

# THIS YEAR SOUTH LAKES HOUSING WILL LOOK TO IMPROVE...

Tenants' Committee has told South Lakes Housing to spend more time over this year on the following:

- To find ways to invest in 'decent homes' works for those properties that no longer meet the standard. This is the reason why Tenants' Committee recommended that the Council formally consult tenants on transfer to South Lakes Housing.
  - To improve painting standards on estates and communal areas.
  - To provide help to people who want to move into smaller accommodation if they wish.
  - To improve the grounds maintenance service.
  - To improve the South Lakes Housing website.
  - Getting repair jobs done right first time.
- This will mean South Lakes Housing meets the national 'home' standard.

## WHAT TENANTS ARE SAYING?

Here are some tenants with their view of the service...

Mr & Mrs L from Ambleside said: "The workman was lovely and very helpful, explaining the smoke alarm – it's brilliant. It was fixed within a couple of hours of me reporting the fault".

Mrs M from Windermere wrote: "Just to say thank you for your help in getting me this flat. I am very grateful. Thank you... the flat is marvellous".

Mr and Mrs S from Kendal wrote: "Being disabled I was very grateful to have the repair done with such speed. Thank you."

Mr & Mrs C from Kendal wrote: "I think South Lakes Housing give a good and efficient service".

Mrs H from Grange said: "Service speedy and very efficient – thank you."

Miss L from Ulverston said: "Let me know when work men are not coming and please get the repair done right first time".

Mrs W from Kendal said: "I can't be happier or more amazed at the speed repairs are completed. I've been telling everyone how efficient South Lakes Housing is."



Mrs F from Coniston said: "Michael was particularly kind and helpful even showing me exactly how the new shower differed from the old one. The promptness with the problem was exemplary – thank you".

Want more information about our standards?

Have you got something to say?

Key contacts and information on how to get involved and have your say.

Contact us or make a comment, complaint or suggestion.

If you want to get involved in scrutinising the performance of South Lakes Housing then ring Suzy on 01539 717717 or email at [s.duffy@southlakeshousing.co.uk](mailto:s.duffy@southlakeshousing.co.uk)

Our Opening Hours are: 8:45am-5:00pm

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You can also contact us using our online contact form at [www.southlakeshousing.co.uk](http://www.southlakeshousing.co.uk)

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★★★ CONTACT JOHN STIRLING ON 01539 717717 ★★★

# THE TENANTS' COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

LOOKING BACK ON 2011... LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE



## WELCOME TO YOUR ANNUAL REPORT

This is the first Tenants' Committee report on South Lakes Housing. It is different to housing transfer and comes from your fellow tenants. This has been made possible thanks to our agreed District-wide Tenant Participation Agreement which marks a change in the relationship between tenants, South Lakeland District Council and South Lakes Housing – tenants are now in control!

EXCLUSIVE

Annual reports used to be written by officers but it's the tenants that now decide how well South Lakes Housing is doing. The message from tenants is "well done on our decent homes programme, let's continue to raise standards and provide homes and services that tenants want".

your own judgement about whether we are getting value for money from our rent.

Please read on and enjoy this short report about how well South Lakes Housing did between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2011) in meeting the national standards which



tenants fought hard to get from Government.  
**Margaret Pritchard,**  
Chairman of Tenants' Committee for the period of the Annual Report.

The Annual report is a report for the 3,179 tenants of South Lakeland – this is not a self congratulatory exercise for South Lakes Housing – allowing you the opportunity to scrutinise services and make

SEE INSIDE FOR HOW WE'VE PERFORMED



# How is South Lakes Housing performing?

## National Tenant Standard 1: 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard'

In the survey from December 2010, 79% of tenants stated that they are satisfied that South Lakes Housing takes their views into account compared to 60% last year. We are told that the best landlords only perform at levels of 66%.

- Five new tenants have joined the 13-strong Tenants' Committee; 22 'drop-in' sessions were held throughout the district, which also targeted rural areas; 64 tenants attended a Tenant Conference in Kendal; 430 tenants returned a survey which was managed by an independent firm; and 838 tenants responded to the housing options study questionnaire.
- The Grant Applications Panel (GAP) is led by tenants who have a dedicated annual budget to review requests from tenants for neighbourhood projects. In the last 12 months, £17k was spent on tenant projects, with an average spend of £600 on tenant priorities such as car parking, tree works, security lighting at sheltered housing, refurbishing goal posts and supporting an estate fete.
- 19 formal complaints were received in 2010/11, eight about repairs and maintenance and the remaining 11 spread across services such as allocations and neighbour nuisance. Six of the total complaints were upheld, two partly upheld and 11 were not upheld. As a result of the complaints we have reviewed our Former Tenants Arrears Policy and reinforced Customer Care Standards.



South Lakes Housing  
Performance against standard  
Tenants' Committee verdict ✓

## National Tenant Standard 2: 'Home Standard'

Every property that has gas has a current gas safety certificate. The service was also checked by an ex housing inspector during the year who stated "Performance on achieving the annual service/safety check within 12 months is very good and at the beginning of January 2011 was 100%".

- 89% of tenants are satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service, compared to 80% in 2004. The best of the rest perform at 82%.
- During the winter freeze, the repairs service dealt with an extra 900 more emergency repair jobs than normal. Tenants were very patient as routine repairs were cancelled for January 2011 to help deal with frozen pipes.
- Major Repairs Improvements were delivered to over 363 properties in the worst condition. This included new bathrooms, kitchens, windows, wiring improvements and new roofing as needed.
- But the money has now ended to maintain decent homes, meaning South Lakes Housing no longer meets the national 'home' standard. Tenants have been involved in a project to attract long term investment needed in our homes and is the reason Tenants' Committee recommended transfer.

South Lakes Housing  
Performance against standard  
Tenants' Committee verdict ✗



## National Tenant Standard 3: 'Tenancy Standard'

A new Choice Based Lettings service, called 'Cumbria Choice' was launched which allows customers to choose where they want to live.

- An independent survey stated that 93% of tenants are happy with the service they get from South Lakes Housing. We are told that this is one of the best in England!
- According to a national report by the Housing Quality Network, South Lakes Housing is rated as one of the top three landlords in the country on rent collection, repair response times and the short time taken to relet empty homes.

South Lakes Housing  
Performance against standard  
Tenants' Committee verdict ✓

## National Tenant Standard 4: 'Neighbourhood and Community Standard'

South Lakes Housing has been awarded three 'Gold' awards from Cumbria Environment Network for its achievements on reducing its carbon footprint.



- South Lakes Housing has been awarded the 'achieving equality' accreditation from a Local Government improvement agency who stated that "South Lakes Housing is tenant-led" and mentioned "Ulverston Partnership Group as innovate practice, which has helped to reduce anti-social behaviour by working with local youngsters".
- 116 people attended three family fun days events held in Kendal, Ulverston and Windermere during 2010. At Hallgarth Community Centre young and older residents interacted and enjoyed the fun organised by the Residents Association via a special

grant from South Lakes Housing. Mr K, from Hallgarth Residents Association, said "Our joint fun day went really well and we attracted many people from all over the estate."

- South Lakes Housing has also worked with the Fire and Rescue Service, Police and other partner agencies to issue guidance to tenants on keeping pets, organizing litter picks on estates and providing fire safety guidelines for tenants and leaseholders living in flats.

South Lakes Housing  
Performance against standard  
Tenants' Committee verdict ✓

## National Tenant Standard 5: 'Value for Money Standard'

In the financial climate dubbed the 'age of austerity', South Lakes Housing managed to collect 99.8% of the rent owed. The best landlords perform at levels over 98.1%.

- South Lakes Housing managed to save £200k last year with plans to save a further £300k this year through a reorganisation and by being careful with spending decisions.
- South Lakes Housing have outsourced their stores department to the private sector (Wolseley) and have new deals in place which offer savings on materials, fuel and vehicle hire.
- European grant funding of £200k was obtained to provide environmentally friendly solar electric systems to 37 homes in rural areas. This means no emissions and will also help to reduce fuel bills.



South Lakes Housing  
Performance against standard  
Tenants' Committee verdict ✓