



Performance 2007/8 Annual Report

South Essex Homes - Keeping you informed

Introduction

The final figures for our key performance indicators for 2007/8 have been reported to Board and published in our quarterly performance review.

The aim of this report is to present this information in a way that is easily understandable, and to show South Essex Homes progress in improving services by comparison with previous years and with other housing organisations.

Sometimes information is not available for previous years because we have changed the way we organise our services, or the way we measure them. Information for other housing organisations is also available only for "standard" indicators which are collected by everyone. These do not cover all important parts of the service

For these standard indicators we have compared South Essex Homes with organisations of a similar size in the "East Region" of the country, whether they are organised as housing associations or ALMOs like us. This is so that we are comparing "like-with-like"

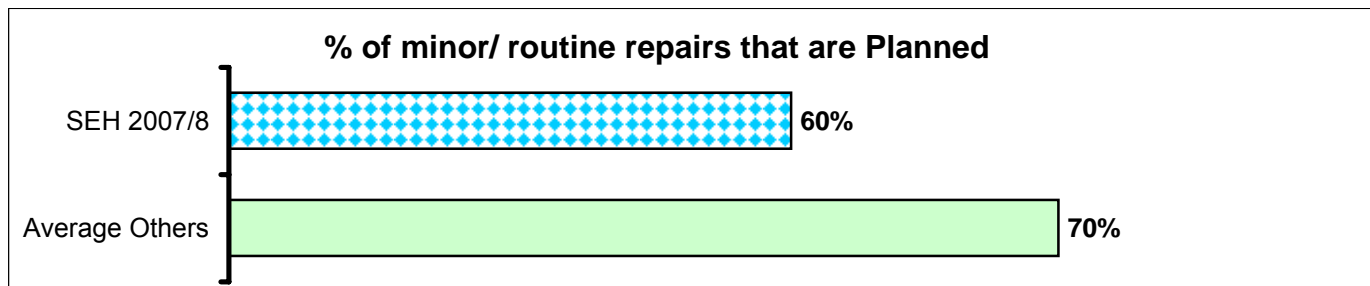
The report is divided into 4 sections

- (a) Repairs & Decent Homes
- (b) Empty Properties & Lettings
- (c) Rent Collection & Anti-Social Behaviour
- (d) Customer contact

Repairs & Maintenance

There are two sorts of ordinary repairs carried out by South Essex Homes. *Responsive repairs* are those that are carried out as a result of problems reported by residents, like a leaking tap or broken light switch. *Planned maintenance* includes regular servicing of gas boilers and lifts, decorating, work to keep communal areas in good order, and major works to groups of properties.

It is a good idea to plan as many works as possible, as they can be organised more effectively and done more cheaply. The generally recommended figure is that planned work should be about 60% of spending.



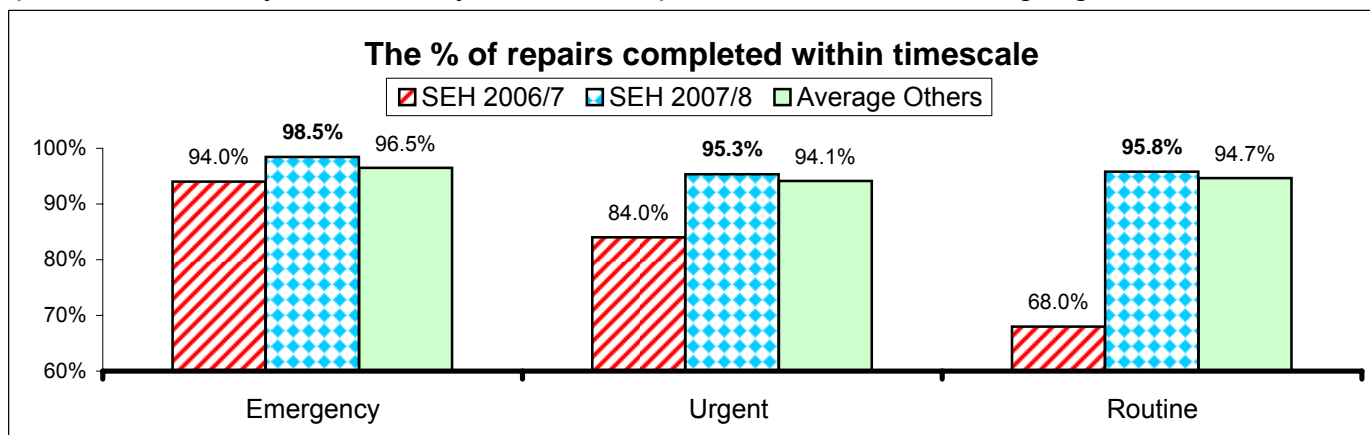
South Essex Homes are at the recommended level, but lower than the average. However other areas may have all, or nearly all, of their homes improved to "decent homes" standards, which means that things are less likely to break or go wrong.

South Essex Homes orders responsive repairs in 3 categories:

- Emergencies which have to be done in 24 hours
- Urgent repairs which have to be completed within a week
- Routine repairs which have to be completed in 4 weeks

Most other housing organisations have similar arrangements

Last year there was a big change in the way we ran our repairs service. Instead of employing staff directly we used a private contractor called Connaughts. The chart below shows performance this year and last year, and compares this to other housing organisations

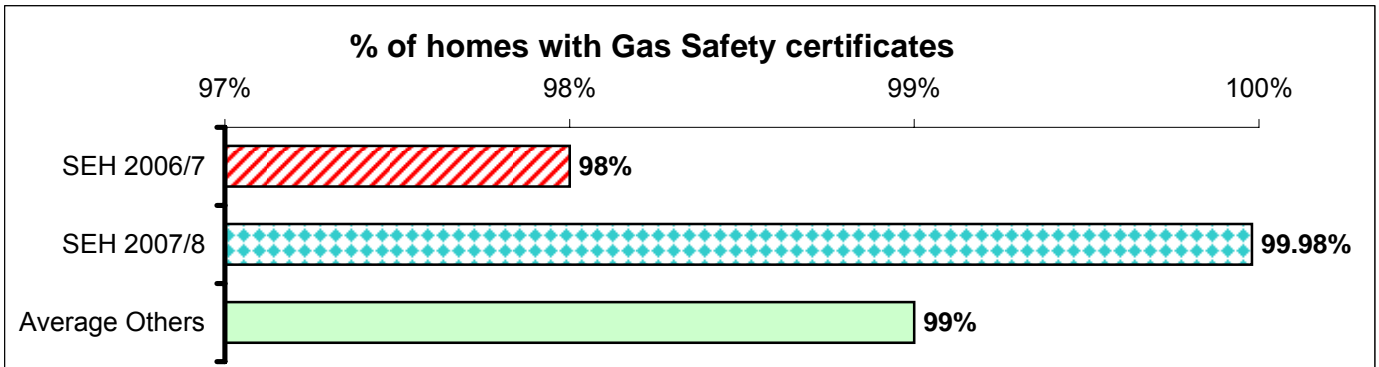


There was a big improvement in our repairs service last year, and it was better than the average for other organisations. However the very best ALMOs achieve figures of over 98% for all categories, and we want to do as well as they do.

It is important, not just that we do repairs quickly, but that we do a good job. We regularly ask 1 in 5 of residents who have had a job completed what they think. **92%** said they were satisfied with the service overall and the standard of work, and **19 out of 20** agreed that the operatives were polite.

Gas Servicing

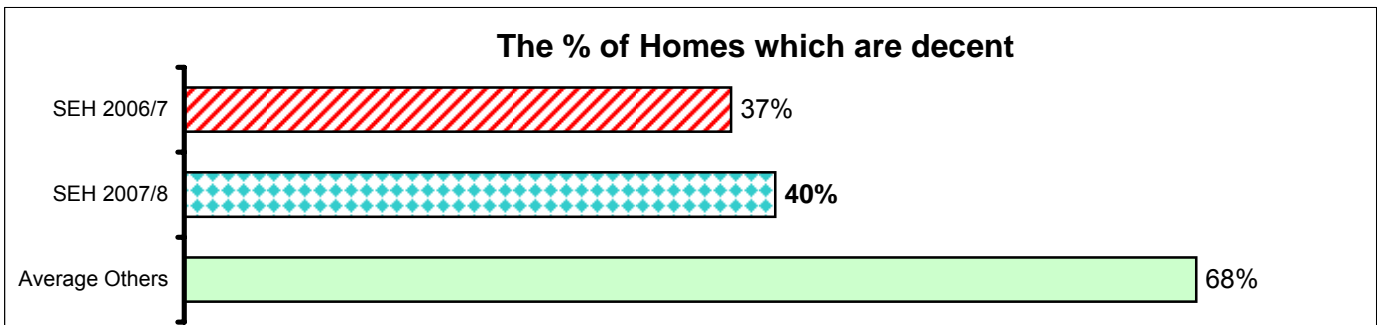
All landlords have a responsibility to service all gas appliances every year and issue a safety certificate. South Essex Homes and our contractor PH Jones achieved this last year for every property except one. Most other housing organisations achieve around 99% on this measure.



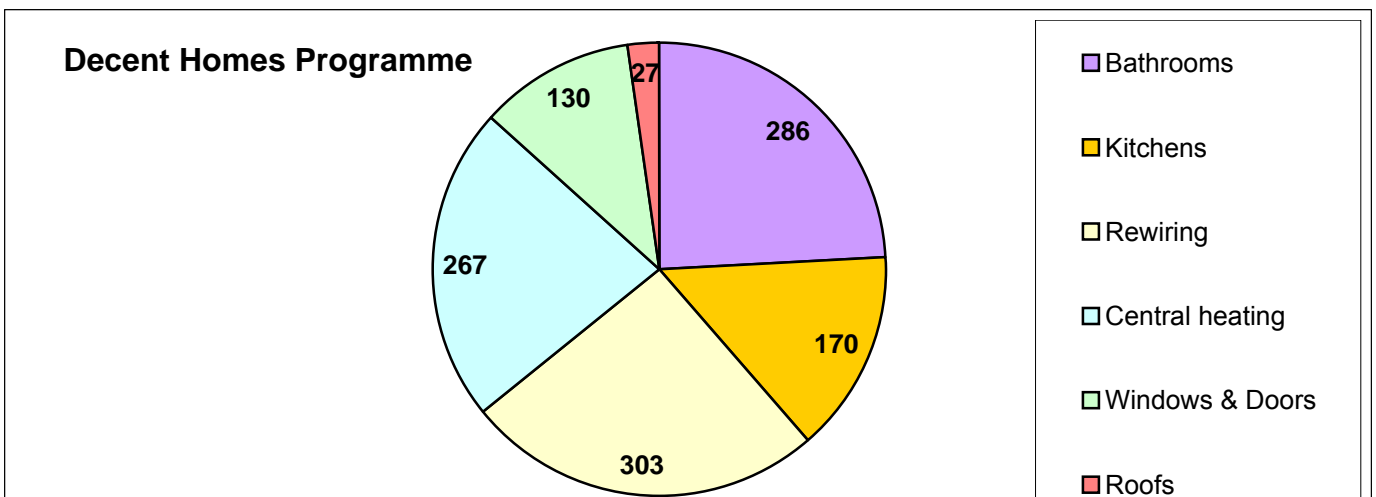
Decent Homes

The government has produced a Decent Homes standard, which all Council homes are expected to meet. Homes have to:

- 1) Be fit for human habitation (have no major health hazards)
- 2) Be in a reasonable state of repair
- 3) Have modern facilities and services
- 4) Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

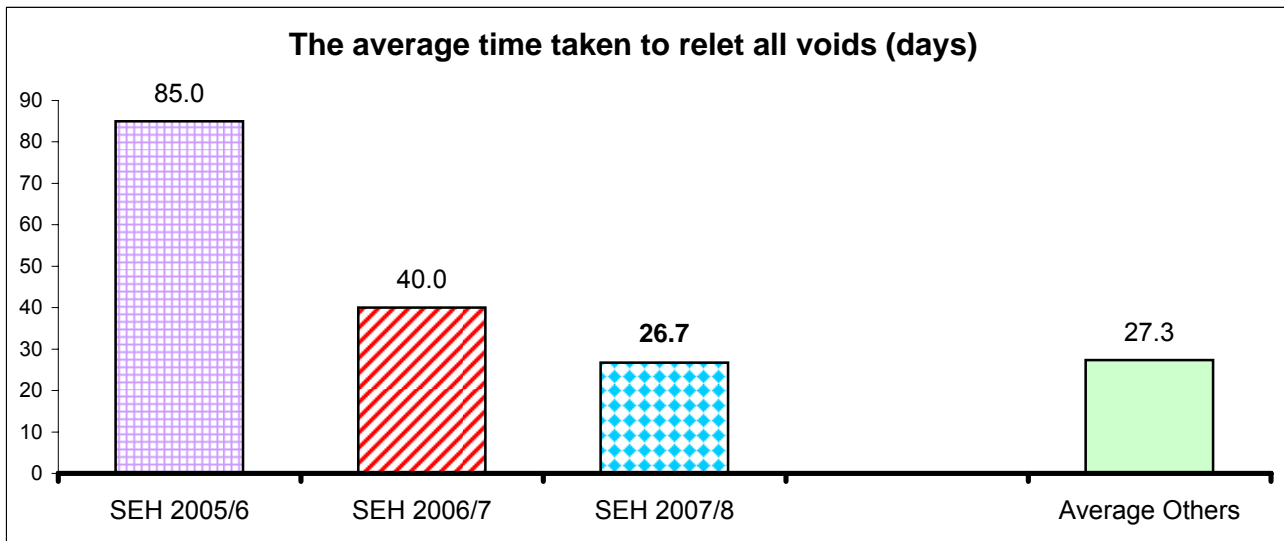


In addition to ordinary repairs, South Essex Homes spent over £5 million last year on our Decent Homes programme. The pie chart shows what this was spent on. We are planning to make all our homes decent by 2013, but will need extra money from the government in order to achieve this.



Empty Properties

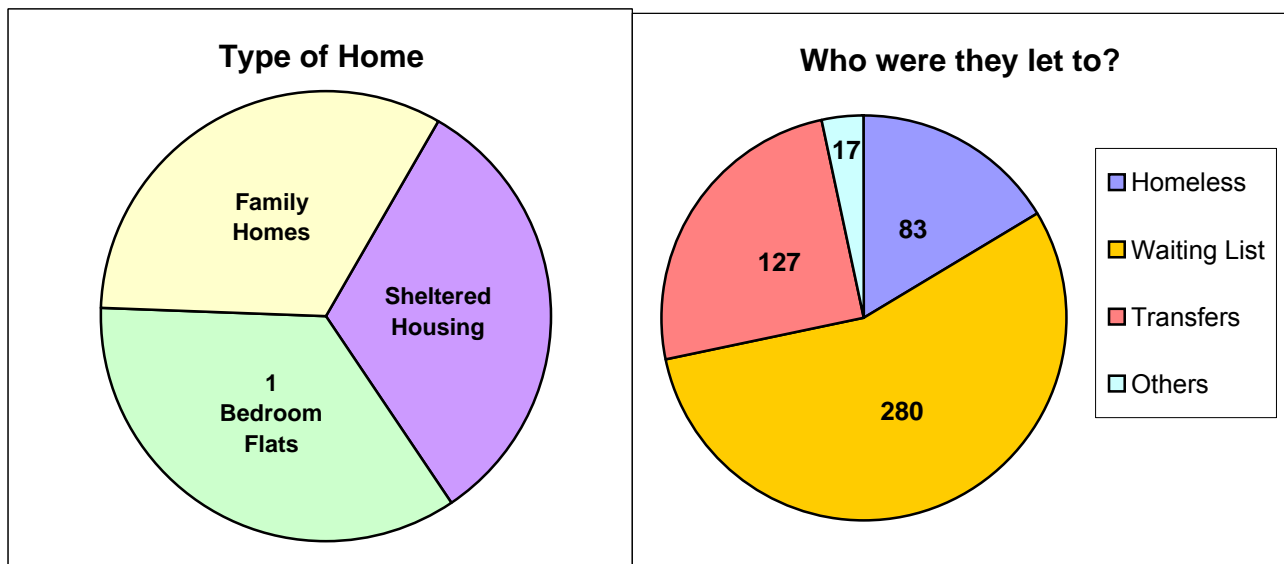
South Essex Homes has been successful in reducing the length of time it takes to relet empty homes. Our figures are now better than similar housing organisations, and close to the top quarter of ALMOs in the country as a whole.



It takes a little bit longer to let sheltered homes (especially studios), and so our performance for ordinary homes is even better than it looks at first glance.

Who do we let our homes to?

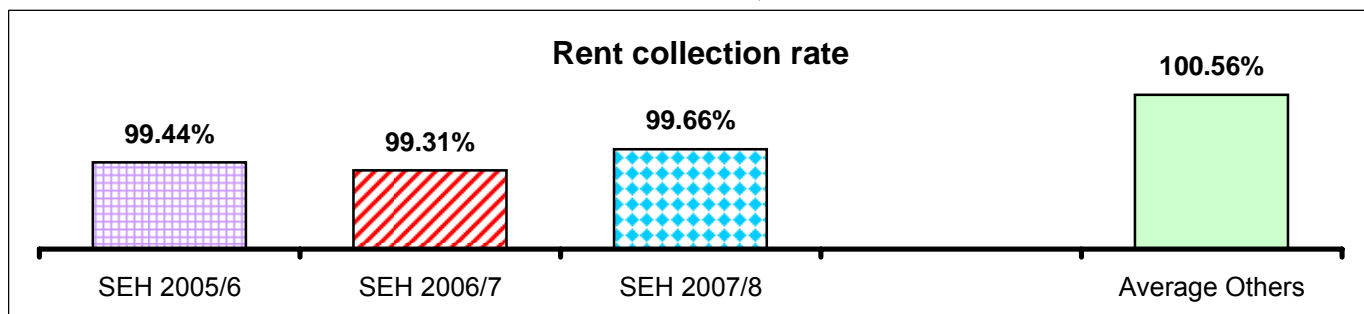
Last year we made 507 new lettings. The charts below show what homes we had available for letting and who they were let to



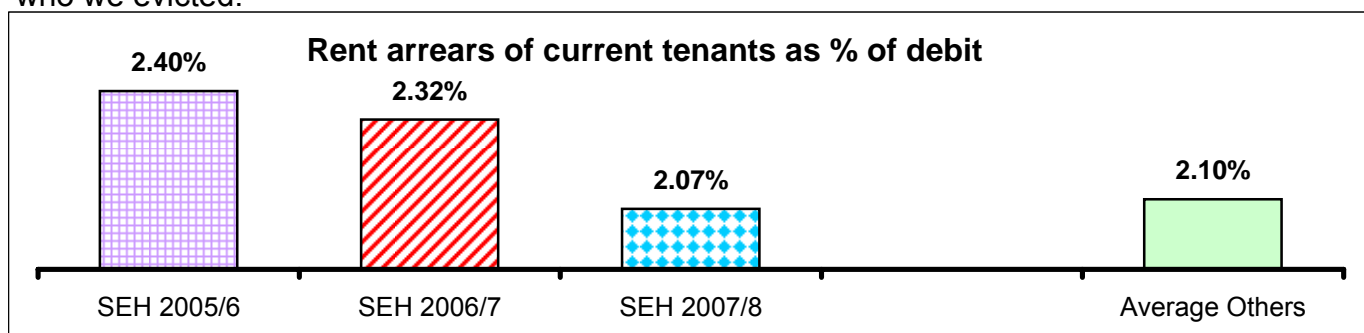
There were also 52 mutual exchanges last year. Nine out of ten of our new tenants described themselves as White British, with the remaining 10% coming from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Rent Collection

The rent paid by tenants is the income that pays for the services provided. We need to make sure therefore that all our residents pay the rent that is due. Last year there was £23 million due from tenants and we collected all of this bar £78,000 -well over 99%.



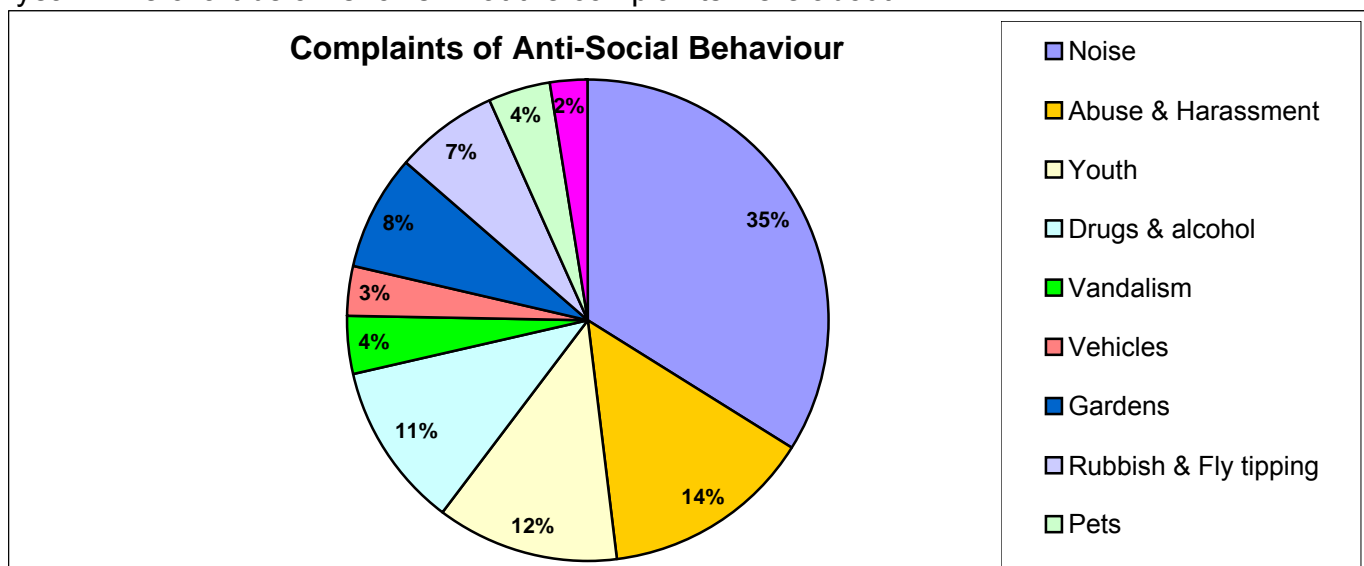
Other housing organisations have done even better, collecting more rent than was due, which means they were reducing rent arrears. Our rent arrears also went down quite a lot, even though we collected less than 100%, because some tenants left owing money, including 36 who we evicted.



This shows that we have reduced our rent arrears down to the average level for comparable organisations. In cash terms rent arrears were **£485,000** at the end of the year, which is just over 2% of the rent due. The number of tenants in serious arrears also dropped a lot. There were only 233 tenants who owed more than 7 weeks rent at the end of the year, which is less than average.

Anti-Social Behaviour

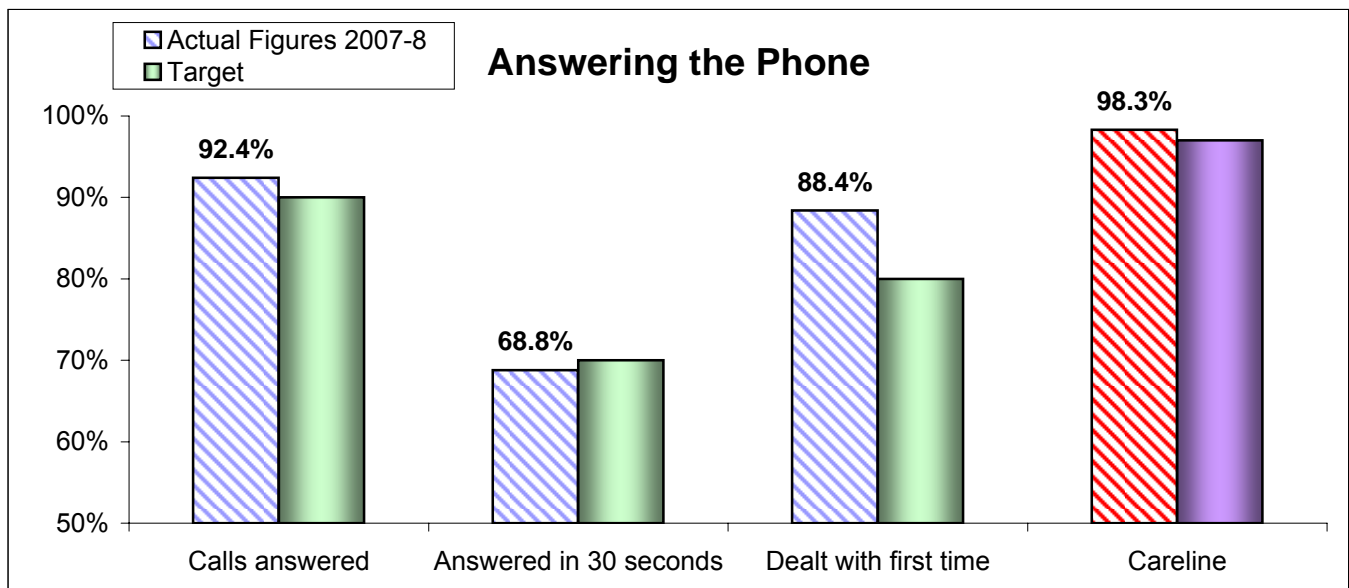
There were 840 complaints about anti-social behaviour reported to our specialist team last year. The chart below shows what the complaints were about.



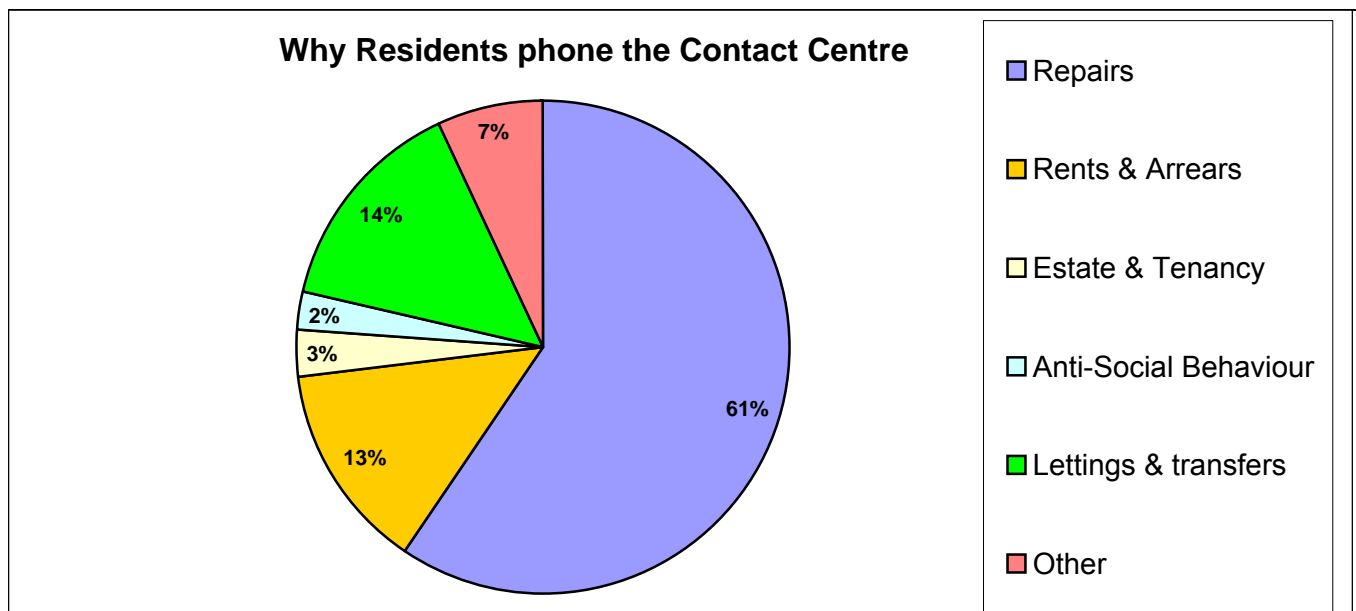
Noise nuisance causes most complaints, but there are a wide range of problems. In most cases the Anti-Social Behaviour team is able to take action to reduce or stop the problem. In the most serious cases there will be police action and court orders against the residents causing the problem. Seven tenants were evicted last year for anti-social behaviour.

Customer Contact

South Essex Homes set up a customer contact centre last year so that we could deal better with queries from residents. The chart shows how well they did at answering calls, and also shows how our separate Careline service did at answering calls.



Careline answered virtually all of its phone calls in less than 30 seconds. The main Contact Centre did not do quite as well, but was able to deal with nearly 9 out of 10 of all calls without having to pass them on to someone else. The second chart shows what the phone calls were about. The majority were about repairs.



Caretaking

Our caretakers provide a bulk refuse removal service. They did 740 clearances last year of which 91% were done within 2 days. They also removed 160 lots of graffiti.