

Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders 2019 - 2020



Arun Residential Services www.arun.gov.uk/housing

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
A message from our Group Head of Residential Services	3
Our homes	4
Your neighbourhood	5
Your home	6
Keeping safe	7
Income recovery and financial inclusion	8
Your customer experience	9
How you can contact us	10



A message from our Group Head of Residential Services, Satnam Kaur



Welcome to our annual report which details our performance for the financial year 2019-20. The end of the financial year coincided with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic where our officers adjusted to working from home whilst supporting our most vulnerable residents through the pandemic. We have continued to carry out estate inspections ensuring your neighbourhoods our safe and clean, whilst providing financial support and money advice to those residents who have been furloughed or made redundant. I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding during this period.

This year also marked the end of our nine-year partnership with Mears. In April, in the midst of a pandemic we succeeded in mobilising a new contract with Osborne Property Services Ltd, for day to day repairs and work to homes that have been vacated. We continue to develop our partnership with Osborne Property Services Ltd, ensuring you are provided with a high standard repairs service.

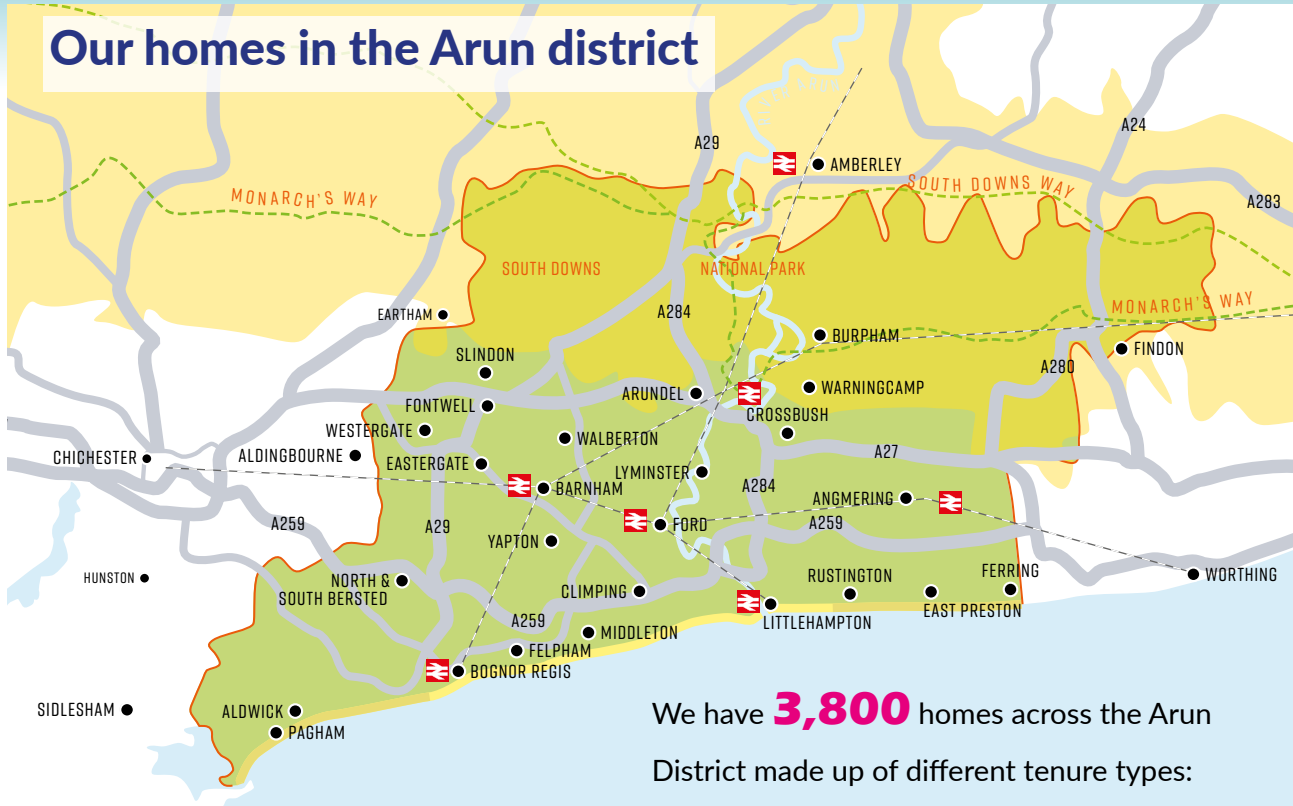
We continue to increase our housing stock to help tackle the housing shortage and meet housing need in the district, this report details the number of new homes we have developed so far and our plans for future development. Our report sets out some of the work that has taken place to your homes, ranging from boiler replacements to the fitting of new bathrooms and kitchens. Fire safety remains a top priority and we continue to work closely with our contractors to make sure your buildings are as safe as possible.

We have also gone through a period of transformation in Residential Services so we could get teams to work more closely together, work smarter, enable cultural change and improve resident engagement. We have created several new roles within our directorate to ensure we are providing a great service that meets your needs.

Finally, as we continue through a national lockdown, I would like to add that I hope you, your family and friends are all keeping well during these difficult times.

Satnam

Our homes in the Arun district



2,628
General needs



666
Sheltered



451
Leasehold



55
Temporary
accommodation

In 2019-2020 we let **191** homes to families, couples and single households.

We are continuing to expand our housing stock and since 2018 we have developed **32** properties, with another **84** properties in the pipeline to be delivered over the next four years.

Your neighbourhood

Our communities are what make our district a great place to live and we want to provide safe and thriving neighbourhoods for our residents, that create community inclusion along with a sense of place.

Some of work we have done:

- We carried out **2,087** block and estate inspections ensuring your communal areas are clean, clear and in a good state of repair.
- Our housing officers carried out **37** of mutual exchanges helping those households meet their housing need.
- Our caretakers carried out **1,033** fly-tipping collections
- We resolved **72** anti-social behaviour cases this year, with the most common complaint being about noise nuisance.
- We investigated **24** cases of fraud resulting in savings of **£1,145.160**.



Your Home

We've worked with our contractors through our repairs service and planned works programme to ensure we are maintaining your home to a good standard; we want you to be happy in your home and community and we will continue to invest in our properties through regular planned works and completing responsive repairs.

We replaced:

300 boilers of which **95** were through our Warm Homes grant funded programme which installs new central heating systems in our properties without gas heating.

66 kitchens

53 bathrooms

We issued:

90 Aids and adaptations to help people to remain living independently in their own homes.

We attended to:

8,381 routine repairs

Of those:

369 were emergency repairs attended to within four hours

1,413 were emergency repairs attended to by the end of the next day.



In April 2020 we appointed a new contractor Osborne Property Services Ltd. Osborne are a family owned business who place residents at the heart of everything they do, and we are really looking forward to working with them and you to provide a high-quality responsive repairs service.



Keeping you safe

Your health and safety is our main priority and we continue to work closely with our contractors to undertake the necessary work, checks and risk assessments associated with gas, electrical, lifts, asbestos, water hygiene and fire safety. Your continued cooperation in allowing us access to your home is vitally important so we can continue to carry out these checks and keep you safe.

Fire safety remains an area of top priority, and we continue to work to ensure your homes and shared spaces are safe.

We carry our regular Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) and our Neighbourhood Housing Officers carry out regular estate inspections to check for any fire safety risks in your communal areas and estates.

We use a specialist system to monitor our compliance on key areas such as fire, asbestos, electrical, asbestos and legionella.

We completed:

340 Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's)

170 Asbestos surveys

698 electrical safety inspections

13 lift inspections

We were fully compliant with our emergency lighting tests, fire alarm tests and evacuations tests for our blocks.

Each year we must carry out gas safety checks on all our homes. In 2019-2020 we had

100% compliance.

Putting things right

Although we try, we don't always get things right, so we ensure that we make it simple for you to complain and work with you to resolve your complaint quickly and fairly.

We are usually able to resolve issues at an early stage by raising them with the relevant service department. Where formal complaints are made, we follow a two-stage process and carry out a detailed investigation.

We received:

57 in-service complaints

9 Stage 1 complaints

8 Stage 2 complaints

Of these complaints five progressed to the Housing Ombudsman for a final determination.

It is important that we learn from what we do well and where we need to do better, we make sure that we capture the root cause of our complaints and the lessons learned so we can make improvements to our services.

Income recovery and financial inclusion

We continue to work with residents who are having trouble paying their rent and we have specially trained officers who are here to help and give advice. We work throughout the year to reduce the amount of rent owed across our stock.

We will continue to use a range of preventative measures to help sustain tenancies and keep eviction rates low.

Our rent collected as a percentage of rent due was 95.76%, this exceeds our target of 94%.

Our financial inclusion officer continues to assist and support our residents to stay in their homes.

There were 226 referrals made throughout the year. Advice was provided on budgeting, debt, benefits and income maximisation.

We also worked with external organisations such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to make sure tenants were in the best position to claim Universal Credit (UC).

To check the balance of your rent account you can **text BALANCE to 07520 646606** or you can check your balance through your I-Housing account.



Your I-Housing account

Your customer experience

Our customer contact centre responded to 169,463 calls across all services and 83.8% were dealt with at first point of contact.

Our reception staff greeted 21,708 visitors to the Civic Centre and 15,912 visitors to the Bognor Town Hall.

Of those visits around 40% were for housing support.

As a result of the closure of receptions due to Covid-19 a complete review of future access to services is taking place. All services that have used reception up to the current crisis are reviewing how they provide these services.

Access to the website continues to be the method by which most customers access the Council's services.

Housing received 90,697 website hits this year.

We are working on a new digital strategy to continue to make access for you easier and enable you to be able to serve yourself at a time that suits you.

At the time of writing our reception services remain closed apart from those people presenting as homeless, we would encourage you to access our website in the first instance where you may find the answer to your enquiry.

In 2019-2020...

169,463 calls to contact centre

21,708 Civic Centre visits

15,912 Bognor Town Hall visits

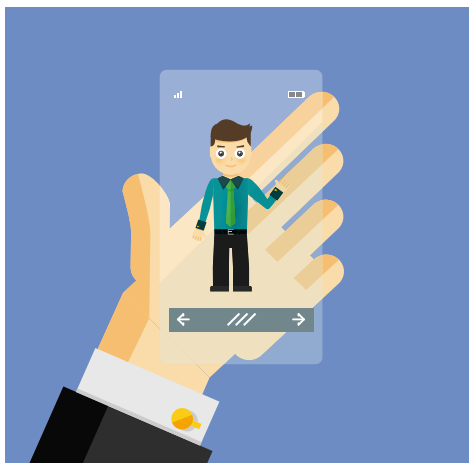
39% for housing support

**90,697
website hits**



www.arun.gov.uk

How you can contact us



I-Housing

By using I-Housing you can access services online and report and track repairs, make payments and view information about your tenancy and rent account. If you would like to register for I-Housing to access these services, please complete our please complete our eform which is located on our website with your details and we will e-mail you a password.



You can call us using these numbers:

01903 737751 - for rent

01903 737287 - for repairs

01903 737500 - for all other enquires



You can e-mail your neighbourhood housing officer at neighbourhoodservices@arun.gov.uk

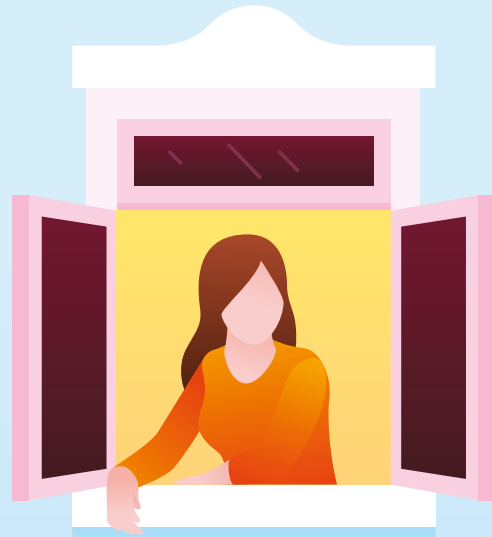


www.arun.gov.uk



Any questions

If you have any questions about this report or would like to provide feedback, please contact residentengagement@arun.gov.uk





ARUN
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.arun.gov.uk