



PERFORMANCE REPORT to residents

2020



Welcome

I hope this report finds you safe and well. For many, events of the past six months have made us think about what is truly important. Our health, and the wellbeing of those around us, has come top of the list for most. A safe and secure home is a huge part of that, so as a responsible landlord, we know how important it is that we do a good job. I couldn't be prouder of the Saxon Weald team who have kept our essential services running throughout lockdown. My thanks go to all of you who have shown us your support, patience and appreciation during what has been an exceptionally challenging time for everyone.

In this report, we'll tell you how our services have been performing, not just recently, but over the past financial year. There are many things we are pleased with, and one or two things we'll be working to improve. We'll also tell you how we have been spending our money. You may be interested to know that around a quarter of our income has been spent on repairs and maintenance of our existing homes, while 17% was invested in new homes.

I hope the information we've supplied gives you confidence in us and our services. If you have any feedback on what we've said, or anything you think we've missed, please email us at hello@saxonweald.com.

With best wishes,

Steven Dennis,

Chief Executive



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Saxon Weald is a housing association, established in 2000, managing approximately 6,750 homes across Sussex and Hampshire. We provide affordable rented and shared ownership homes for individuals and families, as well as properties exclusively for the over 55s. We also provide homes for market rent and shared ownership sale through our Weald Living brand.

We are a charitable Community Benefit Society, with the money we make from rents being re-invested in the management, maintenance and building of homes. We are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Delivering a great customer experience and value for money (VfM) are at the heart of what we do. Examples of our performance against our VfM targets and objectives are provided throughout this report.

Please note throughout this report, that unless otherwise stated figures are taken from the period 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020.

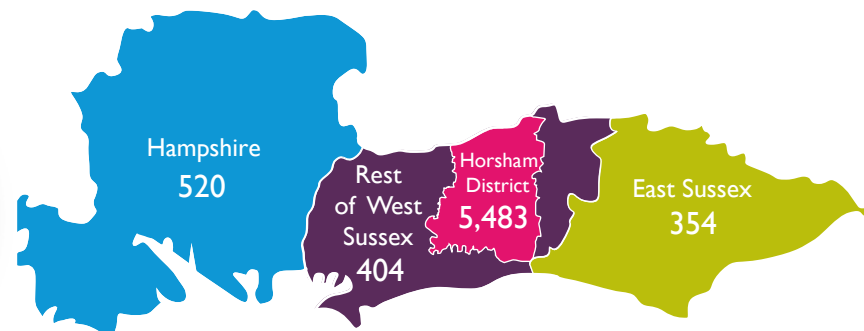
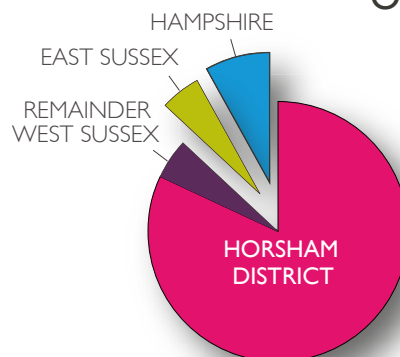
About us

NUMBER OF HOMES

| | |
|---|-------|
| Social rented homes..... | 5,752 |
| Shared ownership homes..... | 223 |
| Leasehold homes for older people | 157 |
| Freehold of privately owned homes..... | 521 |
| Market rent homes..... | 108 |

Total number of homes: 6,761

OUR HOMES & WHERE THEY ARE



- 81% Homes in the Horsham district of West Sussex
- 6% Homes in the remainder of West Sussex
- 5% East Sussex
- 8% Hampshire

NUMBER OF PROPERTIES LET

Total homes let last year 479

Existing homes re-let 425

New build homes let..... 54

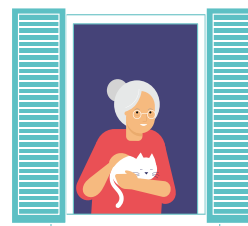
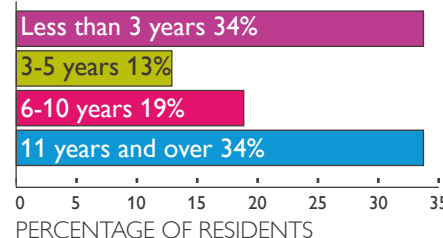
OUR CUSTOMERS

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

| | |
|--|-----|
| Families | 29% |
| Single person | 19% |
| Over 65s in general needs homes..... | 15% |
| Over 65s in retirement properties..... | 23% |
| Shared owners..... | 3% |
| Leaseholders | 8% |
| Shared equity..... | 3% |



LENGTH OF TIME AS A RESIDENT



OUR STAFF

Office staff..... 126

Scheme managers 37

Maintenance 78

Board members..... 9

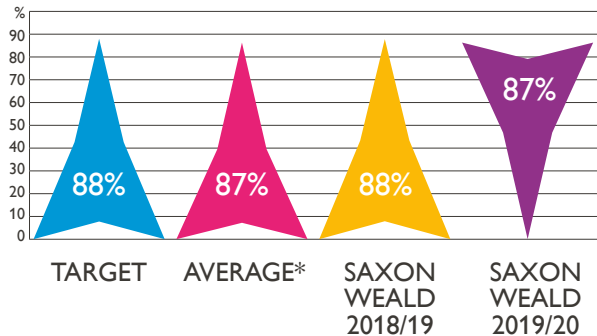
TOTAL..... 250

(229 full-time equivalents)



Performance at a glance

OVERALL SATISFACTION



This is a very slight decrease on last year's result, but by continuing to put customers at the heart of our services, we're confident we'll see that figure rise again in the coming year.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT



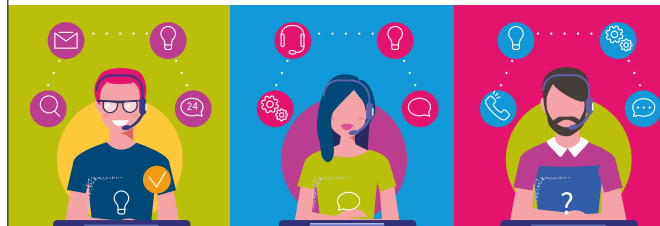
63,080 phone calls answered



22,714 emails
11,384 contacts via web message,
social media and use of text system



86% - customer satisfaction with
handling of enquiries



RENTS

Average
monthly
rents for
a two
bedroom
property in
Horsham



* From www.home.co.uk

RENT ARREARS

Rent arrears at the end of the year were 2.43%.

In monetary terms, this means we were owed £952,627. This is very similar to the previous year when rent arrears were at 2.4%.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE



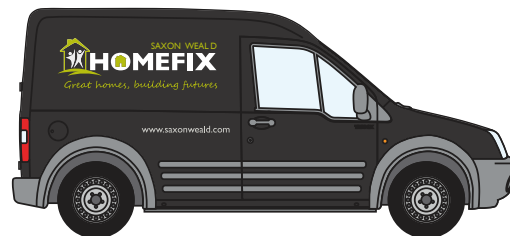
11,838
Repairs completed last year



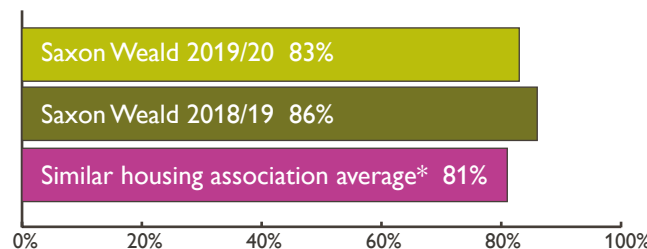
100%
Emergency repairs made safe
within 24 hours of reporting



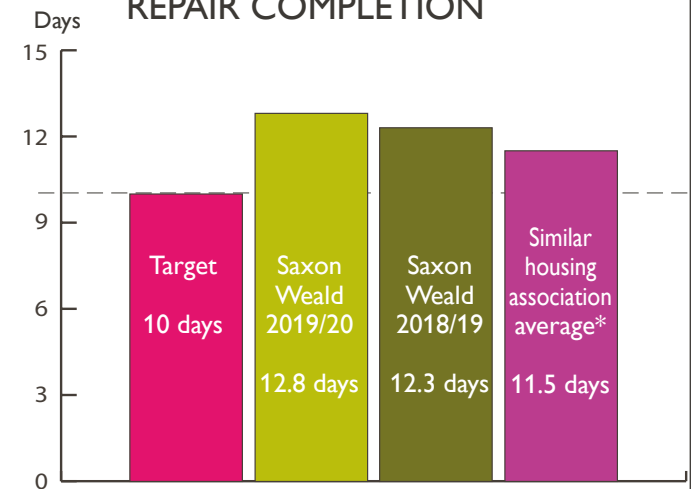
£9.9 million
Spend on property improvements
and planned maintenance work



SATISFACTION WITH REPAIRS SERVICE



AVERAGE STANDARD REPAIR COMPLETION

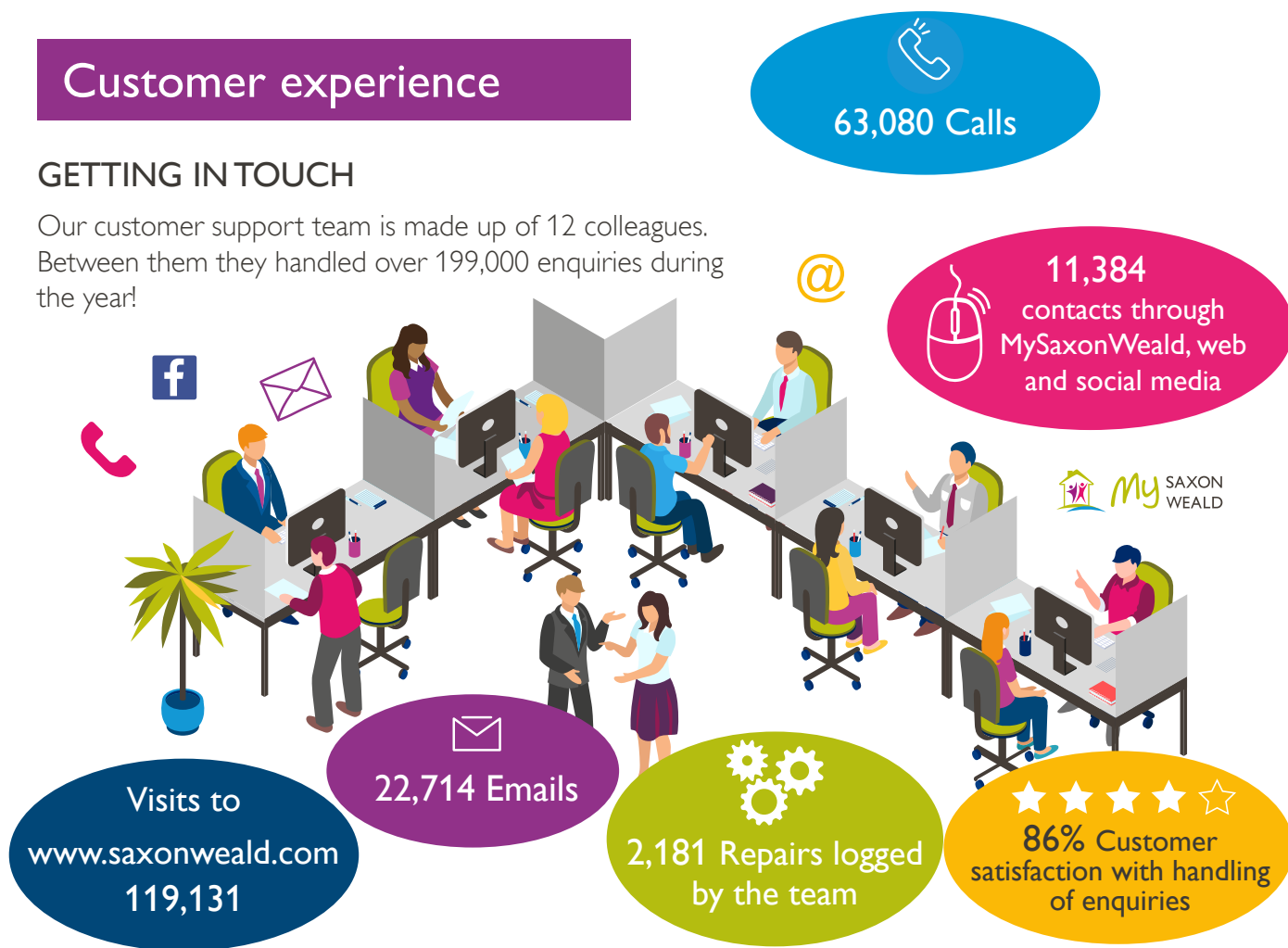


* We use information from a research company called Housemark to compare ourselves to 17 other regional housing associations with a stock size between 2,500 and 12,500 homes.

Customer experience

GETTING IN TOUCH

Our customer support team is made up of 12 colleagues. Between them they handled over 199,000 enquiries during the year!



KEEPING YOU INFORMED

We work hard to keep our website saxonweald.com up-to-date with a wealth of useful information and any important service updates. Last year we had over 119,000 visits!

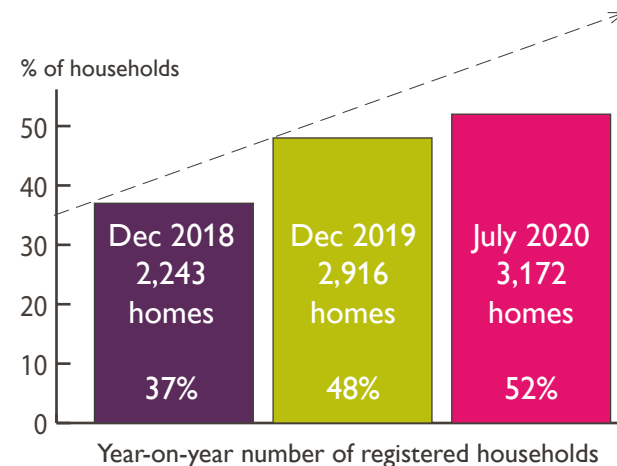
Likewise, our Facebook and Twitter pages provide handy tips, news and information, and offer an opportunity for you to ask questions or add comments on our posts. Last year between them we received over 10,000 views. Go to Facebook.com/saxonweald or Twitter.com/saxonweald.



By the end of 2019 more than 2,900 households had signed up to use MySaxonWeald, our 24-hour digital service. That's an increase of 9% since the previous year.

Registered users can report repairs, change appointments, have access to their rent balance, make online payments, update their details and more, at any time of day.

Go to mysaxonweald.com and give it a go!



Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020 we had 38,472 logins on MySaxonWeald, which is about 23 logins per customer over the year.

Customer experience



YOUR VOICE IN SAXON WEALD

Every month we have five different standard phone surveys carried out by IFF Research and Voluntas, our external survey providers. The surveys let you provide feedback on the different services we deliver. We also carry out in-house email surveys to help us with particular issues.

Some of the surveys we carried out were:

Grounds maintenance and communal cleaning survey, July 2019 - we received over 350 responses, which were considered when we were tendering these contracts. We also invited tenants to be part of the tender interview panel.

The Institute of Customer Service survey, September 2019

400 of you responded to this wide ranging survey, carried out on our behalf. The points you raised have been analysed and we will be making improvements based on your feedback.

Your voice counts survey, January 2020

This survey gathered your feedback on how you would like us to best communicate with you in the future.

Coming soon in 2020/21

We are introducing a new survey provider called Target Apps, who will send you surveys from us via emails and text messages. This means you can offer your feedback anywhere, at any time, that suits you.

Your voice - We are also launching a special section on our website where you can express your views and leave feedback. We will be using the information you provide to shape our processes and decisions, to continually improve our services to you. Go to saxonweald.com to find out more.

COMPLAINTS

It's important that we know if things go wrong, so we can improve our service to you and put things right when we need to. Simply contact us with the details of your concerns by any of our means.

► We resolved 494 problems last year at the first stage

We try to resolve the issue within three days

► 28 problems needed further investigation and went on to the second stage of our complaints process:

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 6 | Standard of service | 7 | Staff behaviour |
| 3 | Quality of work | 4 | Dispute over costs |
| 6 | Standard of accommodation | 2 | Policy |

► Just two complaints were referred to the Housing Ombudsman. In these cases the Ombudsman did not seek any further action by us.

► We report our complaints and what we have learned from them to our Board and Executive Team. This allows us to spot trends and review and improve our services. Examples of improvements include:

- HomeFix have introduced a new process for notifying tenants when works in communal areas are brought forward earlier than originally planned.
- All relevant notes to a complaint are now logged in one specific area of our system to improve communication whilst the complaint is being handled.

We will be reviewing our complaints process in the next few months.



“ I have a problem ”



“ It's not good enough ”



“ You didn't do a good job ”

COMPLIMENTS

We were also glad to receive 113 compliments. If you're happy with something we've done, let us know. It makes our day!



Your health and safety matters

We have a dedicated health and safety team who make sure you and your homes are safe. Every year they ensure an incredible number of safety checks are made, from gas, fire and water assessments to security, electricity and lighting. Here's some of what we've been doing to keep our residents safe:

FIRE



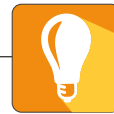
- Every year we carry out an average of 195 fire risk assessments on our blocks of flats.
- We have dry risers at 15 sites for the fire service to use in the unlikely event of a fire. These have to be serviced twice a year.
- 68 properties have a full fire alarm system. This includes 1,883 units which have to be serviced and checked every six months.
- And our scheme managers have to carry out a weekly test on each fire panel to ensure they are working at all times. This means every year we carry out 3,536 tests!

WATER



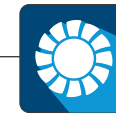
- We carry out 275 water risk assessments on blocks which have communal water.

LIGHTING



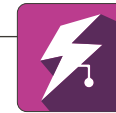
- 201 blocks have emergency lighting. These have an annual service and scheme managers carry out a monthly test.

GAS



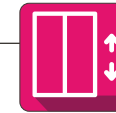
- We have 35 developments which have commercial gas installations serving 1,192 properties, that we have to inspect annually.
- Every year we have to carry out safety checks on gas boilers. There are 3,882!

LIGHTNING



- 32 buildings have lightning protection, which is tested annually.

LIFTS



- The 68 lifts within our properties have a monthly check, an annual service and twice yearly insurance assessment.

MOBILITY EQUIPMENT



- 130 pieces of mobility equipment are serviced every six months. These include stairlifts, bath/therapy chairs and hoists.

ASBESTOS



- We carry out 432 inspections every year.

ELECTRICITY

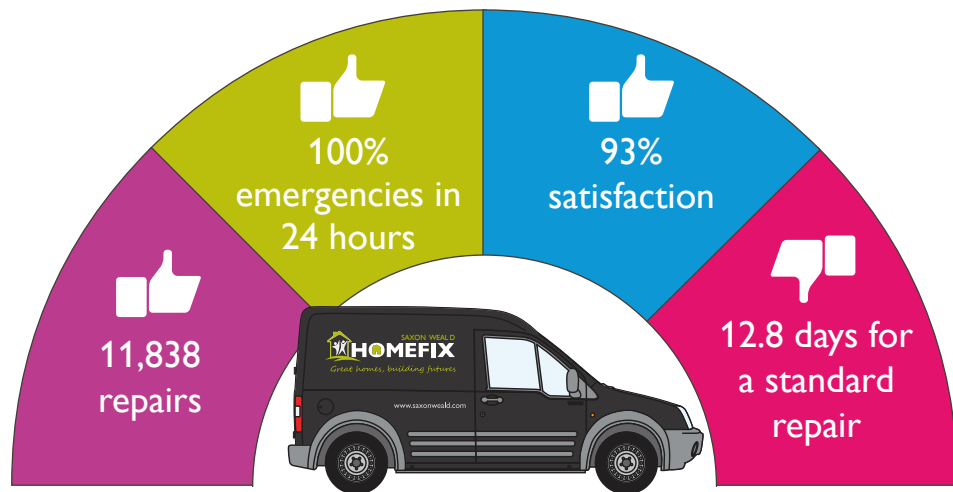


- Every year we carry out 6,277 electrical condition tests within our properties.
- There are 48 schemes where we carry out annual testing on all portable appliances in the communal areas. This can average 100 items at each property. That's nearly 5,000 plugs to check!



Housing quality and maintenance

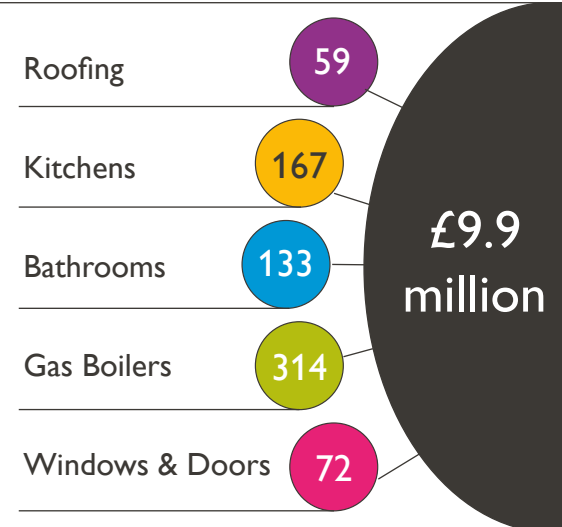
DAY-TO-DAY REPAIRS



- We completed nearly 12,000 day-to-day repairs to our homes last year.
- 93% of customers were satisfied with their last repair. That's above our target of 90%.
- We responded to 100% of emergencies within 24 hours of them being reported.
- Our average time to complete a standard repair was at 12.8 days. That's over our target of 10 days, so we will be trying to improve upon this.

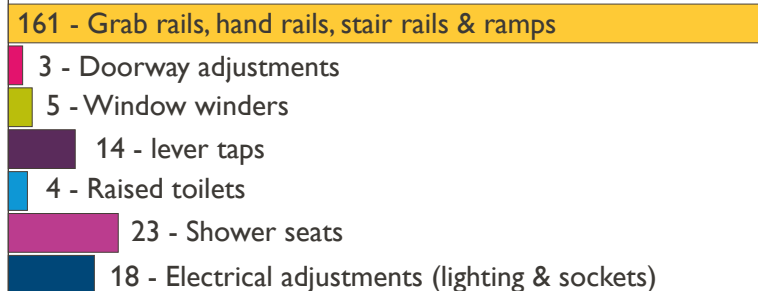
INVESTING IN HOMES

This year we invested £9.9 million in property improvements and planned maintenance work. In addition to routine jobs such as painting communal areas or cleaning fascias, this included replacing: roofing, kitchens, bathrooms, gas boilers and windows and doors.



STAYING INDEPENDENT

We spent over £51,000 fitting mobility aids and adaptations to residents' homes to help them live more safely. The most common items were:



GAS SERVICING



By law, we have to carry out services on gas boilers every year. This year we did 3,882!



94% of customers were satisfied with the service they received.



Our external auditors, Morgan Lambert, check our work against regulation standards and rated us third out of 173 companies.



It's really important to let us know any changes to your phone or email details, so that we can contact you to arrange your annual service.

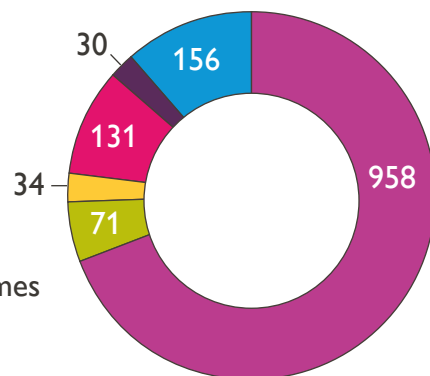
Neighbourhoods and new homes

PRIDE IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

No matter the weather, our estate improvement team are out and about making sure our neighbourhoods are kept clean and tidy.

This year they carried out:

- 958 Estate inspections
- 71 Garage block inspections
- 34 Garage lock changes
- 131 Garage checks
- 30 Garden tidying in empty homes
- 156 Empty homes clearances



One of the most common things they have to deal with, is belongings or rubbish left in communal hallways. These pose a safety risk as they can block escape routes, preventing people from leaving a building safely in an emergency.



We will remove items if we need to.

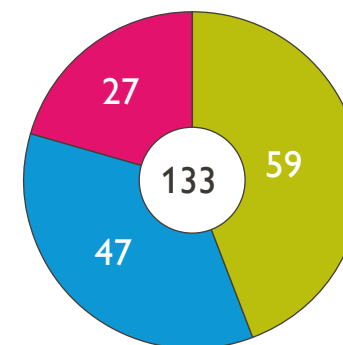
Another problem is large items such as furniture or white goods left in the bin stores or gardens. These should be disposed of by the resident at the local recycling centre. Disposing of other peoples' rubbish costs us a lot of money every year and takes our team away from other jobs they could be doing. If you see someone dumping goods they shouldn't, please report it.

NEW HOMES

In the financial year 2019/2020 we built 133 new homes, which is well above our annual target of 100. These were in Horsham, Burgess Hill, Angmering, West Chiltington and Hassocks. Our flagship scheme Winterton Square in Horsham delivered 65 homes for affordable rent, shared ownership and market rent.

How many properties we built

- 59 Affordable rent
- 47 Shared ownership
- 27 Market rent



Over the last year we have been building relationships with community land trusts with the support of Sussex Community Housing Hub. The sites are usually in rural areas and aim to provide affordable housing for local people.

We continue to work with Horsham District Council and other local councils to deliver more affordable homes.



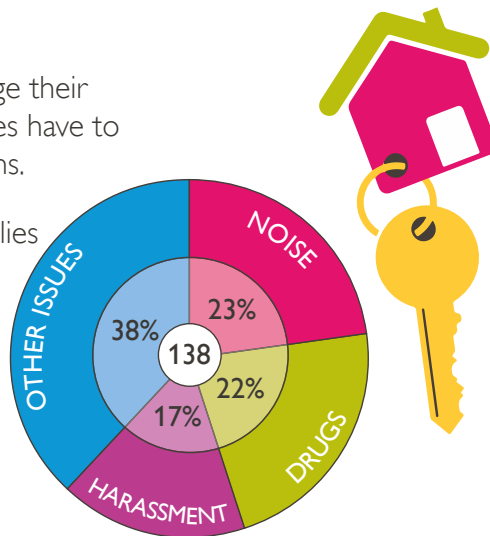
Managing homes and rents

MANAGING HOMES

Our housing team help people manage their tenancies in many ways, but sometimes have to deal with some more difficult situations.

In the last year we supported 15 families who were suffering from domestic abuse. Three of the victims were supported into new homes. There were also 138 reported cases of antisocial behaviour, with two households being evicted.

We had one case of tenancy fraud, which needed investigating. Affordable housing is a much-needed resource and it's important that if we allocate someone a home, they don't sub-let it out at a profit. If you suspect a tenancy fraud, please report it to us at hello@saxonweald.com.



RENT ARREARS

At the end of March 2020 we were owed £952,627, 2.4% of total rents. This is roughly the same as last year.

We had 840 Universal Credit claimants, up from 433 last year, so we are pleased to see our rent arrears are not increasing.

Unfortunately, we had to evict 10 households during the year due to rent arrears. This is always a last resort.



HELPING HANDS

Our friendly money matters team are there for you when you need some financial support or advice with welfare or housing benefits. Last year they received 431 referrals and helped residents claim a total of £471,000 in benefits, including: backdated housing benefit, discretionary housing payment awards, personal independence payments and employment support allowance appeals.

Last year we helped 431 people



They claimed back over £471,000



In one case, a resident was at a low point when her disability benefit was withdrawn and, despite contacting other agencies, no one was able to help her. Our money matters team managed to get the benefit reinstated but while investigating her case, noted that the lady had been underpaid on another benefit for the last six years. She should now be entitled to a substantial backdated payment!

There's a benefit section on our website www.saxonweald.com where you can use our benefit calculator to see if you are getting the support available. You can also email us at moneymatters@saxonweald.com.



Offering our support

We work in partnership with Horsham Matters, who work throughout the year helping people in the community with support when they need it most.

Horsham Matters issued Saxon Weald residents 136 foodbank vouchers during the year. These vouchers provided meals for 230 adults and 102 children and is a 60% increase on vouchers issued last year.

Universal Credit has been rolled out further this year, so more people are having to wait for their first payments. This has contributed to the rise in number of people needing help.

HORSHAM MATTERS DONATIONS

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| Foodbank vouchers | 136 |
| Furniture packs | 26 |
| White goods items | 10 |
| Fuel vouchers 19 x £20 | £380 |

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

Over the last year our staff have helped a number of community and charitable organisations by offering their time and effort. From painting and gardening, to helping at foodbanks and fayres, our support has been gratefully received. Here are some of the projects we worked on last year:

Horsham and Shipley Community Project

We helped members of the project take on a number of tasks including: painting the shed, gardening and levelling out the petanque pitch.

Horsham District Foodbank - managed by Horsham Matters

Five members of staff helped sort through and package a mountain of food donations in time for Christmas deliveries.

St. Mary's C of E Primary School

A dozen colleagues spent a day helping the school. We cleaned fences, fascias and soffits, built a dome for the playground and painted classrooms.

The Strawford Centre

Members of staff volunteered to support at the Christmas fayre, where they helped man the stalls and serve refreshments.

Countess Mountbatten Hospice, Southampton

Local scheme managers braved the rain and de-weeded pathways and tended to the communal gardens. They were later invited to a charity awards evening in recognition of their efforts.

If you've got an idea for a future project, let us know and we'll see if we can help. Email: pr@saxonweald.com.



STAFF SUPPORTING CHARITIES

Many of our staff are keen to get involved and between them are always running, walking, knitting, baking and such to raise money both individually and collectively for charities. Here's a small snippet of some of the activities we've been up to this year and what they raised:

Collette at Bentley Grange, Hailsham - £1,400

Head shave for Sarcoma UK

Macmillan coffee mornings - £1,272

Residents, head office & schemes bake sales

Children in need - Head office - £138

Bake sale & duck race

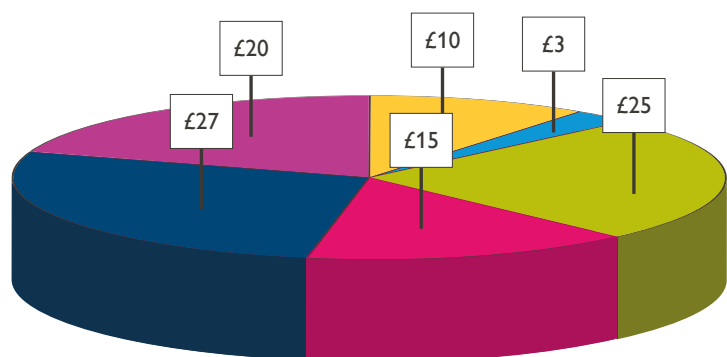


All about money

HOW WE SPEND OUR MONEY

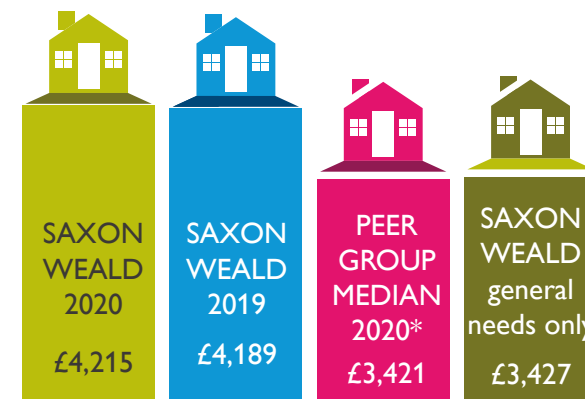
For every £100 we spend

- Management and service costs £10
- Overheads £3
- Repairs and maintenance costs £25
- Staff costs £15
- Interest payments £27
- Investment in new homes £20

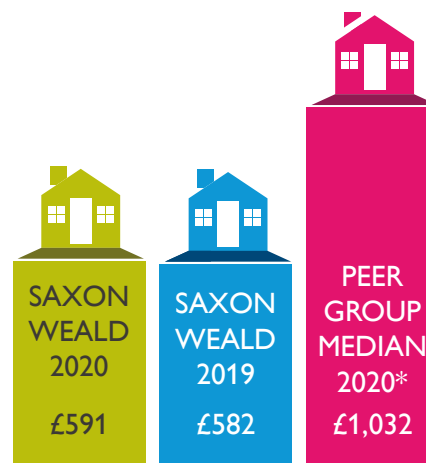


HOW WE COMPARE

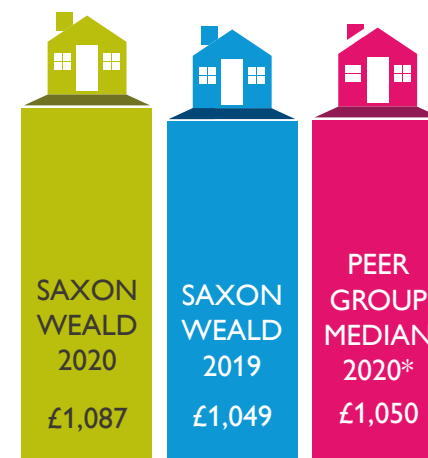
Our overall headline costs are higher than the average of our peer group, largely due to the high number of retirement and extra care homes we manage. These homes require more staff support and maintenance work than general needs properties. Our headline costs per home based only on general needs homes are £3,427, putting us close to the peer group average.



Headline social housing costs per home



Management costs per home



Maintenance costs per home

* We use information from a research company called Housemark to compare ourselves to 17 other regional housing associations with a stock size between 2,500 and 12,500 homes.

Covid-19 report

We're all in this *Together*

Since the end of March, when the whole country (and most of the world) went into lockdown from Covid-19, we've had to make many changes to the way we work and had to adjust to the changing situation as it happens. Helping keep you and our colleagues safe has been our priority, as well as keeping our essential services running, in line with Government guidelines. It's been challenging at times, but we are proud of the work our colleagues have been doing to keep things going.

This section takes a look at some of what's been going on since the end of March, when lockdown began.

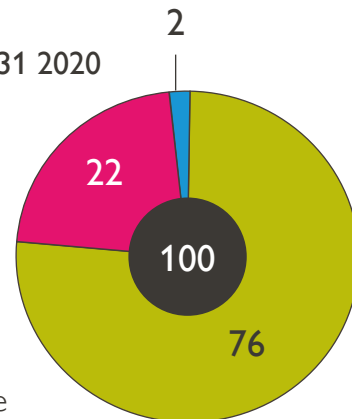


SAXON WEALD STAFF

During the period between April 1 and July 31 2020 we had 100 people on furlough leave:

- 22 Office staff
- 2 Scheme managers
- 76 HomeFix operatives

We had 10 members of staff who were shielding, six of whom could work from home and four operatives who were furloughed.

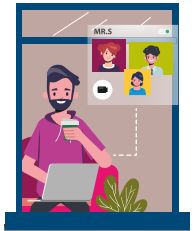
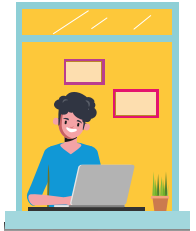


WORKING FROM HOME

Our head office had to close and all 126 of our head-office staff had to work from home. Thanks to an incredible effort from our IT team, everyone has had the equipment, software and support they have needed to do their job.

Meetings went online, with Skype video calls becoming the new normal.

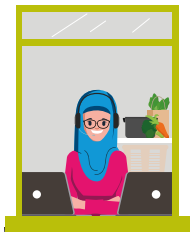
Our customer support team weren't able to take direct calls from customers and instead we offered a voicemail service where they responded to over 6,000 messages! They also responded to over 6,500 emails and nearly 4,000 online enquiries!



over
6,000
voicemails

over
6,500 emails

4,000 online
enquiries



Our office remains closed to the public, however, we do now have a small number of the team working safely (and socially distanced) in the office, who can take calls.

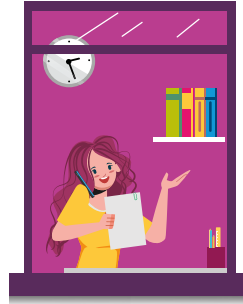


Covid-19 report

HELPING HANDS

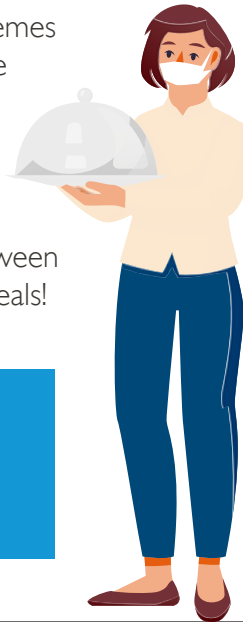
During the lockdown period, our housing team have made over 5,000 calls to our most vulnerable residents, making sure they were coping throughout the pandemic and had the support they needed.

over 5,000 calls made to our most vulnerable residents



Our extra care scheme managers clocked up a lot of extra steps over the lockdown period. With our older residents having to self-isolate, they weren't able to use the communal dining facilities the 11 schemes provide. So, to keep the meals service running, the scheme managers were delivering the meals to the residents' doors. Up until 13 July, when the restaurants reopened with social distancing measures put in place, between them they delivered around 1,700 meals!

1,700 meals delivered to residents of our extra care schemes

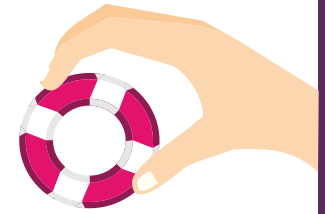


BENEFITS & HELP DURING COVID

Our money matters team have been busy too, as the changing situation has meant more people needing benefit advice due to losing their jobs or being furloughed. Understandably, in these uncertain times, some people have been worried.

They have created a special [Covid benefits advice page](#) on our website, including information for new or existing claimants, whose situations have changed. The team continue to monitor the advice being given by the Government to keep this updated.

We really recommend you get in touch with the team if you find yourself having financial worries, so that we can try to help you. Email moneymatters@saxonweald.com.



LETTINGS

We had to suspend letting our homes while the guidance was to stay home. However, since June we have started to let again, and in July alone rehoused 46 families!

Our retirement waiting list for Sussex is still closed, but we can accept applications for those who wish to live in Southampton.

Mutual exchanges have started up again, but social distancing has changed our process a little, with applicants submitting their own photos instead of us carrying out an inspection. They are also responsible for contacting the money matters team to arrange an affordability check and HomeFix to book an electrical check.

We are currently developing our online and digital forms to provide a better and more streamlined service. Keep an eye on our website for more information www.saxonweald.com.



Covid-19 report

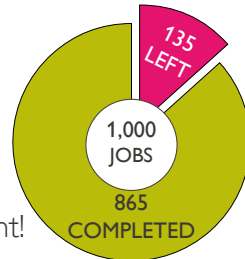


CATCHING UP

Due to lockdown, we had to prioritise emergency appointments and cancel over 1,000 scheduled HomeFix jobs. A much smaller team of operatives carried on working throughout lockdown to fix emergency repairs and carry out gas safety checks.

Since the team started to get back to work on 15 June, they have been working hard to prioritise these cancellations and reschedule appointments. By the end of July, we only had 135 jobs left outstanding.

To the end of July, the empty homes team completed work on 100 properties, which is a fantastic achievement! There's still a lot to do though, with over 60 empty homes to bring up to our lettable standard now and another 30 or so to come in the next few weeks.



A WORD FROM A HOMEFIX OPERATIVE

Throughout the lockdown period, Saxon Weald made a tremendous effort to keep our staff and residents as safe as possible. During this difficult period, it has been quite evident that a lot of hard work has gone into sourcing PPE such as: masks, hand sanitisers, social distancing high visibility clothing, gloves and over-shoes. There has also been a lot of effort making sure we have all had the best guidance possible for carrying out safe working practices.

Saxon Weald has reacted and adapted to all the Government advice, and with the easing of the lockdown most trade staff are now back at work.

We all carry sanitiser and wear our Covid-19 PPE when visiting your homes. Our residents are briefed that social distancing applies whilst we are carrying out repairs, and this has been working very well. Working on the frontline I am confident we, as Saxon Weald, are doing everything we possibly can to maintain a safe working environment, whilst maintaining a high level of customer service.

The HomeFix team would like to thank all our residents who have let us keep our appointments, and have trusted us to enter their homes safely to carry out our work during the pandemic.

Stay safe! Dale

HomeFix Electrician



IMPROVING ONLINE SERVICES

We have upgraded our online repairs booking to make it even easier to find and book the repair you need. You can see the same appointments online as our call team can see, and it's available 24/7! So, save yourself time and give it a try here. www.mysaxonweald.com.



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If you've changed your email address recently, please let us know or log in to mysaxonweald.com and update it there.

Thank you.

My Saxon Weald

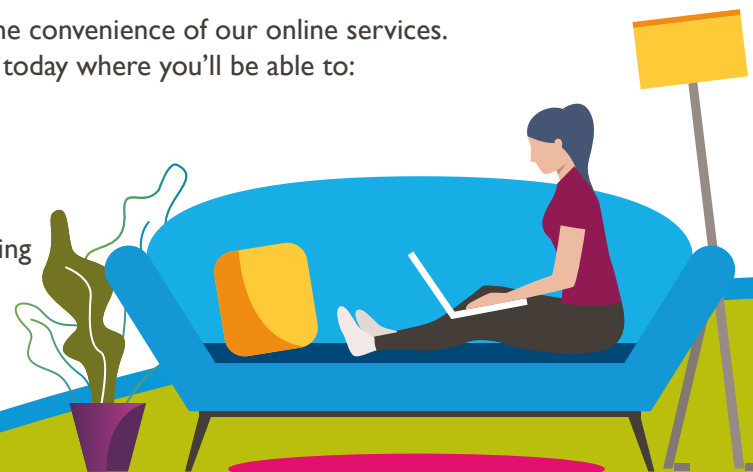
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It's so much easier online

Accessible on your desktop, tablet or mobile, and available online 24 hours a day, My SaxonWeald is the easiest way to manage your account on the go.

Thousands of customers are already enjoying the convenience of our online services. Not yet registered? Sign up to My SaxonWeald today where you'll be able to:

- Check your rent balance
- Make payments
- Report repairs and change your repair booking
- Request permission to have a lodger, keep a pet or run a business from home
- Send us a secure message



Find out more at mysaxonweald.com

Saxon Weald is a Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority Number 7971

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