

## Empty Homes

If a property is left empty and unattended its condition will often decline and attract antisocial behaviour that disturbs neighbours. Empty homes often lead to many complaints about nuisance. Report an empty home to  
council@southend.gov.uk  
01702 215002.

The Council has adopted an Empty Homes Strategy to contact and, where appropriate, take enforcement action against owners of dwellings which have been empty for 2 years or longer. PSH can in some circumstances award grants to the owners of empty properties to help with the costs of the repairs and improvements needed to bring a property into a condition fit for reoccupation.

## Long Stay Immigration Inspections

Long stay immigrants sometimes have to provide certain information before they can enter the UK. This is a condition set by some countries' High Commissions.

Information required typically includes proving satisfactory housing standards and ensuring that overcrowding will not occur.

To arrange for an Immigration Inspection contact the PSH Team. There is a charge of £150 for the inspection & letter and £55 for subsequent visits and letters.



## Disabled Facilities Grants

PSH can award Disabled Facilities Grants or 'DFGs' for those who require major adaptations such as a stairlift, level access shower or wheelchair access ramp in their privately rented or privately owned home. DFGs are subject to both a means test and confirmation by an Occupation Therapist that the adaptation is required. Southend Council contracts this service to Papworth Trust Home Solutions. For more information or to make an application, contact the Papworth Trust's local office on:  
01702 530300  
homesolutionssouthend@papworthtrust.org.uk

## Homes Repairs Assistance Loans

PSH can offer assistance for private home owners within the Borough to undertake essential repairs to their property to remove hazards. Examples would include loans for replacement windows or roof repairs. All loans are interest free but are repayable upon sale of the property or at an earlier time if chosen by the home owner.

For more information about eligibility for a Home Repairs Assistance loan, contact the Grants & Loans Support Officer on  
01702 215002  
council@southend.gov.uk



A summary of this leaflet can be translated into alternative languages, and can be provided in other formats. Please contact Customer Contact Centre  
01702 215000



## Private Sector Housing

### What is the role of the Private Sector Housing Team?

The Private Sector Housing Team (PSH) provides services, support and advice to privately renting tenants, homeowners and private landlords.

The PSH team works towards ensuring warm, safe, healthy homes for all private tenure residents, improve poor housing conditions which impact upon the health and protection of residents. Poor housing has a direct link to poor health, comfort and mental wellbeing.

Private Sector Housing Team  
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council  
Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue  
Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 6ER

Phone: 01702 215002  
website: www.southend.gov.uk  
Email: council@southend.gov.uk



## What can PSH help with?

Problems with disrepair & defects at the property where the landlord or letting agent is not completing works to address problems such as:

- Fire safety
- Ineffective or lack of heating
- Damp and mould growth
- Trip & falling hazards
- Dangerous or defective electrics
- Overcrowding
- Structural stability
- Inadequate ventilation
- Inadequate lighting
- Water supply
- Drainage

## How to make a Complaint

When you have problems with your privately rented property you should:

1. Send details of the problems in writing to your landlord or letting agent.
2. If your landlord or letting agent is a SEAL (South East Alliance of Landlords, Agents & Residents) member you should inform SEAL of the problems at [info@southeastalliance.org](mailto:info@southeastalliance.org) 07722 600 639.
3. If the problems remain unresolved, contact the Council with details about the problems and your contact information at [council@southend.gov.uk](mailto:council@southend.gov.uk) 01702 215002.

Complaints about Council owned properties managed by South Essex Homes should be reported to:

[customerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk)  
0800 833 160  
[www.southessexhomes.co.uk](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk)

## Houses in Multiple Occupation

A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a property where tenants share an amenity such as a bathroom, shower, toilet or kitchen with someone else in the property. For example, three separate bedrooms rented by different people but they share the same kitchen and/or bathroom.

## HMO Rules and Regulations

Houses in Multiple Occupation have specific regulations that apply, such as fire precautions and overcrowding standards. To make sure these rules and regulations are followed PSH inspects all known HMOs. PSH enforces the rules when necessary by contacting letting agents and landlords.

PSH also responds to complaints from people living in an HMO where there are problems with the property or how it is being managed. To report an HMO contact PSH at:

[council@southend.gov.uk](mailto:council@southend.gov.uk)  
01702 215002

## How can PSH Help?

Where any properties (HMO or single occupancy) are found to have problems PSH will first seek to resolve these with the landlord(s) through discussion and by writing to them. However, where the landlord(s) fail to comply, PSH can serve legal notices requiring necessary works to improve or make the property safe.



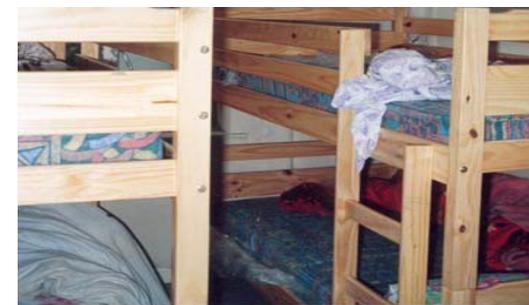
## House in Multiple Occupation Licensing

The Housing Act 2004 introduced a mandatory licensing system for dwellings:

- Of three or more storeys (basements and loft rooms count as a 'storey'); **AND**
- With 5 or more occupants forming two or more households.

It is a criminal offence to operate a licensable HMO without an HMO licence.

A public register of all licensed HMOs is held and the register plus other information about HMOs and renting privately can be found on the Council's website [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk)



## What should landlords do about anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) can mean a wide range of acts, from shouting and swearing, loud music, untidy gardens or rubbish and litter tipping.

Tenants could be victims or perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. There are a number of ways in which landlords & residents can work together with the Council and Police to tackle ASB such as:

- A robust tenancy agreement.
- Reporting ASB to [smart@southend.gov.uk](mailto:smart@southend.gov.uk) or 01702 423504
- Reporting noise nuisance to 01702 215005 or online at [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk)
- Supporting enforcement interventions by the Council, SMAART (Southend Multi Agency ASB Response Team) or the Police.