

Housing



ANNUAL REPORT

Housing Services 2021/22



**Performance
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ANNUAL REPORT



Convenor Statement

Danny Devlin

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Customer Engagement

Welcome to Housing Services Annual Report where each year we report on our performance, and outline our plans for ongoing improvement over the next year or so. This report outlines how our Housing Service has performed in 2021-22 and it compares our performance against the previous year and the average of local authorities and the housing sector (local authorities and housing associations) in Scotland.

Moving forward this year we are placing a strong emphasis on our digital offering to tenants and customers and increasing satisfaction through easier engagement with us as a landlord. As a Council we remain focussed on our performance to continue to provide a high quality and responsive service through our staff team. We have listened to your views and in this edition we provide an opportunity to get to know some of our key staff and the areas of work they and their team are responsible for.

We strive to ensure our service meets the needs of tenants and customers, and that we provide opportunities to get involved in influencing key areas of our work and services. We would welcome your views on how you feel our Housing Service is performing and how you feel we can improve. It is important to hear your views, and we are inviting more of our tenants and customers to get involved, as we refresh our Customer Engagement Strategy this year.

Get involved: customerengagement@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk





Suzanne Conlin
(Senior Housing Manager)

Vision for the Future of Housing



Housing Services consists of almost 150 officers who provide a range of services to Council tenants and other customers. We aim to deliver our service in line with the Council's values of:



Whilst the previous two years have been challenging with many restrictions in place, we are constantly looking at ways to improve. Moving forward Housing Services aims to provide a service that customers are happy with, and that we are proud of.

Our customers need to be able to receive the sound advice, support and information that they are looking for, when they need it.

In recent years we have undertaken some key projects to improve services. This includes:

- **Digital improvements** – a new Housing IT system is in development. Over the next year customers will be provided with access to allow them to, complete housing applications, bid for Council houses access their rent account and report repairs online.

- **Neighbourhood Housing Officers** - We will be writing to all customers in early 2023 to introduce you all to your new Neighbourhood Housing Officer who will be your key contact for all concerns.

Over the next year we are committed to improving the service that we deliver to our customers and have a target to increase customer satisfaction with service delivery.

We hope that you find this report useful and we are keen to hear your views on how to improve services. We appreciate that people have busy lives and we are working to find ways for all customers to be involved in a way that suits them.

If you would like to be involved, please send your details to customerengagement@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk or contact Brian or Lorna on 0141 577 3695 / 3693



MEET THE MANAGERS

Housing Services Manager (Property, Capital & Asset Management) – Gbemi Taiwo



We are the team that look after housing services assets and our main objective is to make sure that our properties are of good quality; meet required standards and they are homes fit for purpose for our tenants. The team is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of our assets; and implementation of energy efficiency and energy saving measures. We deliver these through capital replacement programmes, adaptations and other upgrade works.

The team ensures that housing services is compliant with legislative requirements in our properties; this includes all statutory property condition standards, health and safety requirements (gas, electrical, asbestos), and energy performance standards.

The team also look after mixed tenure blocks, i.e. a mix of our tenants and homeowners. We act as Factor for these blocks by administering projects, managing required common repairs and liaising with homeowners.

One of the key challenges for the team in coming years will be to improve energy efficiency in our properties. We will continue to maintain and improve the energy performance of our housing stock in line with Scottish Government targets for EESSH2; as well as focus on how to achieve zero carbon in our housing stock, in line with the Scottish Government target by 2045.



Repairs Delivery Team Manager – Jamie MacDonald

It is the Repairs team's duty to manage the efficient and effective delivery of the housing repair and maintenance service including responsive repairs, planned maintenance, legislative compliance work programmes and void repairs. We also lead on the management of external contractors for response repairs for our 3,000+ tenancies.

Our team consists of 32 Tradespersons, 4 Technical Officers, 2 Maintenance Officers and a Planning team - this ensures that we put the tenants' needs first and endeavour to complete all repairs works in a quick and timely manner. We work closely with all other teams in Housing, in particular with Property Services to ensure that all our homes are compliant with all current legislation and to put in place adaptations that support independent living.

The Repairs team also have the primary responsibility for all works undertaken in our void properties, from the moment the keys are handed in by the out-going tenant until the keys are returned to the allocations teams when the property is fit to re-let.

MEET THE MANAGERS

Housing Service Manager (Service Delivery - Customer) – John Kelso



Our Customer team has a focus on delivering services not only to Council tenants but across a range of tenures including private sector renting and owner occupation. The principal aim of the team is to support residents in maintaining their residency and in doing so enhancing their quality of life.

These services include the allocation of Council housing, provision of housing advice and where appropriate the prevention and resolution of homelessness. Assisting tenants with the management of their rent account features highly in activities of the team as well as providing financial and welfare advice to those tenants who require it. Staff also provide a service to residents in managing neighbour disputes, anti-social behaviour and enhancing environmental conditions in gardens, open spaces and common areas.

A range of support services is provided including sheltered housing for elderly residents, supported accommodation and advice for young people and the provision of temporary accommodation for those households experiencing homelessness. The team also deliver services to private landlords and their tenants in terms of landlord registration and compliance, as well as managing adaptations services for our own tenants as well as homeowners, who have specific medical needs to be met in their homes.



Housing Service Manager (Strategic Change, Planning & Support) – Bex Astin

We're the team that works to bring the wider Housing Service together. We work with colleagues and local partners to create and deliver the Local Housing Strategy and Strategic Housing Investment Plan. These key strategies are the benchmark for the work we will deliver in the coming years. This is achieved through collating evidence and seeking out best practice, and showing the Scottish Government we are setting ambitious targets to deliver high quality housing services to our residents. Our Business Improvement team analyse our performance as a service, and help identify and drive improvements in the services we provide to tenants and other customers, in line with the Charter standards.

The team also deliver a whole host of services to both our internal and external customers. We ensure that the purchasing and payment of all services and parts for housing services are procured and paid for promptly, following the public procurement guidelines. The System Development team ensure that all digital services and software we use work effectively for housing staff to carry out their functions. And finally, the Customer Engagement officers ensure that your views are heard across the service; through tenant satisfaction surveys, engagement events and responding to any complaints and FOIs and that any issues are dealt with as soon as possible.



Performance & Future Plans

Property Services, Assets & Capital Programme

East Renfrewshire Council owns 3,033 homes including 244 sheltered homes and a number of temporary and supported properties. We built 39 new homes in 2021/22 through our Council House Build Programme. The energy efficiency of our homes is very good against current EESSH1 standards, but with significant investment required to meet the national programme of increasing standards in coming years. This is a challenge faced by landlords across the sector.



Performance in ensuring gas safety certificates are renewed each year is 100%, with other landlords still trying to recover this because of no access during the pandemic. We had very few fails in 2020/21 and worked exceptionally hard to keep track and then resolve those fails quickly.

Indicator	ERC Housing 2021-22	ERC Housing 2020-21	Local Authority Average 2021-22	Housing Sector 2021-22
% of tenants' homes meeting EESSH1**	98.3%	93.2%	84.59%	87.56%
No of properties that failed to have a gas safety check by anniversary date	0	25	8	488

* - Scottish Housing Quality Standard – National property standards set for all social landlords in Scotland

** - Energy Efficiency Standards in Social Housing 1– Energy standards set for all social landlords in Scotland



The condition of our homes against SHQS (Scottish Housing Quality Standard) has been consistently good at 91.42% in 20.21. Our focus for improvement is on updating our Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's), the cycle for which has moved from 10 to 5 yearly, with a programme of 600+ surveys to be carried out over the next two years. A reduction in our compliance with SHQS on this element solely means about 89% properties meet the 10 year safety check but with the changes, about 48.5% are compliant.

There has been a reduction in compliance for many other landlords on this element. At the time the change was introduced, there was constraint on manpower to accelerate these checks; an external contractor has now been procured to provide this service. Between now and March 2023, about 600 properties will be tested and from there on, a programme will be rolled out to meet statutory compliance.

New boilers for Fordyce Court





Housing Repairs



Our repairs service is delivered through the Housing Maintenance team supported by external contractors for specialist works. The performance is excellent illustrated in our response timescales for emergency repairs in particular at 2.66 hours. The quality of repair work is clearly evident through a top quartile performance for jobs completed right first time (98.97%).

Our improvement focus is on communicating more clearly with customers on what to expect for certain types of repairs, in terms of inspections and timescales for completion. And to increase satisfaction with the repairs service.

Indicator	ERC Housing 2021-22	ERC Housing 2020-21	Local Authority Average 2021-22	Housing Sector 2021-22
Average time to complete emergency repairs	2.66 hours	2.4 hours	4.77 hours	4.16 hours
Average time to complete non-emergency repairs	8.35 days	6.2 days	9.87 days	8.87 days
% of day to day repairs completed 'Right First Time'	98.97%	99.5%	78.79%	88.27%



Estates and Neighbourhoods



Our performance in dealing with anti-social behaviour and estates issues remains high. There has been a small number of tenancies which have not sustained for those housed through the waiting list, and we are reviewing the contact with and support offered to tenants in the community and before they begin a tenancy.

Our refreshed Neighbourhood Housing Officer team will allow us to work more closely with tenants in our estates to live there successfully. Our performance in completing vital medical adaptations for our tenants remains high also, ensuring people can live as independently as possible at home.

Indicator	ERC Housing 2021-22	ERC Housing 2020-21	Local Authority Average 2021-22	Housing Sector 2021-22
% of new tenants housed who were still in their tenancy 12 months later	89.36%	94.14%	90.99%	90.75%
Average time to complete medical adaptations	23.51 days	18.56 days	53.60 days	54.35 days
% of anti-social behaviour cases resolved	96.49%	95.4%	93.25%	94.67%



Rents



East Renfrewshire Council rents although higher than the Scottish Council Average in 21.22, are lower than the average for all social landlords and considerably lower than other social or private landlords in the East Renfrewshire area. Through rent setting consultation we will seek an increase which will see rents remain affordable but will support vital investment in existing and new homes for tenants.



Average Weekly Rent	ERC Housing 2021-22	Local Authority Average 2021-22	Housing Sector 2021-22
All Properties	£83.20	£79.71	£85.36
1 Apartment	£70.23	£65.90	£75.95
2 Apartment (One bedroom)	£74.39	£74.24	£81.32
3 Apartment (Two bedroom)	£85.04	£79.37	£84.18
4 Apartment (Three bedroom)	£96.07	£85.37	£91.48
5 Apartment (Four bedroom)	£97.64	£92.11	£100.74



Value for Money

Gross rent arrears takes into account arrears owed by current and former tenants combined. Through COVID there was a significant increase in arrears of rent for current tenants, although this has slowed and stabilised in 21/22.

Implementation of a fresh Arrears Recovery Strategy, for both current and former tenancy arrears, is being underpinned by our service redesign which is now set in place. This will focus on engaging and supporting tenants more intensively to meet their rent payments and reduce arrears.

Indicator	ERC Housing 2021-22	ERC Housing 2020-21	Local Authority Average 2021-22	Housing Sector 2021-22
Gross rent arrears as % of total rent due	9.95%	9.51%	8.67%	6.34%



Housing Options & Access to Housing



Indicator	ERC Housing 2021-22	ERC Housing 2020-21	Local Authority Average 2021-22	Housing Sector 2021-22
Average length of time to re-let properties	99.59 days*	72.7 days	59.42 days	51.57 days
% of rent due lost through empty homes	1.41%	1.8%	1.63%	1.43%
% of tenancy offers refused	51.17%	40.64%	40.11%	32.93%

*A number of long term empty homes were brought back into use, so while raising the average days to relet to an exceptional level in 21.22, this figure is already reduced YTD and is expected to fall significantly in 2022/23.

We had a turnover of 8.78% of properties and we made 312 lets in the year to our tenants and applicants who are homeless or were waiting on a home through our Choice Based Letting system. A further 33 households were housed through nomination to other local social landlords.

However, we face significant waiting list demand at around 4,700 applicants, with 1600 of these joining the list in 21.22.

Homeless approaches remain consistently high at around 380 applications per year. 45% of our lets were to households facing homelessness.

Although we are building new homes, additional pressure to move large numbers through temporary accommodation and to support refugee resettlement adds to demand hugely outstripping supply.

Despite a choice based letting process in place, refusal levels remain high. This is due to the lack of suitable accommodation resulting in offers of accommodation made directly to homeless households who have not successfully bid for a property within a three month period. As well as continuing to turnaround empty homes more quickly, we have reviewed CBL and lettings over the last 3 years and will propose revisions to our allocations policy and processes to reduce tenancy offers refused or withdrawn.





Customer Engagement & Satisfaction



In common with other landlords who have carried out a large scale Tenants Satisfaction Survey since mid-2021, satisfaction levels have dropped significantly. The impact of the pandemic, i.e. more time at home and reductions in “Business as usual” service provision through the pandemic have undoubtedly affected satisfaction. Analysis of national data has shown that across the country satisfaction levels have dropped consistently since 2019.

We have continued surveying our tenants through 21.22 and as outlined levels of satisfaction are moving back upwards, as we have recovered our frontline service delivery (see results below). However we are not complacent. A further survey will be undertaken in early 2023 to ensure the service remains responsive to customer needs.

Our service redesign vision places our customers at the centre of what we do, including improving communication, clarifying the standards they should expect and providing modern routes to participate and influence service improvements. We are refreshing our Customer Engagement plan to deliver on this vision, in partnership with our customers.

Indicator	Satisfied 2020/21 (ARC)	Tenants Satisfaction Survey (East Ren) 2021 (large scale)	ERC Service Surveys 2022	Satisfied 2021/22 (ARC) – combined results
% Satisfied with landlord contribution to management of neighbourhood	88.47%	65.68%	77%	68.47%
% Satisfaction with keeping informed about services & decisions	88.15%	74.22%	81%	75.76%
% Satisfied rent is good value for money	87.04%	66.84%	81%	70.15%
% Satisfied with repairs service	86.43%	72.64%	66%	70.29%
% Satisfied with quality of home	86.48%	67.07%	83%	70.99%
% Satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision-making	91.11%	64.93%	70%	66.18%
% Overall Satisfaction with Landlord	84.81%	68.22%	85%	72.24%



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