

Annual Report 2021-2022

For Milton Keynes Council Tenants and Leaseholders



milton keynes council



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Welcome

Welcome to your 2021-2022 annual report. This report tells you about some of Milton Keynes Council's achievements and how we are continually improving as a landlord. It really matters that we deliver a great service to you, and we are always looking at how we can do things better.

We are continuing to make improvements to current council homes after decades of underinvestment to ensure current tenants have a decent home to live in. We are focusing on those improvements that will make your homes warmer, drier, and safer to help drive down energy bills and provide a good environment for your family.

We have and will continue to increase our housing numbers with new sites across Milton Keynes being developed to help deal with the demand for council homes.

Your views are crucial in helping us make sure we're getting things right and letting us know when we are not. We will continually improve services, using your feedback, placing our tenants at the heart of everything we do, offering a variety of opportunities to get involved and have your say.

We have recently updated our website to make it more accessible and easier to find what you're looking for.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and please do get in touch with suggestions on how we can continue to improve.

Councillor Emily Darlington

Cabinet Member for Adults, Housing and Healthy Communities



1. Our priorities

Our Housing Revenue Account Business Plan sets out how we will manage and **invest in our existing homes** and land, provide **quality services** to council tenants and leaseholders, and invest in **new council homes**.

We'll keep a focus on **carbon reduction and sustainability** as we work to meet our ambitions to build more council homes and make sure existing homes meet a **decent standard**.

In March 2022, we owned 12,474 homes (including Shared Ownership) and managed 1,604 leasehold properties.

Last year we....

Spent more than **£57m** on housing

Made **£1.1m** of adaptations to help people live independently

Helped **30** tenants downsize, paying **£52,400** in cash incentives

Made more than **46,000** repairs

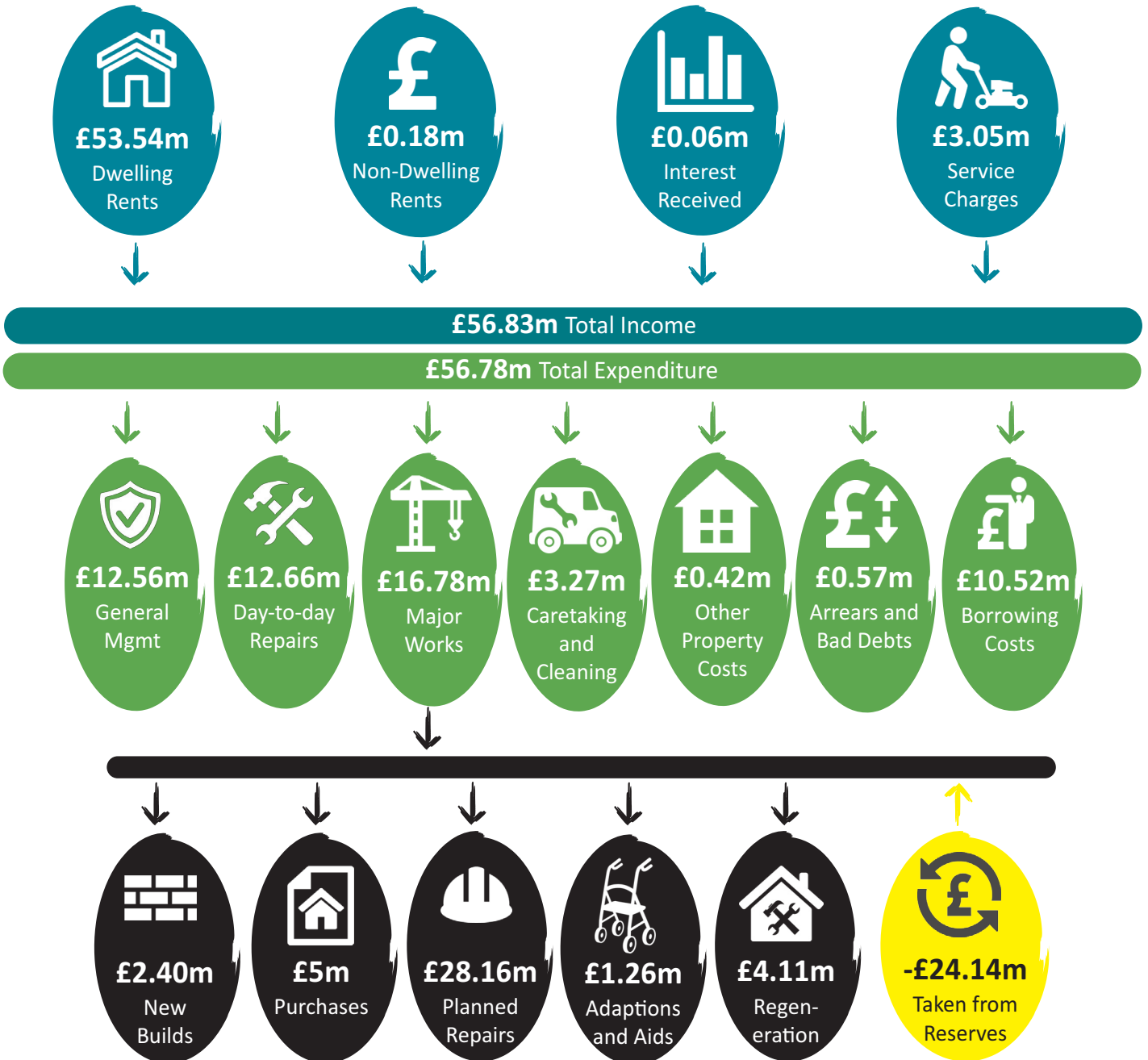
Carried out more than **2,400** safety assessments

Helped **69** tenants find new paid work

and much more...

2. Money matters

Where our housing income comes from and how it's spent:



Rent collections

Average weekly rents	Social rent	Shared Ownership	Affordable rent
2021-22	£90.14	£84.25	£177.39
2020-21	£88.79	£82.03	£184.65
2019-20	£86.19	£82.85	£183.53

Last year we collected 99% of the rent we were owed

How we spend each pound

General Management



Day-to-day Repairs



Caretaking and Cleaning



Other Property Costs



Arrears and Bad Debt



Borrowing Costs



New Build



Acquisitions



Planned Maintenance



Aids and Adaptations



Regeneration



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3. Are you struggling financially?

Paying your rent on time and in accordance with the terms of tenancy should remain your priority. We will take action to recover rent arrears.

However, if you're struggling to pay your rent, please let us know as help is available. We are not here to judge, and you don't need to be receiving welfare benefits for us to give advice. Call our advisors on 01908 252937 or visit www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/cost-living-support

Universal Credit

If you are of working age and are on certain benefits, the Government may have already moved you to Universal Credit. Everyone should have moved to Universal Credit by 2024. The Government is responsible for Universal Credit rather than us. Visit www.gov.uk/universal-credit for information. If you need a benefit entitlement calculation, you can call our advisors on 01908 252937.

Helping tenants find paid work

Our Community Employment Service helps tenants to find paid work and last year we helped 69 council tenants into employment. Our focus for this year is in areas of the city with higher deprivation or particularly vulnerable communities as well as young people and women returning to the workplace (groups hit harder by the pandemic than others).

We offer a one-to-one service plus employment support drop-in sessions in Beanhill, Bradville, Coffee Hall, Fullers Slade, Lakes Estate and West Bletchley. We're opening two new community support sessions at Netherfield and Central MK Libraries and will be working with local charity Ride High to offer sessions to people who find it difficult to learn in a classroom-based environment.

Find out more by calling 01908 252323 or register online at

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/CLMK/community-employment-service-ces>

4. Helping you from day one

In the past year we welcomed 343 new tenants into council housing by signing them up with introductory tenancies. We completed 111 mutual exchanges including 21 where tenants swapped out of MK. We bought 31 properties specifically to help rough sleepers get off of the streets permanently, also providing them with other essential support. We carried out over 2,250 visits to our residents, including inspection and tenancy audits.

Residents Associations

We support and fund 13 Residents Associations who support their local communities and organise resident focused activities. Nine Residents Associations successfully applied for community grant funding, which went towards trips, community events and Christmas hampers. To find out if you have a Residents Association in your area or to start one, please contact us on 07765 343451 or 07557 318943.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We work in partnership with Thames Valley Police to reduce the impact of ASB on all residents, and this work is having a positive effect on many of our communities. We responded to 178 ASB cases in the year (83 low risk and 95 high risk) and 51 tenancy breaches. This is significantly down from last year where we responded to 196 low risk and 241 high risk issues, plus 148 potential breaches.

New tenant handbook coming soon

Your new tenant handbook, produced with the help of tenants, will be delivered later this year. It contains useful information about your responsibilities as a tenant and our responsibilities as a landlord.

Get involved



GET INVOLVED!

Be part of the future of where you live. Have a say and make a real difference.

residentengagement@milton-keynes.gov.uk

07765 343451
07557 318980

We've been working with the Tenants Participation Advisory Service to help us improve how we engage with tenants, and we will have lots of new opportunities to get involved in.

5. Repairs and maintenance

Our goals are to:

- Make it easy for you to report repairs.
- Respond as soon as possible.
- Build better communities by improving the quality of our housing.
- Maximise energy efficiency in homes to tackle fuel poverty and help to tackle climate change.

Last year we made 46,006 repairs and maintenance jobs (34,312 day to day repairs and 11,694 heating repairs) including:

1,128 new kitchens	741 new doors	546 new bathrooms and wet rooms
143 new toilets	193 new boilers/heating systems	207 new windows
32 new roofs	One new lift	Two Refurbished lifts

Building safety

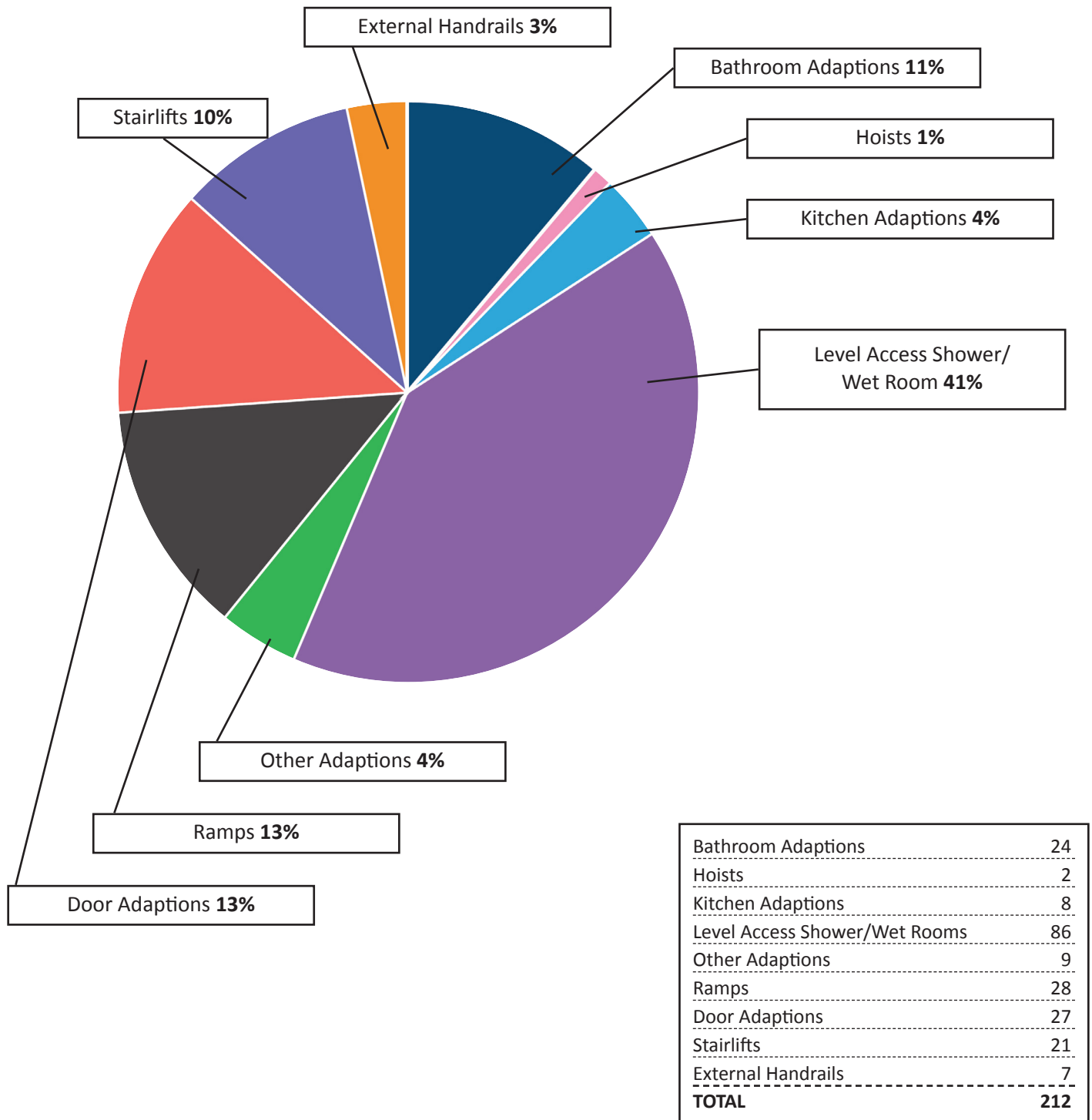
We work hard on safety improvements that make a difference to residents, for instance:

- We made winter ready checks at all of our sheltered housing schemes to check paving, lighting and that footpaths were not overgrown.
- We visited Serpentine Court in the dark to identify where lighting and paving improvements were needed.
- We made more than 2,400 assessments and surveys in all, and 64 compliance audits with 218 improvements.

We are reviewing designs for new build homes to make sure they keep pace with improving safety and compliance standards.

Aids and adaptations

Aids and adaptations to council properties are in very high demand. Last year we completed 212 adaptations at a cost of over £1.1m. Referrals and recommendations from our occupational therapy team are assessed, and where approved are passed to our contractor Mears who organise the works.



6. Building greener homes

In the past year we've built seven new energy efficient family council homes with a further 23 expected in 2022, and permissions granted for new schemes in 2023 and onwards. These homes include air source heat pumps and other energy saving measures.

7. Regeneration update

The Lakes Estate

Funding and planning permission for Phase A (around 200 homes) and outline permission for Phase B has been received and we began making ground investigations on the site. We also secured £1m to improve four play parks and other open spaces, and the new parks were designed in close partnership with local primary schools.

The Lakes Estate Renewal Forum has provided some excellent feedback and formed two new subgroups which are concentrating on repairs to council homes and people's health and wellbeing.

Fullers Slade

A professional team has been appointed to help progress the regeneration of Fullers Slade and they've been listening to feedback provided by the Estate Renewal Forum and the wider community. Later this year a feasibility report will illustrate what can be brought forward.

Bradville

Engagement with the local community has started, and the team is working through the list of priorities highlighted by local people. An Estate Renewal Forum will be set up shortly.

Woughton (Coffee Hall, Beanhill, Netherfield, Tinkers Bridge)

Initial conversations have begun with local Residents Associations, the Parish Council, and an Estate Renewal Forum will be considered.

Mellish Court and The Gables

We have worked hard to smoothly move everyone from these tower blocks into new homes and demolition is expected during 2022, at which point there will be no council owned tower blocks in Milton Keynes. Work has started on designing what will replace the blocks.

8. Sheltered Housing

Our Sheltered Housing service continues to go from strength to strength having recently been accredited to the independent and nationally recognised EROSH Code of Practice standards.

We continue to invest in our schemes to ensure they remain safe and secure and are great places to live. For instance:

- We're building mobility scooter stores at Falaise Nook, Heron Lodge, Byerly House and Radcote Lodge
- We've installed stairlifts across all schemes
- We've replaced or refurbished many lifts, including the lifts at Bellfounder House, Sovereign Lodge and Flintergill Court
- Everglade is undergoing energy efficiency works including solar panels
- Durrans House, Dexter House and Magdalen Court have been redecorated throughout

Find out more at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/adult-social-care/our-adult-social-care-services/sheltered-housing-and-sheltered-housing-care or to request a copy please call 01908 222616.

9. Lettings and allocations

573 Council properties were let, which is an increase of 101 from the previous year.

Property Size	Number of Lets
Studio/1 Bed	406
2 Beds	80
3 Beds	75
4 Beds	10
5 Beds	2

712 families were nominated to Housing Associations for permanent homes, an increase of 299 from the year before.

Property Size	Number of Lets
Studio/1 Bed	220
2 Beds	334
3 Beds	107
4 Beds	49
5 Beds	2

Could you benefit from moving to a smaller home?

We're in urgent need of more family-sized accommodation. If you're living in a Council home that is now too large and would like to move somewhere smaller, cheaper, and easier to manage, we can offer you a generous downsizing cash incentive.

Last year we rehoused 30 tenants and paid £52,400 in cash incentives.

If you move from a property with two or more bedrooms to somewhere smaller, you could receive:

- £1,000 per bedroom
- An additional £1,000 if you move into a sheltered housing flat
- Up to £500 towards relocation costs
- Help to buy carpets
- Help disposing with unwanted furniture

Some examples (conditions apply):

Current Property	New Property	Maximum Payable	Removal Expenses (up to)	Total (up to)
4 Bed	Sheltered	£4,000	£500	£4,500
4 Bed	3 Bed	£1,000	£500	£1,500
4 Bed	2 Bed	£2,000	£500	£2,500
4 Bed	1 Bed	£3,000	£500	£3,500
3 Bed	Sheltered	£3,000	£500	£3,500
3 Bed	2 Bed	£1,000	£500	£1,500
3 Bed	1 Bed	£2,000	£500	£2,500
2 Bed	Sheltered	£2,000	£500	£2,500
2 Bed	1 Bed	£1,000	£500	£1,500

Call Housing Allocations on 01908 252937 (option 4) or email housing.allocations@milton-keynes.gov.uk to learn more.

10. Complaints

The Complaint Handling Code sets out good practice for landlords to respond to complaints. You can find it online at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk. Each year we assess ourselves against the code, and you can find our assessment at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk

Things we have improved this year:

- Outstanding complaints are down by 67%
- Total complaints down by 7%
- We've redesigned our website to make it easier to find information
- We've improved customer forms
- New ways to report things like tenancy changes or fraud

Where we receive complaints	Resolved complaints in 2020/21	Outstanding complaints on 31/03/2021
Assets and Investment	83	16
Neighbourhoods	41	6
Home Ownership	22	6
Income	3	2
Private Sector Housing	6	2
Housing Allocations	7	11
Anti-Social Behaviour	13	1
Supply and Acquisitions	3	5
Housing solutions	30	16
Total	208	65

11. Useful contacts

Report a repair (Mears)

0330 123 2522 at any time or repairs.miltonkeynes@mearsgroup.co.uk

Milton Keynes Council housing enquiries

01908 252937 or out of hours (emergencies only) 01908 226699

- **Welfare and rent team** (Option 1) or rents@milton-keynes.gov.uk
- **Housing allocations** (Option 4) or housing.allocations@milton-keynes.gov.uk
- **Anti-social behaviour** (Option 3) or asb@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Neighbourhood services

01908 252937 or neighbourhood.services@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Housing solutions

01908 253481 or HSAssessment@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Sheltered housing and sheltered housing with care

01908 222616 or sheltered.housing@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Resident involvement

07557 318943 or 07765 343451 or residentengagement@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Homelessness

01908 253481 or homeless.enquiries@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Housing benefit

01908 253100 or benefits@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Regeneration

07443 204793 or 07557 318900 or regeneration@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Domestic abuse

Phone 0344 375 4307 if someone is in fear or call 999 immediately if someone is in danger info@MK-ACT.org

To give us other feedback

01908 691691 or customerservices@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Find more information at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk

Find us on  [@MKCouncil1](https://www.facebook.com/MKCouncil1) or on  [@MKCouncil](https://twitter.com/MKCouncil)

If you would like to share your views on this annual report, to tell us what you liked or what you would like to see included next year, we'd be very happy to hear from you.

Email your thoughts to
residentengagement@milton-keynes.gov.uk