



Hometaalk

News for Soha residents

February 2026



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See the back page for your options.**



The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

and why they matter

The idea behind the TSMs is that the Regulator of Social Housing (the inspector for all social landlords like Soha) judges how well Soha and other landlords are delivering key services to residents. The aim is that residents can be heard and landlords can get insights on how to improve.

It lays down that all landlords with over 1,000 homes ask their tenants exactly the same 12 questions in exactly the same way in a continuous survey.

You may have been phoned by Acuity, our research agency, for your opinion of Soha. Acuity rings 300 residents, chosen completely at random, every three months and they try at all times of day to ensure you have the chance to give your opinion if you want to. They will always offer to ring back at a more convenient time if they catch you at a bad moment. You don't have to be identified, but if you have a specific concern or issue that needs attention and you do tell Acuity, they can pass on the message to us and we will get back to you.

You'll see our TSMs published at www.soha.co.uk/tenant-satisfaction-measure but you can also see the TSMs of every landlord in the country

Tips for checking our performance against other landlords

- **Compare us with landlords who collect data the same way we do. We choose phone surveys because research shows that face-to-face surveys with residents result in more favourable responses for the landlord, whereas online or text surveys get worse results.**
- **The results come out quarterly, so keep an eye on the tables for several months to see if what you see one time is a blip or a trend.**
- **Choose landlords who have roughly the same make-up of tenants. Research shows that older residents tend to say they're more satisfied than younger ones. So if Soha only let homes to older people, our results could well be 'unnaturally' high.**

at www.bit.ly/4p0qWio (nothing to worry about with this strange-looking link, it's a short form for a very lengthy government website page).

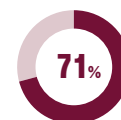
Another way to check is on the website of Four Million Homes. This is a campaign to make sure that all social housing residents, whether tenants or shared owners, know their rights and how to enforce them. You can find every landlord's performance statistics on www.fourmillionhomes.org/a-z-tenant-satisfaction-measures-tsm/

Here is what residents gave us the highest rating for in the rolling year so far:



Soha treats me fairly and with respect; I'm satisfied I have a safe home and Soha is easy to deal with all at **86%**.

And this is where we're still not meeting your expectations:



71% satisfaction with time taken for repairs. Find out more on page 8 about what we do when we see this.

Our actions on damp and mould

We've always taken damp and mould seriously but Awaab's Law makes sure Soha acts within stricter timelines. In the 10 weeks since it came into force, we're proud to have dealt with all reports within those timelines.

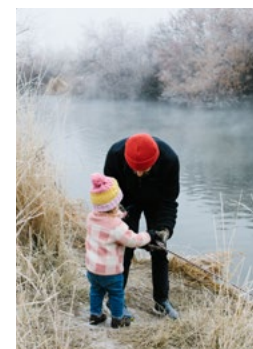
We've received:

- **1 Emergency and 57 significant reports.** These are where we managed the hazard immediately with remedial works, then followed up to identify the root cause and put more works in place as needed.
- **242 Routine reports** where we managed the hazard with remedial works.

If you've got damp or mould, please get in touch **straight away**. Please ring us on **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone) so that we can talk it through with you and tell you what action we'll be taking.

Don't wait for the survey!

You can feed back to Soha on anything concerning you by calling us on **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone), or by emailing complaints@soha.co.uk. We'd also love to tell you more about involvement opportunities to get your voice heard.



Front cover picture: iStock

Welcome to Hometaalk!

It always feels to me like, after the busy-ness and colour of Christmas, being back in the depths of winter is very cruel! I hope 2026 has started well for you or is shaping up to be a good year.

On the opposite page, we publish our performance data. When our survey agency, Acuity, calls you and you take time to answer their questions, you're providing vital feedback for us. It's important that we present what you tell us in a way that gives you useful information so you can raise issues with us. Let us know if we get it right – and, if we don't, please tell us. Together, let's make what we are obliged to publish into something that is helpful to you! The article also tells you a couple of ways you can compare us to other landlords.

Speaking of feedback, we had a large response to our resident consultation on priorities for our future homes (our asset management strategy, in corporate-speak). Thank you to everyone who took part. You can read more about it on page 8.

Further on in *Hometaalk*, you can read about ways to keep warm and save money during the chilly months and a heart-warming story of connecting people across our communities. There's an invitation to join the group planning our new website so that it does what you need it to, and an opportunity to keep up to date with our events by joining a new WhatsApp channel.

Among other news, we're also featuring your key role in helping us tackle tenancy fraud, how we're getting on with a programme of installing solar panels on our homes and news of the apprenticeships Soha will start in September. On the back page, we're asking you if how you currently receive *Hometaalk* still suits you, or whether you'd like it by

email (or to opt out altogether). We appreciate that life doesn't always allow for reading a twice-yearly update from Soha cover to cover, but we do really hope we can continue to welcome you as a reader, whichever version you choose.

In a few weeks, you'll receive a letter telling you about the rent increase that will take effect on 1 April. We are a not-for-profit organisation which means we don't pay dividends or distribute profits. We spend our income – and that largely comes from your rent – on delivering our services including maintaining and improving your homes, on paying interest on our loans and on building new homes for those who need them. As ever, please get in touch with us about anything you read here and, if you are struggling and Soha can help, talk to us so that we can work together towards a solution.



Kate Wareing
Chief Executive

Acholi

Timber ikube ki wan ii housing@soha.co.uk onyo icim 0800 014 15 45 (Cim ma pe icoulu) ka obi konyi me bedo ki gilok ma ki loko ki bot Soha.

Arabic

يرجى الاتصال بنا على البريد الإلكتروني housing@soha.co.uk أو على هاتف رقم 0800 014 15 45 (هاتف مجاني) إذا كنت في حاجة إلى مساعدتك في الحصول على ترجمة لمراسلات Soha.

Dari

لطفاً با ما به آدرس housing@soha.co.uk یا به شماره 0800 014 15 45 (تلفن رایگان) تماس بگیرید اگر ترجمه ارتباطات سوها به شما کمک می کند.

Hungarian

Ha úgy érzi, hogy segítségére válna a Sohától kapott információkat fordításban megkapni, lépjen velünk kapcsolatba a housing@soha.co.uk e-mail-címen vagy a 0800 014 15 45 (ingyenesen hívható) telefonszámon.

Italian

Non esitare a contattarci all'indirizzo di posta elettronica housing@soha.co.uk o tramite chiamata al numero verde 0800 014 15 45 se sei interessato a una nostra traduzione.

Nepali

यदि यसले तपाईंलाई सोहा कम्युनिकेसनको अनुवाद प्राप्त गर्नमा मद्दत गर्न सक्छ भने कृपया हामीलाई housing@soha.co.uk वा 0800 014 15 45 (फ्रीफोन) मा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोस्

Pashto

مهرباني وکړئ له موږ سره په housing@soha.co.uk (ورپا تليفون) اړيکه ونيسئ که يا په 0800 014 15 45 دا ستاسو سره د سوها د اړيکو په ژباړه کې مرسته کوي

Polish

Skontaktuj się z nami korzystając z adresu e-mail housing@soha.co.uk lub darmowego numeru telefonu 0800 014 15 45, jeśli potrzebujesz tłumaczeń dot. Soha communications.

Portuguese

Queira entrar em contacto conosco através do email housing@soha.co.uk ou do número de telefone 0800 014 15 45 (linha grátis), se achar que seria útil ter a tradução das comunicações da Soha.

Romanian

Vă rugăm să luați legătura cu noi la adresa de e-mail housing@soha.co.uk sau la numărul de telefon 0800 014 15 45 (apel gratuit) dacă vă este de ajutor să obțineți o traducere pentru Soha communications.

Russian

Пожалуйста, свяжитесь с нами по адресу housing@soha.co.uk или позвоните по бесплатному номеру телефона 0800 014 15 45, если это поможет вам получать перевод сообщений от Soha.

Tagalog

Mangyaring makipag-ugnayan sa housing@soha.co.uk o sa 0800 014 15 45 (Freephone) kung makakatulong ito sa iyo na magkaroon ng pagsasalang-wika ng Soha communications.

Thai

โปรดติดต่อเราที่ housing@soha.co.uk หรือโทรศัพท์ 0800 014 15 45 (โทรฟรี) หากท่านต้องการคำแปลสำหรับการสื่อสารจาก Soha

Traditional Chinese (Cantonese)

如果用得上 Soha 通訊的翻譯，請透過 housing@soha.co.uk 或 0800 014 15 45 (免付費電話) 聯絡我們。

Turkish

Soha tarafından iletilen bilgilerin çevirisiyle ilgili yardım almak için housing@soha.co.uk adresinden e-posta yoluyla veya 0800 014 15 45 (ücretsiz hat) numaralı telefondan bize ulaşabilirsiniz.

Ukrainian

Зверніться до нас за адресою housing@soha.co.uk або телефоном 0800 014 15 45 (безкоштовно), якщо вам допоможе переклад повідомлень від Soha.

Urdu

اگر آپ کو سوہا کمیونیکیشن کا ترجمہ حاصل کرنے میں ہم سے رابطہ کرنے سے مدد ملتی ہے، تو براہ کرم ہم سے housing@soha.co.uk پر یا 0800 014 15 45 (فری فون) پر رابطہ کریں۔

Please get in touch with us at housing@soha.co.uk or 0800 014 15 45 (Freephone, so no cost to you) if it would help you to have a translation of Soha communications.

Your winter warmth and safety

It's the season for condensation mould and damp. Here are some top tips for this time of year from Lee, Soha's damp and mould specialist.

- If you have trickle vents on your window, do open them. If you have new uPVC windows that allow you to open them just a crack, do that, too.
- Heat your home moderately on a lower, constant temperature rather than in bursts of turning up high and then off.
- Furniture in the wrong place can encourage condensation. If you put it too close to an outside wall, you'll be trapping air and encouraging mould build-up that won't just attack the wall but also your lovely sofa. Leaving even just 5cms between wall and furniture allows air to circulate and will make all the difference.



You don't have to live with damp or mould.

Report it to us by phone (so you can hear we're on the case and you know the timeframe we're working to) on **0800 14 15 45** (Freephone).



There are more tips on the Soha website in our Healthy Homes handbook at www.soha.co.uk/damp-mould-condensation. The full range of Lee's quick tips is on www.youtube.com/@sohahousing/playlists



Keeping warm this winter: while you're on YouTube, drop in on a **new upload**. Paul Neale and Richard Bourton our energy and gas experts, discuss practical quick fixes for keeping your home warm – and how you can see if your home can be considered for solar panels (see more on page 10)!

Awaab's Law came into force at the end of October

It sets timeframes for social housing landlords to investigate reports of hazards in tenants' homes. The first things the law is targeting are all emergency hazards and significant damp and mould. Other elements, such as electrical or fire safety, will be rolled out in Awaab's Law in coming years. Most importantly, it means that Soha and other landlords mustn't wait to be told there's a problem but should take the initiative to report if we spot anything. That might be when we or a contractor is visiting for a completely different reason.

That was what happened in November: a tenant wouldn't engage with the offer of a major upgrade to make their home warmer and more energy efficient. We just couldn't get to the root of the tenant's concerns so a Communities team visited unannounced to find out more. What they found was an entirely uninhabitable house in a condition that was leading to serious health issues. The tenant moved to another house while the original one is being treated, made energy-efficient and generally refurbished.

You can see the number of cases we've dealt with under the new law on page 2.



Is there a Draughtbusters group near you?

This is an organisation that sends out expert volunteers to do things like fit free draught excluders on doors and windows. Their aim is to reduce energy use and make homes warmer. If there aren't Draughtbusters in your neighbourhood, you can still pick up loads of tips and advice for DIY solutions on their website: www.draughtbusters.net



Do you know about the Priority Services Register?

It's a free service, run by utility companies, to provide advice and support, including when there's an interruption to your electricity, gas or water supply. You're eligible if you live with children under five, have a chronic illness or sensory impairment, use medical equipment that's reliant on electricity or water, have mental health difficulties, or need large print, Braille, textphone, audio or a language other than English. Signing up means getting advance warning of scheduled power cuts and, amongst other things, being able to access help in your home. Find out more at www.thepsr.co.uk.



Peace of mind with insurance

As your landlord, Soha covers the buildings insurance for your home but the tenancy agreement you signed makes you responsible for insuring the contents.

You don't have to have contents insurance, but it's a good idea. It can help get your items replaced or repaired if they're damaged by things like flood, fire, and theft.

The good news is that Soha is signed up to a specialist contents insurance policy designed for tenants living in social housing. It's open to everyone. Find out what the policy can cover and apply for a quote at www.soha.co.uk/insurance.

As with all financial decisions, do shop around. A good starting point is www.comparethemarket.com.

If you're struggling to pay your energy bills, do talk to your supplier about your eligibility for schemes designed to help meet the costs.

As well as payment plans, the Warm Home Discount scheme may apply to you if you receive the **Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit** or are on a low income. Soha's Tenancy Sustainment team can also help you. You can get in touch at no cost to you on **0800 014 15 45** or send an email to housing@soha.co.uk for them to contact you.

What's going on in your area by way of free or cheap meals or warm spaces?

www.soha.co.uk/help-in-your-local-area has you covered for:

- places to have a hot drink
- places to charge your phone
- places to keep warm
- community larders
- baby banks
- meals to your door.



➔ If you experience financial hardship there are grants you can access. Call the Neighbourhood team on **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone) or email neighbourhoodteam@soha.co.uk.



photo: iStock

Connecting with you

2026 sees us focusing in a big way on how we communicate with you. Find out what's out there already, as well as our plans for 2026.

Help for speakers of other languages

You may have spotted the different languages we use at the beginning of each of our magazines. Please get in touch with us if it would help you to have a translation of Soha communications in the languages that residents have said is their preference. Our staff may not be able to speak all (or any!) of them, but we do have access to immediate translation over the phone or video call. We also offer some of our key documents to do with your tenancy in other languages. Just let us know if we can help in this way. Call Soha Customer Services on **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone) or email us at **housing@soha.co.uk**

One of the first other languages that Soha used was Polish. Former teacher Irenka, pictured outside her home in Sonning Common, started her life in this country in a refugee camp for Polish displaced persons in Whitchurch-on-Thames in the 1950s. In 2017, Irenka was part of our *Real People True Stories* YouTube series. Eight years on and the friend of a former camp neighbour made contact with Irenka and they have started up a private Facebook group to collect memories and documents about the people who lived in the camp. They hope to install a permanent memorial in 2028. If you, or someone you know, remembers their time in the same camp, we could also put you in touch with Irenka if you would like.

Irenka is one of Soha's involved residents who, amongst others, was part of our Playing with Words poetry project in 2022. Irenka told us she'd like to help other residents who have experienced a language barrier, so we helped her to make connections. She has been a great friend to some housebound tenants with no English but with whom she shares another common language. That's real community!

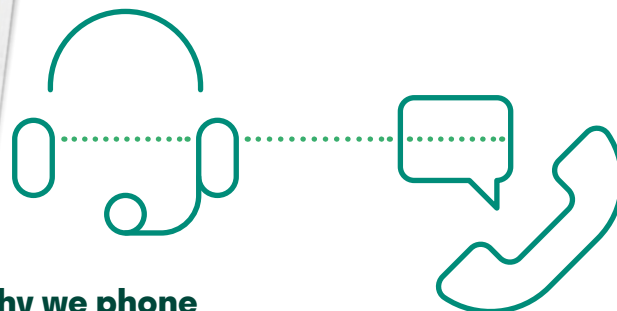
The Whitchurch-on-Thames refugee camp is remembered to this day with the Polish Church Memorial Garden on the site. It is open to the public and a beautiful place for reflecting quietly and enjoying wildlife.

And if, like Irenka, you're looking to spend more time in your community, please let us know how we can help you to make connections.



New!

You can now find us on **WhatsApp**! Called *Soha Housing Information and Events* and sporting our green tree in the profile picture, this private channel will really come into its own as the calendar hots up with events in the coming months. Give us a follow to stay in the know. (The channel is one-way only. You can follow us to receive updates, but you can't reply directly. We don't see your name, phone number, profile picture or personal details.)



Why we phone

Apart from calls about your everyday tenancy issues that Soha staff may make, you may also get a call from people at Soha's research agency, Acuity. They have a rolling programme to talk to a proportion of the total number of our over 8,000 households. The Regulator of Social Housing needs us (and all other housing associations) to canvass residents in this way. We recognise it's not always convenient to take a call but we're very grateful to you when you can. You can opt out if you want to. Do this by contacting Customer Services at **housing@soha.co.uk** or by calling **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone).

If you're ever worried about someone saying they're ringing on behalf of Soha, put the phone down and call us to check. If it's a genuine caller, they'll be happy to ring again another time.

Acuity
rings from
**01235
619324**

We want you to be comfortable with the way we communicate with you.

The Regulator of Social Housing has Consumer Standards that they inspect social landlords like Soha on. One of these covers how we communicate with you. If you have any queries or requests, please contact Soha's Communications team on **communications@soha.co.uk** or **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone).

Getting to know you

Doorknocks

When we visit a street or an area without an appointment and knock on a number of doors in the hope of meeting you, we call this a 'doorknock'. Original, aren't we?! It's a great way of getting your views on your neighbourhood generally, or maybe specific plans for it that we'd like your opinions on. At other times, we might

doorknock because we're hoping to consult you on a new strategy or approach that might affect your tenancy.

Alyson and Michelle, Engagement and Community Officers, were recently doorknocking in Wantage. They said "We wanted to know your ideas for the area and, working with the Kingsgrove Community Collaboration Group, make sure our residents'



Alyson (left) and Michelle

voices genuinely shape what happens on the estate. It's so useful hearing from residents on their doorstep. We appreciate it a lot when you answer a survey or contact us to say a neighbourhood improvement is needed, but being right there on your doorstep means you can show us there and then. It gives us a much clearer idea. Thank you for giving us your time."

Our events calendar is at www.soha.co.uk/events.



Victoria Dingle (right) with Chair of the Members' Forum, Ann-Marie O'Sullivan

Victoria (above) is a Soha resident in Henley who is Vice-Chair of the Soha Board and Chair of the Board's Personnel and Remuneration Committee.

She says "I'm one of five Soha residents on the Board. In autumn 2026 we're looking for a new resident Board member, and in 2027 we'll be looking for more. You might be elected as a full Board member or co-opted – that is, the full Board members add someone to a committee because of their special knowledge or expertise.



"Over the next year, we're going to upload short films of Board life onto our youtube channel (that's www.youtube.com/sohahousing or use the QR code here).

"You can keep in touch with what we do in leading the company, who we are, and the opportunities to join us as they arise."

If you'd like an informal chat about what being a Board member would be like, please call us on **0800 014 15 45** and ask for Marisa Elliott.

Check we're doing what we say

A policy sets out in writing how staff will do something when there are decisions to be made about a given situation. Most of Soha's policies are about things that can help you enjoy your tenancy and life in your community. Having a policy about something makes sure that Soha treats everyone fairly. If we want to introduce a new policy that affects residents, we consult residents about it before we do (there's more on this on the next page and pages 14 and 15).

All our policies are on the Soha website page www.soha.co.uk/our-policies, including a refreshed communications policy.

Thank you!

Thank you to all those who responded to our wide-ranging communications consultation. Many of you had very strong views about our website and you're right – it's definitely due an overhaul. We've got as far as identifying suppliers, so what we really need now is **YOU!**

Please contact the communications team if you fancy sharing your experience as a user with us in a focus group (both in person and online) in March. We'll give you a shopping voucher as a thank you. Email communications@soha.co.uk or call us on **0800 014 15 45** at no cost to you.



See who is currently on the Board at www.soha.co.uk/our-boards



For other opportunities to get involved see the inside back pages

Guided by you



Emma Langstaff has been a neighbourhood officer, an estates manager and in charge of our Communities teams. Now she's bringing all this expertise into a new role which delves deep into **your** experience of interacting with Soha. Introducing our new Head of Resident Experience!

Emma says: "Soha receives a constant stream of feedback about its services. It comes from Tenant Satisfaction Measures surveys (see page 2), complaints, and the comments you share with Customer Services or the Soha Response scheduling team. Every piece of feedback matters.

"My new role is about making sure we hear from as many residents as possible and bringing all that insight together to help design and deliver our services. We want to get better at understanding what we're getting right and where there are opportunities to improve.

"We've set up a Resident Experience Working Group made up of teams from across the organisation. This is where we look for patterns, discuss what they mean, and decide how we'll act on them. It will help ensure that we are continually learning and focusing on what matters most to our residents."

What happens next...

Things we can do immediately to fix a problem

While repairs complaints are going down since the introduction of Soha Response, missed appointments are still happening. We've now introduced a £10 missed appointment payment for residents. We're also employing more operatives all the time.

Changes to the way we will approach things in future

We consult on every new, or changed, resident-facing policy. Nothing gets signed-off until we've heard your views. When residents reviewed an updated policy on how we tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB), for example, you told us to focus more on early intervention. We'll also make more use of non-legal approaches and we'll set out clearly how we'll keep you updated if you've reported an issue to us.



You can see all our policies on the Soha website at www.soha.co.uk/our-policies.



We'll invite Emma back to tell us how we've learned and grown from all your feedback.



Tracey Morris, Tenant Liaison Officer for Soha Response says, "We need to hear what's working well and what needs improvement with Soha Response. Everyone who has a repair is sent a feedback form afterwards. Fill this in and you'll be in a prize draw to win £50 in shopping vouchers!"

Changes to longer term plans

Throughout October and November, we consulted with residents on what our future homes should look like. From 642 responses by survey, in-person focus group and online, we heard that affordability, components (like bathrooms and kitchens), outdoor space and parking should be our focus. Andy Tollett, Director of Property Services, says: "We have turned what residents said into nine objectives. They'll form the basis of the asset management plan. In the next five years we'll tackle as many of residents' hopes and concerns as possible."



"It was really nice to have a couple of hours out of the house, talking about something that really interests me!"
Young mum, Future Homes in-person consultation participant

photo: Adobe Stock





An extremely important way in which you guide us is when you tell us something's not right with the use of a Soha home in your neighbourhood.



Maybe you haven't seen the tenant for a while and someone else seems to be living there. Maybe you haven't seen anyone coming or going for ages.

Your first port of call is the Communities team who will move into action to find out if there's a welfare concern that they can help with. They can get social workers and others involved if need be. Contacting Communities will be completely confidential. Get hold of them on **neighbourhoodteam@soha.co.uk** or by calling **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone).

Sometimes, however, a tenant is hale and hearty but breaching their tenancy agreement by not living in the property at all.

We're very conscious that social homes are in short supply. Any that aren't being used for their proper purpose (as a tenant's 'main and principal home' as the law states) prevents a family in housing need from being housed. That's where Jade Eastgate and Matt Tatum, Tenancy Enforcement Officers, get involved.

They see two types of case. One is sub-letting and the other is a home being abandoned. Sub-letting might happen when someone moves somewhere else so they can make some money by letting out their Soha home. If we can prove sub-letting, we could take that resident to court and they'll have to pay court fees. We may also apply to court for an order that makes sure the tenant pays back the profits they made from the let.

A typical abandonment case is when a tenant moves in with, say, a partner, but keeps their Soha home 'just in case it doesn't work out'.

Matt says, "When you've told us your concerns about a property, you obviously want to know what we're doing about it. It might seem like we're not doing anything for a while, but our investigations have to be very discreet. We will use a national fraud database that gives us information, like where bank cards and other official documents are registered to, where someone is on the electoral roll, and so on. There are a lot of tools at our disposal. Thanks to a tip-off from neighbours and an adult who'd been left looking after a tenant's children, we were alerted to the tenant's short holiday having turned into a prolonged absence abroad for months. At time of *Hometalk* going to press there's a court case about to be heard for Soha to get the home back.

"If someone is claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit for a home they're either not occupying, or getting money from, they're committing benefit fraud as well. In those cases, councils have huge powers to investigate. A council can look at bank statements and DVSA records, for example, and interview a resident under caution.

"We've sat in on those interviews, and when presented with all the evidence that the council and Soha have put together, the absent tenant decides there and then to terminate the tenancy rather than be evicted. Benefit fraud can result in imprisonment for up to two years as well as paying back the funds wrongfully claimed. Eviction for tenancy fraud, even disregarding the upheaval to a family, also has serious consequences when it comes to being rehoused."

If you're going to leave your home for more than four weeks, for whatever reason, you must tell us.

And if you'd like to have a lodger – no problem! You do need to continue to live in the home yourself, though. Take a look at our leaflet. Type in *Lodgers* into the search bar of the Soha website (**www.soha.co.uk**) or, if you're reading a digital copy of *Hometalk*, find the leaflet **here**.

→ **Soha will also go to court** to get access if a resident doesn't let us in to do safety checks required by law, such as a gas or electrical inspection. In those cases, the resident has to pay not only the costs of the court but also Soha's costs. That could come to around £1000 – plus, not letting us in when we give you notice is a breach of your tenancy.

Sometimes people don't want to let us in because they're worried about the state of their home. If this sounds like you, please let us help you get things back in order. We can save you having the stress – and expense – of a court case.



photo: Adobe Stock

We have a further 119 homes in our sights to bring up to Energy Performance Certificate rating C using a government grant by the end of 2027. Many of these are getting solar panels. We also fit batteries so that the solar energy that's not used immediately can be stored for use later on. Any that's left over after that can be sold back to the grid so there's even the potential to make some cash.



Jeannette said "The contractors who visited my property were all so pleasant and polite. The guys who came out to do the loft insulation were especially genuinely nice ... I have now turned off my heating, saving money and energy until the real cold shows itself. As for the solar panels - I love them. The installation took just three days. I can only imagine the savings during spring and summer. I can't believe I managed in the cold for so long."

➔ Find out if you could have solar panels by calling us on **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone) or emailing **sustainability@soha.co.uk**

Time for a clear out?

If we offer you a loft insulation upgrade, don't let the faff of clearing everything out of the loft put you off, we can help if you are elderly or disabled. Who knows? It could even be your cue for a good old clear out, since you shouldn't put anything back in your loft after it's had additional insulation. Squashing it by storing things up there reduces its efficiency.



photo: Adobe Stock



CGI by Cala Homes of typical Himley Grange homes



Map: Cala Homes

Coming soon!

3 two-bed houses, 2 three-bed houses and 2 two-bed maisonettes for shared ownership in May/June 2026 in Himley Village, Bicester.

You can see more about Himley Grange on the developer's website www.cala.co.uk/homes-for-sale/south-east-england/oxfordshire/cala-at-himley-village-bicester/.

Disrepair claims

When you're approached by a law firm offering to take legal action against us – and get you compensation – because something in your home needs fixing, that's called a disrepair claim. You have every right to work with them. There are some things to think about first, though, because doing this isn't risk-free.

'No win, no fee' has catches; claims companies may ask for payments to pursue your claim and then often take more than half of your compensation. Also, if a disrepair solicitor doesn't get the result you wanted, you may end up paying Soha's costs in court. By coming to us first, you'll get faster help **without** paying extra fees. If you're still dissatisfied you can go through our complaints process and ultimately to the Housing Ombudsman.



If you report the problem to us directly, **you keep all the money you're owed** and get the job done quicker.

Report a repair...

- online: 24 hours a day through the **MySoha app or portal**
- call: **0800 014 15 45** (emergency service outside business hours)
- visit: **our office in Didcot** during business hours
- email: **housing@soha.co.uk**

➔ Soha will have more two- and three-bed houses to follow throughout the year. If you're interested email **sales@soha.co.uk** or call **01235 642189**.

Should buying not be for you, there are a number of ways to move. It might be the time to downsize – and get financial and practical support to do so. Have a word with our Lettings team if your needs have changed. They're on **lettings@soha.co.uk** or **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone).

You can still claim the financial incentive if you organize your own home swap. The best guarantee of success is using Homeswapper, but people can advertise their home on social media and make a private arrangement.

You might not know that we also let selected homes directly to the public! Have a look at **www.soha.co.uk/homes-to-rent**

News for you



You're invited

Members' Forum AGM and evening meal on **Tuesday 28 April** in Didcot Civic Hall (accessible venue) at 6.15pm. If you're a Member, you're warmly welcome to come along and meet the newly-elected Forum and Soha staff. Call **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone) to find out more from the Resident Engagement team or email ri@soha.co.uk.

Speaking of Membership...

Every month we run a prize draw among Members and some lucky person wins £50 in shopping vouchers. In September Loren from Cholsey and in October Linda from Sonning Common. In November we said congratulations to Joanna in Henley and to a resident in Didcot in December. Find out more about becoming a Member at www.soha.co.uk/membership.



Ask Us Anything about neighbourhoods

Residents have been joining us for the Ask Us Anything live online Q&As we've held so far – on Estates, Soha Response, and Home Ownership. The next one is *Ask Us Anything about Neighbourhoods and Communities* on **Wednesday 22 April** from 6 until 6.45pm.

What can and can't we do around behaviour, practical improvements and more? You can just join the online call to listen in if you'd prefer – you don't have to have a question to ask (though maybe one will occur when you hear what others are saying). Watch out for the publicity on Soha's Facebook and Instagram pages (both [/SohaHousing](#)).

Free handyman service

Run by the Estates team, it's for residents who have a disability and/or are aged 70+ (shared owners pay £20). As you can imagine, it's really popular and the priority for the moment is health and safety jobs such as grab rails. They hope to take requests for minor works, like curtain rails and blinds, again soon.



photo: Adobe Stock

→ We send out a newsletter about events in your area to your email address if you have one. Do check your spam folder so you don't miss out! You can unsubscribe at any time.



photo: iStock

Apprenticeships

Soha Response will be advertising three apprenticeships during 2026. We'll be recruiting for an electrical and a plumbing apprentice and one as a multi-trade operative. Applications from both women and men are welcome. Look out for adverts when they go live on our LinkedIn page ([soha-housing](#)) and on our website at www.soha.co.uk/careers. If you'd like to chat about these opportunities, email recruitment@soha.co.uk.



photo: iStock

Mobility scooters

Are you thinking of getting one? We have to insist that you don't store a scooter in a communal area (that includes corridors). This is because of fire safety. Not only is any type of e-vehicle potentially flammable, but also anything left around could hamper you or your neighbours escaping, or the fire brigade getting in, if there were to be a fire. Some of our blocks of apartments have scooter stores for you to use, but others don't.

→ **If you're thinking of getting a mobility scooter and there's no store in your block, have a word with us first. We'll see if we can find a solution.**

**Better
Health**

**Let's
do this**

NHS

No wrong answers, just the right start.

The Healthy Choices Quiz is free, quick, and designed to help you take small steps towards lasting changes.

It can help you eat well, move more, sleep better, and feel more in control of your health.

Search
**Healthy
Choices Quiz**





Meet the residents who have a formal role in holding Soha to account! Listening to their views on our services is vital and we're very grateful for all those who give up their time in this way.



The Disability Action and Awareness Group (DAAG) represents the interests of Soha residents who live either with a disability, or with someone living with a disability. Either way, they see things from the perspective of our disabled residents and advise us. Their meetings are always in person and at an accessible venue and there's always a social event or two to enjoy as well.

→ **DAAG looked at three policies in 2025, with a particular interest in the Aids and Adaptations policy as many of the group members had been through this process. Really good points on real-life experience made all the difference to the final policy. They also worked on Soha's Community strategy and, most recently, the Communications strategy, and had an advance update on Disability Benefit and expected changes to the PIP payments from 2027.**

If none of these interest you, or you want to just dip in and out of getting involved (and getting thank you vouchers for most activities), there are loads of other opportunities to tell us what's on your mind.

Take a look at **My Voice** (www.soha.co.uk/my-voice) on the Soha website or call us on **0800 014 15 45** at no cost for your copy of our latest **engagement leaflet**.



Sounding Board is a group of residents with mixed interests from all across Soha's area and of various ages. Soha runs ideas past them such as when we're thinking of making changes to a service. We also consult them on policy changes or new policies. They feed back to us by survey, or at online or in-person meetings. If you respond to a consultation, you get entered into a £50 prize draw!

→ **So far this year they've been consulted on five policies: Aids and Adaptations, Anti-social behaviour, Hoarding, Homelessness, Relocations and Emergency Moves and Mutual Exchange.**

Will you join us?

We say thank you with shopping vouchers.

➔ If you're a Member, you will by now have received an invitation to vote for the new **Members' Forum**. Do take advantage of this opportunity to say who should represent you in 2026.

(Should you want to find out more about becoming a Member, call Resident Engagement on **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone) or email **ri@soha.co.uk** and we'll get that in place!)



The Scrutiny Group

checks to see if Soha is meeting the aims and objectives we set out in the corporate plan (our five-year business plan that you can see at **www.soha.co.uk/publications**). It

monitors our service standards

and whether we are meeting them. Scrutiny decides for itself what service to investigate –

Soha doesn't suggest what they should do. When Scrutiny did an investigation of Soha's communications with residents, they said we should see how many people really value getting a copy of *Hometaalk*.

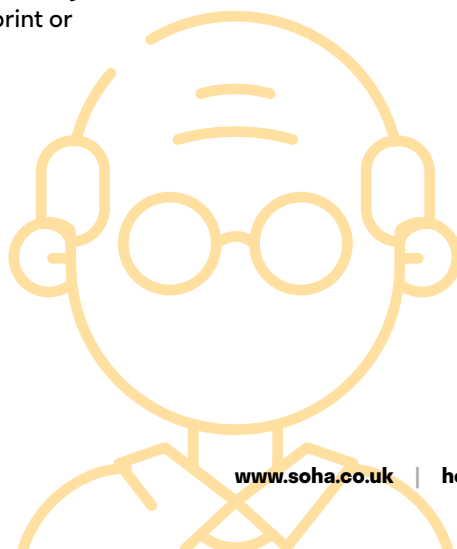
We're doing exactly that by inviting you to positively opt in to receive one in the future, either in print or electronically (see back page).

Seniors' Group

is open to anyone over 55. They play a large part in reviewing Soha's policies and representing the views of older residents from all types of housing. At Christmas this year, they hosted a series of lovely coffee mornings in Independent Living locations. It was a great way to make sure they were picking up on issues and interests from all around the area. Their meetings are in person and run by a resident Chair and Vice-Chair.

➔ In recent months, members of the Seniors' Group have played an active role in how Soha Response staff would present themselves. They contributed to the design, colour scheme, and uniform proposals. They have also helped update the pet policy, reminding us how pet ownership can support mental wellbeing, reduce isolation, and provide companionship.

Every one of the opportunities here is open to **anyone** who is a resident.



A magazine for you

Every Soha household gets a posted copy of *Hometalk*. Some residents have said that they'd rather save the trees and have it electronically, and we can organise this for you.

This is now your chance to say if you'd still like to receive *Hometalk* by post. If you don't respond, we will stop sending you printed copies from autumn 2026 and instead send it to you via email if we have an email address for you.

If you're not sure if we have an email address for you but you'd like an electronic copy by email, this is the time to ring in and check we've got your details.

There are several ways to tell us you STILL want to have a printed copy of *Hometalk* and, if so, how. Choose one of these:

- Tear out the coupon below and post back to us in the reply-paid envelope that came with this *Hometalk*. There's no need for a stamp.
- Zap the QR code opposite to fill in a form.
- Email or call the Communications team at Soha who publish the magazine. You can get in touch with them on communications@soha.co.uk or by phone, at no cost to you, on **0800 014 15 45**.

You must do one of the above if you want a hard copy, otherwise you'll get an electronic version from now on.



For information about how we use your data, please see our Privacy Notice at www.soha.co.uk/data-protection.

➔ Send this back to us to tell us what you want to do

My name

.....

My full address

.....

.....

.....

I still want to receive the printed copy of *Hometalk*... (please choose one)

☐

as a magazine through the post – **usual size in colour**

☐

as a magazine through the post – **large print size in colour**

☐

as a magazine through the post – **large print size in black and white** (can be helpful for the visually impaired)

☐

as an **audio recording on a USB stick through the post**. This is for use on a computer and we'll give you a reply-paid envelope for you to return it to Soha after use.

Readers who have *Hometalk* electronically already need not respond.

If you don't want to receive *Hometalk* at all in any format, please get in touch with the Communications team on communications@soha.co.uk or, at no cost to you, call us on **0800 014 15 45**.

You can still always read *Hometalks* on our website at www.soha.co.uk/publications

If you have *Hometalk* by email we will also send you our Annual Report in the same way in the autumn. It is not possible to opt out of receiving the Annual Report at all.