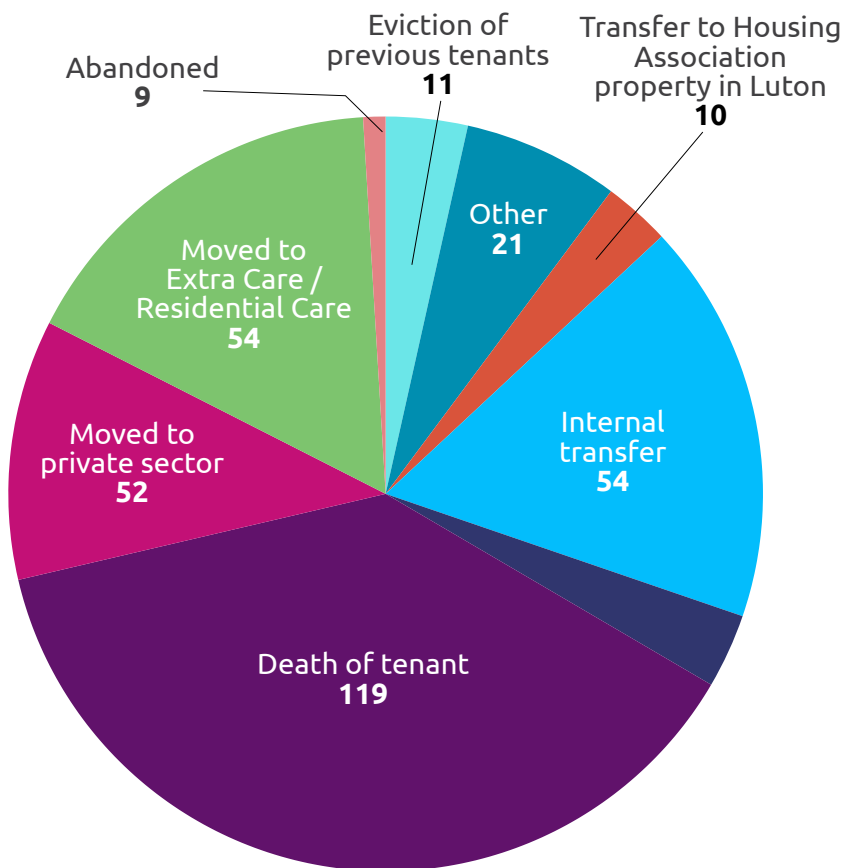
Council Lettings by Property Type:



Reasons for tenancies ending 2023/2024

Most properties let to housing applicants become available because the previous tenancy ended. These properties are known as voids.

The chart below shows the reasons council properties became empty, and available for re-letting, during 2023/24.



The council therefore sets targets for empty properties to be re-let. The targets and actual performance for last year are detailed below.

Property type	Void turnaround target	Actual performance
Sheltered accommodation	22 days	17 days
General housing stock	21 days	21 days.

It is important for the council to let its empty properties as quickly as possible in order to reduce the rental income we lose on an empty property, and also because empty properties can attract vandalism and squatting.

Essential repairs to void properties are completed by BTS to ensure that empty homes meet our lettable standard, which is the condition that new tenants can expect to find their home in when they move in.

Where a property is handed back to us in poor condition it can take longer to carry out the works that are needed for it to meet the standard.

In 2023/24, 88 properties required works that cost over £5,727 for the standard to be met.

An example of this can be seen below:



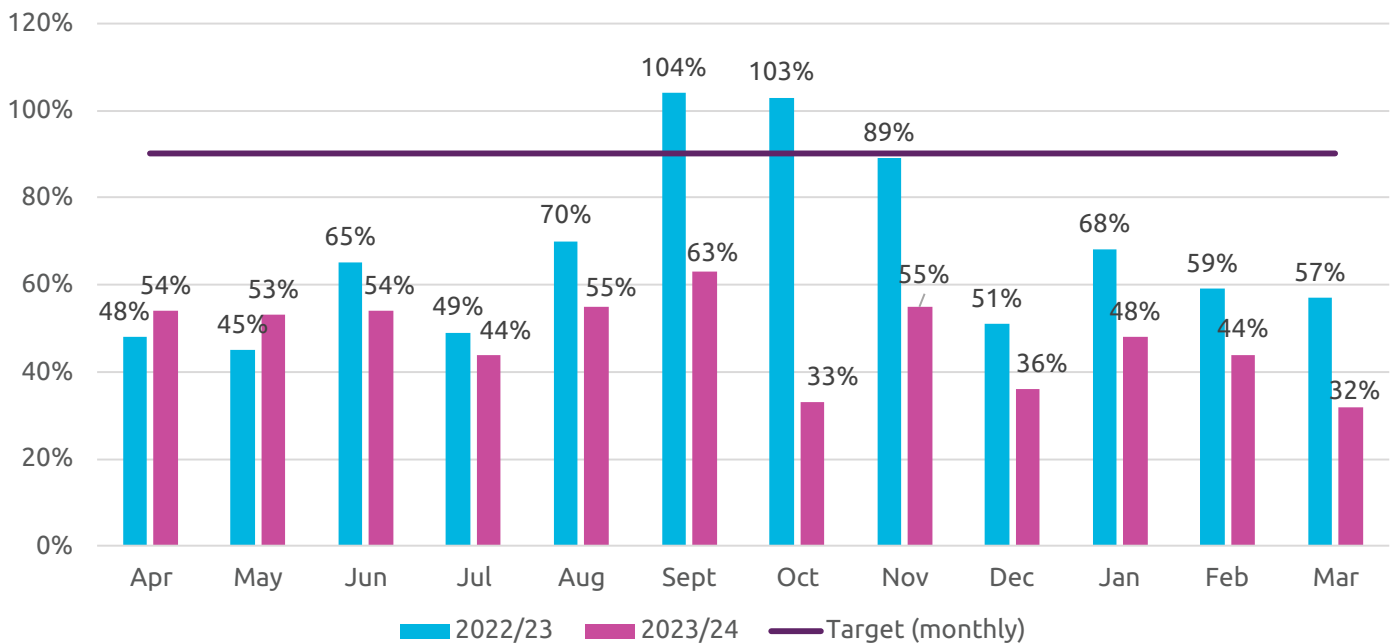
Tenant and Leaseholder Annual Review 2023/2024



Tenancy management service

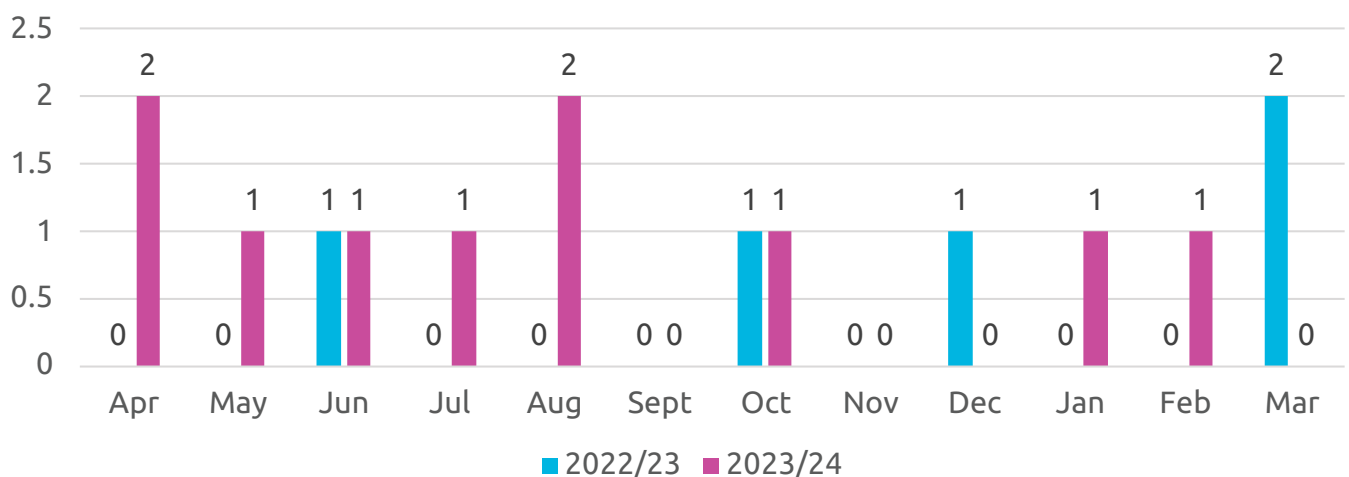
The tenancy management team's role is to help you understand your tenancy agreement and deal with your housing tenancy related queries. This includes tenancy management visits to you at home, tenancy audits, helping with mutual exchanges, neighbour disputes and succession requests.

Tenancy Audit Visits Completed (%)



We use a tenancy audit to check everything is okay with your tenancy. This can include; if the property is still appropriate for your needs; to make sure the home is being looked after; to check the correct tenant is living in the property and whether there is any other housing related help and advice that we can provide.

Properties recovered due to fraud



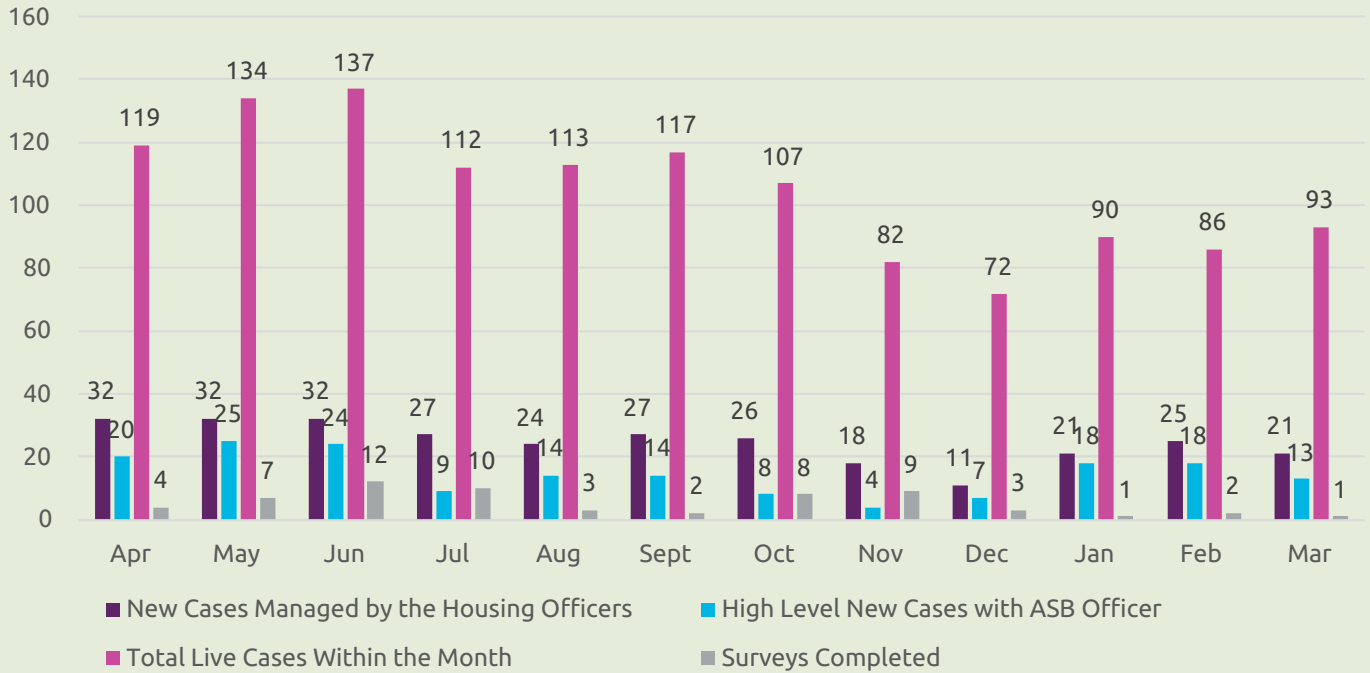
In the year 10 properties were recovered due to tenancy fraud. This happens when a tenant is not using their property as their main home and may be subletting it. These 10 homes have now been relet to people in need of a home.

The anti-social behaviour team (ASB)



Reducing anti-social behaviour is a key priority for us. We take all reports of ASB seriously and work closely with you, police and other agencies to ensure people feel safe. We have our own specialised team who deal with housing related ASB, and recently recruited two new ASB officers. This will help us provide more support to victims of ASB.

Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB)



The tenancy officers manage the lower-level cases with the support and advice of the specialist ASB officers. When a case is more serious, or becomes more serious, these cases are managed by the ASB officers themselves. The ASB officers work jointly with other services, such as the Police, in managing cases to get the best results for our tenants.

ASB cases usually result in the cases being resolved, but there are occasions where we have to take more serious action such as eviction.

Tenant Satisfaction measures

Number of anti-social behaviour cases, opened per 1,000 homes

Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes

Our score:

60 cases

0.7 cases

Benchmark:

38.6 cases

0.7 cases

You said – The behaviour of other tenants and their visitors can cause problems.

Following a review of the number and type of ASB reports we have reviewed their patches and allocated an officer to a patch that looks after town centre, Park Town and the High Town area.

Did you know?

The ASB officer role is not only to investigate breaches of tenancy and where appropriate take action but also to support victims of ASB, including domestic abuse.

The new Housing Compliance team



The new housing compliance team's role is to:



Manage tenant complaints making sure that we reply in full and on time.



Make sure that policies and procedures are up to date.



Make sure that housing service performance meets requirements, including those of the Regulator of Social Housing.



Keep staff up to date with new laws and good practice to help us keep improving our services.

A recent success was the review of the housing section of the council's website www.luton.gov.uk ensuring all information is up to date and accessible. We also worked with service areas to update the **Tenants' Handbook**.

A major role of the compliance team is to monitor and coordinate tenant complaints. Working alongside the council wide complaints team we have introduced quality auditing of our closed complaints which is allowing us to learn from our mistakes and look at how we can improve our customer journey.

The introduction of a new housing service IT system CX will provide a portal which our leaseholders and tenants will be able to log onto and access their information more easily than currently. We have been involved in helping design the system and customer portal. This should help us to ensure it meets your needs. More can be read about this system on page 23. This should further help improve communication with tenants and leaseholders.



The housing income team



The Housing Income Team's aim is to provide an effective and responsive service to ensure simple payment of rent and service charges.

The team can also help with benefits and assist with budgeting. Rent is used to pay for the services that tenants receive and for repairs to Council properties. Service charges pay for the services received by tenants. For example, tenants pay for grounds maintenance on our estates, and for removal of fly tipped rubbish. Those tenants who live in flats pay for the cleaning of the communal areas.

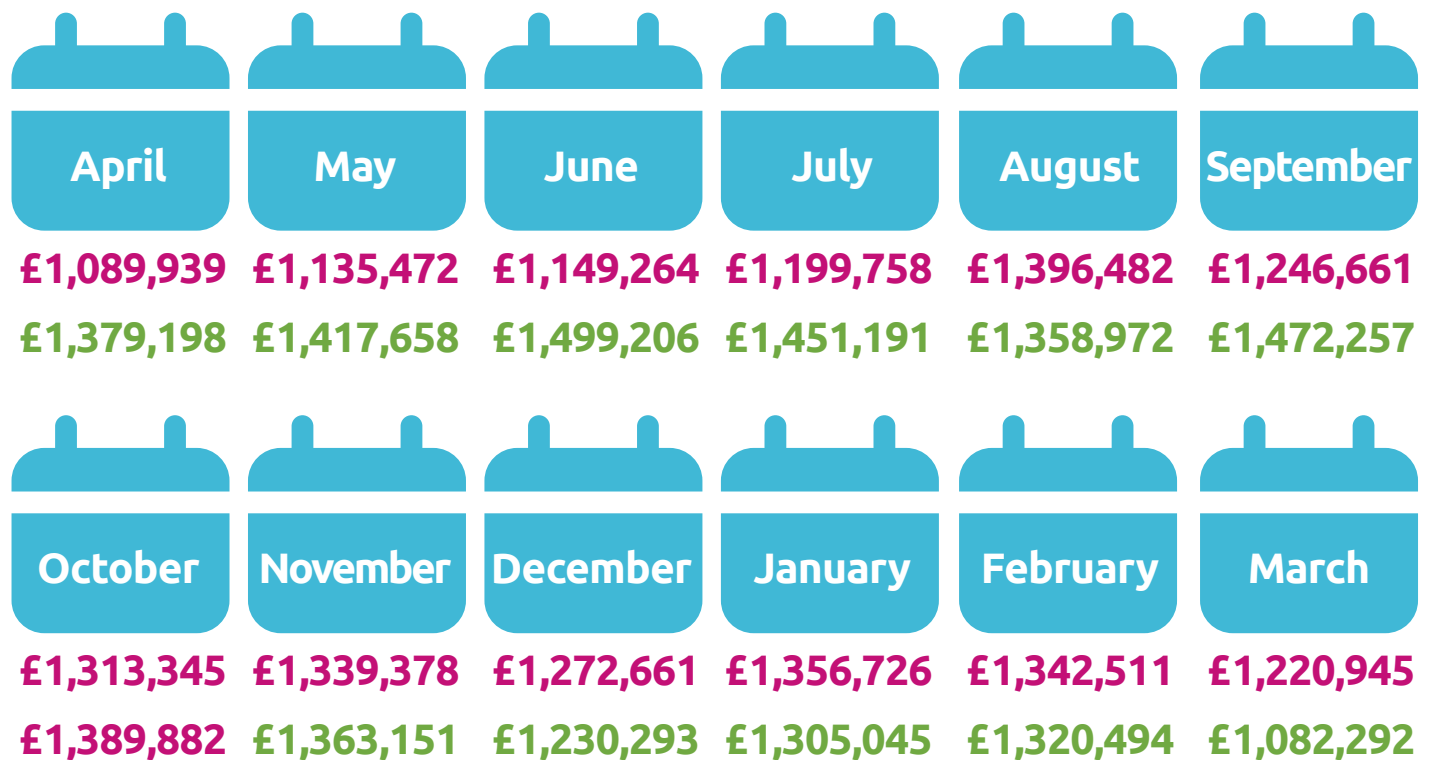
Rent arrears collection

Council current tenant arrears



■ 2022/23

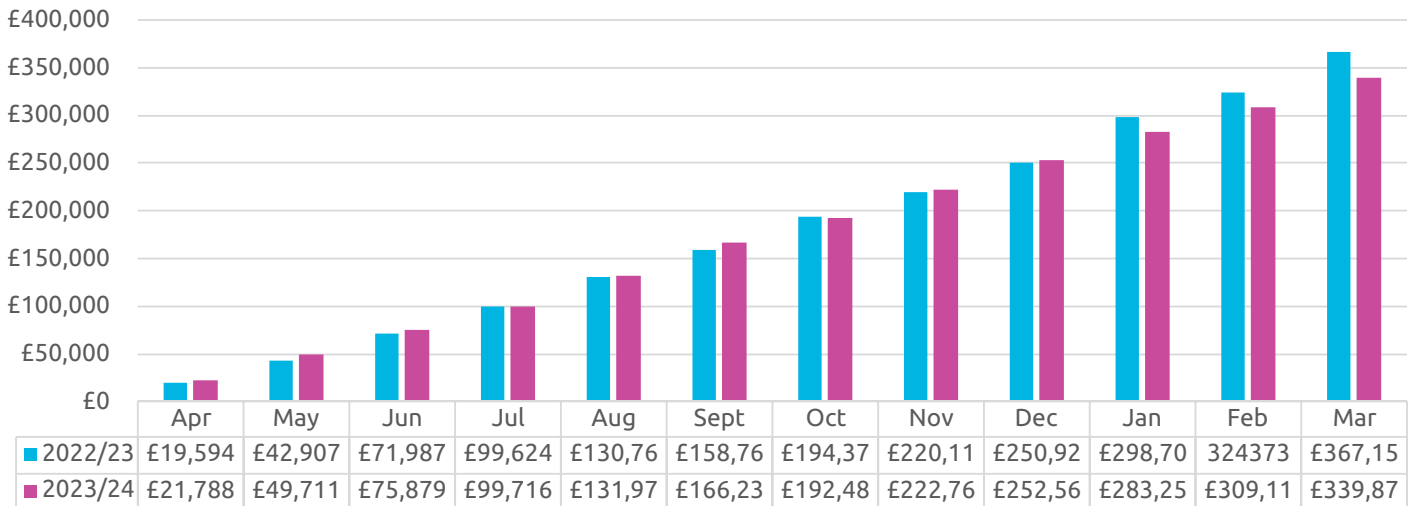
■ 2023/24



Rent arrears were higher at the beginning of 2023/24, and gradually reduced as the year progressed; with March's 2024 figure being the lowest (£1,082,29).



Former tenant arrears



When tenants leave their properties they sometimes leave a debt on their rent account. This debt is called a former tenant arrear. The council chases these debts and recovers them wherever possible.

The target for former tenant arrears for the year was £350,000 but collections were very slightly below that last year at £339,878.



The Housing Commercial Team



The housing commercial team manages leasehold services, right to buy applications and garage management.

Our successes:



We successfully bid for funding of £180,000 for refurbishment of garages over two years for our garage sites and garages.

Our challenge:



Council garages are in high demand for rent. Unfortunately, many of our sites and garages are now old and in need of repair and refurbishment of sites and costs are a challenge. The good news is that we have secured extra funding to help us to do this.

Leaseholder service

In the 2023 satisfaction survey, leaseholders told us that they were less satisfied. To help us understand the issues, and seek to improve satisfaction, we set up open leaseholder meetings to discuss leaseholders' views. We have held three meetings so far and committed to regular meetings going forward. We have discussed issues such as cleaning, major planned works, and service charges and set up regular leaseholder newsletters to help us make sure we share useful information and updates on a regular basis. We are hopeful that these measures will improve satisfaction in the 2024 survey.

In 2023/24 the total amount leaseholders were charged, was £1,256,769 and our total income was £1,011,228. That is a collection rate of 80.5%.

For 2023-2024 our leaseholders were re-charged a total of £91,206. In addition to on-going maintenance to our blocks these works included replacement door entry systems, car park improvements, new metal railings and bin room improvements.

One leaseholder said "Introducing leaseholder forums and newsletters this year has given us the opportunity to voice our concerns with services and our bills. We are hoping this will lead to real change and improved services."

Another leaseholder said, "I think that the newsletter is good, it has just the right amount of information. The forums are fantastic, when you are a leaseholder, you can feel out of the loop of what is going on, but the forums give us the chance to find out info and also share views. Both are working really well."

Garage management

Did you know:

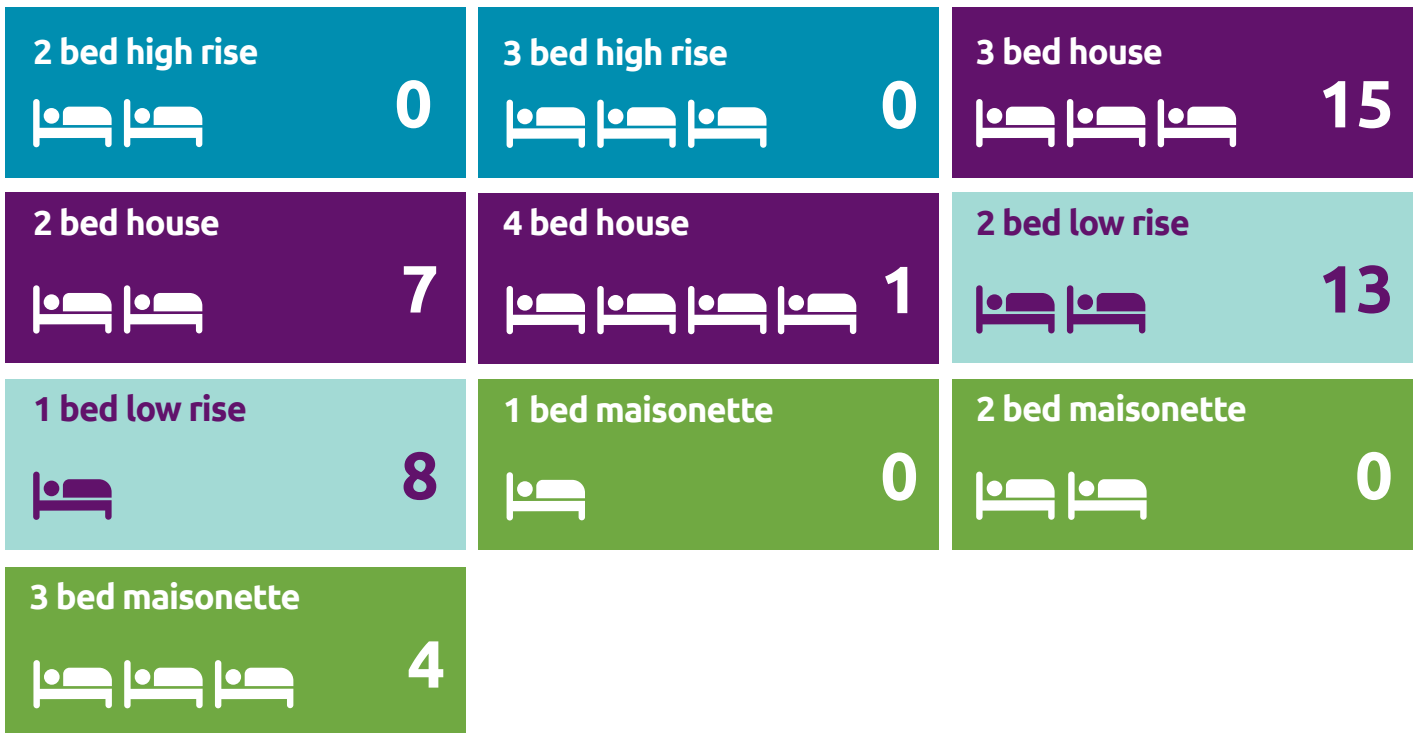
We manage a total of 1,457 of garages in across Luton.



We collected a total of £861,926 during 2023 to 2024



Breakdown of properties sold



When you buy a flat or maisonette under the right to buy scheme you are sold a long-term lease and you become a leaseholder. You are buying the inside of your flat and the structure of the building (external walls, roof etc.) remains in council ownership. We have the responsibility to repair and maintain the structure of the flat block and you will be re-charged your part of costs. You will also be required to contribute each year to the cost of managing and maintaining the building – this is called the service charge. At the end of 2023/24 we had 906 leaseholders, including 28 new leaseholders who purchased their flats during the year.

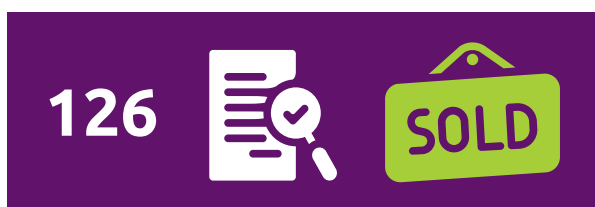
Right to buy

Our secure tenants in general needs homes have the legal right to buy their homes.

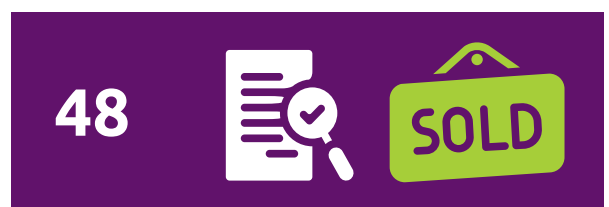
You can apply to buy your council home if:



Right to Buy Applications 2023/24



Right to Buy Sales 2023/24



Sheltered Housing

Sheltered Housing in Luton is about giving people choices, encouraging them to get involved and encouraging them to be independent. Luton council own and manage 22 sheltered housing schemes across Luton, this includes two extra care schemes. Our extra care schemes are designed for those residents who need that extra bit of support with carers on site to help if required.

Sheltered Housing provides a secure environment for people over 55 years of age, or people with disabilities. Support is provided onsite and tenants have the opportunity to participate in activities with likeminded people. There is the added reassurance that should they need support or advice on topics which may affect their tenancy or wellbeing then that support is available from one of our sheltered housing officers.



Our successes:



Recruitment of a new team leader has been important to improve our service to tenants.

Last year we secured a £453.00 payment for each sheltered housing tenant from the Household Support Fund assist with the challenge of increasing energy costs.

Our challenge:



Increases in the cost of living generally have seen us encounter more cases where tenants are struggling financially.



Involving tenants

Tenants are involved in organising functions and activities that they want to see. This includes coffee time events, gardening groups and day trips. We have a Tenant and Resident Group (TARA) at Acworth Court and tenants are actively involved in other council groups such as Key Customers, the Tenant Partnership Board and Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

You said we did....

Tenants requested more activities in their schemes, and we have increased the number of Coffee Time events and involved external services to provide additional services such as Luncheon Clubs and Chair Based activities. We are also offering Movie afternoons. This has encouraged more tenants to get involved.

Additionally, extra funding has given us more opportunities to provide extra activities in schemes. This has included a Mobile Cinema, Gardening Projects, Breakfast Clubs and Fitness Clubs.

Did you know....

The Sheltered Housing Service Luton has been in existence since 1972.

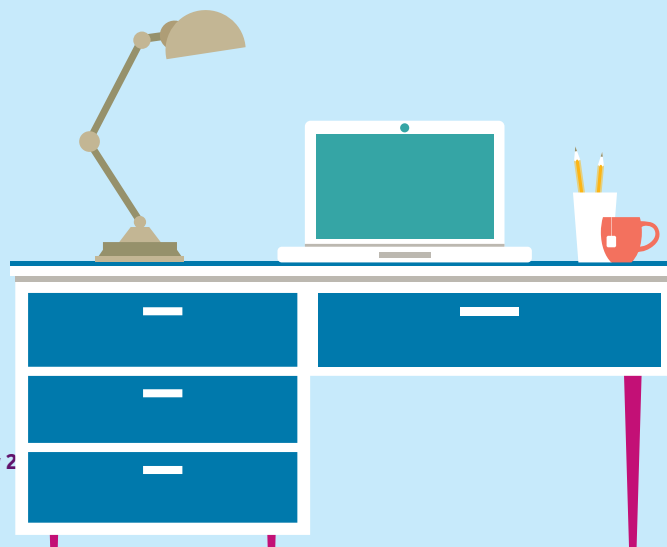
The Sheltered Housing Service serves over 1000 tenants across 22 Sheltered Housing Schemes.

Our future plans and how this will provide you with an improved service.

Covid Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) funding.

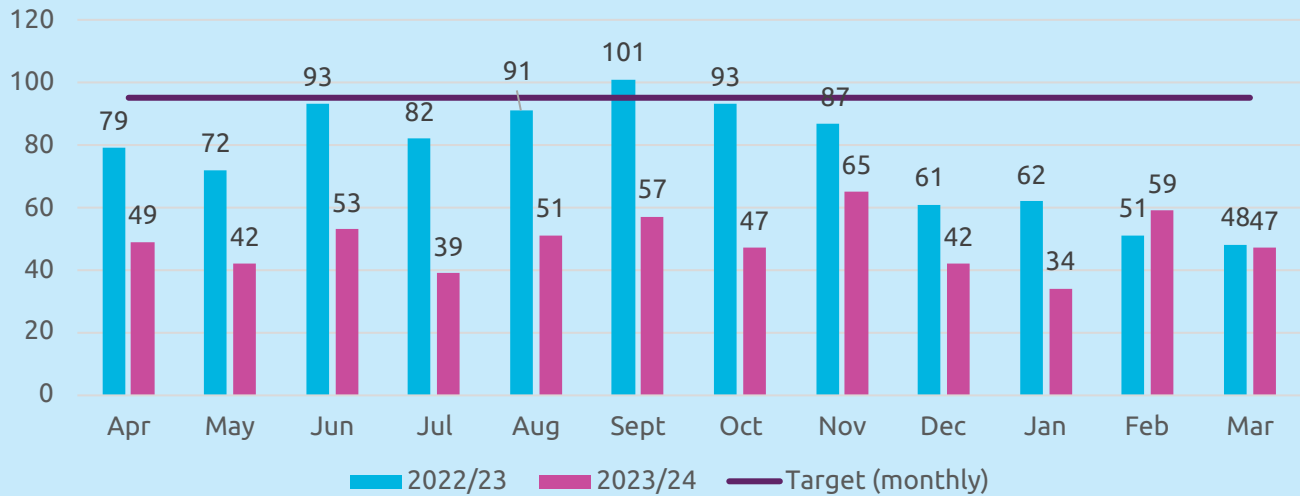
We had some additional funding remaining from this, and are set to buy more cinema equipment that will see us roll the project out across our schemes and making this a more regular activity. We will also buy more fitness and activity equipment for our health and beauty rooms. This is funding that was received from Central Government to Local Authorities in response to the covid outbreak.

Following a review of the Sheltered Housing Service where we consulted our tenants, we have added more sheltered housing officers, and these are being recruited at present. This will mean that services to sheltered housing tenants will improve.



Tenancy Audits (Sheltered)

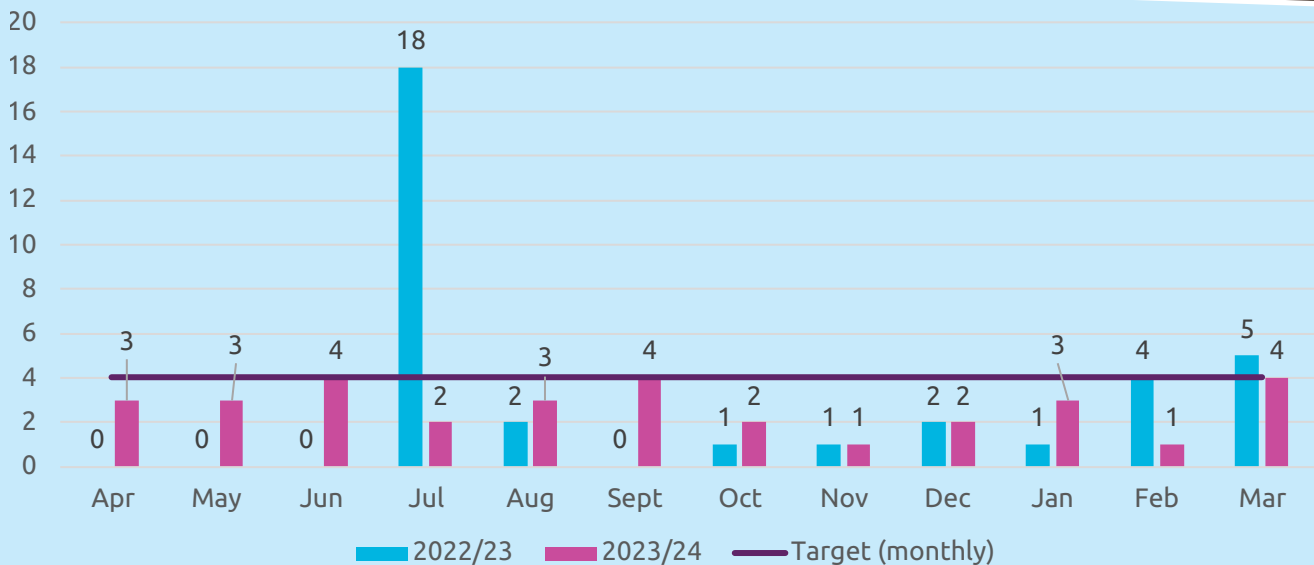
Tenancy Audits (Sheltered)



We carry out tenancy audits in sheltered housing to assess the needs of our tenants to see if their current accommodation is suitable, if they need any extra support and how we can best support them moving forward. They are slightly different to tenancy audits in the rest of our properties as they are focused on the needs of the tenant and any support that will help them as they get older.



Sheltered Tenants' Meetings



Tenant meetings are held in our sheltered housing schemes in the communal lounges to discuss services provided and get people's views. Additional tenant meetings were held in July 2022 to consult on how to spend additional funding allocated for each scheme.

CX Housing – your new online tenant portal

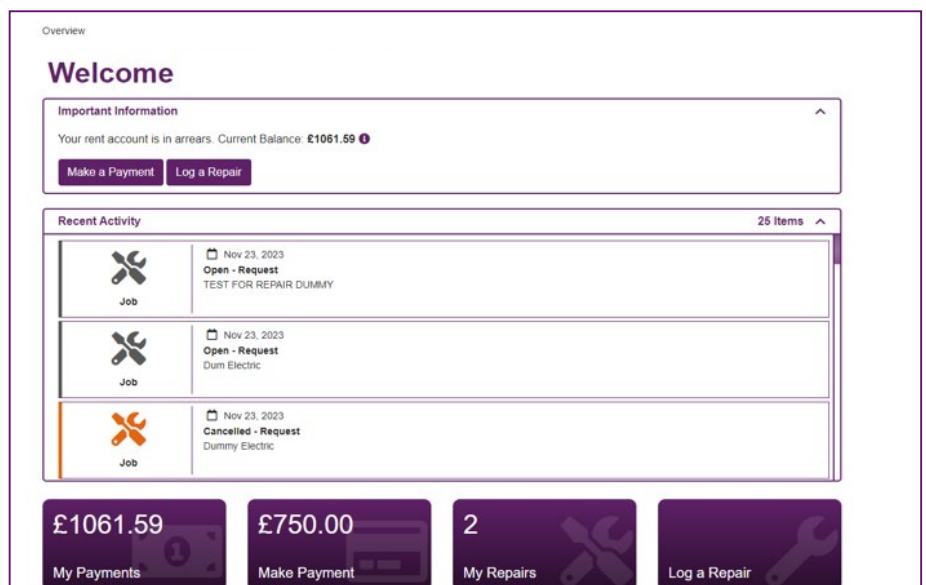
How housing services are delivered and how you want to access them is always changing and growing.

To help improve your housing services we needed to upgrade our IT system. This will help meet new demands of our services and for our customers. The new system will help make the tenant journey easier. We have asked tenant representatives to help us to test the system to make sure that it meets needs. When the system goes live the following will be available for users:

- A new self-service portal.
- A system that can be used on any device PC, mobile or tablet.
- Ability to log repairs and see outstanding repairs on your home.
- Ability to upload photos to explain issues.
- Ability to book and change appointments.
- View your rent and service charge accounts.
- Make payments at a click of a button.
- View your 'case' progress.
- View on-line letters and correspondence all in one place.
- Hold all your information in one place.



Please keep an eye out in our tenant newsletter for more information on when the new system will be available.



Please note: test data has been used in the screenshot.

Housing Estates Team



The housing estate team's role is to make sure residents living in low and high flat blocks have clean, safe and tidy internal and external communal areas by carrying out regular inspections and speaking to residents.

We also work together with other teams on projects that affect residents. We are involved in projects from the Healthy Estates Strategy, including promoting a recent public health project around how to stop smoking.

During the year we consulted with you about the name of the team, the Concierge, and Inspection Team. You told us you did not like this and preferred the name Housing Estates Team. We listened and have changed the team's name.

Our successes:



The introduction of local roadshows, gives us the opportunity to meet residents in their blocks, listen and help to sort out any issues.

The Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) in Park Town, is now in full use on a regular basis by residents and community groups.

The changing of the fleeces from colour black to purple has made us more visible on estates. Have you seen us?

Our challenge:



Vehicles parked on housing land due to lack of parking in and around the area. This has meant residents having to park on green areas on housing land. Some of the vehicles have been Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) and it's difficult to establish the owners.

What is a roadshow?

The road show was introduced in August 2023 and 79 roadshows were carried out between August 2023 and March 2024. Regular visits to flat blocks are set up and residents are invited to raise any concerns or issues they may have. Please let us know if you would like to attend an estate team roadshow, to visit your block by contacting

Achievements against service standards – TSM scores

Proportion of respondents with communal areas who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood.

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour.

Our score:

71.2%

59.2%

51.2%

Benchmark:

65.2%

51.2%

51.2%

Achievements against internal surveys

Total % of block/ estate inspections completed

TSM satisfaction with clean and maintained communal areas

Total % of block/estate inspections judged to be of a "good" standard

TSM's Satisfaction with neighbourhood

Total % of high rise blocks judged to be of a 'good' standard

2022/23

100%

New

99%

New

98%

2023/24

100%

71.2%

96%

59.2%

96%

This year we have:

Worked with residents to improve their communal areas for example in Abbotswood Parade we have renovated their sheds.



Complaints made about housing estate services help us identify areas for improvement. They also help:

- Uncover patterns, helping us spot issues and improve
- Give valuable insights into tenant experiences, helping us tailor our approach to better meet your needs

Our plans for 2024/25 are to continue:

- Working on the healthy estate strategy
- Encourage tenants to make use of their communal garden space.
- To conduct more roadshows

To get in touch please email us on housingstatesteam@luton.gov.uk

In 2023/24, 151 specialist cleans were carried out by the emergency cleaning service, The service is available 24/7 and you can report a specialist clean by calling our BTS service on **0800 0147 333**.



We'd also like to give a shout out to our colleagues in Parks and Street Services who help us to keep our estates clean and tidy. Parks deliver all of the grass cutting and grounds maintenance on the land we own on housing estates. Street Services performance a range of important tasks too including:

- Removing flytipped rubbish
- Litter picking
- Clearing rubbish chutes in high rise flat blocks
- Collecting rubbish from our flat blocks

Repairs Service

Building and Technical Services (BTS) provide the majority of the repairs service and planned works to your homes. We take immense pride in our ability to deliver high quality, affordable services that are customer focused. To help with this we have a dedicated repairs control centre delivering a 24/7 service.

We have 210 people employed by BTS and they make up a dedicated team of repair staff including plumbers, carpenters, electricians, call centre and business support staff. This helps provide tenants and leaseholders with a good service.

To report a repair, you can phone **0800 0147 333** or email the team on **Housing.Repairs@luton.gov.uk**

Total calls to the call centre



45,688

Abandoned calls



2,215

Total day to day repairs completed throughout the year



20,885

Total jobs fixed right 1st time



98.93%

Total customer satisfaction



96%

Number of responsive repairs completed on time



98.93%

Number of gas safety checks completed

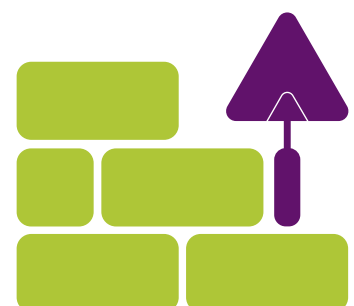


6,899

Total programmed/ planned works carried out



1,589



Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023/24

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is well maintained.

Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service

Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale.

Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale.

Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Home Standards.

Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out.

Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out.

Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out.

Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out.

Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out.

Our score:

76.4%

79.3%

98.9%

99.3%

1.7%

100%

100%

100%

100%

98.0%

Benchmark:

69.4%

70.4%

81.5%

94.8%

0.3%

99.7%

100%

100%

100%

100%

The Housing Ombudsman made findings of maladministration against BTS on two occasions in 2022/23 and they required us to put things right for the tenants, including paying compensation. We were also asked to conduct training on complaints management with staff. We carried out a review of how we manage information and knowledge on repairs and have an action plan in place that is being monitored by the Tenant Partnership Board.

We have published a new residents' engagement strategy in relation to the Building Safety Act 2022 and this strategy is available on our website. The document explains how we will engage and inform residents on matters relating to building and fire safety, especially in high rise flat blocks. This will help drive a better and safer environment for tenants and leaseholders.

You said we did....

Residents asked us to share future work plans. We have developed a 5 year work programme so that you will know what is being done and when. The programmes are now available online. [See here.](#)



Future plans

The council will continue to invest in maintaining our housing stock to a high standard. In 2024/25 the council will be investing nearly £15m to carry out refurbishment works, maintenance and servicing to council homes.

One of the areas that the council will concentrate on is Fire Safety and in particular new fire doors to flats in our high rise blocks. This is driven by new regulations under the Building Safety Act and will improve safety for tenants.

Damp and mould cases remain a challenge as highlighted by the Housing Ombudsman. We have updated our policies around damp and mould and the advice we provide on how you can prevent and manage these issues in your home. You can find this information on the [council website](#).

You can report damp and mould here: **0800 0147 333**



To report a repair, you can phone **0800 0147 333** or email the team on **Housing.Repairs@luton.gov.uk**



Adaptations

The adaptations team's make sure improvements you need that enable you to stay in your current home are made. The team can install a range of adaptations to your home depending on your individual needs, as assessed by occupational health. These include:

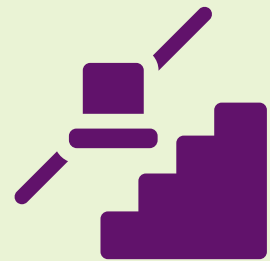
Improving wheelchair access into and movement around your home



Disabled access to showers



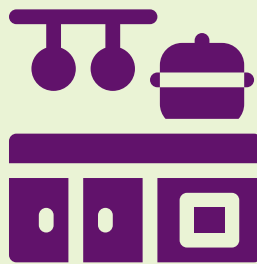
Stair lifts



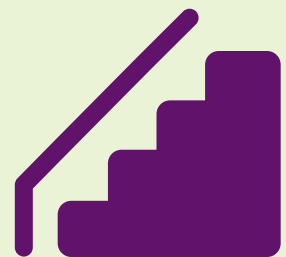
Hoists



Kitchen adaptations



Smaller modifications such as grab rails



76 cases were completed during 2023/24, at a cost of £746,418

We are really pleased to report that satisfaction with the works was 100% of all responses, with no one reporting dissatisfaction with the works.

Housing strategy and development team



The team cover housing strategy, domestic energy efficiency, supporting more affordable homes to be built in Luton, and building new council housing.

In the last year our development team has expanded so that we can increase the number of new council homes that can be built. Successes include:

- We launched our developer forum, helping to build relationships with housing developers in Luton.
- We completed our new design guidance for council housing to improve quality and energy efficiency in future homes. This will help keep bills low and homes warmer.


Bringing new affordable housing to Luton remains a challenge, due to high building costs and limited amounts of land where we can develop.

Statistics for 2023/24

Homes acquired for council housing:
7

Homes on site:
52

Homes completed:
0



Last year with the help from Luton Rising, we started our journey of retrofitting one of our council houses with low carbon technologies.

This included triple glazing, air source heat pump and solar panels with battery storage. Due to the success of the retrofit house it was shortlisted as a finalist at the recent Unlock Net Zero Awards 2024. To find out more about the Retrofit house, please [click here](#).

Complaints

A complaint is a statement that something is wrong or unsatisfactory. The council's internal complaints process has two stages. Most complaints are resolved at stage one. In the year we had a total of 431 complaints and which 47 (10.9%) progressed to stage two. The number of complaints received increased from 415 in the previous year.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023

Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes.

Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes.

Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales.

Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales.

Our score:

28.3%

3.7%

82.9%

62.1%

Benchmark:

39.7%

5.3%

85.0%

83.3%

Complaints completed within timescales

Q1 on time 2022/23	Q1 late 2022/23	Q2 on time 2022/23	Q2 late 2022/23	Q3 on time 2022/23	Q3 late 2022/23	Q4 on time 2022/23	Q4 late 2022/23
21	27	69	36	95	30	82	28

Q1 on time 2023/24	Q1 late 2023/24	Q2 on time 2023/24	Q2 late 2023/24	Q3 on time 2023/24	Q3 late 2023/24	Q4 on time 2023/24	Q4 late 2023/24
85	23	79	30	77	43	51	40

During the year we continued the trend of responding to more complaints on time than late, however in Quarter 4 2023/24 56% of the complaints were closed on time, compared to 64% in the previous quarter and 72% in the one prior to that showing a continued trend of fewer complaints closed on time. This is an area that we are concentrating on to ensure that our performance improves.

Complaints by Theme

Q1 Failed to provide a service	Q1 Made an error	Q1 Staff behaviour	Q2 Failed to provide a service	Q2 Made an error	Q2 Staff behaviour
75	21	12	65	33	11

Q3 Failed to provide a service	Q3 Made an error	Q3 Staff behaviour	Q4 Failed to provide a service	Q4 Made an error	Q4 Staff behaviour
82	22	16	55	15	21

Quarter 3 continued to show the theme of previous years where the largest number of complaints were because of a failure to provide a service. This theme also includes where complainants were unhappy with significant delays.

Housing Ombudsman complaints

There were 21 complaints to the Housing Ombudsman during 2023/24.

12 were not taken up for investigation by the Housing Ombudsman

9 were investigated

4 are still in open investigation at the time of this report

5 outcomes have been received

Housing Ombudsman – who they are and how they help you?

The Housing Ombudsman and complaints handling code became a legal requirement for the council from April 2024. They are an outside organisation whose role is to investigate complaints from tenants about the council's housing services. The Ombudsman investigates complaints about the landlord's housing services, for example, property condition and repairs, charges, tenancy management, complaint handling and how a landlord is responding to antisocial behaviour that is affecting a tenant in their home. Usually, the tenant will have complained formally via the council's complaints process before taking to the Housing Ombudsman.

Some housing complaints are dealt with by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. You can check which ombudsman deals with which complaint by [checking here](#). You can contact the Ombudsman via email, phone, and letter or on their website. They do strongly encourage that you please use email or the forms on their website so there are minimal delays. Their contact information is as follows:

info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us/>

Phone number: 0300 111 3000

Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PE2 0ET



Housing
Ombudsman Service

Compliments

During the year we had a lot of compliments about the services that we provide. A few of these are shown below.

I would like to leave the most beautiful compliment for your lovely team who supported me and my family until they could fix our heating last winter.

I was recently assisted with support to relocate me to a new flat in Milton Keynes. For the record I wish to convey my thanks and admiration to the team for their wonderful support and hard work in making my restart a reality.

I would just like to say a massive thank you to BTS for helping me with my lock today when got locked out. Man on reception was very kind. They came out so quick to help and the man changed lock in no time. A massive thank you.

Thank you so much for all your help. After our conversation I understood the importance of maintaining my rent up to date. I will never put myself in such situation as the risks are extremely high.

As a rent officer your job is challenging however, the push you give us for anyone who thinks will see the goodness you want in your tenants.

Thank you once again keep up the good work.

I am currently in rent arrears and my income officer has been incredible. She has shown immense kindness and compassion alongside monumental patience. She has been brilliant in supporting me in ways in which I can clear my arrears. She has been nothing short of wonderful and is an excellent reflection on the income officers. I cannot thank her enough for her ongoing efforts and support to help me clear the arrears and maintain my housing.



Hello from Councillor Robert Roche

I was delighted to be appointed as Executive Councillor Housing in 2024, taking over the reins from Councillor Tom Shaw. I am fully committed to delivering essential housing services to Luton tenants and leaseholders.

homes and 800 leasehold properties. Alongside this we need to ensure we meet the Regulator of Housing’s requirement and comply with the Housing Ombudsman’s complaint handling code. This makes us more accountable to our tenants and in this report, you will see that housing service delivery and tenant satisfaction are now compared to other landlords.



In the past few months, I have been struck by the variety of properties we manage and the commitment of housing staff to providing good housing services. I have enjoyed meeting and working with tenant representatives and can confirm that the council will continue to work closely with tenants to help shape the way your services are delivered. It’s important that we are transparent and have good workable policies and procedures that respond to tenant’s needs.

I am committed to developing a culture of being compassionate in the delivery of Council services, with tenants at the heart of what we say, think and do. Also, within our town of being compassionate neighbours, looking out for each other and lending a helping hand.

Safe to say my new role involves a steep learning curve. But, despite all the challenges, I am optimistic for the future and ready to take action. If you see me out and about, please do chat to me, as I really want to hear your views and ideas for the future.

Councillor Robert Roche
Executive Councillor for Housing



Making sense of the money

Luton Council manages around 7,630 tenanted homes. In 2023/24 income was about £46,821,408.68 million. Most of the income comes from rent, but tenants and leaseholders are also charged for services and facilities that the council provides. Below is an overview of how rent and other income was spent during the year, including the percentage of money spent in each area.

Income	Income	%
Contribution towards costs	- 2,237,829.66	4.78
Charges for Services and Facilities	- 6,774,960.56	14.47
Garage Rents	-861,926.29	1.84
Property Rent	- 36,946,692.17	78.91
	- 46,821,408.68	100
Expenditure	Expenditure	%
Housing Management	4,205,814.67	9.61
Estate Management	966,930.84	2.21
Income Management	549,844.91	1.26
Anti-Social Behaviour	178,730.42	0.41
Tenant Involvement	152,425.60	0.35
Capital Charges	17,216,753.92	39.35
Repairs and Maintenance	18,612,265.32	42.54
Rents and Rates	5,787.40	0.01
Central Charges	1,861,983.78	4.26
	43,750,536.86	100
Transferred to Reserve to fund capital	- 3,101,871.82	



Sign up for your newsletter

Tenants have your very own newsletter.

In your newsletter you can find useful information about your tenancy, fun things to do round Luton and ways we can help each other. We aim to send out your newsletter every 2 months keeping you informed about everything to do with housing in Luton and how the new changes to legislation will affect you.



If you would like to subscribe to your newsletter it is now easier than ever!

You can sign up electronically via the QR code on this page or you can fill in our survey form at the end of this report. Send it in we can add you to our list.

Please note that this newsletter is an online publication only.

Tell us what you think



What did you like about this report?

What would you like to see in future reports?

Do you want to know more about how you could help improve housing services?

Any other comments

Your name

Your address

Your telephone number

Your email address

Note this competition is open to council tenants and leaseholders only.

The closing date is: 31st December 2024. Please return this page to the tenant participation team either by emailing them on tpluton@luton.gov.uk or by posting it to Housing Service – Tenant Participation, Town Hall, Upper George Street, Luton, LU1 2BQ. Please return your slip to be in with a chance to win a £30 Love2Shop Voucher!



Thank you for reading



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Town Hall
Upper George Street
Luton**

LU1 2BQ

Telephone: 01582 546000

BTS Telephone: 0800 0147 333

www.luton.gov.uk

Luton