

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
HOUSING SERVICES**

Annual Charter Performance Report for Tenants and other Customers 2021/22





Foreword



Welcome to our Annual Charter Performance Report, which outlines how we performed during 2021/22 against the Outcomes and Standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The content and the style of the report was agreed following a consultation with tenants and covers those

areas that tenants have said are important to them and I hope that it is received as positively as previous reports have been.

This past year has remained a challenging period across housing and homelessness services, with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to pose challenges to the delivery of our services.

We continued to react to the changing circumstances, to minimise the impact on our tenants as much as possible. As the restrictions ended, we developed dedicated teams to focus on addressing the repairs back log that built up during the pandemic and worked hard to keep tenants up to date and informed about progress, through tenant groups, the Housing News, social media and text messaging.

Over the last 2 years we have witnessed an unprecedented rise in homeless presentations and we continue to review and implement policies and practices to address this, particularly the increased pressure on temporary accommodation.

West Dunbartonshire Council became the first social landlord in Scotland to introduce a zero tolerance policy on domestic abuse within its properties. Our “No Home for Domestic Abuse” approach is now well embedded and continues to protect victims and their families by ensuring that victims can remain at home, with perpetrators being legally removed, and prevented from returning.

The Council's new build programme 'More Homes West Dunbartonshire' continues to see significant resources invested in the creation and acquisition of new homes. The Council's latest completion at the Dumbarton Harbour development delivered 45 new homes for social rent in the town centre. The Council has delivered over 500 new homes since 2013 and is now the leading housing developer in the area and with our RSL partners we have completed over 1000 new homes in the last five years

Other key achievements during the past year include the development of a new Local Housing Strategy for the period 2022/27 and a review of Housing Operations, including an updated Housing Allocations Policy and a comprehensive review of the housing waiting list. We have made improvements to our communication with customers, including the use of text messaging, online surveys and improvements in online forms for new applicants and medical assessments.

We are rightly proud of our relationship with the many tenant groups that we have and how effective they are in representing their communities. We will continue to take action to improve communication with all tenants and we are committed to continue to strengthen the tenant voice across housing services, increasing opportunities to participate and influence the provision of services.

As well as summarising our performance in 2021/22, the report sets out some of the actions we will be taking during 2022/23 in order to respond positively to the challenges we face and ensure that we achieve our goal of being a top performing landlord

Peter Barry
Chief Officer,
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 social landlords are expected to 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 Services performed during 2021/22. It focuses on the areas that tenants have said are the most important to them and each outcome 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, 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 were made and have been included in subsequent reports.

Another 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 reviewed, are used consistently throughout the report and are explained below.

Comparison with the 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:

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

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 landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

To support our key principles of being a listening, accessible, responsive and open Council, we are committed to continue to strengthen the tenant voice across housing services, increasing opportunities to participate and influence the provision and improvement of services.

Our Housing Management Team and Housing Convener meet regularly with tenants and tenant bodies, including individual Tenant and Resident Associations, their umbrella group the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation (WDTRO) and the Joint Rent Group, which was established with the aim of ensuring services are delivering value for money. The West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel have recently completed their sixth scrutiny exercise and report directly to the Housing Improvement Board where their improvement recommendations are a standing agenda item.

Our Tenant Participation structures are well established and continued to operate virtually throughout the year. Some examples of opportunities to participate are outlined at Tenant Involvement on page 15.

[“Involving You”](#), the Council's Tenant Participation Strategy for the period 2021-2024 was developed in conjunction with tenants and approved in February 2021. The implementation of this strategy provides continued opportunities for tenants to get involved and really influence services that are being provided and 84% of tenants are now satisfied with these opportunities to participate, a rise of 32% since 2014. The focus for 2021-24 will be to encourage more tenants to get involved, promote the personal benefits as well as community benefits to getting involved and ensure that we can demonstrate the impact tenants have. During 2021/22 we implemented Year 1 of this new strategy and our full Tenant Participation performance report can be accessed [here](#).

Performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services	85.7%	85.7%	↔	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to participate in decision making	89.3%	89.3%	↔	

Performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend	Comparison
Average time in working days to respond to a Stage 1 complaint	10.65 days	11.78 days	↓	
Average time in working days to respond to a Stage 2 complaint	35.97 days	27.03 days	↑	

What we are doing in 2022/23

- We will communicate the outcomes of consultations to participants and publish these via Housing News, webpages and social media to demonstrate the influence tenants have.
- We will review and improve the content on the Tenant Participation webpages and the use of social media.



Outcome 4

Quality of Housing

Aims:

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:



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 (EESH) by December 2020.

Our **'More Homes, Better Homes West Dunbartonshire'** approach aims to ensure that our new and existing homes in West Dunbartonshire meet the needs of our tenants and future tenants.

The Council's Better Homes Project Board has been strengthened to ensure all our homes meet the best possible standards including energy efficiency standards. This group will ensure the implementation of our Better Homes Asset Management Strategy.

Some programmes have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and this has reduced the number of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Plans are in place to address this during 2022/23. We have still made significant progress and a key achievement over the last 12 months was to undertake our bi annual stock assessment exercise. This exercise has highlighted a number of housing areas and property types that require a specific focus and this will be addressed over the next 12 months.

In terms of future investment plans, we are keen to strengthen the alignment with tenant priorities and we are aware that additional focus is required in terms of planning and developing our approach to meeting climate change targets to deliver our ambition of increased tenant satisfaction with the quality of our homes.

Performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	76.5%	76.5%	↔	
Percentage of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	79.2%	18.2%	↓	

Over the period of 2022/23, we plan to invest around £18.6 million in existing homes to:

- Improve 500 homes with new heating systems;
- Improve 382 homes with new external insulated render;
- Improve 370 homes with new roof coverings;
- Improve 270 homes with window/door renewals;
- Improve 100 homes with kitchen renewals;
- Improve 100 homes with bathroom renewals;
- Improve 300 homes with electrical shower installs;
- Carry out 200 medical adaptations; and
- Carry out 500 path/general environmental upgrades

What are we doing in 2022/23:

- We will deliver on the Council's new build housing programme
- We will deliver our Capital Investment Programme for 2022/23
- We will implement Year 5 of our Housing Asset Management Strategy



Outcome 5

Repairs and Maintenance





Aim:

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

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

Performance in relation to repairs and maintenance during 2021/22 continued to be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions that had been put in place. When the restrictions ended in April 2021, a backlog of non-essential repairs had built up and we developed dedicated teams to focus solely on addressing this and worked hard to keep tenants up to date and informed, through tenant groups, the Housing News, social media and text messaging. All of these repairs were completed by the end of October 2021, which was the target set.

Whilst the pandemic had an impact on our overall performance, tenant satisfaction with the service rose in 2021/22. We recognise there are areas where we can get better and plans are in place aimed at improving the service experienced by tenants.

Performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend	Comparison
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	6.14 hours	5.8 hours	↑	
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	6.76 days	10.16 days	↓	
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out completed right first time	89.8%	86.5%	↓	
Number of times in the reporting year we did not meet our statutory obligation to complete a gas safety check within 12 months of a gas appliance being fitted or last checked	215	0	↑	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	80.5%	87.7%	↑	

What we are doing in 2022/23

- We will review the overall repairs performance and implement necessary actions to ensure improved performance
- We will complete actions in our customer satisfaction improvement action plan



Outcome 6



Estate Management and Anti-Social Behaviour

Aim:

Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that:

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

Ensuring that tenants live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe is a key objective. Whilst our Anti-Social Behaviour Services operated through-out the pandemic, due to the restrictions, elements of our service were reduced in terms of physical presence. As normality returns, tenants and residents will see more community engagement and physical presence as we continue to deter and evidence acts of Anti-Social Behaviour.

Performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	78.5%	78.5%	↔	
Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases resolved	92.8%	98.1%	↑	

What are we doing in 2022/23:

- We will continue to look at all actions that can be taken to address serious anti-social behaviour and take significant actions to tackle domestic abuse
- We will review and update our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy



Outcome 10

Access to Housing

Aim:


Social landlords ensure that:

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.

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.

A review of our Allocations Policy has been carried out and following consultation with tenants, housing list applicants and other stakeholders, proposals to make improvements to the policy were made to the Housing and Communities Committee in February 2022. These changes will be implemented during 2022/23.

During 2021/22 we carried out a comprehensive review of our housing register and updated the information held for our applicants. During 2022/23 we will continue to improve the information held for our applicants in relation to their area and property selections, ensuring applications are as up to date as possible in order to reduce refusals and waiting times and maximise the chances of being rehoused.

Performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of tenancy offers refused	46.6%	49.2%	↓	

Local performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend
Average time to assess housing applications	3 days	2 days	↑
Percentage of housing applications suspended	1.3%	2.1%	↓
Percentage of medical applications assessed within 28 day target	77%	62%	↓

	2020/21	2021/22
Total number of properties	10,153	10,377
Total number of lets in the year	702	909
Total number on waiting list	6150	4737
Total number added to waiting list	2,087	2,179

What we are doing 2022/23

- We will implement the changes to our Allocations Policy which was approved in February 2022
- We will improve online access to waiting list, verification and Housing Options information
- We will implement a rolling review of all housing applications



Outcome 11

Tenancy Sustainment

Aim:



Social landlords ensure that:

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 by other organisations.

Providing advice and 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 help they need to maintain their tenancy.

The Tenant Liaison Service was introduced in April 2020 and whilst the roll out of the service had been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, the officers are now working in the community with our most vulnerable client group with complex and challenging needs who may be at serious risk of losing their tenancy. We intend to further develop and promote the service to maximise referrals. The tenancy sustainment rate has increased and we hope that this improvement is continued.

It is important that those tenants who need their home adapted due to age, disability, or caring responsibilities are provided with a quick and efficient service. Our ability to carry out medical adaptations was impacted by the restrictions that were in place last year and the average timescales increased. We have more to do to improve in this area and we are taking a series of actions aimed at reducing these timescales.

Performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of all new tenants housed, who were still in their tenancy 12 months later	91.5%	94.6%	↑	
Average time taken to complete medical adaptations	123 days	108 days	↑	

What we are doing in 2022/23:

- We will implement a series of actions aimed at reducing the average time taken to carry out medical adaptations
- We will increase the number of visits carried out with tenants who submit a tenancy termination notice to help reduce tenancies ending for negative reasons



Outcome 12

Homeless People

Aim:

Local councils perform their duties on homelessness so that:

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.









Our approach to homelessness is outlined in our 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, aimed at ensuring that people who have experienced homelessness reach a settled housing solution as quickly as possible, rather than spending long periods of time in temporary accommodation.

This approach builds on the success of our previous homelessness strategy “More than a roof” which made a positive impact and sets out a number of key actions and developments that are being taken to ensure that these improvements are sustained and we continue to prevent and alleviate homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

The homeless service continued to operate throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and faced challenges with an increase in the number of homelessness presentations and an increase in demand for temporary accommodation and support services. We continue to review and implement policies and practices to address this, particularly the increased pressure on temporary accommodation.

We continue to ensure that decisions on all cases are made promptly and efficiently and that households are being provided with temporary accommodation when required. Whilst the numbers who refused accommodation increased during the pandemic, this figure remains well below the Scottish average and satisfaction with the quality of temporary accommodation has increased.

We recognise the need to continually improve the approach to homeless people with the most complex needs and our Housing First initiative forms part of our wider approach to tackling homelessness and repeat homelessness. This approach is targeted at those with a history of issues such as repeat homelessness, multiple and complex support needs and previous engagements with support services which have not led to successful or sustainable housing outcomes.

Performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend	Comparison
Average time from application to assessment	13 days	14 days		
Percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made	100%	100%		
Percentage of all homeless cases re-assessed within 12 months (repeat homeless)	5.4%	5.3%		
Average total time spent in temporary accommodation	214 days	188 days		



Outcome 12

Homeless People continued...

Local performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend
Incidences of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire	1,053	1,203	↓
Percentage of all homeless cases given a decision within 28 days	99.6%	99.6%	↔
Satisfaction with the quality of temporary accommodation	88%	86%	↓

What we are doing in 2022/23:

- We will implement Year 4 of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
- We will implement recommendations from the review Supported Accommodation provision
- We will continue our Housing First approach and report progress to the Scottish Government and key partners



Outcome 13

Value for Money

Aim:

Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that:





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

The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic continued to present significant challenges for rent collection in 21/22 and it is positive to see rent collected as a percentage of rent due met target again and rent arrears as a percentage of rent due reducing and also meeting our target.

Processes were streamlined to improve collection and efficiencies. We reviewed the preferred contact method of tenants and as a result of this we introduced text messaging and emailing for those who prefer to be contacted. We also reviewed the processes around Universal Credit and created a direct email contact with DWP for escalation of non-payment cases and improved the processing of Universal Credit payments.

Prior to the pandemic our “Every day counts” approach to managing empty homes had delivered good performance in this area. This has been adversely affected by the lockdown and period when letting properties was restricted. We have developed a comprehensive action plan to drive recovery and improvements in this area during 2022/23.

Taking actions to address this will be a key focus during 2022/23.

Performance indicator	2020/21	2021/22	Trend	Comparison
Average time to re-let properties	56 days	46 days	↑	
Rent loss due to voids expressed as a percentage of the total amount of rent due	1.2%	1.29%	↓	
Rent collected as a percentage of total rent due	98.9%	98.4%	↓	
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due	10.35%	9.24%	↑	

What are we doing in 2022/23:

- We will continue to review ways to improve rent collection
- We will implement our action plan to improve our management of empty homes



Outcomes 14 & 15

Rents and Service Charges

Aim:

Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:

A balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them.

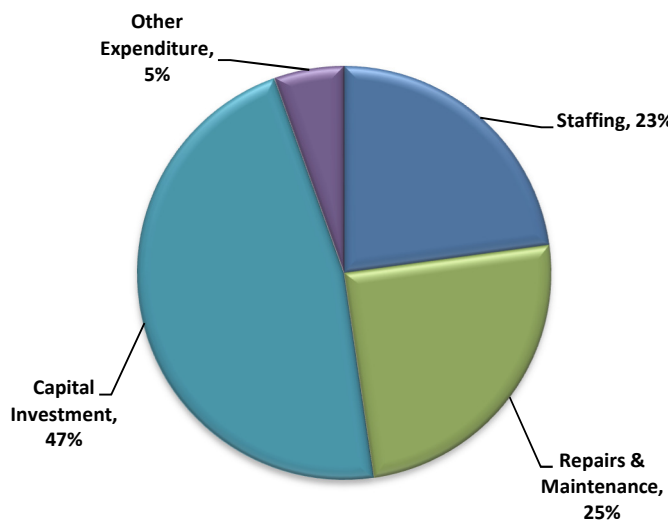
Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

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. Last year various options were looked at and discussed with tenants and options were developed which all tenants were able to vote. Tenants supported a below inflation rent rise of 1.5%, which was then recommended and agreed by the Council. This was one of the lowest rent increases in Scotland.

We have a Joint Rent Group made up of tenants, Council officers and the Convener of the Housing and Communities Committee, who are heavily involved in the rent setting process, compliance with the guidance in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and their focus is ensuring Housing and Homelessness Services provide best value for current and future tenants.

We are keen to ensure that the involvement and influence of tenants in this process continues and if you would like to become involved contact Jane Mack on **0798 354 2993** or jane.mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk.



Staffing:

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 involved in decision making which will influence housing services 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/>. You can also follow us on Facebook where we post regular information about housing, events and community support information.

There are many ways to participate e.g. through a local Tenants and Residents Association, scrutiny group or rent setting consultation. During the Covid-19 pandemic we developed digital ways for us to meet with tenants and most of our groups now meet via zoom. This pandemic has made us all focus a bit more on our neighbourhood and community so this might be a time that you want to get more involved and have your say. If it is then please get in touch.

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 performance, new housing developments, tenant consultations and information on tenant participation activities.

A copy of Housing News is delivered to you and it is also available online at:

<http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/housing-news/>

If you would like more information about tenant participation, please get in touch with Jane Mack:

Tel: 0798 354 2993

Email: jane.mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

What do you think of this report?

We are keen to hear your thoughts on this report and how it could be improved.

Please use the link or QR code below to complete 5 very short survey questions.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KF58FYR>



**This document is also available in other languages,
large print and audio format on request.**

Arabic

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

Hindi

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

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Urdu

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

Chinese (Cantonese)

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。

Polish

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



British Sign Language

BSL users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](https://www.scotlandbsl.co.uk),
the on-line British Sign Language interpreting service.

☎ **01389 737527**

✉ **West Dunbartonshire Council, 16
Church Street, Dumbarton, G82 1QL**

💻 **communications@west-dunbarton.gov.uk**

