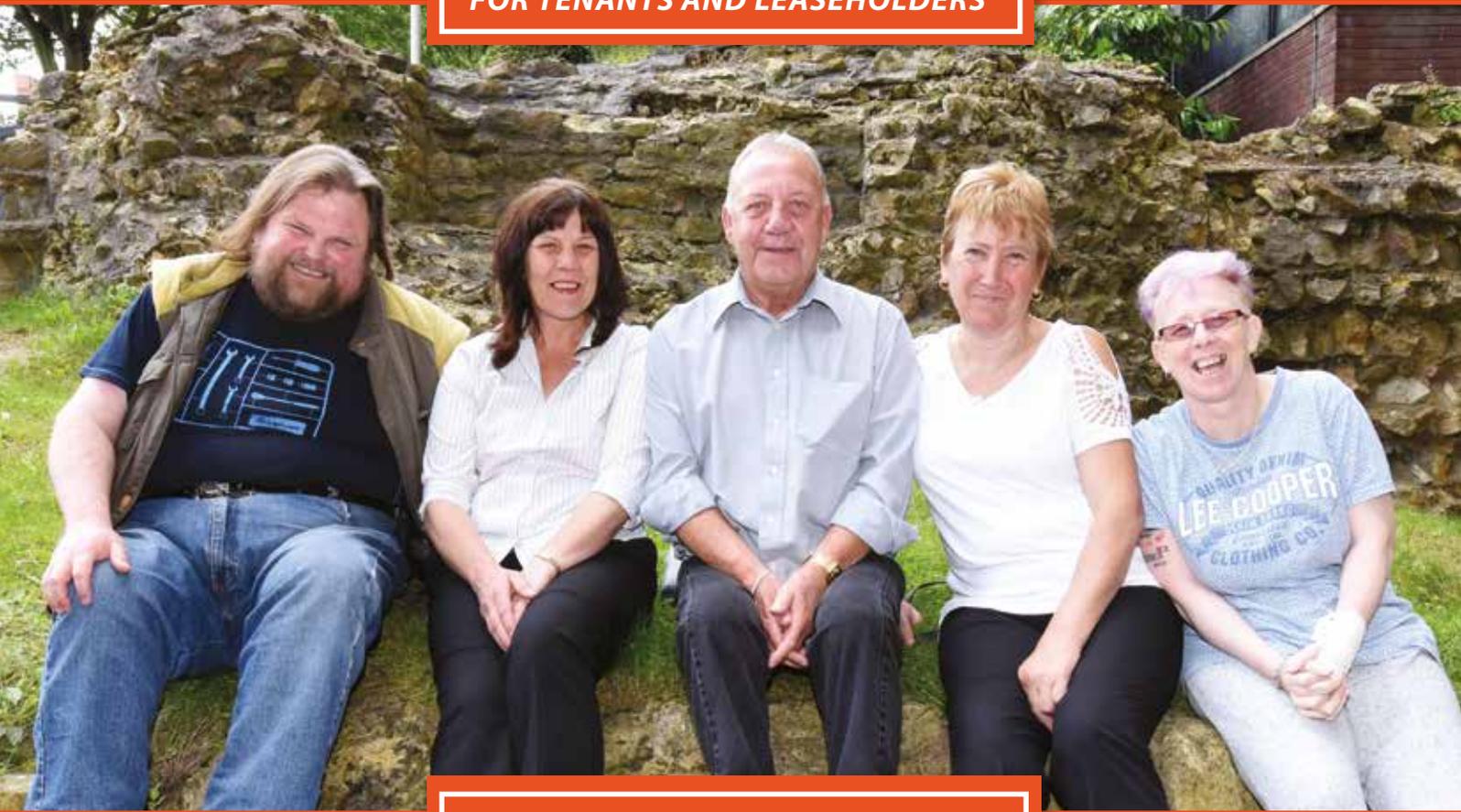


# HOME!

CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL  
FOR TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS



**ANNUAL REPORT 2016**

SINCE APRIL 2012, WE HAVE BEEN WORKING TO A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK UNDER THE HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY. THIS FOCUSES ON LANDLORDS AND TENANTS WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SERVICES. BELOW IS AN EXTRACT FROM THE REGULATIONS.



### **Landlords must:**

- Support the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and respond in a constructive and timely manner to them
- Ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard
- Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time
- Minimise the time that properties are empty between each letting. When doing this, they shall take into account the circumstances of the tenants who have been offered the properties.



The full copy of the framework can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-standards>

### **City of Lincoln Council has**

also published a set of service standards and local offers. They set out the service you can expect to receive from us. Some of these are listed below.



- Consult and involve tenants and leaseholders about decisions affecting the management of their homes
- Ensure that all our properties will remain at the decent homes standard
- Keep appointments for repairs
- Carry out lettings in accordance with our allocations policy and local lettings policies
- Ensure that we do everything we can to prevent tenants from falling into arrears.



The full copy can be found on our website at [www.lincoln.gov.uk/servicestandards](http://www.lincoln.gov.uk/servicestandards)



Like us on Facebook:  
**City of Lincoln  
Council – Housing**

COUNCILLOR  
**PETE WEST**  
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING

FOREWORD



This year we have taken a different approach to the annual report and instead of staff writing it, we have asked our Lincoln Tenants' Panel to take over.

Since this is the panel's report it would seem appropriate for me to highlight some areas where they made a positive contribution to the delivery of the housing service.

The panel view policy reports prior to those reports being considered by councillors. Issues, such as our plans to increase the delivery of affordable housing, will go before the panel and they can, and frequently do, make a contribution before any decision is formally made.

Along with councillors, they have representatives on the Housing Scrutiny Committee where all aspects of the performance and operation of the department are reviewed. If there are significant

variations from the plan, the committee can call upon officers, or myself, for an explanation.

There are a number of issues where the tenants have been of great support. Over the past year we have strived to bring down the time taken to re-let properties without lowering our standards. Some tenant representatives have taken on the task of spot inspections to ensure those standards are maintained.

Members of the panel have also undertaken the task of reviewing our policies, such as the mutual exchange policy, to ensure they are relevant to tenants themselves.

The tenants' panel is drawn from across the city and from all types of people thus their experience and knowledge is widely based and greatly valued.

*Councillor Pete West  
-Portfolio Holder for Housing*



# INTRODUCTION BY ERIC

AS CHAIR OF THE LINCOLN TENANTS' PANEL (LTP), I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME YOU TO THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Over the last year, LTP has done very well. Membership has increased, training has been successful and our new members are doing great.

I am particularly proud of how we have focused on tackling anti-social behaviour (page 14) and the tenant empty property inspections programme (page 5).

The report aims to give you an idea of how the council has performed as your landlord in key areas.

This includes phone waiting times (page 7) and completing repairs (page 8).

I hope you enjoy reading this report.

## SNAPSHOT OF PERFORMANCE IN 2015/16

WHAT WE SAID WE  
WOULD MEASURE

HOW DID WE DO IN  
2014/15                      2015/16

Emergency repairs  
completed on time

94%

99.7%

Homes with a gas safety  
certificate as of 31 March

100%

100 %

Rent collected against rent due

97.52%

99.66 %

# INSPECTING PROPERTIES

BY RICHARD

WHEN A PROPERTY BECOMES EMPTY IT IS INSPECTED AND THEN REFURBISHED.

The process involves operatives from the council and contractors carrying out work to ensure that the incoming tenant receives a property of a good standard, certainly of a better quality than offered by some private sector landlords.

Prior to the incoming tenant receiving the keys, 10 per cent of the properties are inspected by teams of two tenant void inspectors. A comprehensive checklist is filled in with all

sections covered, from gas and electrical safety, flooring and decoration, to smoke alarms, new toilet seats and locks on external doors. The property is then judged against the 'empty property letting standard' and receives a score of green, amber or red. These results are fed back to the council and they use these to make improvements. Last year 39 out of 51 properties scored green. This scrutiny and constructive criticism role is an important part of being involved.

## WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD MEASURE

HOW DID WE DO IN	2014/15	2015/16
Average time to re-let a property (excluding major works)	34 days	20 days
Offers of property accepted first time	86%	86%



## Resident Involvement Team Vacancies

We still have vacancies for the following groups:



Mystery shopping



Residents' groups



Lincoln Tenants' Panel



Leaseholder forum



Tenant authors



Home!  
Editorial Panel

# LINCOLN TENANTS' PANEL YEARLY REPORT

Lincoln Tenants Panel' (LTP) is a group of tenants and a leaseholder from across the city whose aim is to ensure that your views are taken into account and also to monitor the council's performance. Last year the panel:

- Increased its membership and attended events to promote the work of the panel
- Attended Housing Scrutiny Committee meetings
- Took part in the anti-social behaviour improvement group
- Attended East Midlands Tenant Participation conferences
- Discussed all housing related executive reports and made comments on these.

This year the panel will continue to scrutinise the council's performance in tackling anti-social behaviour and the amount of time taken to re-let empty properties. The panel also plans to increase its publicity and recruit new members. If you would like to join, seats are available in the following areas:

- Ermine West (x2 seats)
- Birchwood (x2 seats)

Please contact the Resident Involvement Team by emailing [christopher.morton@lincoln.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.morton@lincoln.gov.uk) or calling 01522 873398.

# INVOLVING YOU BY JOHN

I AM THE CHAIR OF THE 'NEIGHBOURHOOD, COMMUNITY, INVOLVEMENT AND HOME' (NCIH) REVIEW GROUP.

NCIH is one of the two review groups. They look into specific issues and areas in housing, such as the allocations process, and then look at how other councils operate elsewhere. From scrutinising services, tenants can help change housing services for the better. The process involves researching and gathering evidence which the group will then use to write a report of recommendations. This gets considered by the council.

Last year we carried out a review of the information available to tenants about repairs. We found that there were too many leaflets about repairs and it would be better to have just two. The review went really well and I felt that we have made a difference.

As a result of our work, the council is now reviewing the repair leaflets.



The other group is called 'Allocations and Tenancy'. They reviewed the council's arrangements for encouraging tenants to downsize when under occupying properties. Look out for the results of this review next year in the Home! magazine.

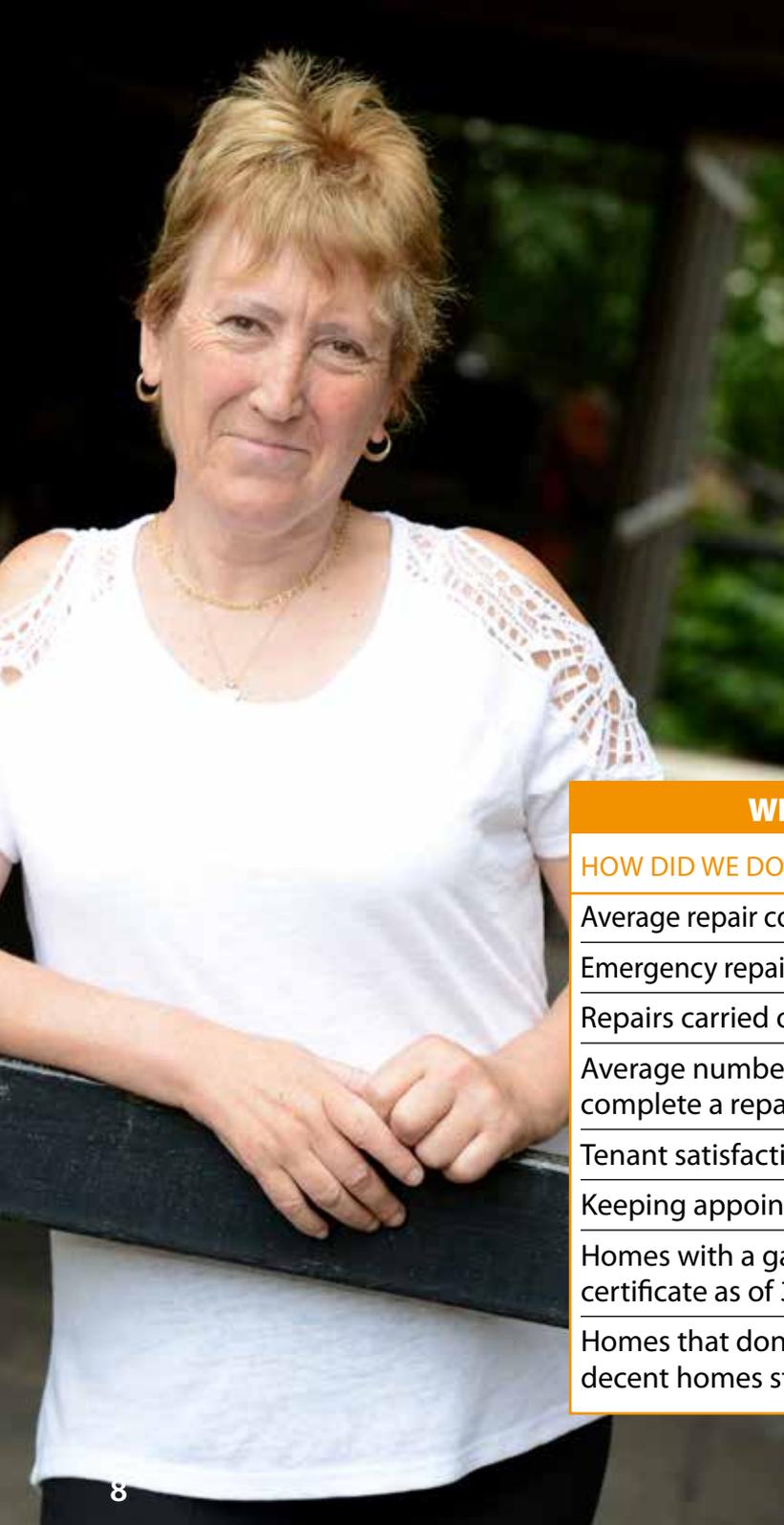
If you would like to join us for the next review, contact the Resident Involvement Team by emailing [christopher.morton@lincoln.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.morton@lincoln.gov.uk) or calling 01522 873398.

## INVOLVING LEASEHOLDERS BY FELICITY

I have attended every meeting of the leaseholder forum since October 2015. The forum meetings have been really worthwhile. They have given me the opportunity to meet other leaseholders and hear their concerns and to meet council officials. Some of the areas we have discussed include; anti-social behaviour, customer services and the procurement procedure for contracts. They have all been interesting and informative and I look forward to future meetings. If you are a leaseholder and would like to attend a meeting, please contact the Resident Involvement Team by emailing [christopher.morton@lincoln.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.morton@lincoln.gov.uk) or calling 01522 873398.

### WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD MEASURE

HOW DID WE DO IN	2014/15	2015/16
Answer calls within 60 seconds	66%	67%
Answer complaints within 10 working days	77.39%	98.19%



# LOOKING AFTER AND IMPROVING YOUR HOME

BY SHEILA

The council is fantastic! They were very efficient when fitting a brand new kitchen and it took them only one day to install a new shower. I am very happy with the council's repair service. In terms of performance, they improved in several areas related to repairs last year. On average, it took only 11 days to complete a repair and 99.7 per cent of emergency repairs were carried out on time.

## WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD MEASURE?

HOW DID WE DO IN	2014/15	2015/16
Average repair cost per property per week	£20	£19.55
Emergency repairs completed on time	94%	99.7%
Repairs carried out within timescale	90%	90.5%
Average number of days to complete a repair	21 days	11 days
Tenant satisfaction with repairs service	95%	96%
Keeping appointments first time	82.1%	96.3%
Homes with a gas safety certificate as of 31 March 2016	100%	100%
Homes that don't meet the decent homes standard	0.46%	1.12%



**HOUSING REPAIRS  
SERVICE VANS ARE  
GO, GO, GO!**

It was a busy year for our repairs service. They changed their name from City Maintenance Services to Housing Repairs Service and launched a new fleet of vans. The vans have a number of benefits including:

- Increased fuel efficiency
- Reduced number of repairs to the vehicles
- Improved stock carried, meaning that more repairs can be completed on the first visit.

They also took on eight new apprentices; this is double the amount taken on in 2014/15.

# INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Invested 3.4 million on the refurbishment of Shuttleworth House tower block. The works included external wall insulation, roof insulation, new windows and the installation of a bio-mass boiler and communal heating system.

As well as tenants seeing savings to their fuel bills, the improvements will save approximately 10,640 tonnes of carbon over the lifetime of the energy efficiency measures. The project attracted £560,000 of funding from the government's ECO scheme.

- The on-going £1.2m project to refurbish the St Botolphs Court sheltered housing scheme. This includes providing each individual home with its own showering facilities and a newly designed kitchen.



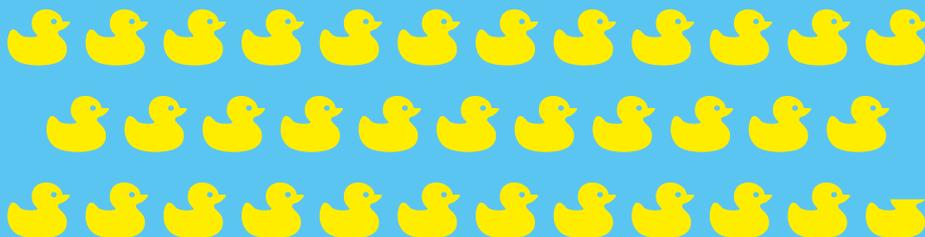
# INVESTING IN LINCOLN

LAST YEAR WE FITTED:

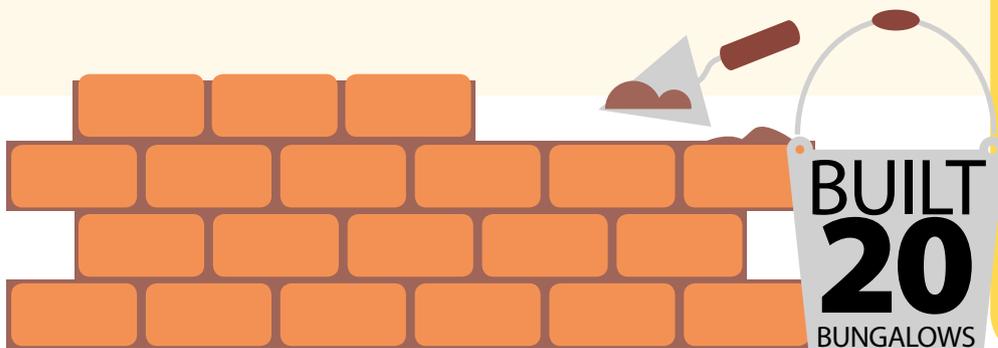
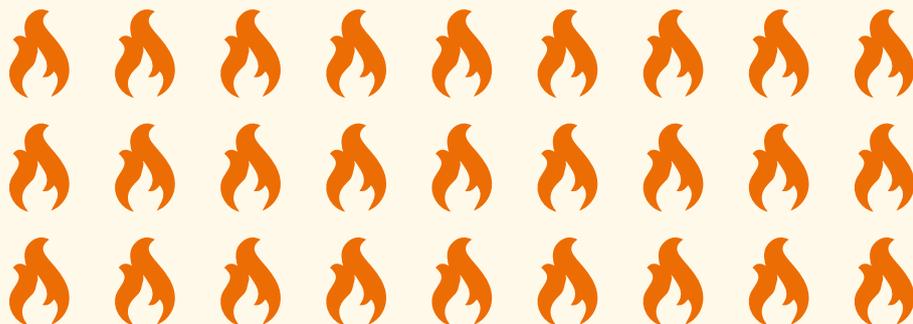
180 KITCHENS



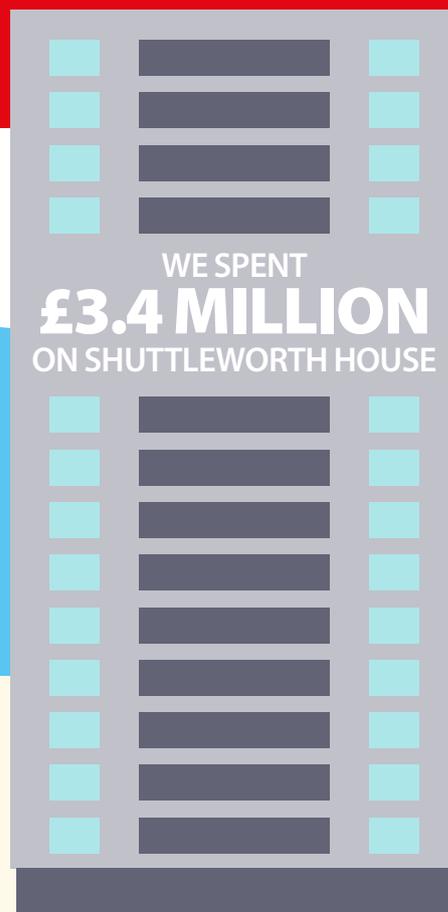
327 BATHROOMS



361 BOILERS



BUILT  
**20**  
BUNGALOWS



WE SPENT  
**£3.4 MILLION**  
ON SHUTTLEWORTH HOUSE



**£11,731,266**  
SPENT IMPROVING  
YOUR HOMES



# YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

## BY CHRISTINE

WHERE I LIVE I'VE NOTICED THAT RESIDENTS WOULD OFTEN TALK ABOUT ISSUES AND HOW SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE TO IMPROVE THEM.

With this in mind, a few local residents set up the Lower City Centre Residents' Group in September 2015.

I thought coming together as a group could help resolve issues and would be a great way of getting to know people where I live.



I thought coming together as a group could help resolve issues and would be a great way of getting to know people where I live.



We meet every few months and discuss ways to make life better for residents. There are many different nationalities in the area and we would like to bring the whole community together.

To achieve this, the group are looking at a couple of projects.

These include organising a street party in the area and working on a project to install benches.

I have made friends on the group and we often meet for coffee. If you would like to join, please contact the Resident Involvement Team by emailing **[christopher.morton@lincoln.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.morton@lincoln.gov.uk)** or calling 01522 873398.

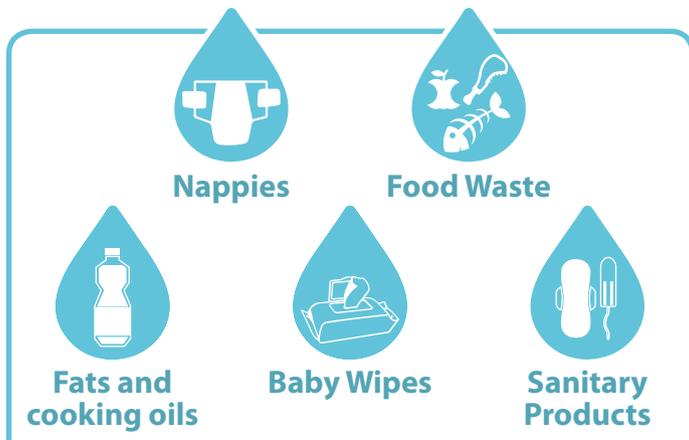
WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT

# KEEP IT CLEAR?

Anglian Water, through its programme Keep It Clear, is working with communities to raise awareness of the issues, the costs and the misery of blocked pipes.

This includes flooding, loss of toilet use, potential pollution and harm to the environment. Nationally these cost £80 million annually to resolve and means that your water bill can increase.

To help stop this happening, please avoid flushing the following items down toilets:



**Nappies**      **Food Waste**

**Fats and cooking oils**      **Baby Wipes**      **Sanitary Products**

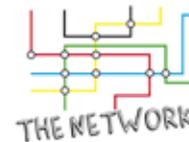
**These should be disposed of by putting them in the bin.**

MANY PEOPLE ARE UNAWARE THAT ONE OF THE BIGGEST CAUSES OF BLOCKAGES IN PIPES ARE CAUSED BY NON FLUSHABLE ITEMS BEING PUT DOWN THE TOILET.

Area Co-ordinator from Voluntary Centre Services, Dianne Slapp, said: *"To find out more, or to invite us to come and talk about these issues at your local group or meeting, please get in touch with us. We have some lovely give-aways that Anglian Water have provided us with to help get this message out. You can find us in The Network office on the ground floor of City Hall in Lincoln."*

Voluntary Centre Services is one of the partners in The Network, which is a new resource of information and advice for young people aged 16-24. They are based in City Hall; drop in and visit for information on training, education, volunteering or employment, or visit the website [www.networklincoln.co.uk](http://www.networklincoln.co.uk).

Voluntary Centre Services  
City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln, LN1 1DF  
Tel: 01522 551683





# TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) BY DEBBIE

LINCOLN TENANTS' PANEL (LTP) FELT THAT THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO ASB NEEDED TO BE BETTER.

Tenants often received an inconsistent service when reporting complaints about Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). I felt something needed to be done and we raised our concerns with the council. This helped to get the ball rolling on a review of how ASB is dealt with.

Several LTP members, along with staff, joined a group to look at how the council could improve its service. I found being on the group useful because I could offer first-hand experience of being a victim of ASB. Together, we went on training, reviewed processes, redesigned information leaflets and web pages.

The group was a success and put in place a number of steps to make improvements, such as a better structure for staff and tenants when dealing with ASB. This means that tenants can now see how their cases are progressing and they are supported the whole way through the process. I believe that the service has greatly improved and will receive accreditation next year.

WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD MEASURE		
HOW DID WE DO IN	2014/15	2015/16
Closed cases of ASB that were resolved	92%	86%
Average number of days to resolve cases of ASB	152 days	77 days
Satisfaction with the outcome of your ASB complaint	50%	59%
Satisfaction with the handling of your ASB complaint	50%	60%
Evictions due to ASB	5	2
Warning letters sent out	240	113
Perpetrator visits and interviews	579	508

# HOW YOUR RENT WAS SPENT BY CAROLINE

“ I FEEL THAT I GET EXCELLENT VALUE FOR THE RENT I PAY TO THE COUNCIL. ”

Keeping rent arrears down means the council has the money to carry out work and means less legal action against tenants for not paying.

Your rent pays for all repairs and improvements made to council homes and a yearly boiler service. You can pay your rent by direct debit, online, over the phone or payment card. The value for money is best demonstrated when you consider it's much cheaper than private renting. See below for the council's performance on collecting rent.



WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD MEASURE		
HOW DID WE DO IN	2014/15	2015/16
Rent collected against rent due	100.3%	101.3%
Level of arrears against total rent due	3.28%	2.32%

# Obtaining copies in alternative formats

If you have difficulty in understanding anything in this document, please go to City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln or any other council office, and an interpretation service will be provided.

#### French

Si vous avez besoin d'éclaircissements au sujet de ce document, veuillez vous rendre au City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln ou tout autre Council office, où nous pourrions faire appel à un interprète par le biais du National Interpreting Service.

#### Polish

Jezeli masz trudnosci ze zrozumieniem tego dokumentu, zglos sie do urzedu miasta w City Hall, Beaumont Fee w Lincoln lub do innego urzedu nalezkego do rady miejskiej, w którym wezwiemy tłumacza z National Interpreting Service.

#### Portuguese

Se tiver dificuldade em compreender qualquer coisa neste documento, por favor dirija-se à City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln ou qualquer outra repartição do município, onde poderemos chamar um interprete para si através do Serviço Nacional de Interpretação.

#### Turkish

Bu belgeyi anlamakta zorlanırsanız, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln Belediyesi'ne ya da herhangi baska bir belediye meclisi ofisine gidin. National Interpreting Service aracılığıyla size bir çevirmen saglanacaktır.

This publication can also be made available in large print, or electronically.

**Please call:**

01522 873333

# Do you claim Housing Benefit?

## Has there been a change in your circumstances?

# TELL US...

about all changes, including:

- Money coming into the home.  
- Such as pensions, wages, other benefits or tax credits.
- People who live in your home.
- Savings and investments.

**We're checking our residents' Housing Benefit claims.**

If your circumstances have changed let us know straight away.

It is an offence not to tell us about a change in circumstances relating to your claim.

T: 01522 873355 E: [benefits@lincoln.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@lincoln.gov.uk)

[www.lincoln.gov.uk/tellus](http://www.lincoln.gov.uk/tellus)

