Welcome to the Autumn 2015 issue of Insight magazine!

It has been a season of celebration here at South Essex Homes as we marked the occasion of our 10th birthday in October in the traditional way – with cake!

I’d like to thank all of you who took the time and effort to enter our photo competition for the ‘Our Town 2016’ annual report calendar, which you will find enclosed with this issue of Insight. The standard of entry was very high! Congratulations to those who see their work in print: Pat Butter, Jennifer Humphreys, Gary Kittle, Angela Lloyd, Dean Richardson and Tony Simpson. A £10 shopping voucher was awarded for each of the photos we have used.

The success of this competition has led to two of the winners setting up a camera club for like-minded Southend residents with a keen interest in photography to share ideas. If you would like to join this club, you can contact us on 01702 212650 for more details or Pat Butter directly by emailing patrick-butcher@sky.com.

We’ve been busy at various events throughout the summer months, so I hope you enjoy the photo special over the centre pages of this issue. Now as we move ever closer to winter we’re turning our efforts towards our fantastic annual Kids’ Christmas Party at Kids Kingdom – see the back page for more details on how to book – but please act fast as this event is very popular and places are offered on a first come, first served basis!

We’ll be back with more news and views in January, so in the meantime I’d like to wish you and your loved ones a happy and enjoyable time this festive season!

Julia Pack
Marketing & Communications Co-ordinator (and Editor of Insight)

MIKE GATRELL SAYS...

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is currently looking to finalise its decision on the extension of our current management agreement and in the next edition of Insight I look forward to being able to confirm the position to you.

In the meantime, all of us at South Essex Homes have been celebrating our 10th birthday recently and reflecting on the first ten years since the launch of the company on 24th October 2005. We’ve picked out important moments in our history and key facts about the company in a special birthday article which you’ll find on pages 4 and 5.

Of all the facts in the article, the most important ones to me personally are those relating to resident satisfaction. When we first collected this information in 2007/08, 68% of general needs residents and 85% of sheltered housing residents were satisfied with the service we provided. Satisfaction has increased year on year and, in 2014/15, levels had reached 91.3% for general needs and 97.5% for sheltered housing. This, I hope you will agree, demonstrates our commitment to continually improving the housing service you receive as tenants of Southend Borough Council.

Best wishes and compliments of the season to you all, Mike

Caretaking and Cleaning Update

The new caretaking and cleaning service has been operating since May and the results so far have been mainly positive. If you missed the initial communication from us, here is a reminder about the changes that have been made:

- The service is now ‘output based’ rather than providing scheduled routine visits
- This allows the team to be more flexible and deliver services on an ‘as required’ basis rather than routine visits for the sake of it
- Caretakers and Cleaners use a photo book for reference. A copy of this photo book, with details of standards of cleanliness you can expect to see, is available on our website www.southessexhomes.co.uk or for more information please do not hesitate to contact us
- By utilising our resources better, more time has been made available to carry out ‘deep cleans’ in some areas. This service will be rolled out to all properties in the borough and can include the re-polishing of floors, intensive block cleans and cleaning of carpets in sheltered schemes.

Get in touch...

To send in your story ideas for future issues of Insight Magazine, or to provide feedback on something you’ve read, contact the Editor via the following methods:

Insight Magazine, South Essex Homes, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6FY
Email: juliapack@seh.southend.gov.uk
For all telephone enquiries freephone 0800 833 160
Universal Credit is for people of working age, designed to top-up your income to a minimum level and help with your housing costs (in place of housing benefit).

Universal Credit will be replacing the following benefits:
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-Related Employment Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit

Please note that Universal Credit does not include help with your Council Tax and you must claim Council Tax Reduction separately (application form can be found on www.southend.gov.uk)

How is Universal Credit paid?
Universal Credit is paid in one lump sum on a monthly basis in arrears, and includes help to pay your rent.

What is the Housing Costs Element?
The Housing Costs Element of Universal Credit is help to pay your rent and replaces Housing Benefit. This will usually be paid straight to you and not onto your rent account. Therefore you must pay your full rent yourself out of the Universal Credit payment.

The Housing Costs Element may not cover your full rent and will not cover your water rates. You may therefore need to pay more than this amount to cover your rent each month.

Do you know how much your rent is monthly? Contact the Specialist Income Management team on 0800 0234 057 to ensure you pay the correct amount.

When is Universal Credit going to affect me?
Universal Credit is being introduced gradually across the country and in stages according to people's circumstances, so many people won't be affected by it until 2016 or later and some will not be affected until 2019.

Universal Credit has arrived in Southend-on-Sea!
Which means you are likely to need to make a claim for Universal Credit if:
- Your work has ended
- You have just left school, college or university and you don't have a job that will start immediately
- You have been claiming Employment Support Allowance but have been found fit for work
- You have had problems with your Job Seekers Allowance which means the claim has been terminated (not just sanctioned)
- You have separated from your partner or spouse
- You have stopped being a carer

At the moment only single people looking for work and without children can claim Universal Credit in this area.

Please note that Universal Credit is only available for people living in the following postcodes:
SS0, SS1, SS2 4, SS3 8, SS8, SS9 0, SS9 1, SS9 2, SS9 4
From 1st February 2016:
SS2 5, SS2 6, SS3 0, SS3 9, SS9 5

How can I prepare for Universal Credit and where can I go for help?
1. Get online. Computers and assistance available at our digital hubs in Malvern, Pennine & Chiltern as well as The Hub in Victoria shopping centre, SAVS, Asda, the Storehouse and the Civic Centre. Please contact our Community Development Team on 01702 212650 for further details.

2. Work out a monthly budget. There is some great advice available at www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk.

3. Set up a Direct Debit. It is the most convenient method of payment and can be set up to take monthly payments in line with your Universal Credit payments. Contact the Specialist Income Management team on 0800 0234 057 to set a Direct Debit up over the phone.

4. Open a bank account. If you don't have a bank account why not set one up? Need some help? Contact our Community Development team on 0800 833 160.

5. Have a look at the Universal Credit section of our website www.southessexhomes.co.uk for further information and advice.
Happy Birthday

TIMELINE - Key moments in the first ten years of South Essex Homes

2005
- Company launched on 24th October
- Joined Essex Police’s Community Safety Accreditation Scheme

2008
- EVENING ECHO BUSINESS AWARDS - Best Business in the Community
- TIM WINTER AWARD (for exceptional performance by an individual tackling ASB) - Louise Scaife

2009
- ★ AWARDED TWO STARS ★ FOLLOWING AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION & ASSESSMENT
  - TPAS- Shirley O’Reilly Tenant of the Year
  - SOUTHEND ECHO BUSINESS AWARDS - Excellent Customer Service
  - TIM WINTER AWARD - Debbie Ford
  - First awarded TSA Telecare Accreditation for Careline service

TEN FACTS - about the first ten years of South Essex Homes

1. DECENT HOMES
   In 2005, under 40% of Council-owned properties met the Decent Homes Standard. In 2015, over 95% of properties now reach this standard.
   - The total number of decent homes works have carried out since 2005 = 13,216.
   - This is made up of:
     - 2373 new bathrooms
     - 802 bathrooms adapted into wet rooms
     - 3965 new kitchens
     - 1077 new roofs
     - 2570 new heating systems
     - 1248 heating system upgrades
     - 1181 re-wires
   - The void property turnaround time (the time it takes for us to get an empty property ready to be re-let to a new tenant) was 28 days in 2005, compared to just 18 days in 2015 - which represents a 35% improvement.

2. BOARD
   - The South Essex Homes Board was originally made up of 15 members, an arrangement which stayed in place until 2014, at which time the composition of the Board reduced to 10 members: 4 Councillors, 3 Tenants and 3 Independents.

3. RESIDENT SATISFACTION
   - Since the launch of South Essex Homes, we have been regularly surveying our residents to find out how satisfied they are with the level of service we provide. Listening to residents’ views on what works well and what needs improvement helps us to learn how best to target our resources.
   - In 2007/8, overall satisfaction of general needs tenants of South Essex Homes was 68%.
   - In 2014/15 this had increased to 91.3%
   - In 2007/8, overall satisfaction of Sheltered Housing tenants of South Essex Homes was 85%.
   - In 2014/15 this had increased to 97.46%

4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
   - South Essex Homes has evolved into an organisation which has residents at the heart of its business and in 2014 our Community Development Team was created. We believe we have a responsibility to support our residents in all aspects of their life including, amongst other things, helping them to live healthier lives, manage their finances better and get online to make the most of the internet.

5. COMMUNITY PROJECTS
   - We have been a major driving force behind several projects within the community of Southend-on-Sea over the last ten years. These projects have often involved us working closely with our community partners. Some of the many notable examples of such projects include:
     - Mendip Wildlife Garden - which turned an area of wasteland often used for fly tipping into a beautiful hideaway providing a haven for local wildlife.
     - Digital Deal project - we were awarded Government funding in 2013 to launch this project, which aims to get our residents more confident using a computer.

6. STAFF DEVELOPMENT
   - When we started out in 2005 we employed approximately 300 staff members. Now in 2015 the size of the team has dropped considerably to 175. Despite this - our resident satisfaction figures continue to rise! (see item 3)
   - Here at South Essex Homes we pride ourselves in nurturing and developing our staff members to fulfil their potential. The fact that 45 per cent of our current team (79 out of 175) have been with the company from its inception shows that we have an excellent staff retention record.
   - There have been some excellent examples of staff fulfilling their potential and progressing their careers including, for example, someone who started working for South Essex Homes as a Caretaker, went on to study a degree and is now one of our Project Surveyors. Several of our managers started out as officers, so we have managed to retain our experienced staff and knowledge base.

7. TENANCY SERVICES TEAM
   - In April 2014, our Tenancy Services Team was restructured as residents requested that they have one named point of contact for all their questions and concerns about their tenancy.
To make this possible, we split the Council homes that we manage into 12 ‘patches’ - six in the ‘East Area’ and six in the ‘West Area’. Each of these patches is looked after by a named Tenancy Services Officer, who acts as first point of contact for residents about any tenancy services issues they may have. There is also a team of Assistants who assist Officers with administrative duties.

8. VALUE FOR MONEY SAVINGS
South Essex Homes is the Arm’s Length Management Organisation (ALMO) of Southend on Sea Borough Council. Over the 10 years since we were incorporated we have continuously looked at how we spend tenants money. We have a value for money strategy and coordinate all value for money savings each year ensuring that everyone in the company looks for any opportunities to save money whilst offering an excellent service. Some of the savings we have made over the 10 years include relocating most of our teams to one single office site, procuring our large scale contracts using delta e-sourcing and obtaining match funding grants to introduce fire sprinkler systems in some of the properties we manage. There are also many small items that we have saved money on as well, including buying our stationery as part of a larger contract.

9. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION TEAM
Back in February 2012, a review was held into the original provision of 91 temporary accommodation units (previously known as hostels - including 22 units at the women’s refuge) spread over ten buildings.
A number of staff residential rooms and offices were identified as surplus to requirements and converted to individual family/single units, increasing the number of homeless units by 16.
The new type of service, resulting from staff being based from a central office, enabled the staffing levels to be reduced and a Specialist Mental Health/Drug and Alcohol Case Worker to be employed.

10. SHELTERED HOUSING TEAM
Residents told us that they wanted the Sheltered Housing Officers available during normal working hours when other services such as doctors, district nurses and contractors visited the schemes. This led to the launch of a pilot scheme for a new provision of service. The Sheltered Housing Service and the Careline service were combined to create a new Supported Housing Service.
The borough has been divided into two areas (East and West) and each area comprises a mixture of static Sheltered Housing Officers (SHOs) for larger schemes of over 50 units, alongside a number of mobile SHOs. 91.93% of the residents who responded advised that at the end of the pilot they were happy with how often they saw their SHO in comparison to 77.19% at the beginning of the pilot.
It is believed that entry to commit these recent thefts must have been gained through insecure doors or windows, as there were no signs of forced entry. Therefore Essex Police along with South Essex Homes would like to remind residents of the importance of always securing your home.

Anita McGinley from South Essex Homes manages the Southend Multi Agency ASB Response Team (SMAART). She said: “Sheltered accommodation is a very safe environment in which to live, however, we would advise all residents and their visitors not to allow other people to ‘tailgate’ through the communal entrance. Never feel pressurised or charmed into letting someone else in behind you - if they are genuine visitors, they will be happy to wait to be let in by the person they are visiting. Don’t put yourself at risk by confronting them, but notify your Sheltered Housing Officer or Careline should someone come in with you.”

Your front door should be closed at all times and locked whenever you go out, even when you’re popping out to use the laundry or see a friend. Windows should also be closed and locked when you go out and please don’t leave keys under doormats as that is the first place an opportunistic burglar would look. If you don’t secure your home, it is not only your own flat you are making vulnerable but all your neighbours’ homes too.

Mick Armstrong, Crime Prevention Tactical Advisor for Southend, said: “Most thieves are opportunistic and in 3 out of 10 burglaries, access is gained through an open door or window. Burglars love it when you make their job easier for them. The advice here will ensure that your possessions and home remain secure. “Our website has more information and top tips on how you can beat the burglar – visit www.essex.police.uk for more”.

Of course, this security advice is also valid for residents of general needs properties, so we would encourage everyone to take some time to review how secure your own home is. A useful way to approach this is to view the property through the eyes of a burglar, identifying any weak points, then you can focus your efforts to strengthen your home security.

If you have an elderly friend or relative who is living in sheltered housing, please reiterate these important security messages to them. We would appreciate the help of the whole community to keep buildings secure and together we will send a clear message to all would-be burglars – that sheltered schemes in Southend are no-go areas!

Object ID cards make valuables too hot to handle

A new recording card scheme has been launched by Essex Police, encouraging residents to keep a record of valuable possessions. The Object ID card is designed for recording valuables such as medals, family heirlooms, memorabilia, art and antiques, as well as jewellery and other valuables. The card can be photographed next to your valuables to provide a handy scale reference as well as a colour chart. It also contains a number of tips on other details of how to protect your property.

It is hoped that the Object ID card will encourage the public to keep records of their possessions. This will be promoted to residents with the help of organisations such as Age UK, The Royal British Legion and Community Agents Essex.

You can get your own Object ID card from any Age UK and Community Agents Essex venues, the Royal British Legion Pop In Information and Advice Centre in Colchester, or by contacting your local Essex Watch Liaison Officer on 101.

Be Sure at the Door

Rogue traders are people who call at your door pretending to be qualified tradespeople and offering to do work on your home. They may seem friendly and persuasive but too often they target elderly people and carry out poor quality household repairs to roofs and driveways. They may claim to know your neighbours and have done work for them but often the work they promise to complete didn’t need doing in the first place.

You decide whether you need any work done to your house, not them.

If you think you’ve been taken in by a rogue trader, please let us know by calling 101, contact Trading Standards on 08454 040 506 or talk to a friend or relative.
South Essex Homes gets involved in various community events throughout the year but we’re never busier than we are over the summer months! This four page pullout contains a selection of our favourite photos from this year’s main events – can you spot anyone you know?!

**Coleman Street Carnival**

The Coleman Street Carnival took place on Friday 21st August, in and around The Storehouse at the foot of three of the town centre tower blocks.

Residents were treated to puppet shows, Wild Things petting zoo, face painting, bouncy castles, fun games and activities alongside lots of information stalls – as well as a free barbecue!

The event, which is organised by residents for residents and supported by the Southend Community Outreach Group (SCOG), is a good way for local agencies to engage with residents of the tower blocks and encourage them to get involved in the local community.

Representatives of the Better Queensway project were also on hand to discuss the future regeneration of the area and gather ideas on what local people would like to see in the local community.

Stuart Long, Community Development Manager for South Essex Homes, said: “This area sometimes suffers from negative press and misconceptions, however the tower blocks are home to many hardworking families and events like the Coleman Street Carnival encourage residents out of their flats to have a fun time whilst also engaging with local agencies and accessing lots of useful information and advice.”

**Mendip Goes Wild!**

The ‘Mendip Goes Wild!’ Heritage Fun Day took place on Friday, 31st July, at the Mendip Wildlife Garden in Dunster Avenue, Westcliff – to celebrate £10,000 of Heritage Lottery funding being awarded to the project.

The funding has been awarded to make the wildlife garden fully accessible and build a summerhouse which will be used to store equipment, as a base for volunteers and to introduce an education programme at the site.

Works began there in August and are being carried out by local charity, Trust Links, who are working in partnership with the Mendip Wildlife Garden Committee.

The sun shone for the event, where dozens of visitors enjoyed an animal petting zoo, bouncy castle and theatre performances whilst they found out more about the work of the wildlife garden and how the Heritage Lottery funding will make a difference at this beautiful hidden hideaway.
Thousands of residents made their way to Priory Park on Wednesday 5th August for the Southend Community Event 2015.

Visitors were able to access a wide variety of information and advice and there were lots of activities for the kids to enjoy - including bouncy castles, bungee trampolines, teacup rides, SUFC football training, Wild Things animal petting zoo and entertainment on the stage throughout the day!

Shirley O’Reilly is Chair of the Southend Tenants & Residents Association (STRF) who organise the annual event. Shirley said: “Each year the event gets bigger and better. It’s a great way for adults to access information and advice on a wide range of issues whilst the whole family can enjoy the entertainment and activities. It’s great to see the community spirit that exists here in Southend.”

South Essex Homes is one of the main sponsors of the annual event. We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who was involved in the organisation of the event through to those who came along on the day. We’re already looking forward to next year!
Around 100 people of all ages attended a community barbecue at Cluny Square on 16th July.

The event was a consultation exercise for South Essex Homes, supported by the Southend Food Culture Project and HealthWatch Essex, to gauge local people’s views on what they want to see in the area.

In return for completing a survey, residents were treated to burger, sausage or vegetable kebab, donated by Grumpy’s Diner in Southchurch Road and supported by Café@theSquare.

It offered a chance for residents to speak to officers from South Essex Homes on a one-to-one basis and express what they’d like to see introduced to the local community, whilst also promoting the community Café@theSquare.

Nicola Kelleher, 37, has been a resident in the area for three years. She said: “I think this a great event as it has brought people together and I didn’t even know this cafe was here. I am interested in doing some more work with local teens, and cookery lessons for families and those with young children, basically making cooking fun!

‘Young people in this area need a base and somewhere to go. I have ideas for a teen programme in the evening, a ‘feeling happy, feeling safe’ workshop, youth empowerment workshop and kids confidence workshop too - so watch this space!”

Crazy about Jalfrezi!

On 15th July, we held an Indian Cooking Demonstration at the Storehouse in Coleman Street, Southend, which all residents of the Queensway estate and our Food Champions from across the borough were invited to attend.

The event was arranged to encourage healthy eating by demonstrating how simple Indian cooking can be and how tasty the results are!

MY TOWN SOUTHEND

‘My Town Southend’ has produced a number of videos covering the work of our Community Development Team, which are available to view on YouTube.

They are amongst a number of short films on the ‘My Town Southend’ YouTube channel, covering a range of community events and focussing on the work of various local agencies.

‘My Town Southend’ is a voluntary organisation - they create these videos as a free service to the community, so it doesn’t cost us a penny!

They are always looking to film stories of local interest so if you want to get involved or have any ideas of events they could cover, please chat to Stuart Long by calling 01702 212650 or emailing stuartlong@seh.southend.gov.uk.

Also, if you know anyone interested in a career in media, there are several volunteering opportunities available on the ‘My Town Southend’ website.

Take a look at the videos created so far by searching for ‘My Town Southend’ on the internet.

Community Development booklet

We have produced a brand new Community Development booklet which contains details about the wide variety of ways we can help you to get involved in your local community!

Details are also available on our website, or if you’d like to receive a copy of this booklet, please give us a call on 01702 212650 and we’d be happy to post one out to you.
Estate Inspections

Estate Inspections are now held throughout the year and involve officers from South Essex Homes surveying each area of the town which include properties managed by us, in order to look for any issues that require our attention. Residents are welcome to come along on these inspections to see this process in action and point out problems that they are aware of. The table below contains the dates and locations of the inspections that are due to take place over the next three months. If you would like to come along, please meet us at the start point at the stated time. We appreciate your input and look forward to seeing more residents take part in estate inspections throughout 2015. For more information about estate inspections please call us on 0800 833 160.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>START POINT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17/11/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Beaver Tower</td>
<td>Beaver Tower Main Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/11/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Treecot Drive, Treelawn Drive, Broomfield Avenue, Bridgewater Drive</td>
<td>Corner of Treecot Drive and Treelawn Drive</td>
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<td>19/11/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
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<td>Corner of Little Fretches and Eastwood Road North</td>
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<tr>
<td>24/11/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Western Approaches, Lundy Close</td>
<td>Corner of Lundy Close and Western Approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>25/11/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Yantlet</td>
<td>Yantlet Main Entrance</td>
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<tr>
<td>26/11/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Shannon Close, Birche Close, Croft Close</td>
<td>Corner of Danescroft Drive and Shannon Close</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/12/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Neil Armstrong Way</td>
<td>Outside Scott House</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/12/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Danbury Close, Tiptree Close</td>
<td>Corner of Danbury Close and Stonehill Road</td>
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<td>08/12/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Dunster Avenue, Martock Avenue, Mendip Flats, Mendip Crescent Cheddar Avenue, Charles Close</td>
<td>Outside West Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/12/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Bradfordbury, Rothwell Close, Eastwood Old Road</td>
<td>Corner of Bradfordbury and Eastwood Old Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>15/12/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Eaton Road, Olive Avenue</td>
<td>Corner of Eaton Road and Herschell Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>17/12/2015</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>East Street Leigh</td>
<td>Corner of East Street and Broadway</td>
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NHS HEALTH CHECKS

A free NHS Health Check is like a MOT for your heart. It will help you know more about your health and how to get fitter and stay well for longer. It helps you prevent heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease or having a stroke.

If you are between 40 and 74 you will be asked to come for a NHS Health Check by your GP practice. Other people can ask for a NHS Health Check if they are worried about their health. If you already have heart or kidney disease, diabetes or have had a stroke then you will not be asked to come for a health check. People with high cholesterol (fat in the blood) or high blood pressure also do not need a free NHS Health Check as the GP already knows about these problems. You will be invited once every five years for your check.

Why do people need a health check? Anyone can get heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease or have a stroke. As you get older you are more at risk of getting these illnesses. There are some things that can make you more likely to get these illnesses. These are being overweight, not keeping fit, not eating a good diet, smoking or drinking too much alcohol. Having a NHS Health Check can help stop you getting these illnesses and keep you fit and well.

The health check takes 20 to 30 minutes. You will be asked some questions about your health and illnesses you have had. They will check how tall you are, how heavy you are and some other questions about you. They will take your blood pressure and measure your cholesterol.

If you do have an unhealthy lifestyle, don't worry, nobody will moan at you. Information and support will be offered including access to a range of free and subsidised local services including a 12 week adult weight management programme, Stop Smoking Support and 1-to-1 Health Trainer sessions.

You can have your free NHS Health Check at your GP surgery or out in the community, with a company called Anglia Community Enterprise (ACE). You may have already seen them in Victoria Circus or elsewhere across Southend. ACE is working with SE Homes to provide health checks in a community venue near you.

If you would like a health check, please phone your GP surgery or call ACE on 0800 022 4524, option 4.
Welcome back to Leasehold Matters... the page in Insight devoted to Leaseholders. I hope you all enjoyed the summer months.

With winter on its way many of you may be considering improvements to your gas and central heating systems. Our Gas Safety Engineer has been able to secure some competitive rates for all leaseholders at South Essex Homes. If you are interested in taking advantage of this, please see the bottom of this page. Any arrangement to undertake works will of course be between yourself and Essex Maintenance but we hope you are able to benefit from their expertise.

In this edition another member of our Focus Group has kindly contributed to the Block Profile article.

Kind Regards, Jan

What do you like most about the property?

It is nice and peaceful. The flat is on one of the higher floors so there is no noise from traffic. The views of the sea and surrounding area are great and I am very impressed with the communal gardens. The block is also very convenient for access to the Town Centre and there are a number of schools nearby.

As a leaseholder, are you happy with the service South Essex Homes provides at the property?

The Caretaking Service is very good and the communal gardens are well maintained. The main entrance doors also provide a good level of security.

Are you happy with the service South Essex Homes provides to you in general?

Generally yes. I am impressed by staff and find them very easy to approach. Issues can take time to resolve but they are willing to assist as best as they can. I recently had a water leak at the address and contacted South Essex Homes on a Saturday. I was quite surprised to be able to get through and by contacting them I was able to ensure that follow up action was taken on Monday.

Actual Service Charge Statements 1st April 2014-31st March 2015

If you require a thorough breakdown of your block’s repairs in conjunction with the recent statements, or have any other queries relating to costs, please do not hesitate to contact the Leasehold Team on 0800 833 160 or email sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk or write to: Leasehold Services, PO Box 5817, Southend on Sea, SS1 9EL

Schedule of prices for leaseholder gas servicing/repairs by Essex Maintenance Ltd during 2015/16 financial year

SCHEDULE 1

Prices for annual gas safety check of gas appliance, including comprehensive cover for any parts that need replacing in the appliance or central heating system throughout the year, and including associated labour costs.

Note - Comprehensive cover does not include complete replacement of a gas appliance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Gas Appliance</th>
<th>Cost per Appliance for Safety Check and Comprehensive Annual Cover (excluding VAT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gas Fired Warm Air Unit</td>
<td>£120.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Fired Boiler</td>
<td>£120.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Back Boiler Unit (incl. firefront)</td>
<td>£120.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Fired Water Heater</td>
<td>£80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Gas Fire Unit</td>
<td>£80.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that all of the above prices will be subject to VAT at the current rate and any work invoiced directly to each leaseholder by Essex Maintenance Ltd.

SCHEDULE 2

Prices for annual gas safety check only of gas appliance, and prices applicable for any repairs or replacement parts necessary during the service visit or any subsequent callout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Gas Appliance</th>
<th>Cost per Appliance for Annual Gas Safety Check Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gas Fired Warm Air Unit</td>
<td>£55 + VAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Fired Boiler (any type)</td>
<td>£55 + VAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Fired Water Heater</td>
<td>£55 + VAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Gas Fire Unit</td>
<td>£40 + VAT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Repairs to Gas Appliances or Central Heating System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Per Repair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Callout including 1st hours labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent hourly labour rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement Parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation / Replacement Appliances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that all of the above prices will be subject to VAT at the current rate and any work invoiced directly to each leaseholder by Essex Maintenance Ltd.
Before the cold weather really hits, autumn is the perfect time of year to make sure your home is ready for winter. Here are some helpful hints and tips to prepare you and your home for a cold weather spell:

- If your home has condensation, make sure you wipe it away every morning to prevent moisture damage. During periods of cold weather, keep your home warm and ventilated.
- If you have an outside tap, make sure it is covered/insulated to prevent it from freezing. Alternatively, where outside taps can be isolated and are not in use during the winter, these should be turned off and any external pipework drained.
- Check that your central heating system is working and familiarise yourself with the settings if you haven’t used it in a while. If you find it is not working as it should, please report this early so that any necessary repairs can be undertaken before they become urgent in the winter months.
- If you haven’t already, allow us entry to carry out your essential annual gas safety checks.
- If you have an open chimney make sure it is clear of any blockages and consider getting it cleaned by a chimney sweep.
- Stock up on salt or cat litter as an alternative for clearing ice from paths.
- Find a torch, candles and matches, and put them somewhere handy in the event of a power cut.
- If you have draughts or gaps in the bottom of doors, invest in some large cushions or draught excluders.
- Check your energy suppliers are offering you the best deals, have a look at our article below about Southend Energy to see if you could make annual savings on your energy bill.
- Bleed your radiators to release any trapped air – use a special key (available for under £1 from most hardware stores) and an old towel to collect any water.

Energy switchers save enough to buy a flat

Residents across the Borough have collectively saved enough money to buy a flat by switching their energy supplies to Southend Energy: a new energy partnership between Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and OVO Energy.

Despite only being launched on 28 May, by the beginning of September the service had saved 700 customers an average of £242 each.

In September, the partnership officially launched its prepayment meter offer (PAYG), offering the cheapest prepayment energy tariffs in the country.

Southend Energy has bespoke tariffs, negotiated by the Council, that aim to offer a fair energy deal with low standing charges and no exit fees. It is available to people living within the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council boundaries.

Jeremy Martin, Energy Projects Manager for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, said: “So many people could save by switching but many are put off by a distrust of energy companies and fears that the switching process is complicated. But switching couldn’t be easier and Southend Energy customers can be assured that they are getting a fair deal with a tariff negotiated by the Council.”

To find out if you could save, go to www.southendenergy.co.uk or call 0800 408 6711 for pay monthly or 0800 408 6715 for PAYG.

Elise Thomas, Leigh

Mrs Elise Thomas, from Leigh-on-Sea, called Southend Energy after receiving a leaflet in Outlook magazine to be told that she could save £437 a year.

She said: “I had been with the same company for ages. They had been alright but their bills were massive.

Then a leaflet came through my door, and by chance my son had told me that OVO were very efficient. I think that was the one little nudge I needed to do something about it.”

Mrs Thomas is going to use the money she saved towards getting her house painted.

Jacqueline Peacock

Jacqueline Peacock, a South Essex Homes resident, had been using two separate suppliers for her gas and electricity supplies, which she pays on a prepayment meter, and had never switched before. Then she called Southend Energy and found out she was likely to be saving in the region of £80 a year by switching and she will also be getting a SMART meter installed, which will enable her to better understand how and when she is using energy in her home.
# What’s on in Southend?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT IS IT?</th>
<th>WHEN CAN I GO? WHERE IS IT?</th>
<th>ANYTHING ELSE I NEED TO KNOW?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hola Amigos Spanish Clubs</strong></td>
<td>15th September 2015 - 15th December 2015 - Every week at 14:00</td>
<td>Classes cost £5 each and booking is essential via Sophie at <a href="mailto:Sophie@Hola-Amigos.co.uk">Sophie@Hola-Amigos.co.uk</a> Tel 07724 936421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have fun learning Spanish.</td>
<td>The event will be held in The Forum, Elmer Square, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 1NE. Every Tuesday at 2pm until 15th December</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Santa on the Pier</strong></td>
<td>Southend Pier, Saturdays and Sundays from 28th November – 20th December and also Mon 21st &amp; Tues 22nd December</td>
<td>Cost is £8 per child including a pier train ticket for the child plus one adult. Booking is essential via <a href="http://www.visitsouthend.co.uk">www.visitsouthend.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Santa in his grotto on the shore end of the Pier and receive a special gift.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leigh Art Trail - Winter Art and Craft Exhibition</strong></td>
<td>24th October 2015 - 2nd January 2016 - Every day</td>
<td>Free to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beecroft Art Gallery Showcasing Leigh-on-Sea based art, painting, photography, ceramics, sculpture and pottery. All works will be for sale.</td>
<td>The event will be held in Beecroft Gallery, Victoria Avenue, Southend, SS2 6EX</td>
<td>Free to attend. For more details call the Bookstart Team on 01702 212120 or email <a href="mailto:Bookstart@southend.gov.uk">Bookstart@southend.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Make &amp; Do - at the Libraries</strong></td>
<td>Held at various libraries across the borough - see <a href="http://www.southend.gov.uk/events">www.southend.gov.uk/events</a> for specific dates and locations.</td>
<td>Free to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, craft and story time. Drop-in sessions for all children under 5 years old to attend with their parents and carers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>See back page for full details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free Christmas Party</strong></td>
<td>Kids Kingdom, Southend Thursday 10th December 4.30pm - 6.45pm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If, for whatever reason, you have a problem reading this document, please contact us to discuss alternative formats available.

0800 833 160

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*Joining up to Social Media sites is a great way to keep up to date with all the latest news.*

Why not join the growing number of people following South Essex Homes’ Twitter page or ‘Liking’ our Facebook page?

There are now 1711 Twitter followers and 280 ‘likes’ on Facebook (figures correct as at 27th October 2015). Next time you’re online, check us out!
WHAT IS ABUSE?

- Physical abuse - When someone hurts you - this could be hitting, kicking, burning, holding down or pushing around.
- Sexual abuse - When someone touches you or makes you do things you do not like. They could make you touch them or kiss them when you do not want to.
- Psychological abuse - When someone says something to upset you - they could say you are stupid, threaten you, make you sad or hurt your feelings.
- Financial abuse - When someone takes your money or things you own without asking. They might spend your money in a way you do not want.
- Neglect - When someone, who should be looking after you, doesn’t feed you, keep you warm and safe or take you to your doctor’s when you need help.
- Discrimination - When someone treats you badly because of your disability, sexuality, religion or the colour of your skin, for example.
- Institutional abuse - This could happen in a day centre, a hospital or a home when either a member of staff or another person might not treat you dignity and respect.

It is generally recognised that the perpetrators of abuse or neglect are most commonly people who are trusted and relied on by the person, such as family members or care staff. As with all types of abuse, victims are never responsible for their abuse, it is the perpetrators who are responsible.

Anyone can be an abuser. Abuse can happen anywhere including in your own home.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you see, hear or suspect an adult is being abused you can either call us on 0800 833160 or Ask Sal 08452 66 66 63. You can contact us via our website at www.southessexhomes.co.uk or visit Ask Sal at www.asksal.org.uk. Alternatively you can contact the Adult Safeguarding Team at the Council on 01702 215008 or via the Council’s website www.southend.gov.uk; or the Police on 101 or 999 if it is an emergency.

If you see, hear or suspect a child is being abused you can either call us on 0800 833160, NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, Childline on 0800 1111, the Council’s Safeguarding team on 01702 215007, the Police on 101 or 999 if it is an emergency. You can contact us via our website at www.southessexhomes.co.uk or visit NSPCC Child Protection helpline at www.NSPCC.org.uk or Childline at www.childline.org.uk.

Do you have home contents insurance?

Isn’t it better to be safe than sorry?

Are you aware that South Essex Homes is not responsible for insuring the contents of your home?

Have you considered taking out home contents insurance to protect yourself financially against the risk of damage to your possessions?

Did you know that South Essex Homes offer a home contents insurance scheme?

- Affordable premiums payable by weekly installments with your rent starting at £0.80 per week for £10,000 standard cover or £1.05 per week including accidental damage
- Insures your possessions against fire, theft, storm and other perils
- No excess to pay in the event of a claim
- Simple application process

For an application pack or for more information call us on 0800 0234 057
South Essex Homes is delighted to invite children to our
FREE CHRISTMAS PARTY
which will be held at Kids Kingdom. Southend on Sea on Thursday 10th December 2015.

Limited places are available and these will be provisionally allocated on a first come, first served basis.

The party starts at 4.30pm with food being served at 6pm; and with a visit from Father Christmas it is sure to be a fun filled afternoon, the party will then finish at 6.45pm.

Children must be aged between 0-12 years old. Parents are asked to stay at the party with their children.

If your child would like to attend please return your form as soon as possible with relevant payment.

If you would like further information please contact Sue Rickard on 01702 212650 or through the contact centre on 0800 833 160

In order to secure your child(ren)'s place, we are asking for £2.00 refundable deposit per child which will be returned to you on attendance at the party.

Cheques to be made out to South Essex Homes.

Please return the completed form by 30th November sending it to ‘FREEPOST SOUTH ESSEX HOMES’- there is no need to attach a stamp.

I would like my child(ren) to attend the Children’s Christmas Party at 10th December 2015

Name: _______________________________ Gender: _______________ Age: __________
Name: _______________________________ Gender: _______________ Age: __________
Name: _______________________________ Gender: _______________ Age: __________
Name: _______________________________ Gender: _______________ Age: __________

Are there any special dietary requirements? _____________________________________________

Parent/Guardians Name: _______________________________ Telephone: __________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
Postcode: _______________________________ Email: ________________________________

Return to: FREEPOST SOUTH ESSEX HOMES