

Looking after the environment

Looking after our estates

If you spot something that is making your estate untidy, please report it to us. Some examples of things you might want to report are:

- ▶ graffiti
- ▶ dumped rubbish or litter
- ▶ overgrown gardens.

You can report problems in a variety of ways. Please see the Contact Us section at the back of this leaflet.

Area caretakers

Our teams of area caretakers help to improve the local environment in a variety of ways.

The area caretakers look after high and low-rise buildings by:

- ▶ making sure the contractors who clean the communal areas are keeping to a high standard of work
- ▶ carrying out fire-safety checks in high-rises (for example, making sure fire exits are not blocked and that fire doors are not damaged)
- ▶ removing rubbish from communal areas
- ▶ carrying out small repairs in communal areas.

They also:

- ▶ repair locks on alley gates and broken fences
- ▶ improve overgrown or neglected areas on our estates
- ▶ recycle things like fencing, gates and locks to use in other locations.



Cleaning in high and low-rise buildings

We are responsible for keeping the communal areas of our high and low-rise buildings (like corridors, stairways, landings and entrance halls) clean and tidy. We employ contractors to do this work for us.

We will:

- ▶ inspect every high-rise once a month
- ▶ act on the results of inspections within two working days (or within 24 hours if there is a risk to health and safety)
- ▶ send our contractor out to clean up within two hours when people report a mess in a shared area that could affect the health of others i.e. blood or vomit.

Keeping the streets clean and tidy

We also inspect roads to make sure they are clean and tidy. We inspect some roads every month, some every three months and some every six months. We rate each road depending on how clean and tidy it is. We inspect the roads with lower scores more often.

During the inspections our officers make a note of problems like litter, graffiti, overgrown gardens and so on, so that we can clear them up or find out who is responsible.

Our officers also have the power to give fixed-penalty notices (fines of up to £75) to anyone they catch dropping litter, gum or cigarette butts.



Estate inspections

We are always on the lookout for residents to help us inspect roads or buildings. Could you spare a couple of hours every so often to help us inspect your local area or high-rise? It won't cost you anything, except a bit of time. If you are interested in taking part please contact us.

Keep your garden tidy

Keeping your garden tidy (by cutting the grass regularly and by making sure hedges and other plants don't look overgrown) and clear of rubbish is a condition of your tenancy agreement.



CCTV

We have installed closed-circuit television (CCTV) in all of our high rises to try to make the local area safe and secure for the people who live, work or visit there.

The images filmed by the cameras are sent to our CCTV monitoring centre where staff check them to make sure all is well both in and around the buildings. We also use the cameras to spot problems like litter, graffiti and fly-tipping.

Our staff at the CCTV monitoring centre can also speak to people outside high-rises through a public address system.

If you live in a high-rise there is an intercom system installed in your flat. You can speak to staff at the CCTV monitoring centre by pressing a button on the handset. Please help us to keep our buildings safe by being alert and reporting anything suspicious to the monitoring centre staff.

Rubbish and recycling

Solihull Council collect your household rubbish every week from outside your property. If you would like to find out more about the household waste collection service – including information about wheelie bins, recycling and collection times – please contact the council on 0121 704 8000.

If you live in a high-rise you will find that there is a rubbish chute on each floor.

- ▶ Please only put small bags of rubbish down the chutes. Large bags and items block the chutes.
- ▶ Don't leave rubbish bags outside your flat, in corridors, on landings, by the bin chute or in any communal area. They will get in the way and in a fire they might block people's escape routes.

Please recycle in the bins located on the ground floor of all high and low-rise buildings.

Getting rid of bulky items

We offer a bulky waste collection service where you can arrange for us to collect a number of items from your property for a small charge. Contact us for more information.



Dumped rubbish and fly-tipping

Fly-tipping means dumping rubbish.

Some people dump waste because they want to avoid paying to have their large or bulky items taken away legally. Piles of dumped waste are an eyesore and we encourage you to contact us to let us know when you spot dumped rubbish.

If you know who is responsible for fly-tipping or dumping rubbish, please let us know as they are breaking the law. We will treat your report as confidential.



Needles

Sometimes people leave hypodermic needles lying round. If you spot one, don't touch it. Contact us and we will arrange to remove it safely.

Don't allow your pets to be a nuisance

- ▶ You must not keep any animal that you are not allowed to keep by law.
- ▶ When your dog makes a mess, clear it up. Our officers also have the power to give fixed-penalty notices (fines of up to £75) to anyone they catch dropping litter, gum or cigarette butts.
- ▶ Please don't leave your dog alone for long periods of time. Don't leave your dog to bark continuously, as this disturbs other residents.



Please don't feed pigeons. Pigeons can cause damage to property and pigeon droppings can cause disease and trigger allergies.



Graffiti

We have a specialist team (part of SCH Better Places) who remove graffiti from homes and buildings that we or Solihull Council own. The team covers the whole Solihull borough and will visit each area every six weeks.

If you see any graffiti, please report it to SCH Better Places on 0121 779 8900. If the graffiti is racist or offensive, we will aim to remove it within two hours of it being reported. We will remove other graffiti within 20 days of it being reported. Writing and spraying graffiti is a criminal offence. If you know who did the graffiti, you should report them to the police. The graffiti hotline staff can do this for you. We also offer a not-for-profit graffiti removal service to residents and businesses. Contact us for more information.

Parking and abandoned vehicles

- ▶ You must not park vehicles on grass verges or gardens.
- ▶ If you want to build a hardstanding (a solid base for a vehicle to sit on, for example, concrete slabs) on your garden, please contact us for information on how to do this. You will need our permission before building a hardstanding. Once the hardstanding is built, contact Solihull Council to lower the kerb in front. You will have to pay them to do this.

Abandoned vehicles

If you see a vehicle you think may be abandoned, please report it to Solihull Council on 0121 704 8000.

When reporting an abandoned vehicle, please information such as:

- ▶ the exact location of the vehicle and how long it has been there
- ▶ the registration number of the vehicle
- ▶ the make, model and colour of the vehicle
- ▶ the name of the vehicle's owner (if you know it)
- ▶ your own contact details.

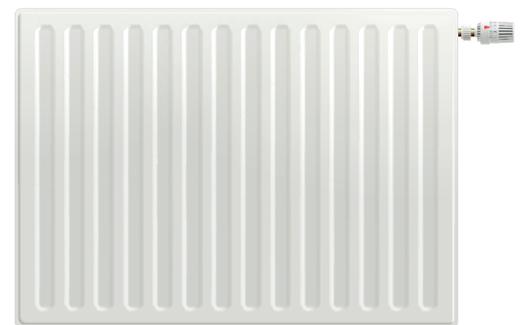
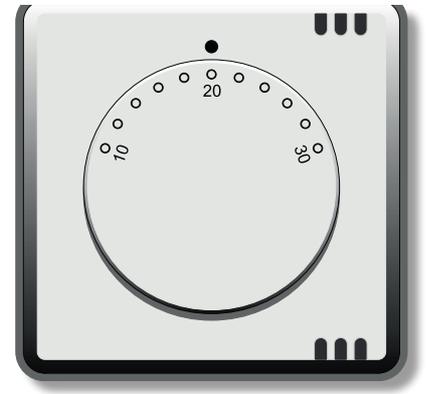


Saving energy

Our environment has a big effect on our quality of life. Following these tips could reduce harm to the environment and also lower your fuel bills

Energy-saving tips

- ▶ When cooking, match pans to the hob size.
- ▶ Cover saucepans with lids whenever possible to reduce cooking time.
- ▶ Switch your oven off as soon as possible when cooking.
- ▶ Do not leave the fridge door open longer than necessary. It will take three minutes for it to regain its temperature for every minute it's open. Don't overfill the fridge as cold air won't circulate freely.
- ▶ Boiling a half-full kettle, instead of a full kettle, four times a day could save enough electricity to run your TV for four hours. Only boil the water you need.
- ▶ Turning the central-heating thermostat down by one degree can reduce your fuel bills by up to 10%.
- ▶ Set your hot-water thermostat to about 60 degrees.
- ▶ Close curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping – you could save £15 a year.



- ▶ Fitting extra draught-proofing to doors can save money.
- ▶ Don't leave taps running. You can save up to £15 a year just by using a plug.
- ▶ If your tap is leaking, change the washer. It will save a lot of water.
- ▶ If you have one you can have about three showers for the price of one bath.
- ▶ When doing laundry, always try to wash a full load at the lowest temperature.
- ▶ Replace light bulbs with energy-efficient ones. An energy-efficient light bulb uses around a fifth of the electricity and will last 10 to 15 times longer.
- ▶ Turn off the lights when leaving a room (lighting accounts for between 10 and 15% of your electricity bill).
- ▶ Leaving a TV on stand-by uses as much electricity as leaving it on. Turn it off.



Loft insulation

If you have no loft insulation in your property please let us know. We will install insulation that is in line with current building regulations.



To get in touch:



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Protecting your personal information: We promise only to use your information strictly within the Data Protection Act 1998. If you supply your email address we will use it to contact you in the future.

If you would like this leaflet in another language or format please contact us.

