

Lighthouse

Combating Homelessness, Creating Opportunities, Promoting Change

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New member of staff

Emma joined BHT Sussex in May 2024 and, from 1 September 2026, has taken on a new role as a Tenancy Sustainment Officer within the Housing Services team.

Emma has worked in the social care & housing sector for over 25 years, in a variety of roles across supported living, assessment and treatment units, community support services, elderly care and mental health services. Throughout her career, she has particularly enjoyed working alongside people, getting to know them as individuals and supporting them to overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

Emma is really enjoying her new role and is looking forward to supporting tenants to maintain their homes and tenancies, build confidence and achieve greater stability and independence. She is also enjoying getting to know colleagues across Housing Services and learning more about the different aspects of her new role.

Having moved around in previous years for work, Emma is very happy to be back in Sussex and close to her family and friends. She has enjoyed her time at BHT Sussex so far and is looking forward to continuing to develop her role and contribute to the work of the organisation.

Outside of work, Emma enjoys gardening, cooking, reading and keeping active with regular visits to the gym. She also enjoys spending time with family and friends whenever she can.



Emma Gould

Energy bills are changing this October

From 1 October, Ofgem's energy price cap will increase by 4%, which means many households on standard variable tariffs will see their energy costs rise.

The price cap sets a limit on the amount suppliers can charge for each unit of gas and electricity – it doesn't set a limit on your total bill. What you pay will depend on how much energy you use, your tariff and how you pay.

A few things worth checking

Know your tariff: Check whether you're on a fixed or standard variable tariff and compare the options available before switching.

Check your bills and meter readings: Regular readings can help make sure you're being charged for the energy you've actually used.

Look at your energy use: Simple changes around the home can help reduce the amount of energy you use.

Ask for help early: If you're worried about paying your energy bills, contact your supplier as soon as possible to discuss the support available.

Access to your flat: Why letting us in matters

Why access is important

We need access to your home for essential safety checks, repairs and tenancy management visits. Some visits are a legal requirement and help keep you, your neighbours and the building safe. Access also helps us identify problems early and complete repairs before they become more disruptive or expensive.

What visits might we need access for?

We may need access for:

- Gas, electrical and fire safety checks
- Repairs, maintenance and property inspections
- Housing Officer visits
- Support and wellbeing visits, where appropriate

Persistent no-access issues can prevent essential safety checks and repairs from being completed.

How we will communicate with you

We understand that people have work, caring responsibilities and other commitments. We will usually contact you in advance and may use letters, texts, emails or phone calls. If you are not home when we visit, we may leave a calling card. Where possible, we will offer alternative appointments and can work with support workers, advocates or family members if needed.

What happens if you don't provide access?

Without access, safety checks and repairs may be delayed and problems such as leaks, damp or faulty equipment may get worse. This could put you or other residents at risk, and we may need to contact you repeatedly to arrange another appointment.

In serious cases, where legally required safety checks cannot be completed, we may take formal action to gain access. BHT Sussex has previously secured injunctions where access to mandatory safety inspections could not otherwise be achieved.

If you're struggling to provide access

Talk to us as soon as possible. We will try to understand any barriers and find a solution with you. Extra support may be available if health, mobility, anxiety or other issues are making access difficult.



Remember:

Access helps keep your home safe, allows us to complete repairs more quickly and helps us provide a good service to you and your neighbours.

What you can do

Please keep your contact details up to date and let us know as soon as possible if an appointment is unsuitable or needs rearranging.

Make sure someone over 18 is present if required and that areas needing inspection or repair can be safely accessed.

You can update your details at any time by:

- logging into MyTenancy,
- contacting the Housing Services Team
- email: mytenancy@bht.org.uk
- phone: 01323 340018
- text: 07860 031036

Noise Nuisance: What We Can and Can't Deal With

Living near other people means some noise is unavoidable. But when noise is persistent, unreasonable and affecting your daily life, we may be able to help.

Noise issues we can investigate include:

- Persistent loud music, TV, shouting or regular parties, particularly late at night
- Repeated banging, door slamming or other deliberate noise
- Noise linked to anti-social behaviour, harassment or intimidation
- DIY, construction work or power tools outside typical daytime hours (7am–10pm)
- Dogs barking excessively for long periods

What we can't usually take action on

Everyday household sounds, such as children playing or crying, people walking around, doors closing, showers, toilets, household appliances and occasional visitors, are generally part of living near other people.

We also can't usually take action on noise caused by poor sound insulation or isolated, one-off incidents.

If you're experiencing ongoing noise

Keeping a record helps us understand the problem. Note when the noise happens, how long it lasts, what you can hear and how it affects you – for example, if it disturbs your sleep or prevents you from working.

Where safe and appropriate, you can also make recordings on your phone. These can support your report alongside other evidence.

Please report ongoing problems and keep us updated if they continue.

What happens next?

We will consider your report and the circumstances of everyone involved. Not all noise is anti-social behaviour, and sometimes a conversation, mediation or practical advice can resolve the problem without the need for enforcement action.

Top Tip

If you feel comfortable and it is safe to do so, consider speaking politely to your neighbour first. They may not realise their noise is affecting you.

Some everyday noise from neighbours is normal. We focus on persistent and unreasonable noise that has a significant impact on residents.

Having problems with a neighbour? Mediation Plus can help.

Disagreements between neighbours can be difficult to resolve. Neighbourhood mediation offers a safe and confidential way to talk through problems and work towards a solution that everyone can agree on.

Trained mediators can help with a range of neighbour disputes, including noise, parking, anti-social behaviour, gardens and the use of shared or outside spaces. **They don't take sides or make decisions for you – their role is to help everyone involved understand each other's concerns and explore practical solutions.**

Mediation is voluntary. If you're referred to the service, a Neighbourhood Co-ordinator will first speak to everyone involved to understand what has been happening and whether mediation could help.

Want to know more?

Visit <https://mediation-plus.org.uk/mediation/neighbourhood-mediation> to find out more and to explore FAQs (frequently asked questions).

BHT Sussex In Bloom 2026 – Gardens, creativity and a little bit of magic

Green fingers, wildlife havens, home-grown produce and even an enchanted fairy kingdom were all on display for this year's BHT Sussex In Bloom competition.

Our judging panel took to the road in July to discover the creativity, hard work and love that BHT Sussex residents and projects have poured into their outdoor spaces. From private gardens and peaceful retreats to shared community spaces, each entry had its own personality.

And the winner is... Carol!



Carol's extraordinary garden captured the imagination of the judging panel.

With winding paths, ponds, a secret den, unusual plants, artwork and surprises around every corner, one judge described it as a "fantastic garden and wildlife oasis", while another called it "Bohemian bliss – like an enchanted fairy kingdom."

Behind its wonderfully informal appearance is careful planning and a strong commitment to sustainability, including reusing seeds, nurturing plants in Carol's own nursery, composting and creating habitats for wildlife.

Congratulations, Carol!

A colourful runner-up

Louise took second place with a garden full of colour, scent and edible planting.

The judges praised her "great floral displays" and blend of ornamental and edible plants, including fruit, vegetables, aromatic plants and roses. One judge described it simply as "a wonderfully full & colourful space."

Well done, Louise!



Environmental Stewardship Award – Ditchling Rise

The Environmental Stewardship Award went to the residents and team at Ditchling Rise, where the garden continues to evolve as a shared community space.

The judges highlighted the new residents' "chill" area, greenhouse, vegetable plots and diverse planting. Tomatoes and beans are grown from seed, with seeds collected annually for future planting.

It was described as an "amazing community space which changes year on year" and a place that is "so tranquil and special."

Congratulations to everyone involved!



A hidden gem

Our fourth entrant, Kevin, also received wonderful feedback, with his garden described as "a hidden gem."

Judges praised the colourful perennial planting, biodiversity and clever use of a challenging space. Raised beds and an attractive seating area make the garden accessible, while herbs and wildlife-friendly planting attract butterflies and bees.



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Celebrating a love of gardening

For the second year, every entrant will also receive the **Elaine MacDonald Award for Loving Your Garden**, recognising the care, imagination and enjoyment our gardeners put into their outdoor spaces.

The award was introduced in memory of Elaine MacDonald, a keen gardener, and is supported by her husband, Kelvin, who has once again generously funded a £10 B&Q voucher for each participant.

BHT Sussex In Bloom is about more than winning. Gardens can provide food and habitats for wildlife, bring people together or simply offer somewhere peaceful to spend time. This year's entries demonstrated all of those things.

A huge thank you to everyone who entered, the staff who supported them, our judging panel for giving their time and expertise, and Kelvin for continuing to support the Elaine MacDonald Award.

Most importantly, congratulations to all our gardeners. Keep growing!

Home and Environment

Leave (leaf) litter for wildlife

If you have a garden or balcony, don't be too tidy this autumn! Fallen leaves, faded flowers and hollow stems provide winter shelter for caterpillars, bees and butterflies, while seedheads such as teasels, poppies, alliums and sea holly provide food for birds. Dead leaves and stems also protect the soil and eventually break down into natural compost. Leave them where there is soil, but make sure leaves and plant matter aren't blocking gullies or drains, as this can cause flooding during heavy rain.

Save with seasonal food

Eating seasonal food can be a good way to keep costs down. Autumn vegetables such as leeks, carrots, greens and potatoes, with beans for protein, can make healthy and affordable soups and stews.

And if you celebrate Halloween, choose an edible squash for your decorations – then turn it into soup or stew afterwards! Find some inspiration:

[Eat Your Pumpkin - Hubbub](#) | [Bean soup recipes](#) | [Good Food](#)

Keep on top of condensation

Condensation is more common in colder weather and, if left unchecked, can contribute to black mould. Cooking, showering, drying washing and even breathing all add moisture to the air.

To help reduce condensation:

- Put lids on pans and don't leave the kettle boiling
- Dry washing outside if possible, or in a ventilated room with the door closed
- If using a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented outside
- Keeping your home warm can help reduce condensation
- Wipe away condensation from windows and walls when you see it

Enjoy autumn colours

Autumn is a great time to get outside and enjoy Sussex's changing colours, sunrises and sunsets. A walk in your local park or along the beach is a simple way to enjoy the season.

If you'd prefer some company, there are regular gentle Wellbeing Walks at Alexandra Park in Hastings and Preston Park in Brighton.

Work on upgrading our homes

Surveys have been carried out at Albion Street and 5 College Road in Brighton, where we are looking at energy efficiency and heating upgrades, part-funded through the government's Warmer Homes programme.

This is part of our ongoing work towards bringing all our properties up to at least EPC C. Our Asset Management team continues to look for funding opportunities to improve more homes.

Text prepared by Mary Stevens, Environmental Officer

BHT Sussex Housing Services: How Well Are We Performing? Q3 Oct-Dec 2025, Q4 Jan-Mar 2026, Q1 Apr-Jun 2026



Repairs: Routine

Response time: 28 days

Q3 95%

Q4 96%

Q1 98%

Target: 95%

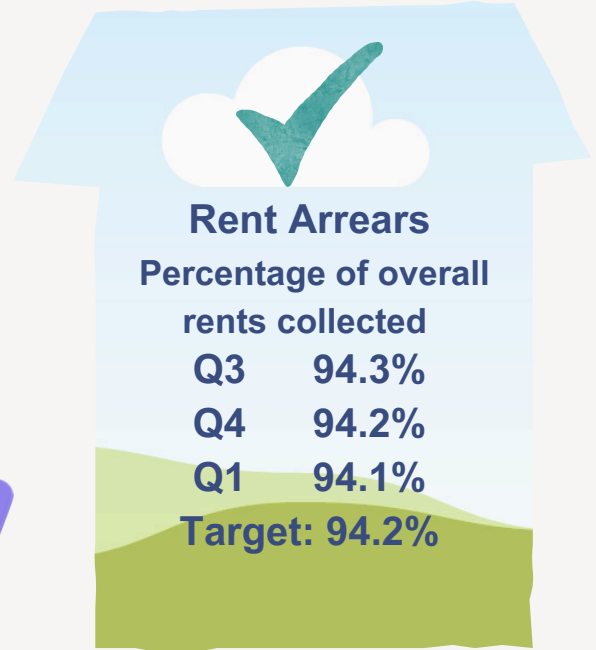
Repairs: Overall Satisfaction

Q3 98%

Q4 100%

Q1 100%

Target: 95%



Rent Arrears

Percentage of overall rents collected

Q3 94.3%

Q4 94.2%

Q1 94.1%

Target: 94.2%

Repairs: Urgent

Response time: 4 to 7 days

Q3 97%

Q4 96%

Q1 94%

Target: 90%

Boiler Servicing

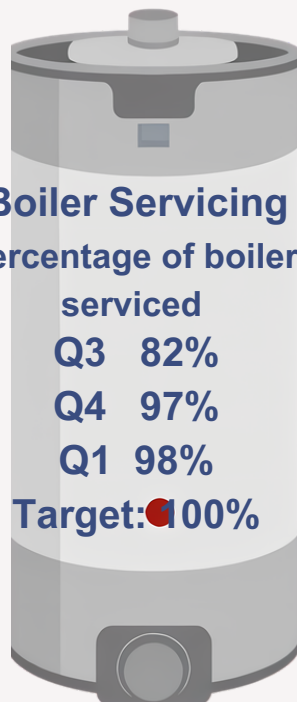
Percentage of boilers serviced

Q3 82%

Q4 97%

Q1 98%

Target: 100%



Letting

Days until vacated property is re-let

Q3 44 days

Q4 50 days

Q1 28 days

Target: 26 days



Repairs: Emergency

Response time: 24 hours

Q3 100%

Q4 100%

Q1 100%

Target: 100%

Think before you flush!

Blocked drains can cause bad smells, flooding and costly repairs. This financial year, we've spent around £10,000 on drainage call-outs.

Please don't flush or wash these down toilets or sinks:

- Wet wipes – even those labelled “flushable”
- Sanitary products and nappies
- Paper towels and tissues
- Cotton buds, cotton wool and makeup wipes
- Fats, oils and grease
- Food scraps and coffee grounds
- Hair and dental floss
- Cleaning wipes, cat litter or plastic

Only human waste and toilet paper should be flushed down the toilet.

If you notice slow drainage, bad smells or a blockage, please report it promptly.

Keep your ventilation fan running

If you have an extractor fan in your bathroom or kitchen, you may notice that it runs quietly in the background and sometimes speeds up. This is normal – many fans automatically respond to increased moisture in the air, for example when you're showering or cooking.

Keeping your fan running helps remove moisture and reduce condensation, damp and mould. These fans are designed to use very little electricity, so please don't switch them off at the isolator.

If your fan becomes unusually noisy, stays on a higher speed for a long time or doesn't seem to be working properly, please let us know so we can check it.

New out-of-hours number for gas emergencies

Our new contractor, **Sureserve**, provides out-of-hours support for gas emergencies.

For gas emergencies after 5.30pm, at weekends or on bank holidays, call:

0330 002 1169

Please save this number somewhere handy.

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MyTenancy

www.mytenancy.co.uk

Report a repair or check your rent statement online

Update your contact details

Email: mytenancy@bht.org.uk

Phone: 01323 340018

Text: 07860 031036

Our mission: Combating homelessness; Creating opportunities; Promoting change.

Our values: Empowering People; Inspiring Change; Collaboration; Delivering Excellence; Being Accountable.