

# Landlord Report 2022



# Introduction

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) was first introduced in 2012 and updated in 2017. The Charter sets out the service standards and outcomes each social landlord is expected to achieve, and therefore what customers can expect from their landlord.

In May each year, every social landlord submits their Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The ARC is a series of measures designed to demonstrate how a landlord is performing and whether they are meeting the outcomes of the Charter.

In August, the Scottish Housing Regulator publishes a report for every landlord with key information on their performance and how that compares to the Scottish national average. The ARC for each social landlord is also made publicly available on the regulator's website.

In this report we have shown our performance over three years and compared ourselves to our partner landlords in North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway. The Local Housing Association partners are Cunninghame Housing Association, Ancho, Atrium Homes, Shire Housing Association, Dumfries & Galloway Housing Partnership, Loreburn and Home in Scotland. The Local Council partners are North Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Council.

In this report, we look at our priorities for improvement and how we perform in the five Charter areas which apply to us, before going on to compare our performance with other landlords and asking for your feedback on how we present this information to you.



# Improving our services to you

The last year continued to be challenging in many ways, as we have still had to ensure the delivery of services amidst a global pandemic and maintain connections with our customers, contractors, and suppliers.

At times, the COVID restrictions have meant that we have not been able to deliver a full range of services, and we know that this has been hard for our customers. When we emerged from the pandemic and returned to normal service delivery in early 2022, we were aware of the overall impact of the pandemic on our customers, and that the needs and aspirations of our customers will have changed over the previous two years. In response to this we have rolled out a comprehensive consultation with all our customers which we have named 'The Big Conversation', to try and find out what services our customers need from us in a 'post Covid' world, and how we need to adapt and change our services to improve customer satisfaction. This consultation will be complete in October 2022 and the outcomes will inform the future delivery of our services, including how we can work more proactively with customers to improve our local neighbourhoods and communities, how we can best support customers through the cost of living crisis to sustain their tenancies, and how we can improve our digital service delivery options to make it easier for customers to access our services online.

We know that most of our complaints relate to our repairs service. Following a comprehensive options appraisal process throughout 2021, we appointed new repairs and maintenance contractors from 1st April 2022. We have been busy working to embed these new services and will continue to work with our contractors to drive forward and improve performance over the coming year.

At the outset of the pandemic we contacted every tenant to ask them if they needed any support or assistance during this difficult period. These calls were well received, and we are planning to build on this proactive approach to customer care by rolling out annual 'Tenancy Welfare Checks' to all tenants to address issues at the earliest point possible.

Our new customer enquiry system, Salesforce, will enable us to delve deeper into complaints that have been made to identify any patterns and key areas of dissatisfaction so that we can take appropriate action. We will also be rolling out further complaints handling training to all staff and implementing 'lessons learned' sessions to continuously improve our services.

As a landlord, we are very aware of the impact increasing rents can have on our customers, which is why we are aiming to minimise rent increases as far as possible over the coming years. We will continue to make every effort to keep our rents affordable to our customers, whilst ensuring that we have enough funding in our business plan to improve and maintain our properties to required standards.

## Average weekly rent\*

On 31st March **2022** we owned **2,326** homes. The total rent due for the year was **£10,687,828**.

	Riverside Scotland 21/22	Riverside Scotland 20/21	Riverside Scotland 19/20	Scottish Average	Local Housing Association Average	Local Council Average
1 apartment	£63.06	£62.61	£62.51	£75.95	£65.80	£66.28
2 apartment	£80.67	£80.18	£79.86	£81.32	£76.24	£74.29
3 apartment	£90.90	£89.51	£87.85	£84.18	£90.33	£76.07
4 apartment	£96.30	£94.90	£93.85	£91.48	£98.57	£78.99
5 apartment	£99.77	£100.06	£99.54	£100.74	£107.16	£81.99

\*All figures are based on the calculations carried out by the Scottish Housing Regulator, and taken from their website on 11-10-2022.

# Getting good value from rents and service charges

Ensuring we provide services that represent good value for money is essential to our business. We continuously work hard to achieve the right balance between the delivery of high quality services to our customers and keeping rents affordable. Over the reporting year we have:

- Continued close joint working between our Housing Officers and Income Collection service, ensuring customer accounts are managed effectively, using early intervention with support to claim the right benefits.
- Implemented new repairs and maintenance services with increased focus on quality of works and customer care.
- Re-let empty homes far more quickly than the Scottish average, despite the added pressures and challenges the pandemic brought with it.

	Riverside Scotland 21/22	Riverside Scotland 20/21	Riverside Scotland 19/20	Scottish Average*	Local Housing Association Average*	Local Council Average*
% of rent due collected in the previous year.	98.8	97.9	99.7	99.3	99.3	99.2
% of rent due not collected through homes being empty in the last year.	0.3	0.3	0.2	1.4	0.5	1.0
Average length of time in days taken to re-let homes in the last year.	21.1	22.6	10.1	51.3	21.5	45.5

\* Scottish averages and figures from other landlords were obtained from the Scottish Housing Regulator's website on 11-10-2022.

# Access to housing and support

Our Housing Options team has worked hard during the year to provide advice to existing, new and future tenants. COVID restrictions brought new challenges when it came to preparing empty houses for new tenants and moving them in, however, we still managed to successfully allocate 131 properties within the year. We continued to work very closely with our Local Authority partners to identify suitable applicants for available properties and to identify housing solutions for people in the greatest housing need.

We are committed to the prevention and alleviation of homelessness across all our operating areas, and we have fully supported our Local Authority partners to provide permanent accommodation to homeless households, and support to our existing tenants at risk of homelessness.

Our Tenancy Sustainability Team is now well established and provides person-centred help and assistance to tenants who are struggling to sustain their tenancy through a range of measures including life skills support, budgeting advice, income maximisation and benefit claims, switching to a cheaper utility supplier, and facilitating access to required health services.

As well as supporting customers to find a new home, we are committed to carrying out adaptations to enable tenants to remain in their own home for as long as possible. Since 2017 we have continued to provide additional funding to progress the increasing demand for property adaptations. In conjunction with grant funding we received from the Scottish Government, we spent a total of £234,842 on adaptations to enable customers to remain for longer in their own homes.

We further enhanced our customer support by establishing a Service Level Agreement with Veterans First Point/NHS Ayrshire and Arran to ensure that veterans are fully supported in their tenancies, and in the transition to civilian life after service in the armed forces.



# Neighbourhood and community

Our Estate Caretaker operating in North Ayrshire visits neighbourhoods on a daily basis, responding to issues such as fly tipping, garden maintenance, and abandonment of vehicles.

Housing Officers have continued to utilise their individual budgets to improve the quality of the neighbourhood or help to resolve anti-social behaviour issues. Having control of these budgets allows our Housing Officers to be more responsive to the particular needs of the households they look after and enable them to target resources where they are most needed to help their communities. Budgets can be used for the things that matter the most locally, whether that be to clean up a bin store or install CCTV in a priority risk area.

We believe that all residents have the right to enjoy the peace and quiet of their home. To help us achieve this, we work in close partnership with a number of agencies, including local councils and Police Scotland, so that any anti-social behaviour reported is dealt with firmly and fairly. 81.9% of all anti-social cases were resolved within the reporting year.

Following the pandemic, we know that we need to get out and about more throughout our communities to identify issues more proactively in partnership with customers and residents and invest in improvements.

	Riverside Scotland 21/22	Riverside Scotland 20/21	Riverside Scotland 19/20	Scottish Average*	Local Housing Association Average*	Local Council Average*
Cases of antisocial behaviour, per 100 homes, reported in the last year.	4.5	6.4	3	n/a	7.4	4.6
% of antisocial behaviour cases resolved within the last year.	81.9	82.4	81.4	94.7	94.5	91.3

\* Scottish averages and figures from other landlords were obtained from the Scottish Housing Regulator's website on 11-10-2022.



# The customer landlord relationship

We are committed to supporting and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. We have updated our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy and continue to work towards delivering the action plan which supports this.

To be as accessible as we can be to our customers, our Customer Service Centre takes calls 24 hours a day every day, and we have an Income Collection team available from 8am until 8pm Monday to Friday and Saturdays from 10am until 4pm.

We have worked hard during the year to enhance the number of ways we can contact our customers. We have increased the use of text messages and have trialled using WhatsApp. We have also held online meetings using Microsoft Teams and have offered information webinars.

We continue to use social media to increase the information we provide to customers, using it as much as possible to distribute key messages about service changes and improvements. We continue to produce service updates three times a year to let you know how we are performing; if there are any new services, and if there are any consultations happening.

We know that we need to improve how we engage with our customers across our estates and neighbourhoods, to make it as easy as possible for you to tell us what you think of our services and what you need from us. Over the coming year we will be increasing our presence out and about across our neighbourhoods to invest more in our communities.

	Riverside Scotland 21/22	Riverside Scotland 20/21	Riverside Scotland 19/20	Scottish Average*	Local Housing Association Average*	Local Council Average*
% of tenants satisfied with the overall service.	74.5	78.6	73.5	87.8	87.5	91.7
% of tenants who felt their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions	75.7	78.2	71.8	91.2	92.4	91.1
% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities to participate in the landlord's decision making	64.6	66.8	59.4	86.8	89.0	87.2

\* Scottish averages and figures from other landlords were obtained from the Scottish Housing Regulator's website on 11-10-2022.

# Housing quality and maintenance

Ensuring that we provide quality housing to our customers is extremely important to us. Over 83.5 % of our homes comply with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and just over 92.3 % comply with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.

We have increased the capacity of our investment programme to progress towards the achievement of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) and improve the quality of our homes for tenants. We have integrated our EESH work programmes with our general investment plans, to ensure we carry out multiple improvement works to a property at the same time to achieve best value and minimise disruption to customers as far as possible. Even though some of our planned works were delayed this year because of COVID restrictions, we are still on track for all applicable properties to be EESH compliant by March 2024.

We have taken a proactive approach to the installation of new LD2 smoke and heat detection systems. We are currently reviewing the process we have in place for electrical safety testing to ensure that we are completing recommended 5 yearly electrical safety checks on every property and being as proactive as possible to gain access to complete these checks within timescales.

We are working hard to get our repairs and maintenance services right and we hope that our new service will make a real difference to our customers. 95.1 % of repairs carried out last year were completed right first time, and 74.4 % of customers were very or fairly satisfied with our repair's services.

	Riverside Scotland 21/22	Riverside Scotland 20/21	Riverside Scotland 19/20	Scottish Average*	Local Housing Association Average*	Local Council Average*
% of homes meeting SHQS	83.5	86	98.6	73.2	83.7	75.6
Average number of hours to complete emergency repairs	6.4	3.8	3	4.2	2.4	2.2
Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs.	9.1	7.2	8.4	8.9	10.1	8.1
Percentage of reactive repairs completed right first time.	95.1	95.6	97.3	88.4	86.1	96.0
Percentage of tenants who have had repairs in the last 12 months who were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance.	74.4	82.4	84.8	88.1	88.0	91.6

\* Scottish averages and figures from other landlords were obtained from the Scottish Housing Regulator's website on 11-10-2022.

# Customer feedback

Last year we introduced a new system for managing customer enquiries and complaints called 'Salesforce'. This system provides us with more performance monitoring information to help us review how we handle complaints, who has been involved, how quickly they have been responded to, and most importantly help us to identify 'lessons learned' from the complaints process. You can find out more about our complaints process on our website.

	Riverside Scotland 21/22	Riverside Scotland 20/21	Riverside Scotland 19/20
Stage 1 Complaints	176	86	358
Stage 1 Complaints Upheld	124	33	227
Stage 2 Complaints	8	2	2
Stage 2 Complaints Upheld	5	0	1
Compliments	6	7	14

We received 184 complaints, 95.65 % (176) were resolved at Stage 1 with 4.35 % (8) resolved at Stage 2. The three service areas with the highest number of complaints were:

 **67.93%** of complaints related to **Responsive Repairs**  
**7.07%** of complaints related to **Tenancy Management**  
**6.52%** of complaints related to **Planned Works**

We received 6 compliments:

 **50%** of compliments related to **Responsive Repairs**  
**33.3%** of compliments related to **Customer Service**  
**16.7%** of compliments related to **Tenancy Management**



The average time for a complaint to be resolved at **Stage 1** was 7.02 days and the average time for a complaint to be resolved at **Stage 2** was 4.75 days.



# What do you think?

We would love to know what you think of our Landlord Report. If you have any comments or suggestions on what we have included or if there is something that you would like to see next year, please get in touch with us using the details using the details below.

## Join our online customer panel

Our online customer panel is made up of a growing number of customers who want to have their say on our services and how we deliver them. Customers who have signed up are emailed regular opportunities to influence decisions which could affect them for example, by taking part in consultation events, short online surveys, quick polls and small focus groups.

We ask our Customer Panel questions about key customer-facing policies, for feedback on the information we provide to customers and how we do this, as well as sharing key performance information along with opportunities to get involved in scrutiny activities.

Why not try it and see what difference you could make?

To find out more, or sign up, please use our enrolment form [here](#) or get in touch with us at **involvement@riversidescotland.org.uk**

or by calling our Customer Involvement Officer on **01294 316785**.







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