



From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Annual Performance Report 2019



Foreword by

Councillor Anne Stirling : *Chair of Aberdeenshire Council's Communities Committee*










I am happy to introduce the 6th annual report to tenants on the Social Housing Charter. This year's report highlights a need for improvement in a number of areas – but also highlights the work the Council is doing to address these matters. The next year will see an increased focus on tenant participation, further development within the Community Safety Hub, reviews of Sheltered Housing and Void Properties, and the further roll out of Rapid Rehousing to tackle homelessness.

Aberdeenshire Council tenants will be placed at the core of all service improvements and the new Tenant Participation Strategy (agreed by Communities Committee in September) will drive tenant involvement in all aspects of the housing service. I have been encouraged by the involvement and contribution of tenants in the Next Steps programme earlier this year. I look forward to working with tenants in new and exciting ways by providing a menu of options for tenants to become involved such as digital methods, partnership working, focus groups and activities at a local level. The Council will ensure that services are shaped by the needs of all our tenants. In particular, I welcome the commitment by staff to engage with all tenants and seldom heard groups such as young people, vulnerable people and tenants from minority groups. I also look forward to seeing an improved quality housing service delivered to tenants and customers over the coming months.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter, introduced in April 2012, sets out 16 standards and outcomes that landlords should achieve when providing housing services. Each year all Scottish social landlords report performance data as it relates to the Scottish Social Housing Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator. Additional information can be accessed from the Scottish Housing Regulator online at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk.

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Tenant Satisfaction



Of the tenants who responded to your landlord's most recent tenant satisfaction survey:

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided compared to Scottish average



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the keeping them informed provided compared to Scottish average



Percentage of tenants were satisfied with the opportunities to participate in your Landlord's decision making.



Tenant Participation

Aberdeenshire Council and TPPT members initiated a review of tenant participation in 2018. The Council's Change Team carried out a review of the Tenant Participation (TP) model and recommended considering alternative ways of involving tenants highlighting changes in tenant's preferences to move away from traditional groups and committees and being more inclusive by providing digital methods for young tenants.

The Scottish Government, facilitated by the Tenants Information Service (TIS), developed the Next Steps programme for landlords who were interested in developing and increasing tenant participation. Aberdeenshire Council was successful in being accepted on to the Next Steps programme. The Next Steps programme took place in early 2019 involving tenants and Councillors and housing staff and management.

As a result of the Next Steps programme the participants, tenants and tenant groups have agreed that a range of new methods of engaging with tenants is needed. A "menu" approach to tenant participation will be developed, giving tenants flexibility to be involved in one-off exercises or longer term projects. Staff will be developing their skills as Digital Motivators through the SCVO programme, where they will work with tenants to improve their digital awareness and IT skills. A new Tenant Communication Group has been convened with the first meeting in September considering how the Council communicates with tenants. The Tenant Communication Group are currently revising the format and information provided within the Tenants' Newsletter.

The new Tenant participation Strategy is very much focussed on developing involvement at a local level. The Council are developing links with local community planning and community safety groups and creating engagement plans for those seldom heard, including young people and gypsy travellers. Local budgets have also been approved. Tenants and tenant groups will be encouraged to bid for funding for environmental improvements in their area.

A key aim of the Tenant Participation Strategy is to produce a Tenant Participation Impact Statement every year. The Impact Statement will demonstrate the improvements and changes to the Housing service that have resulted as a direct consequence of tenant involvement and input.

Would you like to know more or take an opportunity to participate?

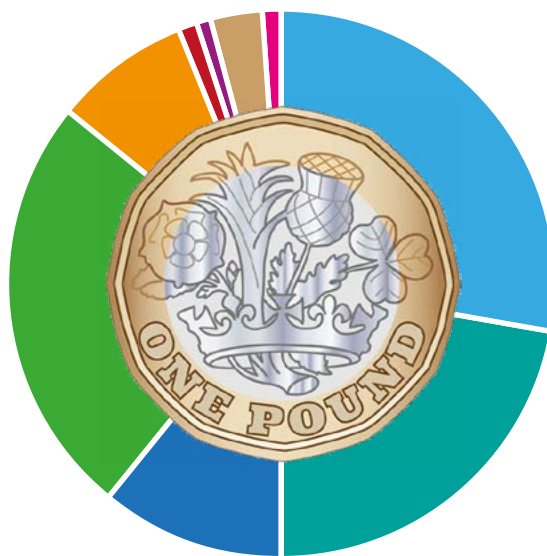
Contact: tenant.participation@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

The Council budget to spend spent £60,000 on tenant participation, information and consultation.
That represents a spend of £4.87 on every one of the Council's 12,317 tenancies.
(As at 31 March 2018, excluding staffing and administration costs).












Getting Good Value from Rents & Service Charges

For every £1 that was received in rental income by the Council was spent as follows:



HRA Budgeted Expenditure

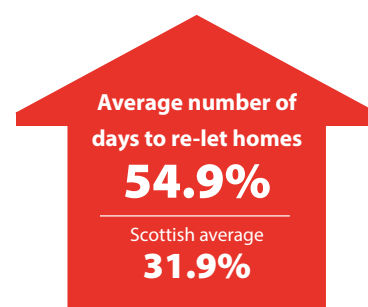
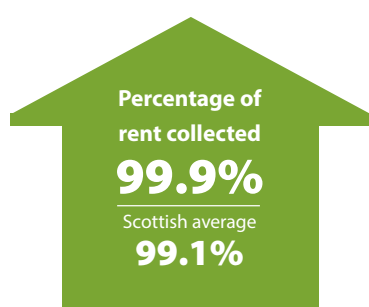
	Repairs and Maintenance	£0.28
	Supervision and Management	£0.22
	Funding Investment	£0.11
	Capital funded from Current Revenue	£0.25
	Sheltered Housing	£0.08
	Hostels	£0.01
	Temporary Accommodation	£0.01
	Rent Loss due to Voids	£0.03
	Other	£0.01
	Rental Income	£1.00

Aberdeenshire Council owned and managed 12,903 homes at the time of reporting (31 March 2019). Aberdeenshire Council undertook a postal rent consultation survey of its tenants in August 2018. The survey asked tenants about their priorities for new build, future maintenance and repair and the level of rent increase they would prefer based on 4 options aligned to delivering the Business Plan. The consultation responses were analysed, and proposals put to Committee where the option chosen was inflation plus 2.5% for 3 years. Rents increased by an average of 4.90%. This option allows Aberdeenshire Council to deliver long-term stock improvement, and 1,000 new homes will become available for rent over 5 years.



Average weekly rents

Size of home	Number owned	Your landlord	Scottish average	Difference
1 apartment	15	£67.54	£70.22	3.8%
2 apartment	5,104	£75.08	£76.10	1.3%
3 apartment	5,183	£76.57	£77.10	1.5%
4 apartment	2,458	£88.71	£84.44	5.1%
5 apartment	143	£100.22	£93.49	7.2%



Aberdeenshire Council's rent collection performance has not had significant change year on year and remains better than the Scottish average. Aberdeenshire Council are taking steps to mitigate the impact of Universal Credit on tenants. Universal Credit is a benefit for working age people who are in or out of work which replaces six "legacy benefits". Universal Credit was formally launched in 2013, and a full roll-out of this benefit has been available to all residents making new claims, or who have a change in circumstances, in Aberdeenshire since 31 October 2018.

If you are claiming Universal Credit, and you are experiencing financial difficulty or you would like support, you can contact:

Your Housing Officer

If you are unsure who your housing officer is, you can contact your local housing office or the contact centre on 03456 08 12 03.

Citizens Advice Scotland

Trained advisors can assist you with an application for universal credit. Assistance ranges from quick questions to step-by-step support. You can contact Citizens Advice Scotland by phone on 0800 023 581 or online at <https://www.cas.org.uk/helpclaim>.

The Money Advice Service

Offers online advice and assistance which can be accessed at <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/tools/money-manager>.

The Universal Credit free phone helpline

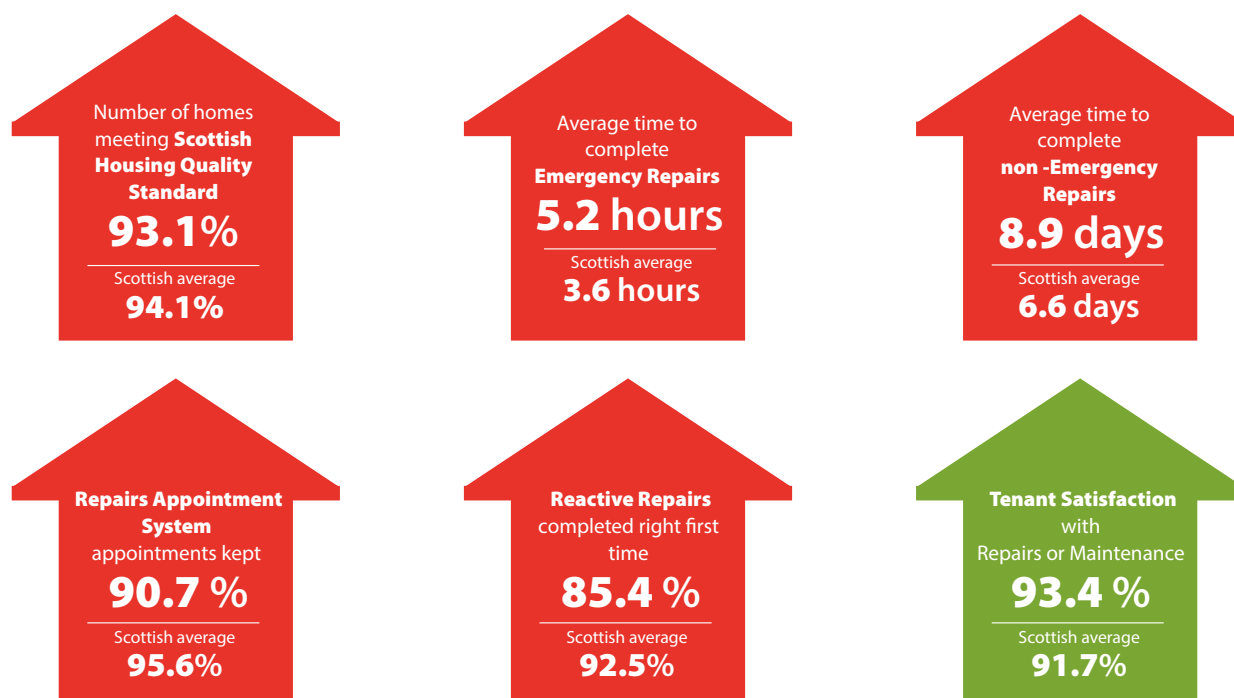
on [0800 328 9344](tel:08003289344) or send a text to [0800 328 1344](tel:08003281344) (Monday to Friday - 8am to 6:30pm).

Housing Quality and Maintenance



Repairs

The Repairs Service is transforming following the introduction of new technologies and systems which have led to a significant improvement in productivity, increasing the numbers of repairs undertaken by the in-house team, and reducing reliance on third parties. The service has also been focusing on allowing tenants to set appointments on days and times that most suit their needs. The service contacts tenants each year who have previously refused an upgrade to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) to ask if they wish the upgrade to go now ahead; if so, they are built into the Housing Improvements Programme. The service is also investigating alternative approaches for those upgrades to meet the SHQS which are currently uneconomic such as a 500 house pilot project to install Photovoltaics (PV's), batteries and SMART technology to improve their energy efficiency and meet the SHQS. The service is also undertaking a comprehensive review of the voids process in order to reduce re-let times. Success are already being achieved with a dedicated in-house team undertaking major refurbishment projects in empty homes. The Council continues to achieve 100% compliance with gas servicing.



Building New Homes

197 Homes were built between April 2018 to March 2019 197: 56 across the Council New Build programme, 140 units across our registered social landlord partners, and 1 property in Inverurie was acquisitioned for social rent through Council. This included developments across the following locations: Macduff, Portsoy, Peterhead, Kingseat, Kemnay, Inverurie, Inch, Laurencekirk, Huntly, Turriff & Banchory. Of these 197 units, 45 were suitable for particular needs and over 80 were one-bedroom properties to house the people with the highest levels of housing need.

Work has commenced for building 386 homes of which 63 are being delivered through the Council's New Build programme, the remaining 323 through our registered social landlord partners. This includes developments across the following locations: Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Oldmeldrum, Newburgh, Inverurie, Stonehaven, Monymusk and Banff. Of these 386 homes, 54 are suitable for particular needs including 10 for wheelchair users.

Neighbourhood and Community



For every 100 of your landlord's homes, 5.3 cases of anti-social behaviour were reported in the last year.

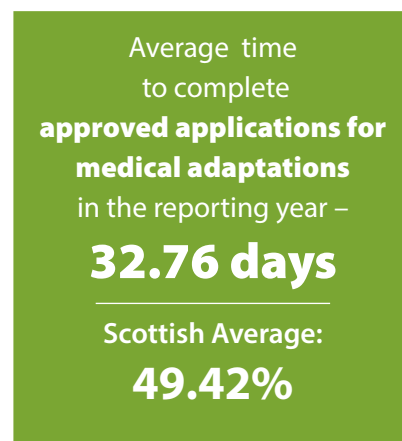
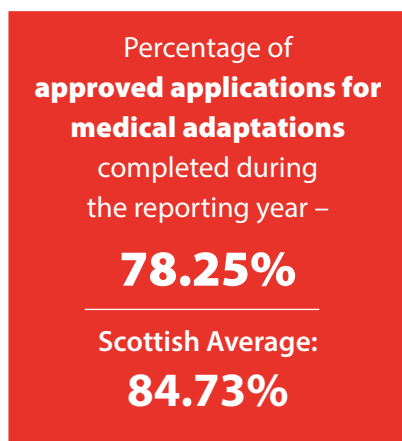
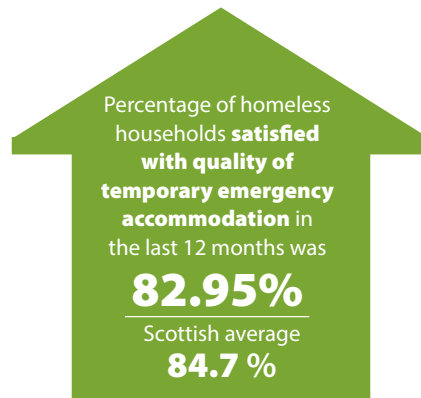
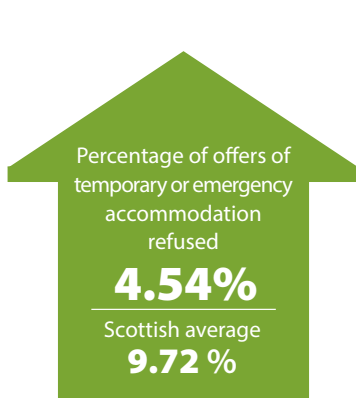
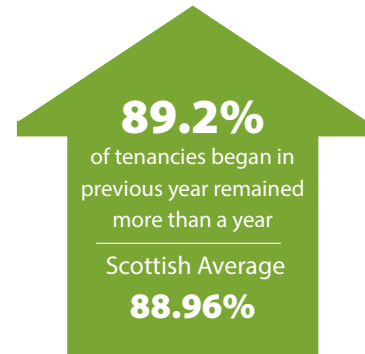
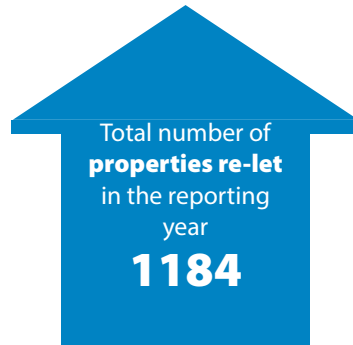
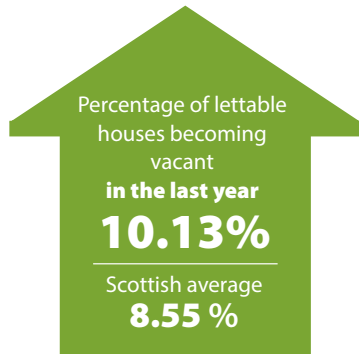


Cases resolved within local targets **67.3%**

Cases resolved Scottish figure **87.9%**

New Housing legislation enacted this year will give landlords new “tools” to tackle anti-social behaviour and resolve problems quicker. The Council wants to ensure that all its tenants and residents live in safe communities and the The Community Safety Hub continues to work and communicate as a partnership of services between Housing, Social Work, Police Scotland, and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The Hub meets twice weekly to discuss all anti-social behaviour incidents across Aberdeenshire, reviewing reports and co-ordinating a joint response. Aberdeenshire Council aims to address community issues (such as anti-social behaviour) at an early stage by taking preventative action such as offering comprehensive advice and introducing appropriate support for residents and residents to resolve matters rather than taking enforcement action. Aberdeenshire Council have also introduced a new team of new Mediation Officers who offer tenants and residents impartial and confidential advice to resolve neighbour disputes and work closely with the Community Safety Partnership. Mediation was previously provided by an external service, and since the new Mediation team has formed there has been an increase in referrals and successful outcomes.

Housing Access and Support





Aberdeenshire Council's Options and Homelessness team is in year 1 of undertaking their Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HRSAG) was set up in October 2017 by the Scottish Government to produce short and long term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping.

The first two reports focussed on rough sleeping in the upcoming winter and preventing homelessness, the third report looked at transforming temporary accommodation, and the fourth report in ending homelessness for good.

They made 70 recommendations and almost all have been accepted by the Scottish Government. These are detailed in a high-level action plan "Ending Homelessness Together".

The main recommendations are that for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (and where it cannot be prevented), we should move to a rapid rehousing model. Rapid Rehousing means

- A settled, mainstream housing outcome for homeless people as quickly as possible.
- Use of temporary accommodation should be limited – and individual temporary homes are preferred to using large scale hostels. Households should not be moved between temporary accommodation if it can be avoided.
- Understanding that some people have complex support needs and there may be a need for a more specialised response such as Housing First.

All 32 Local Authorities produced a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for 2019-2024 detailing how they intend moving towards a rapid rehousing model and bidding for a share of the Ending Homelessness Together Fund. Our plan was based on consultation with partners and overseen by an Officer Member working group.

We have been awarded additional funding in year 1 to assist in funding some of the actions that we identified in our rapid rehousing transition plan but Rapid Rehousing isn't all about extra funding – we need to do things differently and our focus has to be on addressing the needs of homeless clients more quickly but it is also about preventing homelessness.



**Additional Funding
was awarded in year 1
to assist in Rapid Re-housing
transition plan**



Sheltered Housing



Sheltered Housing tenants and Sheltered Housing waiting list applicants were invited to participate in a 'survey' consultation between February and March 2019 as part of the current Sheltered Housing review with the intention to provide tenant and waiting list applicant input into the council's ongoing review of its Sheltered Housing provision and associated services.

The survey findings were in brief -

'A clear categorisation is apparent in terms of tenants' ranking of priorities for sheltered homes and schemes. The very top priorities, most commonly chosen by respondents were security of the home and scheme and a comfortable home. The next level of priorities were a homely environment and appropriate aids and adaptations.'

'With respect to sheltered housing support services, the great majority of tenants place having someone to check they are okay is in their "Top 3" priorities. This is followed by having someone to respond to emergencies and, somewhat behind this, having someone to contact other services and having someone available to provide help or advice. When asked to comment on other areas of importance, respondents most commonly cite personal staff contact.'

The Sheltered Housing tenants survey forms part of the overall Sheltered Housing review, the consultation report findings and tenant comments are being considered along with information from various working groups and pilots are being explored. We intend to hold tenants meetings in each area later in the year and in early 2020 to share the findings of the review and to inform and advise the Sheltered Housing tenants of any potential changes.

"I decided to move to sheltered housing while I was still capable of making changes to my lifestyle. I am very happy here and I feel I made the right decision"

"Being able to live independently in one's senior years is, in my view paramount to happiness"

"I moved in three months ago. My life is so much better being with others."

Relevant contact details



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