



OUR 2020/21

ANNUAL REPORT TO TENANTS

Managed
795
homes across
Scotland

Dealt with
8,000
phone calls

Spent
£598,917
improving
our homes

Adapted
61
homes



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Annual Report to Tenants, which reviews our performance from April 2020 to March 2021. It tells you how we are performing against the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter).

The Charter sets out the standards and outcomes tenants should expect from their landlords in terms of the quality and value for money of the services they receive, the standard of their homes, and opportunities for communication and participation in the decisions that affect them.

You can read more about the Charter by visiting www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter-april-2017.

We've also included information to help you see where we are doing well and where we need to improve. For instance, how well we compare with other landlords, whether our performance is getting better or worse, and if there is an issue, what we are intending to do to improve.

You can find all the information we report on the Scottish Housing Regulator's website. The website also has a comparison tool you can use to find out how other landlords perform. Visit www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-tenants for more information.

Our Residents' Improvement Group (RIG) continues to do great work in scrutinising our activities and making suggestions on how we can improve. Over the last few years, they have suggested several changes to improve the annual report and make it relevant for tenants, and we thank them for their hard work.





AN UPDATE FROM THE RESIDENTS' IMPROVEMENT GROUP

2020/21 has been a productive but interesting year for RIG. Like everyone else, we have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, but we have continued to meet on Zoom, along with Horizon staff members. Sharon Donohoe from TIS has facilitated the group well over the past 18 months.

Our scrutiny report on Horizon's repairs service was ongoing when lockdown hit. The focus of the report was improving response times and an east/west split on dealing with complaints. An interim report on this was created in July 2020.

We're now working on a review of the housing investment programme, which includes new things for our homes, such as boilers, kitchens and windows, along with looking at how Horizon demonstrates value for money and reports performance to tenants.

I attended the TIS Virtual Online Conference in October 2021 representing RIG. A wide range of issues were discussed, including the right of everyone to a property, the challenges landlords faced during Covid-19, flexible working, the challenges of housebuilding as we move towards "net zero", and the great work taking place in communities across Scotland.

We hope, as Covid restrictions continue to ease, we can continue to return to our usual activities over the coming months with a mix of face-to-face gatherings and Zoom calls.

[Andrew Perry, RIG member](#)



HOW WE MEASURE OUR PERFORMANCE

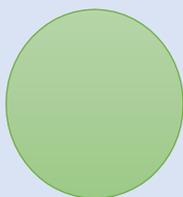
Our performance information comes from a range of sources. One of the most important ways is through a tenant satisfaction survey every three years. We completed a new survey in August 2021 and will report on the results of this next year.

In this report, when we give performance for each year, most of the data is from the 2018 tenant satisfaction survey, as this is what we reported to the SHR in our ARC (annual return on the charter).

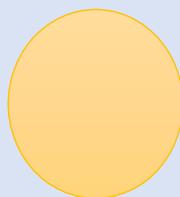
We felt it was important to continue to gather your views during the pandemic, so asked an independent company, Research Resource, to carry out a 'mini survey' in April 2020. Around a third of tenants took part in telephone surveys and answered questions on overall satisfaction, satisfaction with repairs and neighbourhood management as well as value for money.

We also regularly look at our performance in key activities to assess how we are performing and take steps to improve areas we need to. To double-check the accuracy of the results we report, we asked Scotland's Housing Network to complete a desktop review of the data we sent to the SHR in the ARC.

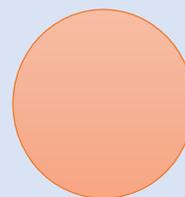
THE RATINGS



We are doing well



We are doing ok



We could do better



In most instances, we have compared ourselves against the SHR's Scottish average (which includes all councils and housing associations [HAs]). However, when it comes to comparing our rents, we have also included the HA average.

TENANT SATISFACTION

Our overall satisfaction rate increased over the last two years and is above the Scottish average based on the 2020 tenant survey. We are very pleased these results reflect the importance we placed on maintaining our services during the Covid-19 pandemic and the hard work and commitment of our staff.

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish Average 2020/21
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord	88.9%	94.5%	94.5%	89%

97%
Satisfied with
quality of advice
and assistance

100%
Satisfaction with
our Tenancy
Sustainment
Service

98%
Satisfied with the
helpfulness of
staff over the
phone



OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU

Satisfaction with keeping you informed about services dropped a bit – although remained in line with the Scottish average and we are aiming to improve.

The percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities provided to participate in decision remains slightly below the national average and we will continue to work to improve this.

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish Average 2020/21
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about services and outcomes	94.4%	92.4%	92.4%	92%

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish Average 2020/21
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlords decision-making process	85.7%	85.7%	85.7%	87.2%

We are working to improve these figures and want to make sure you are aware of how you can get involved: www.horizonhousing.org/media/1910/have-your-say-leaflet.pdf



Our Tea in the Carpark activities are popular with many tenants. Covid restrictions meant we couldn't hold these in 2020 but, to make up for it, we held more than ever in the summer of 2021.

RIG continued to work through the pandemic (via Zoom rather than in person) and produced an excellent report on our repairs service. You can read it on our website www.horizonhousing.org/RIG.

We know many of you would rather engage with us digitally. We continue to promote the MyHorizon app and have increased our use of texting and social media. Through Connecting Scotland, we supplied iPads and free MiFi units to 140 tenants. Some of our staff have trained as digital champions and were able to help tenants get online and access services digitally.

MAINTENANCE

We use the most recent information on our tenant satisfaction with repairs, this may be the annual surveys or our regular transactional surveys, which tenants complete each time they have a repair.

Customer satisfaction has been reported from surveys completed throughout the year. As expected, satisfaction with repairs dropped in 2020/21 at a time when the repair service was significantly restricted. However, recent survey information shows this has improved to 92%.

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Percentage of tenants (who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months) satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	86%	91.6%	88%	90%



INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	2.15 hours	1.81 hours	2.65 hours	4.2 hours

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	4.4 days	5.4 days	9.2 days	6.7 days

We work hard to make sure we can evidence the performance we report. This year, we identified we could improve supporting information for the completion of repairs right first time. As a result, we reported a lower performance for this indicator, which included repairs completed out with our normal 10-day target as not right first time.

Many of these repairs completed out with target were impacted by the Covid restrictions during the lockdown periods. However, this is an area we will continue to focus on during 2021/22 to make sure we carry out our repairs as quickly as possible.



INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time	96.8%	89.1%	79%	92%

HOUSING QUALITY

We have consistently performed well on the quality standards set for social housing – the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH).

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	100%	100%	99.6%	91%

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Percentage of properties meeting the energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)	98.9%	98.9%	99.6%	89%

In our 2021 tenant satisfaction survey, you told us your top priorities for investment are windows, bathrooms and kitchens. Our planned maintenance



programme reflects these priorities with planned work in 2022/23, including 35 window and external door replacements, 70 boiler replacements, 20 kitchens and 30 bathrooms. We provide these as well as completing mandatory work relating to legal safety requirements.

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	92%	92%	92%	87%

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

Like most landlords during the pandemic, we saw an increase in the number of anti-social complaints. The majority were minor neighbour nuisance. This appears to be another consequence of the pandemic – tenants spending extra time at home found it more difficult to cope, and frustrations with neighbours escalated into complaints to the landlord.

Despite this, our staff performed well to support our tenants in dealing with these complaints

This year, the SHR updated the anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood management indicators, so we have not reported previous performance as we do not have comparable information.

INDICATOR:	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Percentage of antisocial behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved	99%	94%



We want you to live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where you feel safe.

We are pleased tenant satisfaction with our contribution to the management of neighbourhoods is significantly higher than the Scottish average, but we will always work to get better.

INDICATOR:	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	91%	86%

Our in-house estates team continued to work throughout the pandemic cleaning closes and carrying out ground maintenance, in line with government guidance, to keep everyone safe.

We are proud of their efforts and know this was much appreciated by our tenants. We know that we can do better though. In the 2020 survey, only 89% of tenants were happy the overall appearance of the estate.

We are working to improve this – in 2021/22 we will spend over £25,000 upgrading the landscaping in our estates and are anticipating the same level of spending in 2022/23.

We are also looking at area-based estates budgets for 2022/23 to allow tenants and staff to identify upgrades at a local level.



VALUE FOR MONEY

Value for money means different things to different people. When we ask tenants for their views of value for money in our surveys, they consistently tell us it is not just about costs, it's also about the quality of services we deliver and homes we provide

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Do you think your rent is good value for money?	57%	83%	81%	83%

Although there has been a great improvement in tenant satisfaction with value for money since we asked 2015, we are still slightly below the Scottish average. We are working hard to keep our rents affordable while delivering the level of service tenants want.

OUR RENTS

In April 2020, we introduced a new rent policy which aims to be fair and transparent. Rents are based on the size and type of each property and the services (close cleaning and grounds maintenance) we deliver.

Before we introduced the new policy, we did a lot of work to ensure our rents were affordable to tenants on modest incomes using a nationally recognised 'affordability calculator'. We continually review this and ensure any tenants who may struggle receive targeted support from our tenancy sustainment officers.

Our rents are slightly above national average, but do not include additional service charges for things like grounds maintenance and cleaning - many other



landlords add these on top.

TOTAL NUMBER OF EACH PROPERTY SIZE AND AVERAGE RENT FOR EACH						
Size	No of properties	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21	HA average 2020/21
1 bedroom	260	£79.96	£81.72	£82.05	£79.48	£85.59
2 bedroom	362	£88.35	£90.29	£91.98	£82.60	£88.15
3 bedroom	157	£91.34	£96.22	£99.34	£89.81	£97.46
4 bedroom+	16	£102.64	£104.90	£114.31	£99.97	£109.51

Rent is our only source of income. It allows us to deliver our services and maintain your home. We keep our annual rent increases to a minimum, balancing affordability with making sure we have enough money to provide quality services. Over the last few years we have kept our rent increase under the national average.

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Percentage average weekly rent to be applied	2.2%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%

As part of our work to ensure value for money, we try to keep rent loss to a minimum. One of the main reasons for loss of rent is rent arrears. We do what we can to prevent rent arrears from happening by providing good advice and support to tenants and quickly dealing with issues when arrears do arise.

The pandemic brought financial problems for many of our tenants but, with the support and advice provided by our Housing Officers and Tenancy Sustainment Officers, our arrears reduced and we are performing very well against national



averages.

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Total rent arrears as a percentage of rent due	2.9%	4.08%	3.3%	5.8%

Another way landlords 'lose rent' is by having houses lying empty. We aim to relet our properties quickly and as result, keep 'lost rent' to a minimum. Like all landlords, the 'days to let' increased in 2020/21 since we were unable to relet properties in the first quarter of the year (April- June) because of the lockdown.

Despite this, we performed well against national averages. As a result, our 'lost rent' was 0.27% of rent due, compared with a Scottish average of 1.4%.

INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
Average length of time taken to re-let properties	17.5 days	13.9 days	22.1 days	56.3 days

ADAPTATIONS

Adaptations, such as wet floor showers, ramps, accessible kitchens play a vital role in ensuring you can continue to live independently in your own home and sustain your tenancy.

Our performance on the average time to complete has slipped due to Covid restrictions, but also many tenants waiting for adaptations were shielding and choose not to have the works carried out at that time.



	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total number of adaptations	49	89	56
Average number of days to complete	49.56	26.19	58.25

ACCESS TO HOUSING AND SUPPORT

The number of properties relet in 2020/21 dropped because we were unable to carry out work and move people into empty houses during the early lockdown, from April to June 2020.

	No of properties relet	% of lets to Horizon transfers	% of lets to housing list applicants	% of council nominations	% to homeless applicants	% to other applicants
2020/21	36	17	44	17	19	3
2019/20	50	16	34	30	20	0
2018/19	47	20	40	15	25	0

We do all we can to support new tenants to establish their tenancies - all new tenants are contacted by our Tenancy Sustainment Officers to offer advice and support, and we continue to offer support for tenants throughout their tenancy.

We have a very low turnover of properties - only 40 properties became empty last year: this is just 5% of stock, down from 6.7% last year. For the second year in a row we have had no evictions – which indicates our positive approach to tenancy sustainment and support.



INDICATOR:	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Scottish average 2020/21
New tenancies sustained for more than a year	96%	98%	94%	90.9%

We have our own in-house Tenancy Sustainment Team, which assist tenants with a range of issues such as claiming and arranging benefits, making appeals, making claims to the Scottish Welfare Fund and charity applications.

The TS team supported 206 tenants - 25% of our tenants (up from 164 in 2019/20, 21%) – and generated £348,000 in income for our tenants (up from £280,942 in 2019/20).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

To help improve the information we provide on our performance in the future, we want to know what you think of this report. If there is anything you would like to ask or discuss in more detail, please get in touch.

We also want to work with you to improve our services. Getting involved does not always mean attending meetings. It includes Tea in the Car Park events, estate walkabouts or completing online surveys. It is up to you how much or how little you want to participate. If you are interested, please contact your housing officer on 0330 30 30 089 or e-mail@horizonhousing.org

We can produce information in Braille, Audio Tape, Large Print and Community Languages. Call 0330 303 0089 to find out more.

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