

2006/07

annualreport



For residents of
Southern Housing Group



Annual Report to Residents

About our Annual Report to Residents

What you will find in this report

We report to our residents every year to:

- give details about our performance, and
- explain any major changes we have made to our services or organisation.

This annual report is for residents who rent their homes from Southern Housing Group Ltd, South Wight Housing Association (SWHA) and James Butcher Housing Association (JBHA). These three not-for-profit housing associations are all part of Southern Housing Group.

In this report, you will find facts and figures about:

- the homes we provide
- our repairs service
- our rent and service charges
- our empty properties and who we let them to
- our residents
- our income and expenditure
- the complaints residents made.

We also tell you about the main things that have happened during the year in some of our key areas of work. They include:

- the services we provide centrally
- the management of your homes
- the ways we involve residents
- how we handle anti-social behaviour
- the projects we develop in your communities.

What you won't find in this report

An annual report is designed to give you details about our performance and work in a particular year. It doesn't give you information about our services and how to access them. We have other ways of telling you about this, which are set out opposite.

Our annual report can't include details about our performance at every individual scheme and estate, because it would get too long. If you would like

more local information than we provide in this report, you are welcome to call the Service Centre and leave a message for your patch manager.

Where to find more information

If the information you need is not included in this annual report, try referring to the following.

Residents' Handbook Your Residents' Handbook explains your rights and responsibilities as a resident, gives details about services and other information.



Service Centre Our customer service advisors will answer most queries on the spot or refer you to someone who can give an answer. They can also send you copies of our leaflets, booklets, formal policies and reports.

Open Door Our residents' newsletter gives news highlights and keeps you regularly updated about our activities and services.

Estate newsletters If your estate has a newsletter, it will provide local news and information.

Our staff Our caretakers, housing managers and community development staff will all be glad to help answer your queries.

Our website You will find useful information, key policy summaries, forms and publications to view and download at www.shgroup.org.uk Our website is currently being upgraded and, by the end of 2007, it will include much more information about our services.

Annual Review and Group Financial Accounts

The Annual Review and the Group Financial Accounts provide more formal information about the work of the organisations that make up Southern Housing Group. You can read or download them from our website or call the Service Centre for a copy.

Our work in 2006/07

Working together for better services

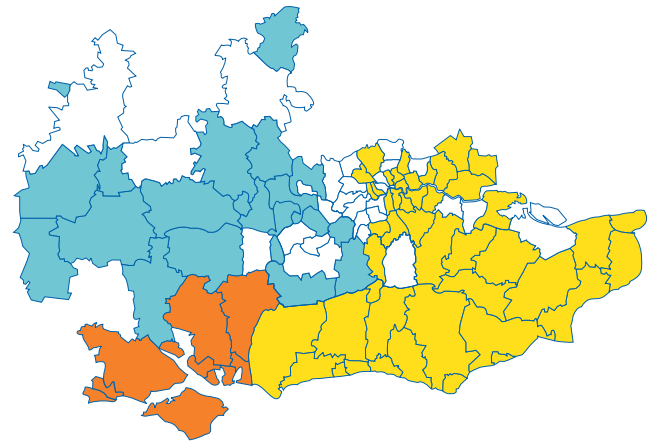
In 2006/07, after our rapid expansion the year before, we concentrated on bringing our organisations more closely together to make sure we provide a consistent, good quality service for all our residents.

We began by deciding to make better use of our shared resources to manage our properties. For some of you this means that your homes are now managed by a different Southern Housing Group landlord.

Our Service Centre opened up to residents of James Butcher HA in April 2006 and South Wight HA residents came on board in January 2007, giving them access to the same level of service and extended opening hours as Southern Housing Group Ltd residents.

In September 2007, home owners and key workers who rent homes from us also began using the Service Centre. At the same time, we began managing their homes alongside our rented homes.

Our rented homes



■ Managed by SWHA ■ Managed by JBHA
■ Managed by Southern Housing Group Ltd (three regions)

We sent you a separate newsletter in August, with Open Door, to explain how this will affect you.

What external regulators think of our organisation

The Housing Corporation awarded the whole of Southern Housing Group four green lights after assessing our work in 2006.



The green lights mean they found us financially secure, well governed, well managed and doing a good job when it comes to developing new homes.

The Corporation particularly praised our 'excellent' new developments in London and the south east, as well as the way we worked to bring James Butcher Housing Association into the Group.

James Butcher HA was inspected by the Audit Commission just after the period covered by this report. We have sent JBHA residents a summary of their findings. For a copy, call the Service Centre or go to our website.

We expect Southern Housing Group Ltd to be inspected by the Audit Commission during 2008.

Our work in 2006/07

How you influenced our work

Your feedback is extremely important to us and during the year we used a wide range of ways to hear from as many residents as possible. We use what you tell us to improve services and we report back regularly in Open Door residents' newsletter and elsewhere about how your views have influenced us. The following are some of our key resident involvement activities during 2006/07.

We carried out major **resident satisfaction surveys** in the autumn of 2006. These three-yearly surveys are a very important source of information for us about who you are and what your views are.

We held a **residents' conference** for Southern Housing Group Ltd residents in March 2007 and a similar conference for residents of South Wight HA in September.

Resident **focus groups** gave us their views on the Group's new Service Charter, our rent statements, the design of our new homes, how we work to make sure we are fair and provide a good service to residents from different backgrounds and with differing needs, the support plans we draw up with our sheltered housing residents and the way we go about managing our stock.

We sent a **survey** to members of the Southern Housing Group Ltd residents' panel to ask their views on last year's Annual Report to Residents and Open Door residents' newsletter.

Taking part in the residents' conference in March.



Find out more:

- in our annual involvement report, **Resident Involvement 2006/07** (available on our website or by calling the Service Centre)
- in Open Door residents' newsletter
- by calling the Service Centre and leaving a message for the resident involvement team.

We also sent the panel **mystery caller surveys**, so that they could report back on the service they got when they next used the Service Centre. If you would like to take part this year, call the Service Centre for a survey form.

We got ideas from a focus group about how we could introduce demoted tenancies as a way of tackling anti-social behaviour. When we had drawn up our strategy, we used a **phone survey** to call them back to check we had the right approach.

Nine Southern Housing Group Ltd residents became **customer service monitors**, making several visits to 12 schemes and streets in our London, Thames Gateway and South regions, to check on their condition.

During the year, we redesigned and improved the **postal surveys** we send out when we let you a brand-new home, redecorate your scheme, carry out major work or fit aids and adaptations to make your home more suitable for a disabled family member. We will be updating more of our surveys in the months to come.

Four Southern Housing Group Ltd residents sit on our **Customer Services Committee**, which meets four times a year to monitor our performance in key areas of our work and we recently selected two residents, one a leaseholder, to sit on the **Southern Housing Group Board**.

Local view

South Wight HA invited residents to a series of information days in Brading, Chale, Shanklin, Freshwater and Newport in August 2006, as well as launching a new database of residents who are willing to complete surveys and take part in focus groups and other feedback events.

To get ready for the introduction of the Service Centre, we sent out surveys, ran focus groups, took a group of residents to Horsham to see how the Centre worked at first hand and held a follow-up meeting back on the Island.

With our repairs contracts up for renewal, we have been meeting with 16 general needs residents and 15 supported housing residents to find out what they think of their repairs service. Two residents have volunteered to go on site visits and will sit on the interview panels later this year.

Three residents joined the Board of South Wight HA in September 2006. They will be Board members for three years, bringing a resident perspective to the heart of the organisation.

[A large group of residents took part in the focus groups we consulted before we introduced the Service Centre.](#)



Local view



Members of the resident consultative panel.

James Butcher HA launched a new resident consultative panel with six residents who now meet with us monthly to discuss a range of issues. We also invited residents to join a larger customer panel made up of people willing to complete surveys, comment on reports and publications, and join local discussions. We're now looking for residents willing to share their views on the cleaning and gardening we do at your schemes and the condition of homes when you first move in.

Over a dozen residents played an important role during the recent Audit Commission inspection, when they shared their views about our services with the inspectors.

We invited residents to start joining us on our regular inspections of their estates, helping us to spot where services needed to improve.

Residents at Elizabeth Court in Theale gave us their views on a bedsit we converted into a one bedroom flat, giving us valuable feedback that will help us with future conversions.



Our work in 2006/07

How you influenced our work

Local view

In London, Thames Gateway and South regions, **Southern Housing Group Ltd** residents helped us review some of our services by taking part in local focus groups.

Last summer, we consulted residents and young people at the five Southern Homes Estates in Hackney about what they wanted for their schemes now that work there is complete and we asked residents of Dawson Heights in south-east London about their hopes for their estate.

We consulted residents at Vanston Place in Fulham about their new community centre, at Ixworth Place in Fulham about plans to upgrade their landscaping and at Moore Paragon Estate in Canning Town about their new community room.

We gave residents at Fieldgate Mansions in Whitechapel choices about how to spend the last of the estate's improvement fund and shared plans for a new play area at the Durrington Estate.



The new community hall at Vanston Place.

Working jointly with Shepway District Council, we provided residents at Perrot Way in Hawkinge with a new caretaker, after consulting them to find out what they wanted. Two residents helped select the new staff member.

Over the next year, we plan to introduce regional residents' forums for Southern Housing Group Ltd residents, a new approach to local service agreements and new ways of involving you locally.

A new approach to lettings

In 2006, we reviewed the way we let Southern Housing Group Ltd and James Butcher HA homes (if you live on the Isle of Wight, the council holds a waiting list for all the Island's social landlords).

Most of our vacant homes, especially the newly built ones, have to be let to people put forward by their local authority. However, we decided to make improvements to the way we let the remainder.

Firstly, we decided where possible to join other social landlords in choice-based lettings schemes, where our waiting lists and empty homes are pooled together. The advantage for residents is that you can bid for properties that interest you.

Secondly, for the homes we allocate ourselves, we introduced a new way of prioritising people that uses a simple banding system instead of points. The new system is simpler to understand and fairer for people who have been waiting a long time.

Thirdly, we stopped offering homes to people with a history of anti-social behaviour during the past two years.

All our residents now receive Moving Options with each edition of Open Door, which gives details about making a transfer, sheltered housing vacancies, residents who would like to swap their homes and low-cost home ownership schemes.

An expanding Service Centre

The Service Centre answered **218,188** calls during 2006/07 – an increase on the previous year of over 23%. The rise is because we began taking calls from James Butcher HA residents from April 2006 and from South Wight HA residents from January 2007.

Despite the fact we're answering more calls than ever before, we've kept our average call answering speed down to **24.5** seconds and we answered two-thirds of calls within **20** seconds.

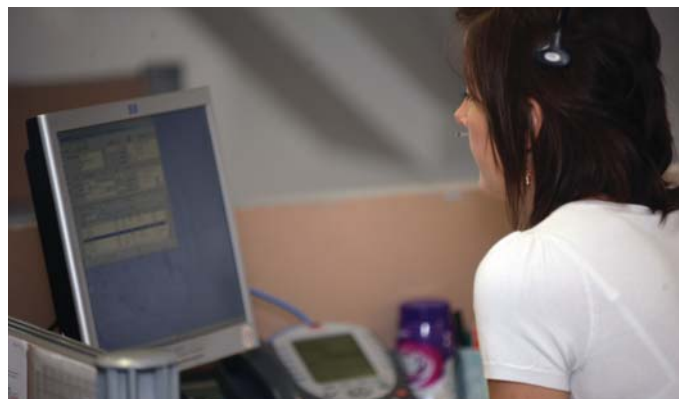
We received **375** calls from residents who needed an interpreter, almost a quarter more than the previous year. We introduced a new number for Turkish speakers alongside our existing Bengali line.

During the year the repairs team took **106,794** calls about repairs and booked in **51,633** repairs for residents of Southern Housing Group Ltd and James Butcher HA. To check how satisfied you were with your repair, the repairs team phoned **3,856** residents during the year. The average scores you gave each contractor are listed on page 10.

The rents team took **47,617** calls. The team focused on trying to reduce rent arrears, helping people to make arrangements to pay what they owed, so that we could further reduce the number of cases we take to court. We now keep an even closer record of every step we take, so that when we do have to go to court we can show that we have done everything possible to avoid it.

The tenancy team took **63,777** calls. They received **1,059** applications for housing and **538** transfer applications. In February, they began logging the first complaints and reports of anti-social behaviour onto the new reporting system (see page 15).

In September 2007, our three teams changed their names to: the repairs and maintenance team, the income recovery team, and the resident services team.



The feedback we have from residents who took part in focus groups, our mystery caller survey (see page 4) and the recent resident surveys tells us that you find it easy to contact the Service Centre and that you generally find our staff polite and helpful. But you aren't always happy with the outcome of your call and you often have to call more than once about your problem or repair. These are areas for us to improve.

Just after the period covered by this report, the Service Centre moved with the rest of our Horsham staff to new premises that give us room to expand.

Local view

South Wight HA residents go directly through to their contractors when they call about their repairs and, until January 2007 – when we joined the Service Centre – called our Isle of Wight offices with all their queries.

We counted these calls between the end of May and the end of July and again from October to December, so that the Service Centre would know the call volumes to expect.

We found that you were making around **162** calls a week to our contractors and around **840** calls with other enquiries.

Annual report to residents

Getting local services right

We continued to work to improve the services we provide at your schemes and estates, with more estate inspections and meetings with local residents.

However, we think we can do even better. We spent several months reviewing the way we provide services locally, with the aim of introducing a new system from the autumn of 2007. We have explained this new approach in Closer to Home, which we sent out with the latest issue of Open Door. The changes mean that in future we will:

- manage the homes of residents who rent and own their homes alongside each other
- manage cleaning and gardening contractors more closely
- provide specialist staff to tackle anti-social behaviour and to help you keep your payments on track
- provide more staff to spend more time at your schemes.

During 2006/07, sheltered housing residents around the Group also began enjoying the benefits of better technology, thanks to a programme to upgrade the community and fire alarm systems at their schemes. Mitchell House in Seaford in East Sussex, Pennington House in Franklands Village in West Sussex and Snowdown Court in Dover were among the first schemes to be given the new alarms.



Local view

At **South Wight HA**, we began making regular scheme inspections and invited residents to join us. We published lists of inspection dates and sent them to you with Open Door residents' newsletter.

In 2006, we introduced a new environmental improvements fund to help residents launch community projects to improve their schemes (see page 17).

Thanks to funding from Fair Haven Housing Trust, learning disabled residents at 22 Argyll Street in Ryde gained a conservatory that extended their communal lounge to provide more space for wheelchairs.

Residents at Spring Court sheltered scheme in Gosport are having better fencing, lighting and lockable gates installed, as well as thorny bushes planted to improve security at the back of the scheme, which backs onto local playing fields. The council is helping us meet the costs.



Local view

At **James Butcher HA**, we began regular estate inspections to monitor the condition of your schemes and the services we deliver to you locally. Regular visits also mean that we can talk to you about any problems developing in your areas.

The change reflects our new emphasis on local management and involving you in our work.

Our work in 2006/07

Local view

In **London region**, we used some of the environmental improvements budget to upgrade the ball games area for young residents at Dalston Lane by fitting new chain-link fencing and netting. Dawson Heights residents also benefited from new bin chutes.

We've been working with residents at Ixworth Place in Chelsea on a £1.4m scheme to improve the landscaping at their scheme with levelled courtyards, better lighting, more planting and cycle storage, better recycling facilities and access routes for emergency vehicles and refuse vans. The work will be completed next year.



Artist's impression of the new look for Ixworth Place.

Local view

In **Thames Gateway region**, we used money from the environmental improvements budget to provide new locking gates at Wakeling Street in Limehouse and Cannon Street Road in Shadwell, improving security and putting an end to dumping and illegal parking.

We also installed gates at Gill Avenue in Wainscott, Kent and built a substantial wall at the rear of Hardinge Crescent. At Coney Mews in Chatham we installed new bin stores.

We improved life for wheelchair users at Hogarth Court sheltered scheme in Whitechapel by installing a ramp so that they can enjoy the scheme's gardens.



Local view

In **South region**, we funded a £10,000 scheme to replace a disused play area with a landscaped garden at Kiln Walk on our Whitebushes Estate in Redhill, Surrey.

We replaced damaged fencing at Bunkers Hill in Dover, after hearing that children were putting themselves at risk of a 25-foot drop to the railway tracks below and to discourage fly tipping.

Our 'responsible tenant' at Coastal Counties House in Brighton no longer has to heave the scheme's individual metal bins up a flight of stone steps to street level since we built a brand-new bin storage area next to the main road, enclosed with new fencing. We have added a store for our residents' bikes alongside it.



Annual report to residents

Repairs and maintenance

We spent over **£8.2m** on your day-to-day repairs last year and completed **48,706** repairs.

One of our priorities in 2006/07 was to draw together the systems used by all three landlords, to make sure we provide the same high levels of service to all our residents. In particular, we are bringing our IT systems together and drawing up a new set of performance standards.

We continued to run our day-to-day repairs service in partnership with a small number of contractors, working with them to improve services and keep down costs. During the year, both James Butcher HA and Southern Housing Group Ltd's South region selected new contractors.

By this summer, most of our contractors were using hand-held technology, which means quicker, more efficient communication between the operative doing the job, the contractor's base and the Service Centre. We are also working with our contractors to integrate our IT systems. This will mean that when a customer advisor puts details on our computer system there will be no delay in the contractor getting the information. We think these changes are going to bring real improvements to the future efficiency of our repairs service.

Robert Heath Heating took on the gas servicing and repairs contract for 600 James Butcher HA homes as well as holding the contract for all three regions of Southern Housing Group Ltd. The company is continuing to make significant reductions in the number of gas services that are overdue, so we decided to change our policy of forcing entry to gain access. But we do still rely on you to give our contractors access so that they can do their job.

One positive result of the good relationships we have with our contractors is that they are starting to offer apprenticeships to a small number of our residents (see page 12). We send out adverts as these opportunities arise.



Because we spend a large part of our budget on repairs and maintenance, we're constantly working to find savings, as well as improving our service. For example, we're now saving money on gas boilers thanks to membership of the Buy4London buying group, which is buying in bulk for nine, large, London-based housing associations. We expect to save around £10,000 on gas boilers every quarter as a result.

With our day-to-day repairs partnerships generally going well, we decided that in future we'd run our redecoration programmes in a similar way. We invited contractors to tender for a five-year contract to decorate the communal areas and outside paintwork at all our schemes except homes on the Isle of Wight. After following the selection process set out by the European Union, we have awarded the contract to Architectural Decorators Ltd of Sidcup.

We continued to work on your homes so that they will meet the Government's Decent Homes standard by the target date of 2010, working on over **1,633** homes and spending almost **£10m**. And, under our Decent Homes Plus programme, we continued to go beyond the minimum standards set by the Government, replacing all failing items, rather than simply making sure a home will pass.

Our work in 2006/07

Local view

South Wight HA spent **£680,000** on day-to-day repairs during 2006/07. We also spent over **£1.36m** on Decent Homes works, ending the year with over **71%** of homes meeting the standard. Amongst other things, we replaced:

- **330** kitchens
- **25** bathrooms
- **50** heating systems.

Working on **736** homes, we carried out rewires and electrical upgrades to homes in Chillerton, Bembridge, Brading, Brighstone, Freshwater, Hulverstone and Merstone.

We replaced electric heating in Bembridge, Brading, Freshwater, Lake, Niton, Rookley and Shanklin.

We replaced roofs in Ventnor and Yarmouth, and kitchens in Chale, Chillerton, Brading, Lake, Newport, Sandown, Shanklin, and Wroxall.

We replaced bathrooms in Brading, Chillerton and Shanklin, and windows in Shanklin, East Cowes and Ventnor.



A new kitchen installed under Decent Homes.

Local view

James Butcher HA went live with a new repairs contractor, Enterprise plc, last October and spent almost **£1.5m** on day-to-day repairs during 2006/07.

We also took on several new specialist contractors, including Jackson Lifts, who service and maintain all our lifts, and Allied Protection Limited, who service and maintain the fire alarms and panels at all of our sheltered schemes.

We've been finding it harder to let sheltered flats that are bedsits, because older people would often rather have a separate bedroom. So, last summer, as a trial project, we converted one of the bedsits at Elizabeth Court in Theale into a one bedroom flat. Resident feedback suggests this worked quite well and we will develop the idea further in future.

During 2006, we concentrated on carrying out further surveys to identify homes that would fail the Decent Homes standard.

In 2007, Southern Housing Group Ltd's reinvestment team put together a new works programme for JBHA. As a result, we were able to provide new electrics, as well as new kitchens for some residents, at Mander Court sheltered scheme in Reading.

In addition, we carried out electrical upgrades at Foundry Court in Portsmouth, Wallis House in East Grinstead and at a number of smaller schemes.

Windows were also replaced at Foundry Court in Portsmouth, Helen Court and Florence Court in Reading, Nutfield Court in Portsmouth and Reading House on Hayling Island in Hampshire.

By the end of the year, we had worked on **178** homes and spent **£759,000**. Over **67%** of homes met the Decent Homes standard.

Annual report to residents

Repairs and maintenance

Local view

Southern Housing Group Ltd spent over **£6.1m** on day-to-day repairs during 2006/07. We also spent over **£7.7m** on Decent Homes works. In all:

- 281 homes had new windows fitted
- 396 homes were given new kitchens
- 277 homes gained new bathrooms
- 202 homes had electrical rewires
- 259 homes were given new heating
- 17 homes had their roofs renewed
- four homes had their layout changed.

By April 2007, over **89%** of our homes met the Decent Homes standard.

Two Southern Housing Group Ltd residents got the chance to develop a career in maintenance, thanks to a scheme run in partnership with Axis Europe plc, our repairs contractor for London and Thames Gateway regions.

The pair were among 70 residents to apply for an



Decent Homes works to these homes at Goldsmith in Grays, Essex, involved replacing warped wooden windows with new pvc units.

apprenticeship after reading the advert we carried in Open Door residents' newsletter.

As we go to press, residents are being invited to apply for similar opportunities with MHS, Robert Heath Heating and Axis Europe, in what we see as a continuing programme.

Our pilot mobile caretaker scheme was extended a second time, so that caretakers Abrajah Rafiq in Hackney and Neil Hoyle in the Dover area could continue to provide their popular mobile repairs service.

With over 80% of jobs fixed first time and many jobs done on the day they are reported, the pair continue to get good resident satisfaction scores.

Our work in 2006/07

Local view

In **London region**, Decent Homes works provided residents at Taymount Rise in Forest Hill with new kitchens, heating, windows and a new roof, Redland Court residents in Bromley gained new kitchens and heating, and Amhurst Park Estate residents in Stoke Newington had new kitchens and bathrooms installed.

We completed the last of the landscaping work at the Southern Homes estates in Hackney, as well as all the regeneration works agreed when residents voted to transfer to us from Hackney Council six years ago.

We also completed the long-running works at Vanston Place in Fulham. The scheme now has a new community hall, ball games area, better lighting and security, as well as bigger, warmer, quieter and better laid out flats. We have also developed new homes at the scheme for key workers to rent and for shared owners.

Our major regeneration of the Market Estate in Holloway saw the first new homes completed, allowing

residents to move from their homes on the old estate. We also completed the first phase of work to next-door Caledonian Park. As well as work to the landscaping, we've added a new ball games area.



Local view

In **Thames Gateway region**, Axis Europe completed their first full year as the region's contractor and last summer we held a special one-day workshop with them, as we looked at ways to develop our working relationship.

Decent Homes works at Beckton Estate gave residents new heating, kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors, while residents at Ensign, Bell and Eagle Houses in Grays in Essex had new windows fitted.



Local view

In **South region**, Mountjoy Ltd, who covered homes in the west of the region, brought their contract to an early end for operational reasons. Our new contractors, Connaught, began their contract in January.

As part of our Decent Homes programme, we completed the latest phase of internal works and soundproofing at York and Brunswick in Hove. Homes in Dover, Deal, Ashford, Tonbridge & Malling and Saltdean had their kitchens, bathrooms and heating renewed.

In Brighton, sheltered housing residents at Courtney King House were given new bathrooms and at Lakeview gained new bathrooms, kitchens, windows and wiring. At Oliver House and Windlesham Gardens, also in Brighton, we installed new bathrooms, kitchens and wiring.

Annual report to residents

Making services easier to access

During 2006/07 we introduced a new strategy for making sure we always take into account our residents' different backgrounds and needs when we design services, as well as working on a strategy to make sure that those services can easily be accessed by everyone.

We introduced a special phone number for the Group's Turkish residents alongside the phone line we have for Bengali speakers.

In June 2006, we took the unusual step of running diversity awareness days for around 90 key staff from our day-to-day and service contractors, to help them do an even better job of meeting all our residents' needs and preferences. We also began collecting more information about your service

preferences, to make it easier to deliver services in the ways you want.

In planning the relaunch of our website, we made sure we met Government guidelines. Users can change type sizes and colours, or opt to view in html.



We are also increasingly using larger type sizes in our printed publications to make them easier to read and we can offer large print or audio copies on request as well as translations.

Keeping you informed

We relaunched Open Door residents' newsletter last summer, with a bright new look and a more convenient size.

Open Door has an even more important job since we began sending it to residents of James Butcher HA last summer and South Wight HA this spring. As from this summer, we now include home owners and renting key workers as well.



As well as the usual mix of news and service updates, we began giving you more information about our performance and we launched Moving Options to give you more details about the different ways you can get a move.

During the year, we issued our new Service Charter. We reissued our complaints leaflet and we produced a leaflet for our more vulnerable residents, to let them know they could count on our support if they ever faced abuse.

James Butcher HA residents were sent a new and improved residents' handbook, as well as Building Blocks for Excellence, which set out plans to put improved services and resident involvement at the heart of JBHA's work. South Wight HA residents will soon receive a new residents' handbook.

We began working on improvements to our website, to make it more useful and easier for you to use.



Our work in 2006/07

Sorting out what bothered you

After reviewing our complaints system last year, we decided to make major changes to improve our service. We made it easier to complain by phone, via our website or by email, so that you no longer have to send a letter or fill in a form unless you prefer to.

We introduced a new computer system to help us record and manage complaints and anti-social behaviour. As well as helping us be more efficient at record keeping, the system is improving the way we handle these cases because, as staff enter the details, it offers guidelines about the steps they should take.

We retrained over 300 staff to make sure they knew all about our new approach and sent out a new complaints leaflet explaining the system to all our residents.

We took on our first-ever complaints service manager to lead on complaints management and to make sure that we provide a much higher level of customer care, as well as learning from and acting on what your complaints tell us about our services.

Our anti-social behaviour team continued to support local staff dealing with nuisance cases, as well as planning the best way to introduce demoted tenancies for residents who persist in causing a nuisance. After discussing our work with focus groups, we made sure that our new system for managing reports of anti-social behaviour would mean swift action on less serious cases of nuisance, leaving local and specialist staff to concentrate on the more serious cases.

Our work in this area will be further strengthened when the new anti-social behaviour case workers we are introducing for Southern Housing Group Ltd and South Wight HA begin work this autumn. We are planning to introduce similar changes at James Butcher HA in the future.

Local view

At **South Wight HA**, we took a resident to court in July 2006 to get an injunction after he failed to respond to our requests to tidy up his garden and remove untaxed vehicles from his drive. This eyesore had been causing annoyance to his neighbours.

Also in 2006, we evicted a Newport man for persisting in playing loud music, despite having his equipment confiscated several times and being prosecuted by the environmental health department. When we took him to court, our evidence, together with statements from his neighbours, added up to a very good case and the judge agreed that the man should be evicted.

A once regular visitor to Melton Hall in Ryde, who threatened and abused residents, is still prevented from returning to the scheme, thanks to the three-year Anti-social Behaviour Injunction we gained at the end of 2005.

In Hampshire, we welcomed the arrival of the new safer neighbourhood police teams and will work with them to tackle local nuisance.

Local view

At **James Butcher HA**, we worked with the police to close down a flat at Mount Pleasant in Bracknell under the crack house laws, after a young male resident allowed a dealer to move in with him. The flat was closed for three months, giving us time to secure an eviction.

In Marlborough and in Pewsey, we stepped in to deal with cases of noise nuisance and nipped problems in the bud by issuing warning letters and visiting the perpetrators.

Annual report to residents

Sorting out what bothered you

Local view

In **London region**, we had to deal with a female resident who was attracting large groups of young people to her Islington scheme, where they were drinking, drug dealing, shouting, swearing, riding motorbikes and littering. Residents also complained that they couldn't park their cars after bottles were broken in the road. Fireworks were also set off in the street and the children's play area suffered fly tipping.

We already had a suspended possession order against this resident for not paying her rent, so we went back to court for permission to evict her, taking evidence of the anti-social behaviour. The court gave us a new suspended order, which will allow us to apply for eviction if the anti-social behaviour continues.

Local view

In **Thames Gateway region**, we gained nuisance injunctions against two people who had been causing trouble at Fieldgate Mansions in Whitechapel. In the first case, the injunction was designed to stop a resident and her visitors from being abusive and playing loud music. In the second case, the injunction was against the ex-partner of a resident who kept returning to cause damage.

We also evicted a resident who physically attacked a female member of staff who was running a drop-in surgery at one of our estates. It was witnessed by other residents who were fearful and quickly left the scene for their own safety. We passed the details to the police, who are bringing criminal charges.

Local view

In **South region**, we evicted a Brighton resident after his violent behaviour caused his wife to leave their home.

We got a court injunction banning a resident from his home in the village of Angmering in West Sussex, after he kept threatening his neighbours and allowing drunken fighting to spill out from his home into the garden. The order meant we could go on to evict him.

In a case that took several years to resolve, we evicted a loud and abusive resident from The Mannings in Shoreham-by-Sea in Sussex, together with her daughter who was attracting young people to the scheme bent on causing a nuisance. We eventually took the resident to court for not paying her rent, but we let her know we were ready to use evidence of her anti-social behaviour if she applied for a further hearing.

Anti-social behaviour has been a tricky problem in Durrington, but we are continuing to improve our links with the police, local schools, the borough council and social services so that we can act swiftly when problems arise. We have taken serious action against several residents at the scheme, including taking people to court.

We supported local police when they gained an Anti-social Behaviour Order against a 17-year-old resident who had been causing a nuisance in the park next door to our Saunders Park View Estate in Brighton.

We also worked with fellow landlords at Meadowview in Brighton to get the teenage son and daughter of two of our residents to sign up to voluntary anti-social behaviour contracts, agreeing that they would behave better in future.

Our work in 2006/07

Strengthening your communities

Southern Housing Group has an impressive and longstanding record of working with residents to help boost your local communities. We know that we can make a big difference to life in your neighbourhoods if we involve you in local decision-making, help you to launch your own projects and support your residents' groups.

Since joining Southern Housing Group, South Wight and James Butcher Housing Associations are both putting more emphasis on this area of their work. Their community development staff can now call on some of the resources of our experienced resident involvement team.

Local view

At **James Butcher HA**, we began placing greater emphasis on resident involvement during 2006/07, explaining our renewed commitment to residents in Building Blocks for Excellence.



During the year, we supported residents at the Northbourne Estate in Farncombe in Surrey when they set up an action group to improve life at their scheme.

With backing from their neighbours, they have organised social and community activities, as well as involving young people in discussions about what needs to improve. We gave the group a grant for their set-up costs and support to help them secure a grant from the Local Network Fund. The group also gained funding from their local council.

We also backed residents at Schroder Court in Egham in Surrey when they launched a neighbourhood watch scheme.

Local view

South Wight HA worked with residents and the Footprint Trust in a major clean up of the historic pond at Treefields Estate in October. We also encouraged residents to go on to take part in a pond wardens' course.

Thanks to our new environmental improvements fund, residents at Treefields in Binstead, got an award to help them develop



their community garden (young helpers pictured), while residents at St Edmunds in Chale Village bought more plants and a compost bin.

At Melton Hall in Ryde, we got residents together to decide how to make the most of their grounds. It led to the design of an impressive wooden bench by young residents, which was made up by a local craftsman. There are plans for a brick barbecue and new planting.

Last summer, residents at 54 St John's Road, one of our schemes for young people, were able to decorate and re-furnish their front room thanks to donations and grants from local stores.

At Atkinson House, another hostel for young people, residents were given gardening tips by the Footprint Trust and B&Q donated goods worth £250.

Residents from our supported housing schemes enjoyed social activities that included the launch of a brunch club at Carisbrooke Road and the lively Ryde Fun Project which provides a range of activities out in the community for local people with learning disabilities.

Annual report to residents

Strengthening your communities

Southern Housing Foundation is the charity we set up to work with Southern Housing Group Ltd residents. It prioritises:

- providing opportunities for young people
- 'financial inclusion' – widening the financial choices open to people who are usually turned down by banks
- older people
- the external environment, and
- boosting your skills and resources to help you improve your lives and your neighbourhoods.

This year, to strengthen our work with young people, the Foundation took on a youth development project manager to oversee our work with young people and offer specialist advice to all our staff when they are planning projects.

The Foundation's financial inclusion team supported 68 residents with rent arrears and debt problems. The Foundation also continued to support new and developing credit unions, as well as Fair Finance, which offers fair loans to

residents and small businesses in east London. These organisations offer not-for-profit financial services to people with low credit ratings, helping people to manage their money and stay out of debt.

During the year, the Foundation drew up a new strategy for the landscaping at our schemes, which recognises the importance of attractive communal areas and the part residents can play in achieving them. We think that social space will soon become an important national issue.

Two residents living in Greater London are being given the chance to turn their community project and business ideas into a reality, thanks to being sponsored by the Foundation to take a course with the School for Social Entrepreneurs. We'll be advertising further opportunities in the future.

The Foundation also supported and/or funded many of the local projects described in the local view sections that follow.



Local view

In **Thames Gateway region**, residents at Cyprus Street Estate in Bethnal Green blitzed their communal garden last summer with support from housing staff and Axis repairs contractors.

We set up a residents' panel at Timber Wharves Estate on the Isle of Dogs, arranged for Docklands Outreach to provide a three-year programme for young people and hosted the first Community Festival last September. With Foundation support, 40 young residents worked with Okai Collier publishing company to produce a graphic novel and nearly 70 residents worked with a metalwork

artist to design four sets of gates for the estate's parking areas (pictured).

Around 20 young residents at Royal Arsenal Estate in Greenwich worked with Okai Collier to produce a newsletter called Riverside and we gave the former rent office at Moore Paragon Estate in Canning Town a new lease of life as a community room.



Our work in 2006/07

Local view

In **London region**, we've been working with local agencies and residents at New River Green Estate in Islington to find practical ways to improve life in the area. By working with Islington Council, we've also had CCTV installed.

Four Market Estate residents in Holloway went on a course with the Asian and Oriental School of Catering. Art panels were produced for the estate's construction panels by 10 young estate residents working with the Copenhagen Youth Project and by a Year 5 class from Hungerford Primary School, working with FreeForm Arts and the Caledonian Park Users' Group.

We supported the resident-led Hackney Modern art project so they could open a community arts centre in a refurbished flat on the Stamford Hill



Estate in Hackney. Estate residents also celebrated the opening of their sculpture park, with six of their designs transformed into life-size artworks by Arts Express (pictured).

In Hackney, a Foundation grant reopened the Friendly Faces Toddler group at Hindle House and a Nightingale Community Development Fund award provided a moveable stage for Baden Powell Primary School, which is next door to the Nightingale Estate.

Ten young people from Vanston Place in Fulham worked with Okai Collier publishing company to produce a graphic novel and we refurbished the estate's community hall.

Dawson Heights residents in south-east London celebrated the end of works to their scheme with a fun day in June 2006.

Local view

In **South region**, we worked with residents and local agencies on a good neighbour declaration for Peacehaven Estate and we provided a new base for community activities. Peacehaven youngsters also took part in football sessions, thanks to a partnership between the Foundation and Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club.

We supported residents at French's Court in Seaford, East Sussex, as they started a residents' association and neighbourhood watch scheme.

Support from the Foundation allowed the mediation service in Sussex to extend the area it works in and to train children as mediators.

The Foundation bought a five-year lease on the old Aylesham Library, so that the Aylesham Neighbourhood Project could go ahead with plans to turn it into a community centre.

In Durrington, we worked with other local landlords to provide a space known as 'The Flat – Services to our community' (pictured), where residents can get benefits and other advice. We backed the

relaunch of Durrington's Phoenix Youth Group, which is run by residents, and paid The Beat Project to carry out research

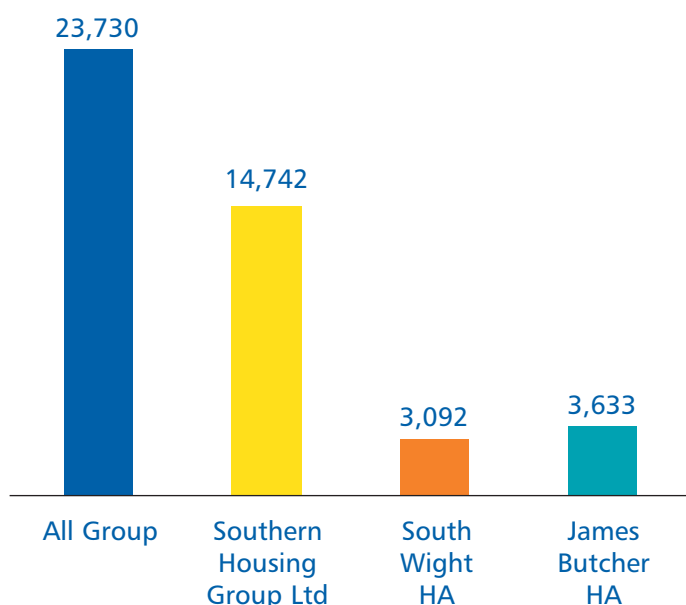


with young people. The Foundation is now funding The Beat Project to work with young people in Durrington for two more years.

In partnership with Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club and other landlords, the Foundation is also funding coaching sessions for young people over a three-year period.

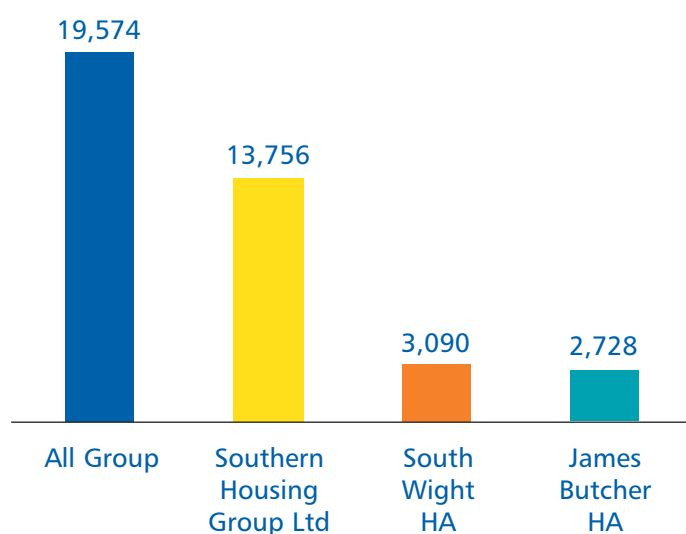
Facts & figures 2006/07

The homes we owned



The homes we owned on 31 March 2007 included **2,263** homes owned by Southern Housing Home Ownership that are for shared ownership or rent by key workers.

The rented homes we managed



To make the best use of our combined resources, our three housing associations manage homes for each other. Unless otherwise stated, the figures in this report are based on the landlord that managed the homes.

By the end of March 2007 we managed homes in **81** local authority areas in southern England. Southern Housing Group Ltd managed homes in **49** local authority areas, South Wight HA in **11** areas and James Butcher HA in **21** areas.

Homes for vulnerable residents

We owned **2,950** units in sheltered schemes for older people and schemes offering support as well as a home to a number of different groups. They included:

- **1,696** homes managed by Southern Housing Group Ltd
- **500** homes managed by South Wight HA
- **754** homes managed by James Butcher HA.

Our homes included **141** suitable for the needs of residents who use wheelchairs or who have problems with mobility. Of these:

- **107** were managed by Southern Housing Group Ltd
- **17** were managed by South Wight HA
- **17** were managed by James Butcher HA.

Home ownership

We also had **804** leaseholders who had taken up their right to buy or acquire their home from us. Of these:

- **718** had a lease with Southern Housing Group Ltd
- **73** had a lease with South Wight HA
- **13** had a lease with James Butcher HA.

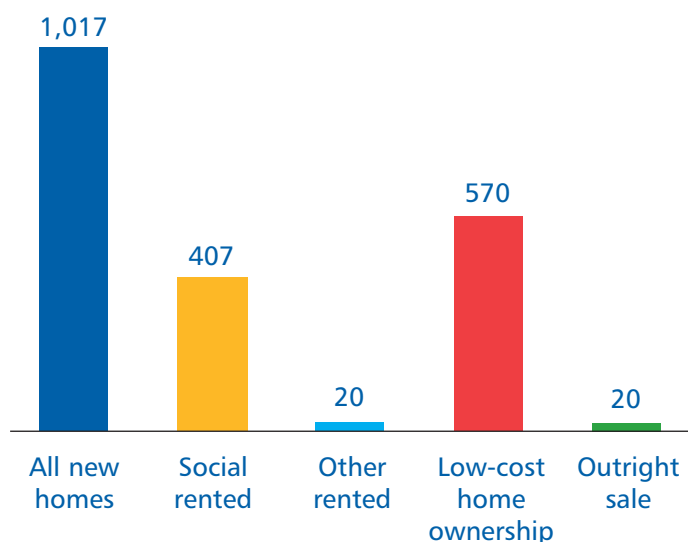
The Group also has **3,120** shared owners, who are part-buying, part-renting their homes.

None of these owner-occupied properties are included in the figures in this report, because we currently report separately to our home owners.

From September 2007, however, we began managing these homes alongside our rented properties.

Investing in homes

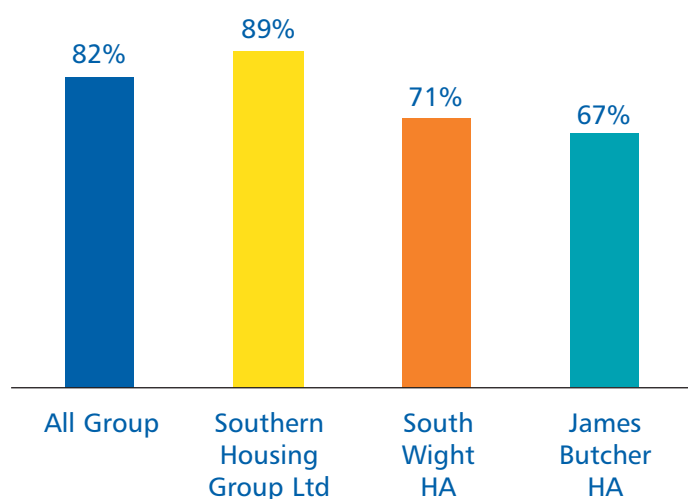
In 2006/07 we developed **1,017** new homes.



As well as affordable and low-cost homes for rent and sale, we developed a small number of homes for rent to key workers and others. Our commercial property development company Southern Space also began to produce homes for sale on the open market so that we can raise additional funds to invest in our social housing work.

Working towards Decent Homes

By 31 March 2007, over **82%** of our homes met the Decent Homes standard.



The repairs we carried out

In 2006/07, we carried out **48,706** day-to-day repairs.

	Emergency	Other
Southern Housing Group Ltd	6,567	29,340
South Wight HA	1,327	8,354
James Butcher HA	555	2,563
Total	8,449	40,257

How long repairs took

On average, we completed emergency repairs within **23** hours and all other repairs within **11** days of you reporting them to us.

	Emergency (hours)	Other (days)
Southern Housing Group Ltd	27	16
South Wight HA	20	9
James Butcher HA	22	9
Total	23	11

This meant that we completed **87%** of emergency repairs and **83%** of other repairs within our target times.

	Emergency on time	Other on time
Southern Housing Group Ltd	85%	81%
South Wight HA	96%	96%
James Butcher HA	80%	81%
Total	87%	83%

The figures show that we are getting it right most of the time, but we still need to improve. We will continue to work with our partner contractors to improve the service we give you.

Facts & figures 2006/07

How satisfied you were with our contractors and caretakers

Every month we phone a random 5% to 10% of residents who have had a repair done. When we call, we ask you to rank the service you got from 1 to 10.

If you score below 8 out of 10, we ask you to tell us what could have been better. We discuss what you tell us with our contractors at our regular monthly meetings.

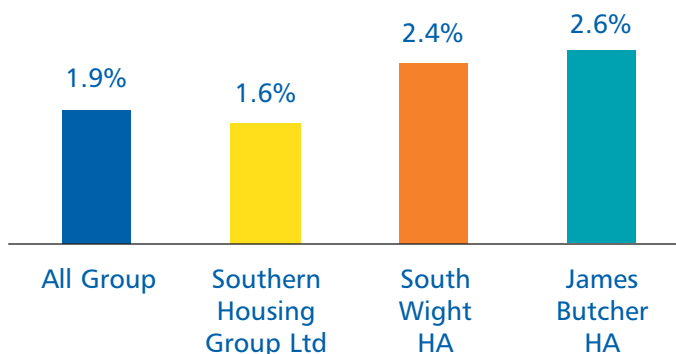
Your satisfaction levels during 2006/07 are shown below.



Contractor	Area	Residents phoned	Average score
Axis Europe	London region	1032	8.0
Axis Europe	Thames Gateway	840	8.1
Connaught	South region	98	8.0
MHS	South region	545	8.3
Mountjoy	South Wight HA	297	7.9
Banks	South Wight HA	48	9.2
Enterprise	James Butcher HA	124	8.4
Robert Heath Heating	Southern Housing Group Ltd/JBHA	786	7.9
Caretakers	Southern Housing Group Ltd	86	7.8

How well we performed on gas servicing and checks

By law, we have to get all your gas boilers and appliances serviced and safety checked every year. Our performance in this area has been improving, but we still have problems getting some residents to give us access. The graph opposite shows how many homes did not have a current safety certificate on 31 March 2007.



The rents we charged

General needs

At the end of March 2007, our average weekly rent for a general home rented on a secure or assured tenancy was **£74.10**. (Including service charges, the figure was **£80.45**.)



General needs	Average weekly basic rent		
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA
Bedsit	51.61	52.41	55.33
One bed	63.73	58.38	64.82
Two bed	74.92	69.88	78.58
Three bed	83.34	80.73	89.05
Four bed or more	94.69	89.91	97.60

Sheltered and supported



At the same time, our average weekly rent for a sheltered scheme or supported home before service charges was **£58.58**.

Sheltered and supported	Average weekly basic rent		
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA
Bedsit	48.70	51.93	55.70
One bed	60.66	59.53	65.40
Two bed	73.13	75.09	81.41
Three bed	66.94	73.23	–

The rent residents owed

By the end of March 2007, our overall rent arrears were **5.3%** (compared to 5.9% the previous year).

General needs

General needs	Rent owed
Southern Housing Group Ltd	8%
South Wight HA	4.5%
James Butcher HA	6.3%
All Group	7.3%

Sheltered and supported

Sheltered and supported	Rent owed
Southern Housing Group Ltd	8.4%
South Wight HA	4.4%
James Butcher HA	4%
All Group	5.9%

We gained court orders against **372** people for not paying their rent. Of these:

- **278** were taken to court by Southern Housing Group Ltd
- **35** were taken to court by South Wight HA
- **59** were taken to court by James Butcher HA.

We went on to evict **47** people. Of these:

- **29** were evicted by Southern Housing Group Ltd
- **14** were evicted by South Wight HA
- **4** were evicted by James Butcher HA.

Note: In the above section, we've used figures for the landlords that owned rather than managed the homes.

Facts & figures 2006/07

Our empty homes

General needs

At the end of March 2007, **292** of our general needs homes were empty. Of these, **101** were in the process of being let and **191** were awaiting major repairs, conversion, improvement, sale or demolition.

Empty homes	General needs		
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA
Available for let	67	16	18
Awaiting major work or sale	182	9	–
Total	249	25	18

Sheltered and supported

At the same time, **224** of our sheltered and supported homes were empty. Of these, **135** were in the process of being let and **89** were awaiting major repairs, conversion, improvement or sale.

Empty homes	Sheltered and supported		
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA
Available for let	32	15	88
Awaiting major work or sale	25	1	63
Total	57	16	151

How quickly we let our empty homes

During 2006/07, on average, we let our empty general needs homes within **29** days and our empty sheltered and supported homes within **71** days.

	Average days to let empty homes		
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA
General needs	29	24	36
Sheltered and supported	32	57	167

Why general needs homes became available

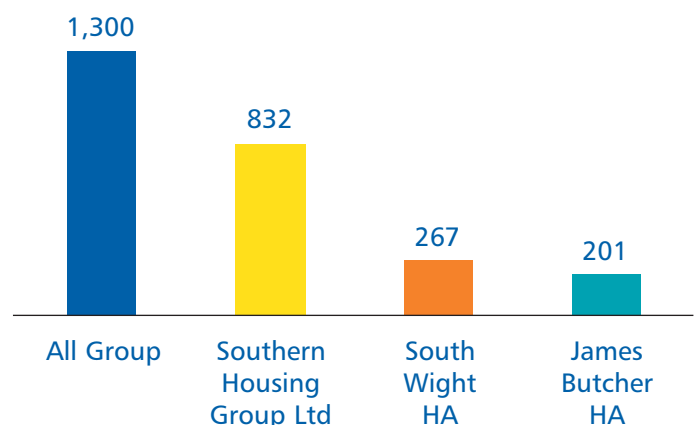
Some of the most common reasons why general needs homes became available are listed in the chart below.

Why available	% available homes			
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA	All Group
Newly built	36%	24%	10%	29%
Internal transfer	11%	17%	18%	14%
Moved elsewhere	16%	29%	30%	21%
Resident died	9%	12%	6%	9%
Home abandoned	7%	2%	9%	6%
Resident evicted	11%	8%	5%	10%

The homes we let

General needs

During 2006/07, we let **1,300** general needs homes. This figure does not include the homes we let to live-in staff or the mutual exchanges you made.



Included in the total were **386** brand-new homes, of which:

- **303** were let by Southern Housing Group Ltd
- **63** were let by South Wight HA
- **20** were let by James Butcher HA.

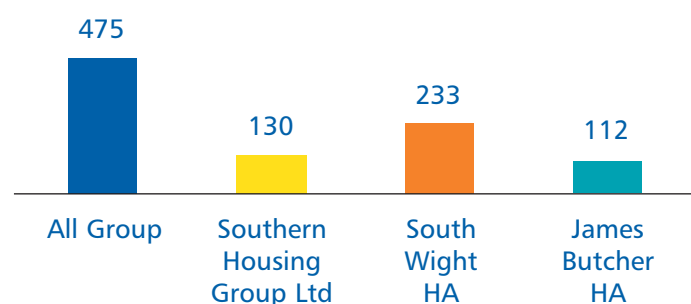
The size of homes we let

The chart below shows the sizes of the general needs homes we let.

Size of home	General needs			
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA	All Group
Bedsit/One bed	345	92	128	565
Two bed	348	110	60	518
Three bed	128	55	12	195
Four or more	11	9	1	21

Sheltered and supported

During 2006/07, we let 475 sheltered and supported homes. This figure does not include the homes we let to live-in staff.



Who we rehoused

Household type	% Rehoused			
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA	All Group
Single people	50%	50%	68%	53%
Single people 60 ⁺	16%	15%	31%	18%
Families with children under 16	36%	36%	15%	32%
Other households	14%	14%	17%	14%

Disabled household members

Of the households we rehoused, 21% included a disabled family member.

- 20% of Southern Housing Group Ltd's lettings went to a household with a disabled member.
- 22% of South Wight HA's lettings went to a household with a disabled member.
- 24% of James Butcher HA's lettings went to a household with a disabled member.

Residents from different communities

Around 20% of our lettings were to households who were black or from an ethnic minority.

Community	% lettings			
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA	All Group
White British	67.7%	97.6%	88.5%	79.8%
Asian/Asian British	4.5%	0.4%	1.6%	2.8%
Black/Black British	13.4%	–	5.1%	8.2%
Chinese	0.5%	–	–	0.3%
Other white	8.2%	0.8%	2.6%	5.1%
Other ethnic group	1.4%	0.4%	–	0.8%
Mixed	2.9%	0.6%	1.9%	2.1%
Not known	1.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.8%

Facts & figures 2006/07

Why we rehoused people

The chart below shows, for each landlord and for the Group as a whole, the most common reasons why we rehoused people during 2006/07.

Reason	% Rehoused			
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA	All Group
Ill health/disability	15%		13%	13%
Overcrowding	17%	10%	13%	14%
Move to home with support		18%		10%
Asked to leave by friends or family	8%	14%		
End of assured shorthold tenancy		11%		
Move to independent home			12%	



Our resident communities

At the end of March 2007, almost **20%** of our residents were black or from an ethnic minority. This applied to:

- **28%** of Southern Housing Group Ltd residents
- **1%** of South Wight HA residents
- **4%** of James Butcher HA residents.



Our brand-new homes

During the year, **308** residents who had lived in one of our newly built homes for a year completed our satisfaction survey.

They told us that:

- **92%** were satisfied or very satisfied with their home
- **71%** were satisfied or very satisfied with us as their landlord.

Language preferences

We are working to improve the information we hold about residents' language preferences. We already know that at least **245** people prefer to hear from us in Bengali and **172** in Turkish – so we routinely translate many of our publications into these two languages.

We also know that:

- over **40** people prefer to hear from us in Arabic, French and Somali
- over **20** people prefer to hear from us in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Gujarati and Urdu
- over **10** people prefer to hear from us in Greek, Polish and Tigrigna.

In all, residents have expressed a preference for a total of **29** languages other than English.

The complaints we received

During 2006/07 we received **784** complaints. You made:

- **640** complaints to Southern Housing Group Ltd
- **65** complaints to South Wight HA
- **79** complaints to James Butcher HA.

Most common reasons for complaints

The chart below shows the most common reasons why you complained.

Reasons	Number of complaints			
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA	All Group
Repairs/contractors	451	34	47	532
Anti-social behaviour	35	8		43
Lack of response	24		1	25
Shared areas/scheme management			22	22
Staff attitude	18		4	22
Rehousing	16			16
Rent and charges	8	3	5	16
Car parking	11			11

How we dealt with your complaints

The chart below shows the progress of these complaints at the end of March 2007.

Stage reached	Number of complaints			
	SHG Ltd	SWHA	JBHA	All Group
Resolved	574	62	68	704
Still being put right	64	2	9	75
Awaiting appeals panel	1	1	2	4
Referred to Housing Ombudsman	1	0	0	1

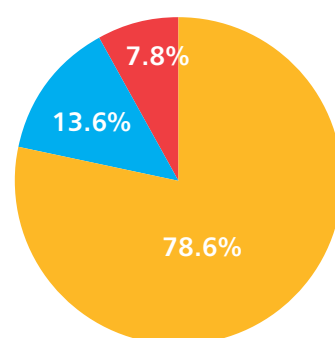
One Southern Housing Group Ltd complaint was finally resolved by an Ombudsman decision.

No complaints went to the Ombudsman for South Wight or James Butcher Housing Associations.

Our income

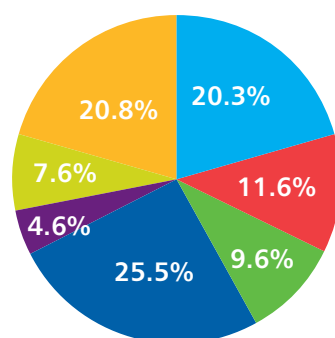
- Net rental income
- Other income
- Surplus on sale of assets*

*This figure is high because JBHA sold their retirement leasehold properties during the year.



Our expenditure

- Routine repairs
- Major repairs
- Estate costs
- Staff costs
- Overheads
- Property depreciation
- Interest paid on loans



The figures shown include Southern Housing Home Ownership, Southern Space and Southern Housing Foundation, as well as Southern Housing Group Ltd, South Wight and James Butcher HAs.

If you live anywhere except on the Isle of Wight, phone us on **08456 066 366** (8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday)

If you live on the Isle of Wight, phone us on **08456 581 654** (8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday)

Email us at servicecentre@shgroup.org.uk

Write to us at **Service Centre, Southern Housing Group, PO Box 643, Horsham RH12 1XJ**

In an emergency, when the Service Centre is closed, if you live anywhere except the Isle of Wight, phone Homeserve on (Southern Housing Group) **08457 573 764** or (James Butcher HA) **08456 013 225**

In an emergency, when the Service Centre is closed, if you live on the Isle of Wight, phone Wightcare on **01983 821 030**

Visit our website at www.shgroup.org.uk

Front page pic: Young people in Sussex take part in football coaching – just one of the community activities we made possible for residents and their children during the year.

For help with translations or if a large type, Braille or taped summary would be useful, please contact the Service Centre.

Bengali	অনুবাদ সাহায্য পেতে হলে সার্ভিস সেন্টারে 08456 120 041 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।
Gujarati	અનુવાદ સંબંધી મદદ માટે સર્વિસ સેન્ટરને ટેલિફોન નંબર 08456 066 366 પર ફોન કરો.
Turkish	Tercüme konusunda yardım için 08456 120 031 'dan Hizmet Merkezi'ni arayın.
Vietnamese	Muốn được giúp đỡ về dịch thuật, xin gọi Trung Tâm Phục Vụ (Service Centre) điện thoại số 08456 066 366.
Somali	Wixii ah caawimo turjumaan ka soo wac Xarunta Adeegga telefoonka 08456 066 366.
Cantonese	若需要提供翻譯，請致電服務中心 (Service Centre) 08456 066 366。
Arabic	لمساعدتك في الترجمة يرجى الاتصال بمركز الخدمة على هاتف 08456 066 366.
Urdu	ترجمہ میں مدد کے لئے سروس سنٹر کو اس نمبر 08456 066 366 پر فون کریں۔
Mandarin	需要翻译的帮助，请拨打 08456 066 366 联系服务中心。