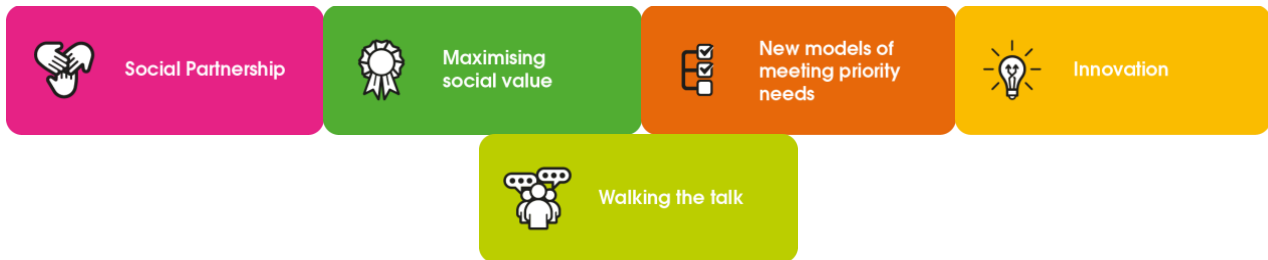


HOUSING



Swindon Borough Council

Salzgitter Court - council housing providing homes for those in need

Salzgitter Court in Toothill, Swindon, shows what can be achieved when an underused council asset is turned into a place of stability, safety, and new beginnings. Originally a low-demand sheltered housing scheme, the building was identified as an opportunity to bring empty homes back into use and reduce pressure on temporary accommodation. Through the Housing, Care and Homelessness Transformation Board, the building was fully refurbished and repurposed using internal Council teams. It reopened in July 2025 as 25 modern, self-contained homes for people experiencing homelessness or at serious risk of it.

The aim was simple but ambitious - provide people with their own front door, a sense of dignity, and the tailored support needed to rebuild their lives. The project directly supports the council's wider priorities of reducing homelessness, improving housing quality, strengthening communities, and using resources responsibly.

A model built around people

What makes Salzgitter Court stand out is the way it combines on-site, trauma-informed support with a fully self-contained housing offer. Two in-house support workers provide day-to-day stability and work alongside floating support from the Rough Sleeper Team.

Everyone moving in receives a personalised support and move-on plan that recognises the challenges they have faced. By bringing the right staff together on site, the service offers genuinely wrap-around care.

This combination of independence and intensive support is uncommon in local authority services and has proven to be highly effective in preventing repeat homelessness. Residents enjoy the security and dignity of their own home, with specialist support available whenever needed.

Support includes help with housing benefits and income, so residents can sustain their tenancy.

- All 25 residents have received help to ensure their housing cost claims are correct and are being paid, enabling them to maximise their income and manage their bills.
- Support has also been given for Council Tax.
- Five residents have received detailed debt advice, supported by partners including Swindon CAB and StepChange, enabling them to take control of longstanding financial pressures.

Health and well-being are treated with equal priority.

- 17 residents have been supported to register with a GP or re-engage with health services.
- Three residents are receiving counselling
- Two Occupational Therapy referrals and two safeguarding referrals have been made, following the early identification of risks.

Building independence and community

Salzgitter Court is more than a roof over people's heads. It has quickly become a genuine community. The refurbished lounge, with its pool table and comfortable seating, has become a natural gathering place. Residents have taken part in pool competitions, life-skills sessions, and creative projects. Fourteen residents have used the donations room for essential household items. Six people are now in employment, and five are volunteering, demonstrating growing independence, confidence, and motivation.

A six-week slow-cooking programme, funded through the Household Support Fund, made a massive difference. Residents learned to prepare healthy, affordable meals using slow cookers they could keep afterwards. The sessions reduced isolation, strengthened relationships, and gave residents practical skills to support longer-term tenancies.

One recent creative project - turning unused toy cars into miniature council vans for children in nearby supported accommodation (see below) - brought great pride to the residents involved. Ten colourful vans are now ready to be given to local children, a small act that builds a much bigger connection with the wider community.

The local neighbourhood has also played an important part. Residents nearby have shown real warmth and generosity, donating items, offering encouragement and helping to reduce stigma. Their support has made new tenants feel welcome and part of the area from day one.



Turning toy cars into miniature council vans creative project

Evidence of impact

In less than a year, Salzgitter Court has delivered significant outcomes:

- Two residents are ready to move on into longer-term accommodation
- No one has been asked to leave, and only one resident has left voluntarily.

Early signs show this is a stable, safe and supportive environment that helps people progress at a pace that works for them.

The scheme is also contributing to easing wider system pressures.

- Since April, rough sleeping figures have fallen from 38 to 22.
- B&B placements have reduced from 59 in April to 51 in November, despite wider seasonal pressures.
- The project is assisting the council in reducing its reliance on costly temporary accommodation, resulting in savings of £161,000 so far, with £178,000 forecast. These savings enable more of the Housing Revenue Account to be reinvested in frontline support and housing improvements.

The service has collaborated proactively with community police, public health, voluntary organisations, and the council's community safety teams to ensure residents can access specialist help swiftly. These relationships are essential for keeping people safe and preventing issues from

escalating. Planning and building control teams supported compliance sign-off, ensuring the building met all safety and regulatory standards.

Lasting value

Transforming a low-demand sheltered housing scheme into high-quality supported accommodation has brought immediate benefits and created a sustainable asset for the future. The project demonstrates what can be achieved when a council uses its buildings creatively, delivers improvements through skilled internal teams, and designs support around the needs of the residents. Its outcomes are already evident: safer housing, better health and financial stability, less pressure from homelessness, and a community where people truly feel supported.

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Image for use with case study:

