

Residents' Influence and Impact Report 2025/26

for the year ended 31 March 2026

WestKent

Places to live. Space to grow.

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Foreword: Residents at the heart of everything we do

Welcome to our Residents' Influence and Impact Report, developed with residents, for residents. It shares our performance for the last year and shows how your views and feedback influence the services we provide across Kent. We hope you find it interesting and useful.

Residents' voices were at the heart of our decision-making in 2025/26. We listened more closely than ever, using Tenant Satisfaction Measures, resident-led scrutiny, direct conversations, and daily feedback to understand your priorities.

You told us you want faster repairs, clearer communication, safer and warmer homes, and a fair, responsive complaints process. You also highlighted the need for better communal areas and neighbourhood safety. These priorities shaped our work this year and form the basis of our 2026/27 plans.

As an organisation, our actions are driven by residents' expectations of reliable, respectful, and needs-focused services – alongside the requirements of our various regulators. Investments in energy efficiency, complaints handling, and communication reflect what residents have told us matters most.

I am proud of our progress in the last year, and even more so that residents have shaped it at every level, from board members to ambassadors, scrutiny volunteers, and those who share their experiences daily via feedback forms or simply conversations with our staff. Thank you for your honesty, feedback, and partnership. I look forward to building on this in the year ahead.

Abdool Kara
Board Vice-Chair and Housing & Communities Committee Chair





Resident ambassador introduction: Iain Walters, Resident Ambassador



Iain has been a resident at West Kent for 11 years and is a resident ambassador, a member of the communities and housing committee, policy influencer, and a member of the resident communications network.

Over the past couple of years, I have seen resident involvement at West Kent grow from something promising into something with real influence. What we as residents have to say now matters far more than it used to. We are no longer just adding comments from the side. Our experiences are helping to guide conversations, challenge assumptions, and move important issues into action.

Feedback is often most useful when it tells an organisation something it did not know it needed to hear. As residents, we see services from the point where they reach real life. West Kent may know how their services are meant to work, but we know how they actually work when they reach our homes, our neighbourhoods, and our daily lives.

We judge a service by the whole experience. The way we feel along the journey can change how much confidence we have in the outcome. Small details can make a service feel clear, considerate and easy to trust, or leave us unsure whether we have truly been understood.

This is why I became an involved resident in the first place. I wanted resident experience to be part of the conversation early enough to make a difference. Since then, I have seen our influence become more practical, more visible, and more connected to the way West Kent thinks about services.

We are now taking part in conversations at every level, from everyday experiences and feedback about services to board-level decision-making, before plans are finalised. Your voice now has a stronger place in the thinking behind services, and you can help influence those outcomes. Resident feedback has helped move more important conversations into action than you may realise. A concern raised from one home can help West Kent recognise something affecting many others. Clear feedback can give an issue the focus it needs to become a change.

As you read on, I hope you can see why residents' voices matter. It helps challenge assumptions, focus priorities, and turn listening into visible action. Trust grows when people can see feedback being taken seriously, followed through, and reflected in what changes next.

As more residents get involved, I have seen how this influence has become far stronger. Most of us have had that moment where we think, "If only West Kent could…" Resident involvement gives us a way to help turn those thoughts into real change.

Share your experience. The next improvement could start with something you choose to say.

Thank you.

Iain Walters, Resident Ambassador

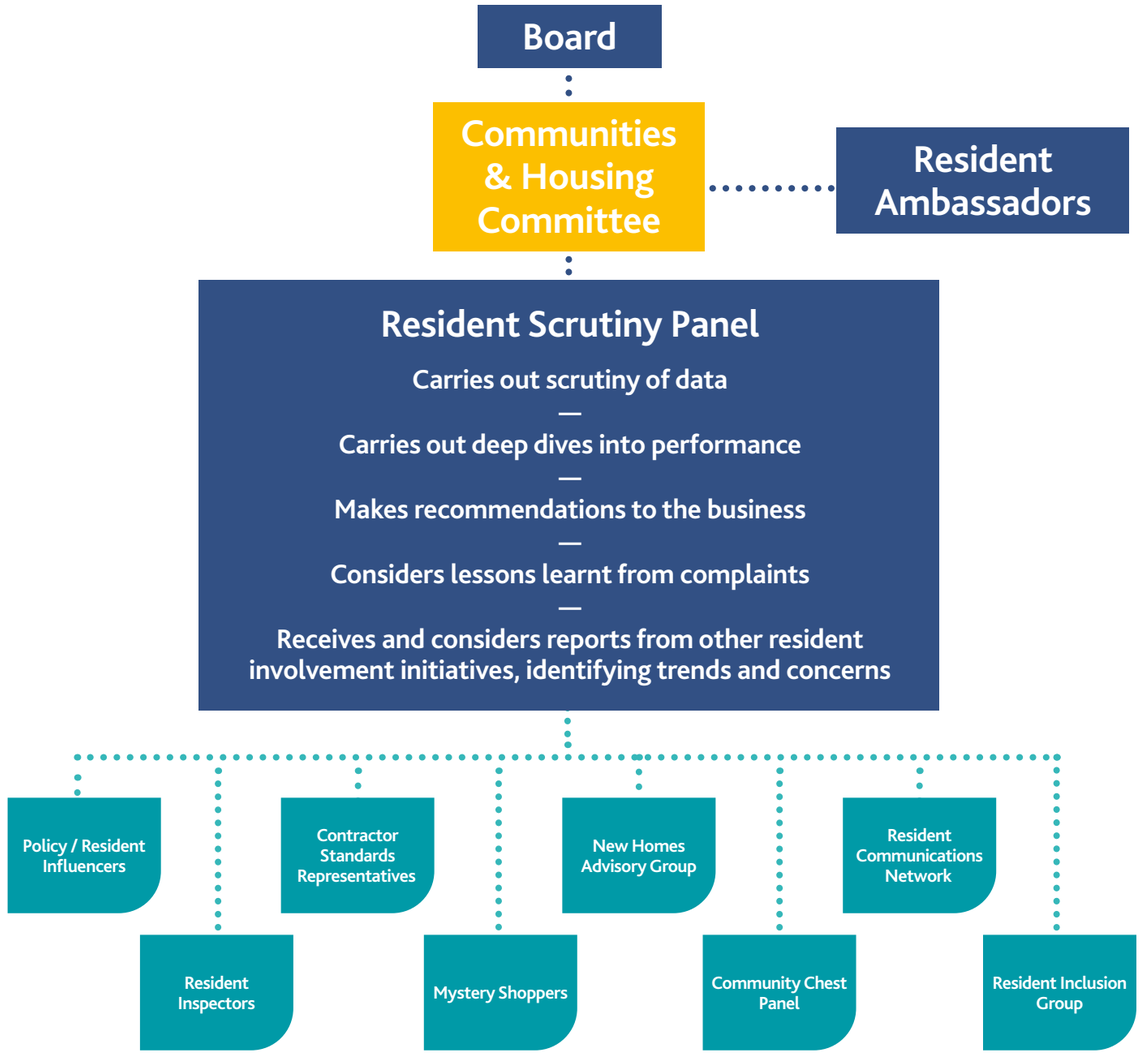
How residents influence our work

Residents influence every aspect of our operations, from board decisions to communication, service delivery, and future planning. In 2025/26, we strengthened involvement structures, so residents' voices actively drive change.

Resident feedback ensures we are held to account and deliver on what we say we'll do, when we say we'll do it.

We are committed to listening to what our residents tell us. So, we've employed a new member of staff - head of resident voice. This role is designed to specifically seek out and understand customers' lived experiences and turn these into service improvements. This role also links in other valuable data sources such as our complaints data and our survey data including TSM results to ensure our services reflect the needs of our residents at all times.

Resident involvement structure



Resident groups

Residents at the centre of governance

We want to ensure that resident voice is at the heart of board oversight and decision making. We have:

Two resident board members, who are full voting members of the board and bring, amongst other valuable skills and experience, their lived experience as residents to inform board discussions and decisions.

Two resident ambassadors, who are independent members of our communities and housing committee, working with other committee members to scrutinise how we deliver our services to residents and ensure that we provide good quality, safe and well-maintained homes for our residents.

A resident scrutiny panel, which is an independent, resident-led group who objectively review areas of service delivery, engaging with our employees and residents to provide constructive feedback and recommendations to the board through the communities and housing committee.

Resident communications network

The resident communications network, formerly the resident communications group, brings together residents to help us improve communication. They review campaigns, digital content, and service updates to ensure our messages are clear, accessible, and relevant.

Residents want clearer, more timely information, especially about repairs, safety, and service changes. The network has already influenced improvements in how we explain service charge changes, notify about repairs, and share neighbourhood updates.

Resident inspectors

Resident inspectors have helped improve services in our communal areas by working closely with contractors and staff.

In one area where residents were experiencing issues with contractor performance, resident inspectors took an active role in helping to improve the service. They carried out surveys, attended contractor meetings and joined estate inspections alongside contractors and staff.

This helped highlight where the service needed more attention and improvement. As a result, complaints in the area fell to zero and the contractor increased the resources dedicated to the service. We are looking at how this approach could be used to improve services in other communal areas.

Resident scrutiny panel

Our resident scrutiny panel plays a vital role in holding us accountable. This year, the panel reviewed key services and made recommendations that directly shaped our improvement plans.

Residents want evidence that their feedback leads to action. Scrutiny provides this proof: residents investigate, challenge, and recommend improvements, and we commit to acting on their findings.

This year, the panel worked on:

- Improvements to our service charges, leading to most residents moving to variable charges which are more accurate and fair.
- Carried out a review of our voids process (when residents move out) and recommended improvements to ensure homes are ready for new residents quicker.
- Reviewed the experiences of residents with physical disabilities. They looked at policies and procedures, explored how we work with partner organisations to provide adaptations, analysed complaints data and spoke with managers about what is working well and where improvements could be made.

Hear from Catherine Curtis, who has been a member of the panel for just under two years. She shares how the scrutiny panel's work has led to tangible change.

"The scrutiny panel exists to keep West Kent accountable. We have seen the changes that the scrutiny panel can make. A highlight this year was the variable service charge project - feeding into the communications, so everyone affected can understand what's changing. We asked for symbols to be used to help those with dyslexia or neurodiversity know exactly what they're paying for."



Catherine, Scrutiny panel member

Highlights from 2025/26: Improvements we're most proud of

Your feedback made a big difference to the services you - and other residents - receive from us. Although these aren't all the improvements we've made, here's what we're most proud of.

Overall satisfaction with our services:

78.1%

(up from 74.5%)

We listen and act on your feedback:

67.6%

(up from 63%)

How well we handle your complaints:

40.6%

(up from 37%)

Time taken to complete your repairs:

77.8%

(up from 74.6%)

Keeping communal areas clean and well-maintained:

66.2%

(up from 60.6%)

How well we manage reports of anti-social behaviour:

63.5%

(up from 58.2%)

How resident feedback shapes our priorities

Residents shared thousands of pieces of feedback with us this year through Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM), transactional surveys, complaints, scrutiny work, community conversations, and direct contact with our teams. This feedback forms the foundation of our improvement plans.

Residents have consistently highlighted several priorities:

- **Repairs must be quicker and more reliable**
- **Communication needs to be clearer and more proactive**
- **Complaints handling must feel fair, timely, and transparent**
- **Homes must be safe, warm, and well-maintained**
- **Neighbourhood safety and anti-social behaviour (ASB) responses must improve**
- **Communal areas need more attention**
- **Support must be personalised, especially for vulnerable residents who feel they are receiving a different service from other residents.**

These themes are reflected in the TSM results and our performance data.

We have also written a targeted service improvement plan to make sure we take action in the areas that our residents have told us we need to improve in.

As a result of this feedback, we have

- **Introduced improved text messaging for repairs**
- **Developed a compensation matrix, to ensure compensation is given fairly and appropriately.**
- **Introduced a new vulnerability policy**
- **Provided staff with additional training on dignity and respect.**

We know we still need to work on:

- **Anti-social behaviour**
- **Complaints**
- **Maintaining our communal areas**
- **Value for money (particularly for shared owners).**



Financial management

In 2025/26 we:

- Refinanced with NatWest, securing **£25 million** in new loan funding
- Received two year credit approval for **£50 million** in loan facilities

These decisions help us keep investing in homes, safety, and services.

Having this funding means we can be more financially stable, invest in our current homes and communities, and build more homes for families in Kent.



Service charges

Residents told us they want clarity about what they pay for.

In 2025/26 we:

- Began transitioning to variable service charges
- Committed to regular consultation on supply contracts
- Consulted on lifts and pest control contracts.

This work helps make sure service charges are fair, transparent, and reflect residents' priorities.



Looking ahead

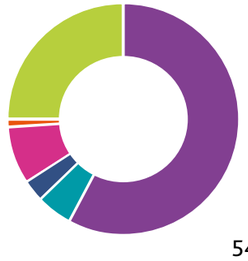
In 2026/27 we will:

- Continue improving financial transparency
- Continue to make sure investment decisions reflect what residents want.

Ensuring value for residents' money

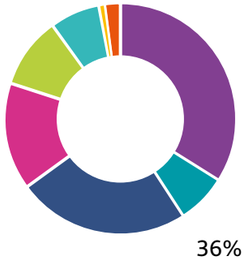
Residents told us they want transparency about how we spend money and assurance that we invest wisely in homes and services.

Cash in



Rent	54%
Service charges	5%
Property sales	3%
Sales shared ownership	9%
Communities income	0%
Interest received	0%
Grants	1%
Loans drawn	28%

Cash out



New homes	36%
Management and other expenses	7%
Planned maintenance	21%
Interest on loans	15%
Estate and services	10%
Routine maintenance	8%
Community engagement	1%
Purchase of IT equipment	2%

Our income is supplemented by loan financing to support our investment in new homes.

Breakdown of social housing cost per home	West Kent Group	
	2025/26	2024/25
Management costs	£976	£852
Services	£1,313	£1,257
Maintenance	£3,915	£3,805
Other (social housing letting) costs	£0	£0
Development services	£2	£9
Community/neighbourhood services	£130	£194
Other social housing activities: other (operating expenditure)	£14	£11
Other social housing activities: charges for support services (operating expenditure)	£14	£18
Group total social housing costs	**£6,364**	**£6,146**
Group total social housing costs (including pension exit)	**£6,258**	**£9,770**
Total social housing homes owned and/or managed at period end	**8,841**	**8,735**

When spread across all the social housing homes we own and manage, the total cost of directors' pay, pensions and National Insurance contributions was £135 per home (2025: £128). The salary of our highest-paid director, excluding pension and National Insurance contributions, was equivalent to £14 per home (2025: £20 per home).

Value for money

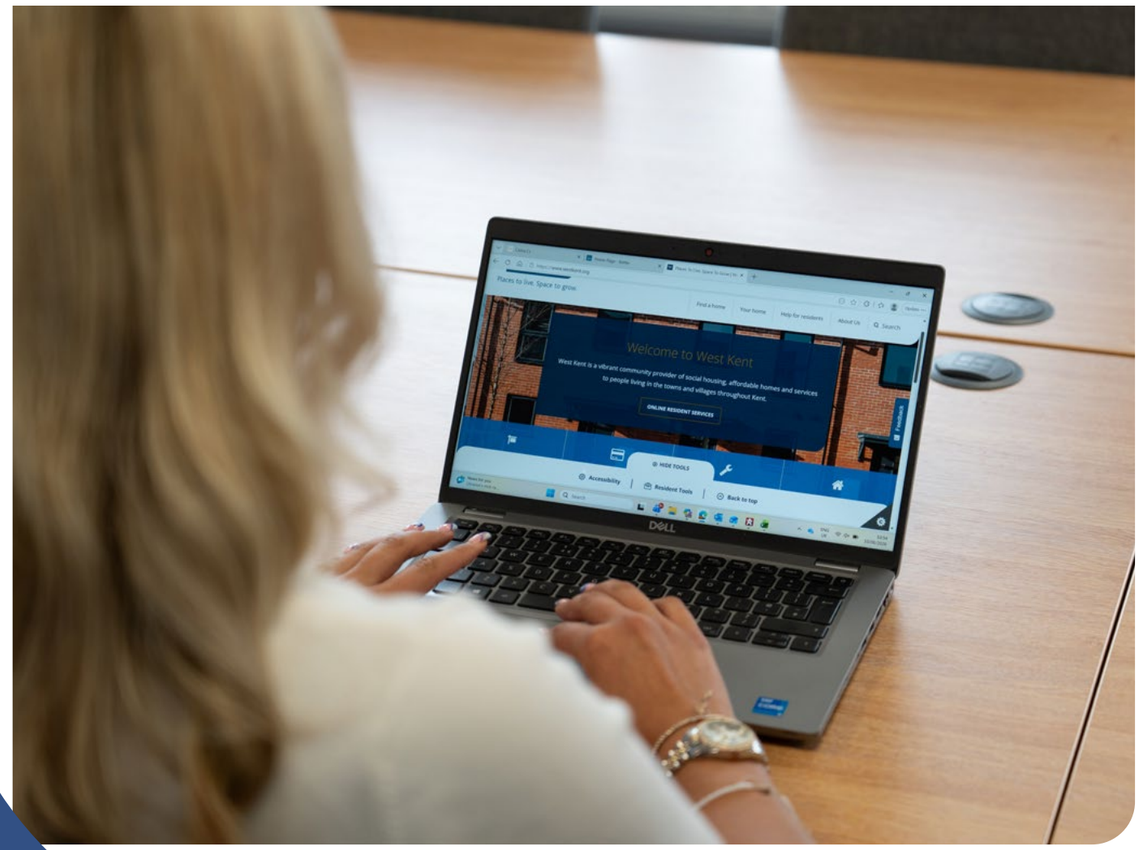
In 2025–26, we delivered value for money by:

- Cutting the cost of empty homes by £0.1 million.
- Reducing costs by £0.3 million by making changes to our staff pension arrangements.
- Improving how we calculate and report service charges, increasing service charge income by £0.1 million.

We plan to continue improving value for money in 2026/27 by:

- Introducing variable service charges from 1 April 2026, which we expect will improve service charge income by £0.1 million.
- Further reducing the cost of empty homes by £0.4 million by lowering the number of vacant properties.
- Delivering £0.2 million of social value through local investment and community benefits.
- Saving £0.2 million by reducing the number of repeat repairs and improving the quality of repair work.
- Increasing savings from fewer repeat repairs to £0.5 million a year by 2028–29.

This approach helps us make the best use of our resources while continuing to improve services for residents.



Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM)



Every three months, an independent organisation asks a sample of residents a set of questions about their experience. These results are monitored by the Regulator of Social Housing, but more importantly, they help us understand what matters most to residents. This year, satisfaction has increased in all areas except one, which shows how important your feedback is in improving our services. In the annual results of the TSM survey published in 2025/26, residents told us:

Overall satisfaction is **78.1%**, but shared owners are less satisfied **(61%)**

Repairs satisfaction is **76%**, and satisfaction with the time taken is **77.8%** (rental tenants only)

Feeling listened to is a key concern, only **67.6%** of rental tenants and **53.1%** of shared owners feel heard

Complaints handling remains a challenge, **40.6%** satisfaction for rental tenants and **40.4%** for shared owners

Communal areas need improvement, **66.2%** satisfaction for rental tenants and **39%** for shared owners

ASB handling is an area residents want us to focus on, **63.5%** satisfaction for rental tenants and **49.6%** for shared owners.

We are in the upper quartile for the majority of our results, which means we are doing better than others in the sector. These great results and improvements could only have been made because of your honest feedback.

These insights directly shaped our priorities for 2026/27. Our full Tenant Satisfaction Measure results can be found on our website, **www.westkent.org/tsms**

Transactional surveys

Every month, residents who recently used our services are asked to tell us how satisfied they were. If anyone gives us a score of one or two out of five, we contact them to understand what went wrong.

Residents told us:

- Repairs are improving, but communication about appointments and follow up needs to be clearer
- Customer service is strong, but residents want quicker resolutions
- Move in experiences are positive, but new residents want more support settling in.

Scrutiny and resident involvement feedback

Residents involved in scrutiny and engagement activities told us:

- They want more transparency about how decisions are made
- They want to see evidence that their feedback leads to action
- They want involvement opportunities that are flexible and accessible
- They want clearer information about service changes and performance.

As a result of this feedback, we have

- Improved text messaging about appointments, including new text messages when operatives are on their way.
- Improved our onboarding, creating a new resident group to focus on the voids and moving-in processes, repairs communication, and customer service training.
- Improved and expanded the resident communications network, making involvement less formal and more flexible.
- Improved our support at the point of moving in (see page 17 for more information).



Delivering services that reflect resident priorities

Residents expect services that are reliable, respectful, and responsive. This year, we focused on improving the areas residents told us matter most: communication, customer service, and complaints handling.

Customer service

Residents told us they value friendly, helpful staff, but they want quicker resolutions and clearer updates.

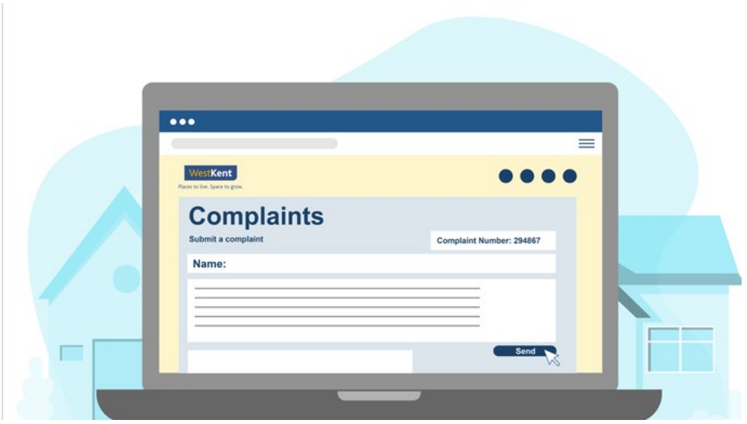
Our customer service score remained strong at 4.34 out of 5, and we continued to improve how we communicate about repairs, appointments, and service changes.

We also introduced new training focused on dignity, respect, and understanding residents' needs - directly shaped by resident feedback.

Our customer services team had its busiest year yet, in 2025/26, with well over 100,000 contacts from customers.

We improved our TSM satisfaction score for complaints handling, from 37.0% in 2024/25 to 40.6% in 2025/26.

41,798
Emails received



Complaints handling

Residents told us they want complaints handled fairly, quickly, and transparently.

In 2025/26 we:

- Responded to stage one complaints in **9 days** on average (target: **10 days**)
- Reduced upheld cases by **15%**
- Closed **100%** of complaint cases with agreed extensions
- Decreased compensation payments from **£120,563.91** to **£84,193.78**
- Upheld **60%** of complaints.

Phone calls answered: 55,864

Average speed of answer:
4:11 minutes
(target 4mins)

Average call length:
4:39 minutes
(target 4mins)

The top three reasons for contact were::
1. **Repairs**
2. **Housing-related queries**
3. **Rent and arrears.**

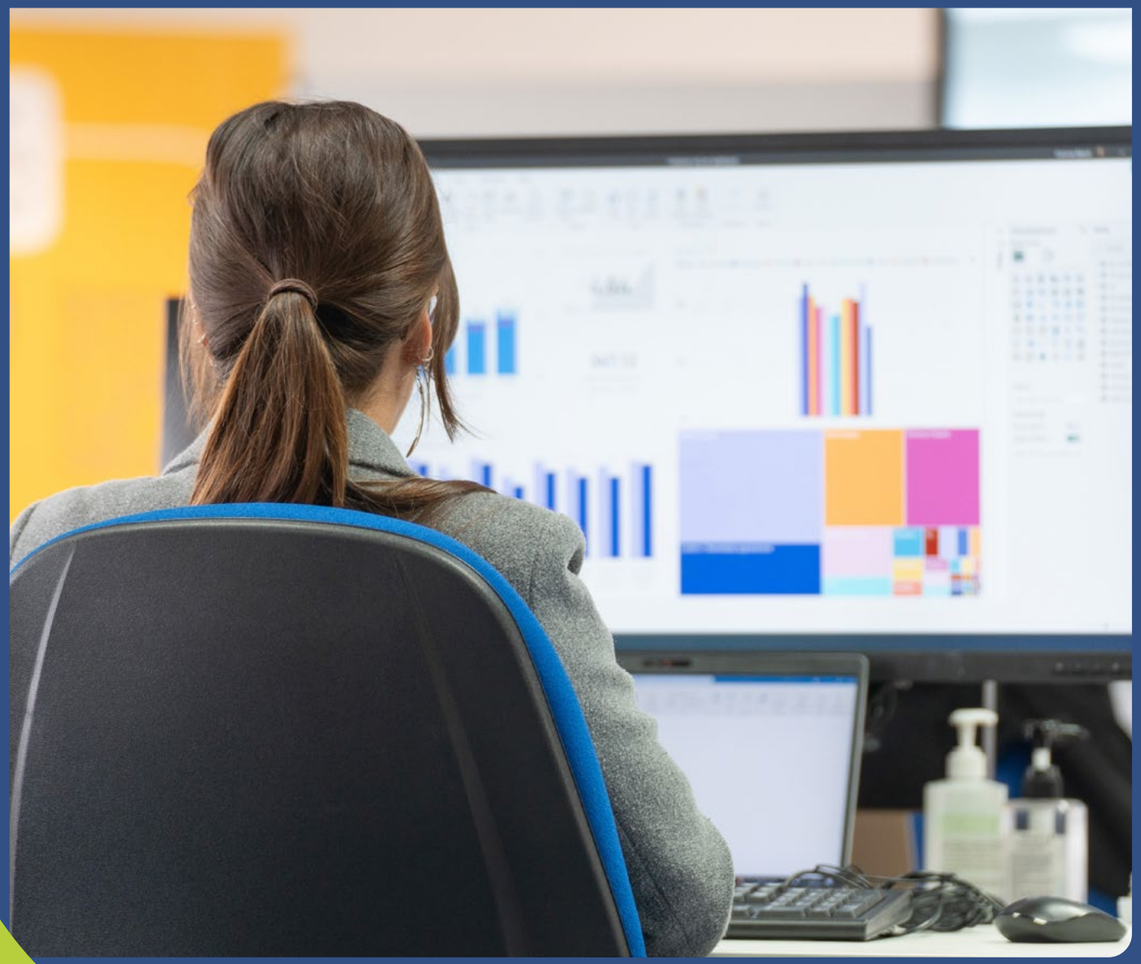
Highlight: Ombudsman praise for improvements

In September 2025, the Housing Ombudsman Service reached out to us about how we performed in its annual Landlord Performance Report for 2024/25.

Our results showed a big improvement: our maladministration rate dropped from **62%** to **31%**. The Housing Ombudsman Service called this a "significant improvement recognition." This was especially important in a year when there was a **30%** rise in determinations across the country and a national maladministration rate of **71%**. The report included **37** findings from **13** determinations.

The Ombudsman said this year's progress shows we have a strong culture for handling complaints and that it deserves to be recognised.

They also said they want to use our performance as an example of good practice and share these results more broadly.



Safe, warm and well maintained homes

In 2025/26 we achieved:
Zero
overdue fire risk assessments

Residents told us that feeling safe in their homes, staying warm, and having repairs completed quickly are some of their highest priorities. This year, we focused on improving the quality, safety, and energy efficiency of our homes, not just because regulations require it, but because residents said these things matter to their wellbeing, comfort, and peace of mind.

Repairs and maintenance

Residents told us:

- They want repairs completed more quickly
- They want clearer communication about appointments
- They want repairs done right the first time.

In response, we:

- Delivered over **25,000** repairs, averaging **3.7** repairs per home
- Improved emergency, urgent, and routine repairs performance
- Increased satisfaction with repairs (transactional score: 4.6 out of 5)
- Introduced more follow up calls to check work was completed properly.

Repairs performance will be a key focus for 2026/27 because residents told us it is important.

Building safety and compliance

Residents told us they want reassurance that their homes are safe and that we are proactive in managing risks.

In 2025/26 we achieved:

100% compliance with building safety requirements

Zero overdue fire risk assessments

One gas safety check overdue, which is now in the 'no access' legal process.

We improved our approach to fire safety in communal areas, communicated more clearly about safety checks, and increased tenancy audits to help residents understand changes that affect their buildings.

While we don't have any overdue fire risk assessments, we do have overdue actions as a result, which are all due to residents not providing access to their homes to complete the work.

Energy efficiency and warm homes

Residents told us they want homes that are warm, affordable to heat, and energy efficient.

In response, we:

Ensured over **93%** of our homes now meet EPC C or higher

Employed a new fuel efficiency officer who can give specialist advice.

Secured external funding through the Warm Homes Consortium to invest further in energy improvements.

These improvements help residents lower their energy bills, stay warm in winter, and feel more comfortable at home.

Damp and mould

Residents told us damp and mould must be dealt with quickly and effectively.

This year we:

- Improved processes to complete remedial work faster
- Introduced more in home humidity sensors to help residents manage moisture levels
- Strengthened follow up checks to prevent recurrence.
- Implemented new processes in line with Awaab's Law, ensuring we identify issues more quickly and take earlier action to resolve the causes of damp and mould.



In 2026/27, we will keep working to reduce damp and mould cases and get ready for the new second phase of Awaab's Law.

Decent homes and planned works

Residents told us they want clear information about planned works and support when works are disruptive.

In 2025/26 we:

- Reviewed reasons for refusals of planned works
- Worked more closely with our housing teams to address hoarding, vulnerability, and unsuitable homes
- Invested in kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, windows, doors, and boilers (final spend: £80 million).



We also started preparing for Decent Homes 2 to make sure our homes continue to meet modern standards.

Disposal of poor performing homes

Residents told us they want us to invest in homes that are efficient, safe, and sustainable.

We sold or demolished **38** properties identified as poor performing. Income from these sales will be reinvested into building new homes and improving existing ones.



Creating homes and communities residents want to live in

Where are our homes?

We continue to provide homes across Kent, with 8,842 homes owned and managed in 2025/26, including:

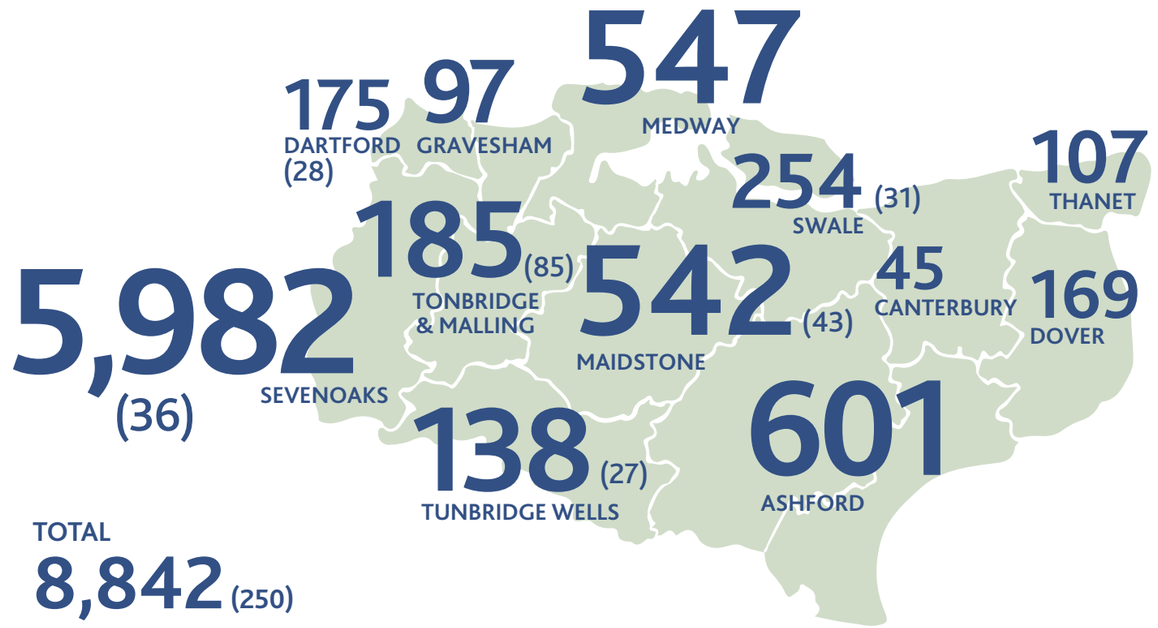
8,842 homes owned and managed in 2025/26

7,492 rented homes

252 leaseholders

1,097 low cost home ownership homes

250 homes under construction.



TOTAL
8,842 (250)

Our current homes by local authority
(**Figures in brackets** are homes under construction)

Residents told us they want cleaner communal areas, safer neighbourhoods, and a stronger presence from us in their communities.

TSM results show:

- Communal area satisfaction:
  66.2% (rented), 39% (shared owners)
- Neighbourhood contribution satisfaction:
  68.2% (rented), 54.5% (shared owners)
- ASB handling satisfaction:
  63.5% (rented), 49.6% (shared owners).



- Over **3,600** residents benefited directly from events and activities we delivered in communities.
- **1,300** residents received support to manage their tenancies, access money advice or receive support to find employment.



These results helped shape our neighbourhood priorities for 2026/27.

We will focus on:

- Improving communal area maintenance
- Strengthening ASB responses
- Increasing visibility in neighbourhoods
- Working with partners to improve local environments.
- Introducing a new communities strategy for 2026/27, which will enable us to deliver more support to where it is needed most.
- Moving most residents to variable service charges, ensuring residents are more fairly and accurately charged for the services they receive.

Building new homes

Residents told us they want cleaner communal areas, safer neighbourhoods, and a stronger presence from us in their communities.

Between April 2025 and March 2026, we:

- Built 180 new homes, surpassing our target of 148
- Achieved an average of 1.7 snags per property at move in
- Received customer satisfaction of 4.2 out of 5 for new homes.

We also focused on building communities, making sure new developments help residents connect with each other.

Residents told us they want support when moving into new communities.

In 2025/26 we:

- Provided enhanced tenancy sustainment support
- Developed a community integration plan based on resident and partner feedback
- Introduced a neighbourhood agreement to establish a positive community culture
- Progressed activities aligned to first handovers.

Case Study: Enhanced letting support

We offer a complete onboarding service for every new tenant. This begins before sign-up, continues through the sign-up process, and ends with an onboarding call in the second week of their tenancy. If we spot any extra needs along the way, we quickly connect customers with the right support, such as our Financial Inclusion, Tenancy Support, Fuel Efficiency, and Hardship teams.

This proactive approach helped 82 new customers access tenancy support in 2025/26, which supported tenancy sustainment from day one. This group made up 16% of all new lets, including new builds and re-lets. It helped residents settle in and keep their tenancies.

These referrals made up 40% of all tenancy support officer enquiries during the year. This shows that we are identifying needs early, right at the point of letting, which allows us to step in before issues get worse.

We helped residents settle in and eased financial pressure by arranging 25 furniture packs and supporting 51 white goods applications during the year. This gave new tenants a safe and stable start.



The forthcoming Renters Reform Act will allow us to provide residents with greater security from the outset of their tenancy, helping to create more stable and sustainable tenancies. This will strengthen our lettings approach, ensuring residents feel supported and confident from the point of move-in, with clearer rights and protections in place.

Greater transparency at the outset: Renters Reform will strengthen requirements around clear tenancy information, helping residents better understand their rights, responsibilities, and costs before they move in.

Stronger protections against unfair practices: The removal of "no fault" evictions (Section 21) will give residents more confidence and stability from day one, reducing anxiety about losing their home without a clear reason.

Improved property standards: The extension of the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector will help ensure homes are safe and of good quality before residents move in.

Quicker resolution of issues: Plans for a new ombudsman and streamlined redress processes mean residents will have clearer routes to raise and resolve concerns early in their tenancy.

Letting our homes

Residents told us they want quicker lettings and better support when moving in.

In 2025/26:

We let **537** homes, compared to **539** in 2024/25

We have **99%** occupancy

The average time to let a home was **25 days**, compared to our target of 40 days.

We also introduced enhanced onboarding support to help new residents settle in, understand their tenancy, and access services.

In 2025/26 we had:
99%
occupancy





Case Study: Woodland Place

Woodland Place is already becoming known not just for the 106 high quality new homes delivered there, but for the way a genuine sense of community is taking root from the moment residents arrive.

The development offers a mix of rented and shared ownership homes, but its real success lies in how people are settling in, connecting with one another, and shaping a neighbourhood they're proud to call home.

The design of Woodland Place encourages this from the outset. Two play parks give families natural places to meet and children room to explore. Green spaces run throughout the development, including a carefully protected newt habitat that adds character and supports local biodiversity. Parking has been planned generously so residents don't feel squeezed for space, and the overall layout feels open, calm, and welcoming.

What truly sets Woodland Place apart, though, is the focus on people. A dedicated community development officer is already on site, helping new residents feel supported and included. Early events have brought neighbours together, and practical help has been offered where needed - including providing those essential cups of tea and coffee on moving days. These small acts of support are helping build trust and belonging, long before the last home is occupied.

Partnership working has been central to the development's success. Strong collaboration between organisations has ensured that Woodland Place is more than a collection of homes; it is a thoughtfully planned environment where residents can thrive. The pride in the build quality is clear, but the pride in the community forming around it is even stronger.

Woodland Place is quickly becoming a place where people don't just live, they feel part of something.



Regeneration and future planning

In 2026/27 we will:
Deliver **180** new homes

Residents told us they want long term investment in their neighbourhoods.

In 2025/26 we:

- Completed demolition at Heath Close and progressed construction of **22** new homes
- Carried out early consultation for the Swanley masterplan
- Aligned retrofit and EPC work with regeneration opportunities
- Identified the need to integrate plans with wider town regeneration.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Seek planning permission for Greatness Lane, which will provide **26** new affordable homes.
- Deliver **180** new homes.



Downsizing support

Residents told us they want help finding homes that better suit their needs.

We created a dedicated role to support downsizing. Last year we helped twenty-eight households move, with many more moves in the pipeline.

As residents' circumstances change, many seek more suitable homes, such as adapted properties, level access or wish to move to allow them to live closer to family and support networks.

By proactively supporting these moves through this dedicated role, we freed up 38 bedrooms, reducing overcrowding and supporting families that are waiting for larger homes.



Supporting residents to sustain their tenancies

In 2025/26 we:
Supported **3,403** residents

Residents told us they want personalised support, especially when facing challenges. This shaped our tenancy sustainment work throughout the year.

Tenancy checks and support

Residents told us they value proactive contact and support.

In 2025/26 we:

- Supported **3,403** residents
- Completed around **700** tenancy audits, focusing on fire safety awareness
- Carried out over **200** winter calls to residents aged over 60 or with additional needs.
- Supported residents in rent arrears.

These checks help us identify support needs early and keep residents safe.

Understanding residents' needs

Residents told us they want staff who understand their needs and treat them with dignity.

In response, we:

- Rolled out dignity and respect training to all staff
- Introduced a new vulnerability policy
- Improved data collection to better understand changing needs
- Designed a leadership development programme for 2026/27
- Identified staff for Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) training ahead of the Competence and Conduct Standard, a nationally recognised standard for all housing association employees



Case Study: supporting "Magda"

Our tenancy sustainment and financial inclusion teams worked with our business insight team to identify and reach out to tenants who might be more vulnerable over the winter months.



Stock photo

We looked at several factors, such as known vulnerabilities, benefits status, how long it had been since we last spoke with them, and whether they faced a capped service charge increase of £250 per year.

We identified 256 tenants and tried to contact each one. Out of these, 171 tenants responded and engaged with the service. Those who did not respond were referred back to the neighbourhood housing team for follow-up. About 25% of the people we spoke with needed more help, and 40 tenants received direct support from the Financial Inclusion and Tenancy Sustainment teams.

Here is a case study of a resident, "Magda", who was identified as needing extra support.

When we first started working with Magda, she was having a hard time. She lived alone, her health was getting worse, and she had to deal with complicated systems in a language that wasn't her first. This put her at risk of feeling isolated and overwhelmed.

On our second home visit, we saw that Magda was very upset. One of her closest friends in Poland had died, and it was the day of the funeral. This showed how emotionally vulnerable she was and how much she needed steady, caring support. Just being there to listen, reassure her, and acknowledge her grief made a real difference.

In addition to offering emotional support, we worked on practical steps to improve her life. We went through her EDF energy tariff with her and found more affordable, fixed-rate options to help her budget. We promised to contact EDF and checked in with Better Housing Better Health to make sure she got approval for thermal curtains, an electric blanket, and energy-efficient bulbs to help keep her home warm and comfortable.

Magda's health had worsened, so she asked for a review of her Personal Independence Payment. When she was told to go to a face-to-face assessment far from home, we spoke to the DWP and got her a closer appointment. We arranged for our welfare benefits officer to go with her, which helped her feel less anxious. To help with transport, we also told her about Compaid, which offers accessible travel.

By taking this whole-person approach, Magda has reconnected with support networks, feels safer and warmer at home, and is more confident using services. Most importantly, she feels heard and valued. As she told us: "You are my angel sent from heaven."

*name changed to protect privacy

Looking ahead: resident driven priorities for 2026/27

Residents told us what they want us to focus on next year. Our 2026/27 commitments reflect those priorities.

Our priorities are to:

- Improve repairs performance and communication
- Strengthen complaints handling
- Enhance communal area maintenance
- Continue investing in building safety
- Reduce the number of homes below EPC C
- Prepare for Decent Homes 2 and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)
- Working towards Renters' Rights and introducing pre-tenancy checks.
- Improve our telephony system and contact centre set-up.
- Deliver 180 new homes
- Support new and existing communities
- Improve transparency around service charges
- Provide more personalised tenancy support
- Reintroduce My West Kent, our online portal.

These priorities are not just regulatory requirements; they are the things residents told us matter most.



This report was updated on 27 October 2026 to correct statistical information regarding our Tenant Satisfaction Measures. The amendments do not alter the overall conclusions of the report.



WestKent

Places to live. Space to grow.

West Kent Housing Association
101 London Road, Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1AX

westkent.org
01732 749400
WestKentHA
@westkenthousingassociation
@1WestKent