

West Dunbartonshire Council

Housing Services

Annual Charter Performance Report for Tenants and other Customers 2018/19





Welcome to our “2018/19 Annual Charter Performance Report” for tenants and other customers. This report outlines how we have performed against the outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

Areas where we have performed well are highlighted and also areas where we need to improve. The report sets out some of the actions we are taking during 2019/20 in order to respond positively to the challenges we face and ensure that we achieve our goal of being a top performing landlord across all the Charter Outcomes, delivering both value for money and excellent customer service.



As you would expect, it has been another busy year across Housing and Homelessness services, as we continue to respond to the challenges of Welfare Reform and deliver improving customer focused housing services.

Highlights during the past year include the progression of the Council’s new build housing programme, including the beginning of works at the old St Andrew’s high school site in Clydebank, which will deliver 126 new council homes and the approval of our new 5 year Capital Investment Programme, which will deliver a £170 million investment in our tenants homes. Our commitment to housing quality was also reinforced as we updated and strengthened the West Dunbartonshire Design Standard, which applies to all new build social housing, maximising energy efficiency benefits to all new social tenants.

We are also beginning to implement our new ‘Home at the Heart’ approach to homelessness, which aims to provide settled accommodation to households and provide the support to ensure positive housing solutions. We have reviewed and updated “Help to Rent”, our scheme to assist households access the private rented sector. We have also considerably reduced the time taken to re-let empty properties via our “every day counts” approach and we continue to take forward our “No Home for Domestic Abuse” initiative, our zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse, which has now been shared across the housing sector.

We are rightly proud of our relationship with the many tenant groups that we have and how effective they are in representing their communities and getting involved in decision making. This relationship was recognised earlier in the year when we were awarded Gold Accreditation for Excellence in Tenant Participation from TPAS Scotland (Tenant Participation Advisory Service).

As always we welcome your opinion and would be happy for you to provide your views via the Housing Development team at HousingStrategy@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Peter Barry

Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability





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Introduction

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the outcomes and standards that the Scottish Government expects landlords to be delivering for their tenants and other customers.

All landlords assess their performance against these Charter outcomes on an annual basis and produce a report based on this assessment, which includes actions being taken to address any areas of weakness.



This report outlines how Housing and Homelessness Services performed during 2018/19. It focuses on the areas that tenants have said are the most important to them and each page includes key measures of performance, whether this performance has improved or not since the previous year and how this performance compares to other landlords.

Tenant involvement in this report

The Scottish Social Housing Charter expects landlords to fully involve tenants in assessing and reporting their performance. In August and September 2019, a group of tenants were involved in reviewing the content, style and format of this report. Lots of valuable feedback was provided and all of the changes asked for by tenants have been made.

These changes include a reduction in the number of words in some sections, less jargon being used and some pages being removed, as they were seen as being repetitive and not required. Some of the performance measures used have also been changed and performance against these measures will be reported to tenants throughout the year via the Housing News.

A key task of the review was to consider the best group of landlords to compare our performance against. There are many “peer groups” that can be used, each with some benefits and drawbacks. In the end, tenants have asked that the report shows how our performance compares with that of all the other local authorities in Scotland that have housing stock.

This comparison is shown using symbols, which again have been chosen by tenants, are used consistently throughout the report and are explained below.

Comparison with previous year



Better



Poorer



No change

Comparison with other landlords.



Top Quarter



Second Quarter



Third Quarter





Bottom Quarter

Outcomes 2,3

Communication and Participation

Aims: Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides. Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	Trend	Comparison
% of tenants who feel that we are good at keeping them informed about services and decisions	84.5%	84.5%	↔	
% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlords' decision making processes	79.1%	79.1%	↔	

We continue to improve communication with tenants and also develop the opportunities to get involved and influence the decision making process.

We also continue to ensure that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence decisions at a level they feel comfortable with and 2018/19 saw us implement Year 2 of our Tenant Participation Strategy "Involving You".



Key achievements have included successful tenant involvement and influence in our Rent Setting process and the continued development of the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation (WDTRO), the West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel and the Joint Rent Group which looks at value for money across housing services.



Following a robust scrutiny of our tenant participation provision, we were also extremely proud to gain Gold Accreditation for Excellence in Tenant Participation from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).

For more information about becoming involved see page 14 of this report.

What we are doing in 2019/20





- We will carry out a comprehensive Tenant Satisfaction survey and develop improvements based on feedback
- We will implement Year 3 of our Tenant Participation Strategy
- We will carry out a review of the Service Standards in place across Housing and Homelessness Services

Performance Indicator	Stage 1	Stage 2
% of complaints responded to within target timescales	76%	65%
% of complaints that were upheld	56%	24%

Outcome 4

The Quality of Housing

Aims: Tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair, and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by December 2020.

Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	Trend	Comparison
% of Council's housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	90.2%	91.9%	↑	
% of Council's housing stock meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH)	55.9%	77.6%	↑	
% of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	86%	86%	↔	
% of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in	94.9%	87.4%	↓	



Our “More Homes, Better Homes” approach in West Dunbartonshire is on track to deliver 1000 new homes for West Dunbartonshire Communities. These properties will all meet the affordable housing design standard, which provides sector leading energy efficiency and space standards. We will continue to push the boundaries in terms of our housing building programme, putting quality first.

We will also continue to invest in improving existing Council homes and local estates. The investment will enable the Council to maintain its commitment to meeting the Scottish Quality Housing Standard and meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by 2020.

What we are doing in 2019/20

- We will implement Year 2 of our Housing Asset Management Strategy “Better Homes West Dunbartonshire”
- We will continue to invest in our housing stock by delivering our Housing Capital Investment Plan
- We will progress with our New Build Programme





Outcome

5

Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements

Aims: *Tenants' homes are well maintained; with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices when work is done.*

Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	Trend	Comparison
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	3.67 hours	3.41 hours	↑	
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	7.08 days	5.7 days	↑	
% of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time	88.1%	90.5%	↑	
% of repairs appointments kept	86.05%	86.13%	↑	
% of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	92.3%	88.5%	↓	
% of properties that had a gas safety check within 12 month anniversary date	99.13%	100%	↑	

During 2018/19 there was improvement in 5 of the 6 key measures of performance. This included the average time taken to carry out both emergency and non-emergency repairs and our performance compares well when compared to other local authorities.

An external service review has recently been carried out and an improvement plan based on this exercise is currently being developed. We expect that this, together with the implementation of our new Integrated Housing Management System during 2019/20, will lead to an improved service for tenants.

What we are doing in 2019/20




- We will develop and implement an improvement plan based on the external review carried out in 2019
- We will implement our new Integrated Housing Management System to improve our appointment system and the number of appointments kept
- We will develop improvement actions based on tenant feedback from Repairs satisfaction surveys





Outcome 6 Managing our estates, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

Aims: Tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	Trend	Comparison
% of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	80%	80%	↔	
% of anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed targets	81.4%	80.4%	↓	
% of tenancy offers refused	55.9%	54.6%	↑	

Ensuring that tenants live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe is a key objective. Our “No Home for Domestic Abuse” initiative continues to ensure that victims have immediate access to practical help, as well as specialist legal assistance and support following any incident of domestic abuse, in order that they can remain in and feel safe within their home.

During 2018/19, in conjunction with tenants, we reviewed our target timescales for resolving complaints of anti social behaviour and we are currently restructuring our Anti Social Behaviour and Estate Caretaking services to ensure neighbourhoods are clean, safe and vibrant communities for our tenants and residents to live in.



What we are doing in 2019/20

- We will restructure our Anti Social Behaviour and Estate Caretaking services to ensure neighbourhoods are clean, safe and vibrant communities for our tenants and residents to live in
- We will continue to roll out our zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse via our “No Home for Domestic Abuse” initiative
- Our Homelessness and Housing Options Service will help reduce the percentage of tenancy offers refused by capturing applicant preferences more accurately

Outcome 10

Access to Social Housing

Aims: People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

Local Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	Trend
Average time to assess housing applications	4.2 days	3.8 days	↑
% of medical assessments assessed within 28 day target	28%	15%	↓

We are committed to ensuring that people find it easy to apply for the widest choice of housing available and which meets their needs. In addition to being given information about their prospects of being housed by the council, our application process provides information about how homes are allocated and information about a range of housing options.

During 2018/19 there was a reduction in the average time taken to assess housing applications. Following the successful implementation of our updated Allocations Policy, we were delighted that our approach to helping Young Care Leavers access housing was short listed for a number of awards.

We remain concerned with the time it currently takes for medical applications to be assessed and we are currently taking action to address this and ensure that performance improves during 2019/20.





	2017/18	2018/19
Total number of properties	10485	10397
Total number of lets in the year	907	993
Total number on waiting list	3810	3968
Total number added to waiting list during 2018/19	1790	2167
Number of medical applications received	645	826
Number of medical applications assessed	687	740

What we are doing in 2019/20

- We will carry out a review of the Service Level Agreement in place with Occupational Therapy services, in order to increase the number of medical applications being assessed within target
- We will review and update the tenant handbook

Aims: *Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and other organisations.*

Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	Trend	Comparison
% of all new tenants housed in 2017/18 who were still in their tenancy 12 months later	88.5%	87.1%	↓	
Average time to complete medical adaptations	98 days	68 days	↑	

Providing support to those who need it to remain in their homes is a key priority and we will continue to develop initiatives to ensure that tenants are provided with the support they need to maintain their tenancy. This includes tenants who may be at risk of falling into arrears with their rent, and tenants who may need their home adapted to cope with age, disability, or caring responsibilities.









During 2018/19 we introduced stronger monitoring of new tenant rent accounts and introduced a dedicated Welfare Officer to assist tenants with debt that they may have. The average time taken to carry out medical adaptations also reduced significantly and we aim to do more to reduce this further.

What we are doing in 2019/20

- We will increase the number of visits carried out when a tenant wants to terminate their tenancy, to see if we can support them to remain in their home
- We will monitor and review our adaptations process to ensure



Aims: *Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed, and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.*

Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	Trend	Comparison
% of people satisfied with the quality of temporary accommodation	83.3%	76.3%		
% of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made	100%	100%		
% of temporary accommodation offers refused	2.7%	1.9%		




There continues to be a reduction in incidences of homelessness across West Dunbartonshire, with decisions on cases being made promptly and efficiently and households being provided with temporary accommodation when required.

Following an extensive review of supported and temporary accommodation provision, we have developed a 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. This plan is aimed at ensuring that people who have experienced homelessness or housing crisis reach a settled housing solution as quickly as possible





This new approach to homelessness builds on our existing homelessness strategy “More than a Roof”, which had already made a positive impact and sets out a number of key actions and developments that will be taken to ensure that these improvements are sustained and we continue to prevent and alleviate homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

What we are doing in 2019/20

- We will implement Year 1 of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
- We will review and update our partnership protocol to ensure access to Housing Association stock for homeless households
- We will introduce enhanced Housing Options And Prevention Services including providing a housing options service to all young people in West Dunbartonshire
- We will introduce a Resettlement Service to support new tenants in social and private rented housing

Local Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	Trend
Incidences of homeless in West Dunbartonshire	1048	1037	
% of homeless cases re-assessed within 12 months (repeat homelessness)	5.0%	4.9%	
Incidences of youth homeless in West Dunbartonshire	290	280	

Aims: *Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.*

Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	Trend	Comparison
% of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money.	75.3%	75.3%	↔	
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year.	8.83%	9.71%	↓	
% of rent lost through properties being empty during the last year.	0.9%	0.73%	↑	
Average length of time taken to re-let properties in the last year.	35.6 days	23.3 days	↑	



Welfare Reform continues to pose a significant challenge and following the roll out of Universal Credit in West Dunbartonshire in November 2018, there has been an increase in the level of rent arrears. Via our “Help Us, Help U” campaign, we continue to engage with tenants facing difficulties with rent payments,, with early intervention being our priority.

We have made significant improvement in term of how many and how long properties are empty for.

Our “every day counts” approach to managing empty homes has resulted in the average time to re-let empty properties reducing from 35.6 days to 23.3 days and the rental income lost as a result of properties being empty reducing to 0.73% of our total rental income.



What we are doing in 2019/20

- We will review and update our rent collection policy in partnership with tenants
- We will focus on taking actions to reduce the number of new tenants in arrears

Aims: Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers.

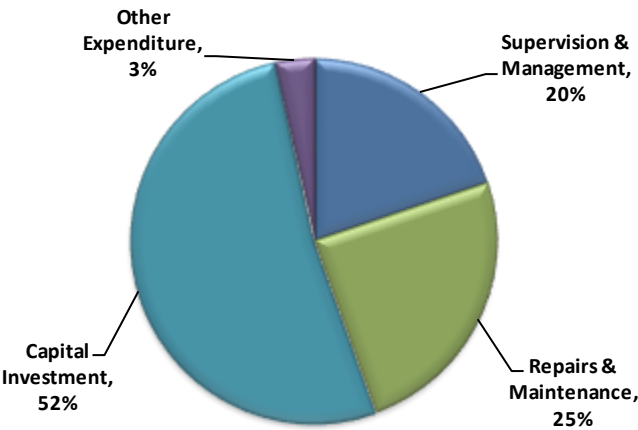
	2 Apt	3 Apt	4 Apt	5 Apt
WDC average rent	£75.10	£77.37	£82.21	£88.12
Scottish average rent	£76.10	£77.70	£84.84	£93.49

All tenants want to live in good quality, energy efficient homes in well maintained neighbourhoods, where they feel safe. For this reason, we continue to invest heavily in both our housing capital programme and our new council house building programme and employ housing officers to manage estates, promote successful tenancy sustainment and tackle anti-social behaviour.

We strive to keep our costs as low as possible and carry out a rent consultation process annually in conjunction with tenants.

This consultation focuses on the Council’s plans to both meet and maintain the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing, alongside our ambitions to improve our housing and communities.

Last year various options were looked at and discussed with tenants and proposals were developed which were then agreed by the Council. This resulted in a below inflation rent rise of 2%.



How we spent each £1 of your money in 2018-19

Supervision and Management:

employee costs, administration costs (this also includes payments to other departments for example financial services, computer systems, human resources, corporate communications, architectural services) and property costs.

Repairs and Maintenance:

the costs for day to day repairs carried out across all properties and costs associated with medical adaptations.

Capital Investment:

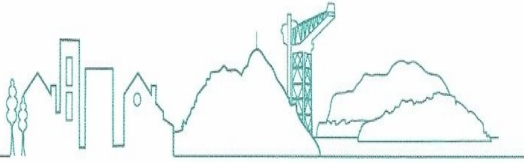
the interest and principal repayments on money we have borrowed to fund the Council’s new build programme and carry out major works and improvements (e.g. cladding, kitchens, bathrooms, roofs).

Other expenditure:

costs associated with arrears and the collection of rents, bad debt provision (funds required to account for rents and debt accounts which are not paid to the Council) and Council Tax and lost rent on empty homes.



Tenant Involvement



At West Dunbartonshire Council we have a long history of tenant involvement. Tenant participation helps you to become directly engaged in decision making which will influence housing service decisions now and in the future.

Details about the various ways tenants can become involved are available online at <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/tenant-participation/>

There are many ways to participate. You could join a Tenants and Residents Association, be part of a scrutiny group, or register as an Interested Tenant and we will keep you updated on all information relating to housing at West Dunbartonshire Council.

You can participate from your home by following us on Facebook, where we post regular information about housing and events.

We produce a quarterly newspaper called Housing News, which is delivered to all West Dunbartonshire tenants. It provides up to date news on housing in West Dunbartonshire including information on our new housing developments, tenant consultations, staff profiles and information on tenant participation activities.

A copy of Housing News is delivered to your door or you can pick up a copy at your local library. It is also available online at <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/housing-news/>

If you would like more information about tenant involvement, then please get in touch with Jane Mack, 01389 737281, 07983542993 or email jane.mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk. Training, support and travelling expenses are provided.





What do you think of this report?

Complete this page and return it to the address overleaf

- 1. **How satisfied are you with the design and layout of this report?**
Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied/Neither or/ Fairly dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied
- 2. **How satisfied are you that this report is easy to read and understand?**
Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied/Neither or/ Fairly dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied
- 3. **How satisfied are you that this report informs you about how we are performing?**
Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied/Neither or/ Fairly dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied
- 4. **Which information did you find particularly useful or not useful?**
.....
.....
- 5. **What other information would you like to see in a future annual report?**
.....
.....



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If you need this information in a different format please do not hesitate to contact us.

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

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