



Riverside
Scotland

Welcome to our
Landlord Report 2021



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 publically 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 and Dumfries & Galloway. In North Ayrshire this is North Ayrshire Council, Cunninghame Housing Association and Ancho. In East Ayrshire our partners are East Ayrshire Council, Cunninghame Housing Association, Atrium Homes and Shire Housing Association. In Dumfries & Galloway our partners are Dumfries & Galloway Housing Partnership, Loreburn and Home in Scotland.

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.



Focus on the Customer

Improving our services to you

The last year has been challenging in so many ways, as we have had to quickly adapt our services, often at short notice, in order to comply with ever-changing lockdown restrictions, whilst still maintaining connections with our customers, our 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. In response to this, we commenced a series of proactive tenancy welfare checks, contacting every customer, to offer support and assistance shortly after the beginning of the first lockdown. Wherever possible, we prioritised contacting our most vulnerable households first, but made sure that every customer was offered a tenancy welfare check. These checks have been so successful and well-received by customers that we plan to continue them on an annual basis.

We know that most of our complaints relate to our repairs service, so we have been busy working on a new repairs and maintenance service model which will not only directly benefit our customers, but will also add value locally by ensuring that there is an element of social value included within any new contracts. Our new repairs and maintenance service will launch next year. It is designed to improve customer satisfaction, meet

changing customer expectations, ensure we have a sustainable repairs and maintenance service which is fit for the future, and provide an efficient service which delivers value for money.

We know that some customers have experienced longer than usual waiting times to receive repairs and improvements to their properties as a direct result of the COVID pandemic. We know that this has been difficult for customers, and we are working hard to complete any outstanding work, and make sure that we prioritise jobs accordingly for our customers.

In an increasingly digital world, we are continually seeking to improve our online presence in terms of our website, to make it easier to navigate and provide more up to date and useful information, as well as increasing our use of social media to promote local news and events which could benefit people living within our communities.

We have over 70 customers on our Customer Panel who have volunteered to participate in quick surveys and who provide feedback to us so that we can take our customers' views into account. If you'd like to join them, please take a look at the information on our Customer Panel on the last page.



Housing charter outcome

The Customer Landlord Relationship

We are committed to supporting and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. We updated our [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy](#) in June 2019 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 have also introduced a new repairs tracking feature that allows our customers (with the exception of customers on Arran) to track their repair. Once an appointment has been booked with MPS Housing, customers receive a text message with a link to the live tracking feature and with our new repairs and maintenance service coming soon, we hope to further enhance customer information.

Housing Quality & Maintenance

Ensuring that we provide quality housing to our customers is extremely important to us. Over 98% of our homes comply with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and just over 86% 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 (ESSH), and improve the quality of our homes for tenants. We have integrated our ESSH 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 ESSH compliant by March 2024.

We have taken a proactive approach to the installation of new LD2 smoke and heat detection systems. Due to COVID, the deadline for completion was extended to February 2022. We have already achieved over 98% compliance across our homes to ensure that every property has the highest standard for fire safety.

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. Over 95% of repairs carried out last year were completed right first time, and over 82% of customers were very or fairly satisfied with our repairs services.



Neighbourhood & Community

We are proud of our communities and make sure that our estates are inspected on a regular basis to ensure they remain well-kept. Our Estate Caretakers who operate in Dumfries and North Ayrshire visit 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. Over 82% of all anti-social cases were resolved within the reporting year.

Access to Housing & 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 116 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 £218,000 on adaptations to enable customers to remain for longer in their own homes.

Getting Good Value from Rents & 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.
- Enhanced the options for communication with our customers, providing more opportunities for interaction, to ensure that our customers felt connected throughout the pandemic.
- Supported tenants to look after their homes, reducing repairs when tenancies ended.
- Re-let empty homes far more quickly than the Scottish average, despite the added pressures and challenges the pandemic brought with it.
- Reviewed our modes of service delivery to ensure we were still able to deliver services effectively throughout the pandemic, as far as restrictions allowed.
- Ensured our staffing structure was efficient, and agile enough to be able to quickly adapt and change to channel resources to where they were needed most.

Our performance

Average weekly rent

On 31st March 2021 we owned 2,306 homes. The total rent due for the year was £10,571,725.

| | North Ayrshire Average | East Ayrshire Average | Dumfries & Galloway Average | Scottish Average | Riverside Scotland 20/21 | Riverside Scotland 19/20 | Riverside Scotland 18/19 |
|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 apartment | £58.94 | £68.61 | £71.45 | £73.61 | £62.61 | £62.51 | £67.55 |
| 2 apartment | £74.04 | £73.03 | £79.40 | £79.48 | £79.74 | £77.4 | £78.54 |
| 3 apartment | £79.17 | £79.13 | £87.79 | £82.60 | £87.79 | £86.41 | £86.40 |
| 4 apartment | £79.85 | £83.66 | £93.53 | £89.81 | £93.90 | £92.78 | £91.65 |
| 5 apartment | £82.28 | £87.87 | £101.88 | £99.97 | £99.60 | £101.29 | £96.78 |

Neighbourhoods

We work with our partners to keep neighbourhoods and communal areas greener, cleaner and safer. We take a robust stance on anti-social behaviour, investing in our communities and working with other agencies..

| | North Ayrshire Average | East Ayrshire Average | Dumfries & Galloway Average | Scottish Average | Riverside Scotland 20/21 | Riverside Scotland 19/20 | Riverside Scotland 18/19 |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Cases of antisocial behaviour, per 100 homes, reported in the last year. | 10.43 | 4.97 | 8.57 | N/A | 6.4 | 3 | 4.3 |
| % of antisocial behaviour cases resolved within the last year. | 92.5% | 95.1% | 92.8% | 94.4% | 82.4% | 81.3% | 71.3% |

Value for money

| | North Ayrshire Average | East Ayrshire Average | Dumfries & Galloway Average | Scottish Average | Riverside Scotland 20/21 | Riverside Scotland 19/20 | Riverside Scotland 18/19 |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| % of rent due collected in the previous year. | 99.5% | 100.2% | 98.3% | 99.1% | 97.9% | 99.7% | 96.3% |
| % of rent due not collected through homes being empty in the last year. | 0.5% | 1.3% | 1.1% | 1.4% | 0.3% | 0.2% | 0.2% |
| Average length of time in days taken to re-let homes in the last year. | 27.1 | 55.2 | 42.0 | 56.3 | 22.6 | 10.07 | 9.3 |

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 20/21 | Riverside Scotland 19/20 |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Stage 1 Complaints | 86 | 358 |
| Stage 1 Complaints upheld | 33 | 227 |
| Stage 2 Complaints | 2 | 2 |
| Stage 2 Complaints upheld | 0 | 1 |
| Compliments | 7 | 14 |

Top service areas for complaints:

67% Responsive Repairs



10.2% Customer Care



Top service areas for compliments:

42.9% Responsive Repairs



28.6% Tenancy Management



Our performance

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction remains a key priority for us. Even though our figures are showing an increase year on year, we are still some way below the Scottish average.

We agreed a set of actions which were undertaken to try and improve customer satisfaction and we will continue to build on these to further improve our customers' experiences. Actions have included establishing a more streamlined process for co-ordinating and managing complaints, the roll out of webchats and discussions through social media platforms, a more person-centred and flexible approach to resolving estate management issues; and, a full review of the delivery model for our repairs and maintenance services.

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.

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.

| | North Ayrshire Average | East Ayrshire Average | Dumfries & Galloway Average | Scottish Average | Riverside Scotland 20/21 | Riverside Scotland 19/20 | Riverside Scotland 18/19 |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| % of tenants satisfied with the overall service. | 89.6% | 89.6% | 87.6% | 89.0% | 78.6 | 75.5% | 81.2% |
| % of tenants who felt their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and outcomes. | 94.4% | 92.9% | 91.5% | 91.7% | 78.2% | 71.8% | 82.2% |
| % of tenants satisfied with the opportunities to participate in the landlord's decision making. | 92.5% | 88.4% | 87.2% | 86.6% | 66.8% | 59.4% | 68.4% |

Quality and maintenance

We invested £2.1m over the year to improve our properties and will continue to invest in them to ensure that they are well maintained and that we progress towards the achievement of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Scotland.

| | North Ayrshire Average | East Ayrshire Average | Dumfries & Galloway Average | Scottish Average | Riverside Scotland 20/21 | Riverside Scotland 19/20 | Riverside Scotland 18/19 |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| % of homes meeting SHQS | 94.6% | 96% | 94% | 91.0% | 98.8% | 98.57% | 98.3% |
| Average number of hours to complete emergency repairs. | 2.8 | 4.1 | 2.4 | 4.2 | 3.8 | 3 | 2.8 |
| Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs. | 6.4 | 7.1 | 7.2 | 6.7 | 7.2 | 8.37 | 6.7 |
| Percentage of reactive repairs completed right first time. | 95.1% | 89.8 | 93.4 | 91.5% | 95.6 | 97.26% | 98.2% |
| Percentage of tenants who have had repairs in the last 12 months who were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance. | 87.8% | 93.1% | 89.8% | 90.1% | 82.4% | 84.8% | 80.0% |

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 at the bottom of this page.

Have you heard about our Customer Panel?

Our 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 given 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.

Panel members choose when and how they participate and how much time they give. 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 Lyndsay McLaughlan, Customer Involvement Officer on **01294 316785**.



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