

# YOUR HOUSING

September 2025



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# Welcome to the September edition of Your Housing



Cllr Rob Lillis with the new interim Head of Housing Services, Michael Lerpiniere, in the gardens of Willalla House.

## **As summer turns to autumn, I'm delighted to welcome you to this latest edition of Your Housing, our tenant newsletter.**

Progress continues at pace on the Housing Improvement Programme and we're continuing with our stock condition surveys which you can read about on page 10. We are investing in a wide range of improvements including the recent upgrades to car parking facilities at our properties on Kitkatts Road, Canvey Island.

Last month, I also had the opportunity to visit Willalla House where I met with our dedicated team to better understand their roles and how they support tenants day-to-day. I toured the property and learned more about the recent safety improvements, including important work being done to help prevent any fires from spreading between different parts of the building. I was very impressed with the communal garden, in particular the rhubarb, which was clearly thriving!

In this issue you'll also find practical advice: what to do if you're facing issues with neighbours, which DIY projects you can easily do at home and some creative ideas for those without garden space. Alongside this, we've included resources for mental health and wellbeing because we know that feeling secure in your home is about more than just bricks and mortar.

Importantly, we're sharing the results of our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) for 2024/2025, providing transparency around how we're doing and where we must do better. Your feedback continues to shape how we plan, invest in and deliver our Housing service.

Thank you for your ongoing engagement. Together we're building stronger, safer communities where everyone can feel proud of where they live.

All the best

**Cllr Rob Lillis**  
**Cabinet Member for Health,**  
**Wellbeing and Housing**



# Everybody needs good neighbours

Living in your home should be a peaceful and enjoyable experience, but when you're not getting along with a neighbour, that peace can feel out of reach. Whether it's persistent noise or tension over rubbish, you're not alone and there are clear steps you can take to restore harmony with your neighbours.



## What the Council can do

Your Housing Management Officer will:

- Visit your home or meet you at an office
- Work with the police, social services or environmental health where required
- Offer extra support services if needed
- Help you through legal steps if necessary
- Keep you updated throughout

The Council takes antisocial behaviour (ASB) seriously—this includes harassment, threats, drug misuse, noise disturbances and pets causing nuisance. In serious cases, enforcement actions such as injunctions or evictions may be taken.

## Taking the first step

If you feel safe doing so, try speaking to your neighbour calmly and politely. Many people aren't even aware their actions are bothering someone and a simple conversation can solve things quickly. If direct contact doesn't feel right, a short, respectful letter explaining how their behaviour is affecting you, could help. Always keep copies of any letters or responses. Avoid retaliating or escalating things as this can sometimes make the problem worse.

## When you need support

If the problem continues or you're too uncomfortable to approach your neighbour, contact your Housing Management Officer. They'll take your concerns seriously and act swiftly. When reporting the issue, share as much detail as you can:

- What's happening and how it's affecting you
- Who's involved
- Dates, times and frequency of incidents

You can call 01268 882200 at any time to leave a message, which will be followed up as soon as possible.

## When it's urgent

If a crime is happening or someone is in danger, call 999. For non-emergencies or ongoing ASB contact your Housing Management Officer.



# Tenant survey results 2024/25

Since April 2023, the Regulator of Social Housing has required all social landlords to carry out an annual survey asking their residents to rate how they feel their landlord is performing, using tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs).

With support from Acuity, we carried out perception surveys on our tenants, asking you to rate how you feel we are performing as a social landlord against the TSMs.

The below results help us to better understand how you feel about the services you receive, recognise areas that are performing well and identify areas for improvement.

Tenant satisfaction	What we are doing to improve
Overall satisfaction of housing services <b>54%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing Improvement Programme set up to drive change across the housing service</li><li>• Reviewing the Housing service and its structures to ensure it is fit for purpose and properly staffed to deliver for our tenants and leaseholders</li><li>• Involving tenants and leaseholders in shaping the services we deliver</li><li>• Working with the Regulator of Social Housing to ensure changes are permanent and sustainable</li></ul>
Satisfaction with overall repairs service received in last 12 months <b>63%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have introduced strong Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor performance</li><li>• We have introduced weekly contractor monitoring meetings to review key performance information</li><li>• We are working with our repairs contractors to ensure performance against KPIs</li></ul>
Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair <b>65%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Repairs and Maintenance Policy to be introduced following consultation with tenants and leaseholders</li><li>• We are improving our systems to be able to respond to repairs concerns quicker</li><li>• We are managing our contractors on whether they respond within agreed repair timescales</li></ul>
Satisfaction that their home is well maintained <b>54%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We are carrying out stock condition surveys on all our homes to better understand their current condition and inform us where our investment and maintenance work is most needed</li><li>• We are working with our stock condition data to ensure our planned maintenance works are scoped and ready for timely delivery</li></ul>
Satisfaction that their home is safe <b>63%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We are introducing new health and safety policies and procedures</li><li>• We have introduced a new process for dealing with damp, mould and condensation</li><li>• We are training our staff so they know their legal responsibilities for keeping our tenants and leaseholders safe</li></ul>
Satisfaction that the Council listens to their views and acts upon them <b>40%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We are giving our tenants and leaseholders a voice in the creation, review and adoption of new Housing service policies and processes</li><li>• We are learning from the complaints, comments and compliments we receive and letting you know what we have done with the feedback received</li></ul>

Tenant satisfaction	What we are doing to improve
<p>Satisfaction that the Council keeps them informed about things that matter to them</p> <p><b>58%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have reintroduced our housing newsletter so you are kept up to date with the work we are doing</li> <li>• We are working on forming and embedding tenant and leaseholder panels</li> </ul>
<p>Satisfaction that the Council treats them fairly and with respect</p> <p><b>65%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have improved and embedded a new Housing Complaints process so that concerns can be addressed and learnt from</li> <li>• We are carrying out customer service training for all customer facing staff</li> <li>• Respect and treating people fairly is reinforced in all our policies, training and team meetings</li> <li>• We are carrying out a consultation on a new Contractor Code of Conduct to get our tenants' and leaseholders' feedback on what is most important to them</li> </ul>
<p>Satisfaction with the Council's approach to handling complaints</p> <p><b>23%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have introduced a new policy that follows the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code with set timescales for responding to complaints</li> <li>• We are monitoring the performance of complaint responses</li> <li>• We are completing satisfaction surveys once a complaint has been closed and are analysing the results to see what we can do to improve our approach to handling complaints</li> </ul>
<p>Satisfaction that the Council keeps communal areas clean and well maintained</p> <p><b>56%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estate inspections will now be attended by both Housing Management Officers and surveyors from our housing technical team</li> <li>• We are looking to embed a process where tenants and leaseholders can accompany Housing Management Officers and surveyors during estate inspections to ensure their observations and concerns are noted</li> <li>• We aim to complete all estate inspections on an electronic device so that results can be shared easily</li> </ul>
<p>Satisfaction that the Council makes a positive contribution to neighbourhood</p> <p><b>49%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We aim to share inspection reports with tenants and leaseholders via email and noticeboards so they can see our contributions</li> </ul>
<p>Satisfaction with the Council's approach to handling antisocial behaviour (ASB)</p> <p><b>43%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are reviewing our approach to reports of antisocial behaviour (ASB)</li> <li>• We are working to procure a new ASB system to better manage ASB cases</li> <li>• We are working on updating the Council's Community Safety Priorities</li> <li>• We are updating the Council's ASB policies for both housing and community safety</li> <li>• We're holding a focus group and carrying out a survey on the ASB service to feed into the new ASB Policy.</li> <li>• We plan to introduce customer satisfaction surveys on all ASB cases and we'll then look to make any further adjustments to our approach to the ASB service.</li> </ul>

We will be continuing our work with Acuity for our 2025/26 tenant perception surveys with a specific focus on:

- Increasing the number of tenants surveyed
- Asking more specific questions so that we can better understand areas of concerns

- Benchmarking our performance as we begin to embed service improvements within our Housing service.

You can read the full TSM results including our operational performance on our website: [castlepoint.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-survey](https://castlepoint.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-survey)

# DIY at home: What you can tackle yourself and when to call us

Maintaining your home can be straightforward for a handful of simple tasks but some repairs need professional attention. This guide helps you spot the jobs that you can safely handle yourself and shows when to get in touch with us as your social landlord.

## Quick reference chart

Task	Do it yourself	Time to contact us
Changing light bulbs	YES	
Bleeding radiators	YES	If radiator is still cold after bleeding call 01268 882200 (Mon–Fri 8.45–17.15)
Unclogging sink (minor blockages)	YES	If water won't drain at all call 01268 882200 (Mon–Fri 8.45–17.15)
Touch-up painting	YES	For major wall cracks or persistent damp spots, call 01268 882200 or email <a href="mailto:housingadvice@castlepoint.gov.uk">housingadvice@castlepoint.gov.uk</a>
Replacing shower heads and curtains	YES	If leaks appear at pipe fittings call 01268 882200 (Mon–Fri 8.45–17.15)
Fixing small door hinges	YES	If doors come off their frame or won't latch properly call 01268 882200 (Mon–Fri 8.45–17.15)
Resetting trip switches	YES	For repeated trips call 01268 882200 or email <a href="mailto:housingadvice@castlepoint.gov.uk">housingadvice@castlepoint.gov.uk</a>
Gas appliance repairs	NO	Always use a Gas Safe registered engineer. Call us on 01268 882200
Structural repairs (e.g. beams)	NO	Call 01268 882200 to arrange a survey, never attempt yourself
Major leaks or floods	NO	Call 01268 882200 or for out-of-hours emergencies, 0800 833 162

## Routine tasks you can do yourself

- Change a blown bulb only after switching off the light at the wall
- Bleed radiators using a radiator key: open until water drips, then retighten and top up boiler pressure
- Clear minor sink blockages with a plunger or sink-safe drain cleaner
- Give walls a fresh coat of paint; clean brushes and rollers immediately after use to prolong their life

Having these skills saves you time and helps you keep your home feeling cared for.

## Tips for safe DIY

- Wear appropriate safety gear e.g. gloves, goggles
- Ensure good ventilation when using strong cleaners, paints, solvents, or adhesives
- Keep a basic toolkit on hand e.g. hammer, screwdrivers (flat and cross-head), spanner and a torch



Take care that the bulb isn't hot!

## When to contact us

Some repairs carry safety risks or need specialist knowledge. Please contact us if you encounter:

- Persistent leaks from pipes, ceilings or window frames
- Electrical faults that recur after resetting the fuse or trip switch
- Cracks in walls that widen or let in drafts
- Rising damp, black mould or rotten skirting boards
- Faulty smoke alarms or Carbon Monoxide detectors
- Gas appliances that fail to ignite or those that emit a gas smell

Call 01268 882200 (Mon–Fri 8.45–17.15) or email [housingadvice@castlepoint.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvice@castlepoint.gov.uk) For emergencies outside office hours call 0800 833 162.



# Greening your space without a garden

**Not everyone has access to a garden but that shouldn't mean missing out on the joys of growing your own plants. For many tenants, creating an oasis in a flat or on a window sill is both doable and enjoyable. It doesn't just add beauty to your space - it can boost wellbeing, reduce stress and build a real sense of pride in your home.**

Whether it's growing herbs in your kitchen or a green oasis in your living room or bathroom, growing plants at home is becoming more popular than ever.

## Green ideas for every home

Here are easy ways to bring greenery into your home:

- Indoor plants: place low-maintenance plants like spider plants, peace lilies and aloe vera in corners, shelves or window sills. Some varieties can even improve air quality
- Kitchen herbs: basil, parsley and mint thrive indoors and add instant flavour to meals

## Getting started: tips for tenants

- Choose containers wisely: use non-combustible pots like ceramic, terracotta or metal with drainage trays to capture excess water
- Read your tenancy agreement: please check with us before installing anything that requires fixtures
- Remember not to place any plants in communal areas such as hallways or shared spaces as they are fire hazards
- Start small: a single plant can make a big difference. Build your green space gradually to suit your lifestyle



Hills and mountain bike trails of Hadleigh Park

## Public green spaces in Castle Point

If maintaining your own plants isn't your thing, you can still soak up nature and fresh air at one of Castle Point's many beautiful parks and community areas:

- Waterside Farm Recreation Ground on Canvey Island includes a skate park, sports pitches and walking paths - great for active outings
- Canvey Seafront is perfect for relaxing strolls, enjoying coastal views or finding a bench with a sea breeze
- Thundersley Common provides peaceful woodland walks and a chance to spot local wildlife
- Hadleigh Country Park, near the historic Hadleigh Castle, has sprawling parkland, cycling trails and beautiful views
- Benfleet Downs gives scenic views, quiet nature trails and cozy picnic spots
- Woodside Park in Benfleet is a welcoming green space with play areas and places to sit and unwind

These spaces are open to all and maintained by the local council and community groups. Whether you're after exercise or just a bit of greenery, there's a perfect spot for you.



# Where to go when you're feeling low

Life's pressures can sometimes leave us feeling overwhelmed or low. It takes courage to notice those feelings and to seek support. Below is a guide to trusted resources - online, local and urgent - so you always know where to turn. **Remember that reaching out for help is a sign of strength.**

## Understanding your needs

Feeling low can look different for everyone. You might notice:

- Difficulty sleeping or eating
- Loss of interest in hobbies or socialising
- Persistent sadness, irritability or fatigue

If these signs last more than a couple of weeks, it's a good idea to explore the support options below.

## For free and confidential online resources

- **Every Mind Matters** – NHS-backed hub with self-help articles, videos and the “Mind Plan” quiz to build personalised wellbeing tips – [nhs.uk/every-mind-matters](https://nhs.uk/every-mind-matters)
- **Kooth** – Anonymous, text-based counselling and peer support for ages 10–25 – Open 24/7, 365 days a year – [kooth.com](https://kooth.com)

## Local services in South Essex

- **Therapy For You** – Free NHS talking therapies (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counselling) for adults in Southend, Castle Point & Rochford – [therapyforyou.co.uk](https://therapyforyou.co.uk)



- **South East and Central Essex Mind** – Counselling, peer support groups, training and housing advice – [secemind.org.uk](https://secemind.org.uk)
- **Trust Links** – Community projects: therapeutic gardening, art classes, recovery workshops – [trustlinks.org](https://trustlinks.org)
- **Essex Community Tree Network** – Comprehensive directory of local mental health services searchable by area and need [essexcommunitytree.net](https://essexcommunitytree.net)

## Finding NHS mental health services

If you'd prefer to use an NHS-run service near you, use the online tool:

- NHS Find mental health services [nhs.uk/mental-health](https://nhs.uk/mental-health)

## Urgent help and crisis support

When you need support right away, here's who to contact:

### Service

Crisis Response Service (Essex, 18+)  
NELFT Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health  
(Out-of-hours, under 18s)  
Samaritans  
Shout  
Childline

### Who it's for

Adults in crisis  
Under-18s & families  
  
Anyone, 24/7 support  
Anyone, text support  
Under 19s

### Contact details

Call 111, then press option 2  
0300 300 1600 (referrals)  
0300 555 1201  
Call 116 123  
Text “SHOUT” to 85258  
Call 0800 1111



# Speaking up: How to make a complaint

**At Castle Point Borough Council, we're committed to providing a high-quality Housing service, but we know that sometimes things can go wrong. Whether it's poor communication or a failure to provide a good service, your feedback helps us to improve. That's why we've introduced a new Housing Complaints Policy, published in June 2025, to make the process clearer, fairer and more responsive for everyone.**

You can find our policies relating to complaints, and information on our performance on handling your complaints on the Council's website [castlepoint.gov.uk/housing-services-complaints](https://castlepoint.gov.uk/housing-services-complaints)

## How we deal with your complaints

We operate a two-stage complaints process, each with clear timescales:

- Stage one: We aim to resolve your complaint quickly at the first point of contact
- Stage two: If you're not satisfied with our response, you can escalate it for a review by an Assistant Director

Throughout the process we'll keep you informed and explain our decisions clearly.

## How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint in whichever way suits you best:

- Email: [housingcomplaints@castlepoint.gov.uk](mailto:housingcomplaints@castlepoint.gov.uk)
- Phone: 01268 882200
- Online: [castlepoint.gov.uk/housing-services-complaints](https://castlepoint.gov.uk/housing-services-complaints)
- In writing or in person: Council Offices, Kiln Road, Benfleet, SS7 1TF



If your issue remains unresolved or you want advice on your complaint, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman, who ensures social landlords follow their Complaint Handling Code. You can contact the Housing Ombudsman by:

- Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- Phone: 0300 111 3000



## Why your voice matters

Every complaint is an opportunity for us to learn and improve. We carry out self-assessments on our complaints process to ensure we're meeting the standards set by the Housing Ombudsman and to identify areas for service improvement.

So if something's not right don't hesitate to speak up. Your feedback helps us build a better Housing service for everyone.

# Car park improvements

As part of our commitment to improving facilities and access for residents we are pleased to confirm that a car park area for Council properties in Kitkatts Road on Canvey Island has recently been refurbished.

## Before



## After



Further projects of this nature are planned in 2025/26 as part of our ongoing improvement programme of housing stock.

# Stock condition survey update

We are currently conducting stock condition surveys across all Council-owned homes. These inspections are being carried out by Walker Management, an external contractor, and are designed to assess both the internal and external condition of properties.

The surveys will enable us to make informed decisions about future investment priorities and maintenance planning, helping ensure homes meet modern standards and residents' needs. Surveyors will assess key areas such as kitchens, bathrooms, mechanical and electrical systems and identify any potential hazards. Each visit takes no more than 60 minutes and is an opportunity for you to raise any concerns you may have about your property.

**Please support us with this vital work by allowing the surveyor access to your home.**

Once your visit is complete, we'd appreciate your feedback via

[castlepoint.gov.uk/stock-condition-survey](https://castlepoint.gov.uk/stock-condition-survey)

Your input will help us improve our services in the future.



# Work with us to design the services that matter to you

It is important to us that you are involved in shaping the services we provide. We want you to feel confident that when you tell us what matters to you that it is reflected in the services we deliver.

We are in the process of drafting a new Repairs and Maintenance Policy. It is important to us that as part of this policy, we include a Contractor Code of Conduct. As our contractors require access to your home to carry out their duties, it is vital that you have the opportunity to tell us what is important to you in how they conduct their role.

We're holding drop-in sessions across two days in different locations for you to pop by for some tea and cake and share your thoughts and ideas for the new Contractor Code of Conduct with us.

**Monday 22 September 2025 drop in anytime between 2pm – 7pm at Runnymede Hall, Kiln Road, Benfleet, SS7 1TF**

**Tuesday 23 September 2025 drop in anytime between 2pm – 7pm at the Paddocks, Long Road, Canvey Island SS8 0JA**



If you can't make either of the drop-in sessions, don't worry - you can still have your say. Scan the QR code and fill out the survey to share your thoughts and ideas with us.







For more information contact your Housing team by  
Phone: 01268 882200

Email: [tenancyofficers@castlepoint.gov.uk](mailto:tenancyofficers@castlepoint.gov.uk)

Or visit the Castle Point Borough Council  
website at: [castlepoint.gov.uk](http://castlepoint.gov.uk)