

Making Clackmannanshire Better



**Clackmannanshire
Council**

www.clacksweb.org.uk

Better Services

Better Opportunities

Better Communities

Report to Tenants

Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance

Foreword

It is my great pleasure to introduce Clackmannanshire Council's first report to tenants on our Scottish Social Housing Charter performance.

This has certainly been a very busy year for the Housing and Community Safety Service. In March 2014, after many months of careful preparation, we moved seamlessly into our newly refurbished offices at Kilncraigs. The converted mill building is part of several multi-million pound investments the Council is making to improve our communities across Clackmannanshire.

At the same time we launched a new 'housing options' service from the new Home@Clacks dedicated office in Kilncraigs, to help people find accommodation that meets their needs.

The massive investment programme in our housing stock continued apace, with a further £8.75m invested during year, taking the total to £21.4m in just three years. We have also built new council homes for the first time in decades, and bought properties on the open market to

add to our stock of affordable housing. A total of 65 new homes were built or acquired in the year. A further 56 houses are on site, and another 136 have funding commitment.

This represents the most significant addition to the total affordable housing stock in a great many years.

We put our tenants and customers at the heart of everything we do. This was demonstrated by retention of our 'Customer Service Excellence' award. We not only met the standard but also achieved an outstanding eight 'Compliance Plus' ratings.

A comprehensive satisfaction survey of over 900 tenants was completed in October 2013. This revealed that 90% of you are satisfied with the Council as a landlord. This, and many of the other results from that survey, are very pleasing. However, we are using the survey results to concentrate on improving the areas where we can do better.

We are always keen to hear from you about the service you have received. We also want to get more people involved to help shape the services we provide. On page 20 you can read about the different ways for you to have your say. If you are interested in getting involved my colleagues will be delighted to hear from you, so please get in touch using the contact details which can be found below.

Finally, I am grateful for the support and effective challenge provided by the Clackmannanshire Tenants and Residents Federation. The Federation is the independent group, elected by tenants and residents, that works to help us improve our services. This report has been developed with the help of a working group consisting of tenants and residents. I hope that you find it useful and interesting.

Ahsan Khan
Head of Housing and Community Safety



The results in this report reflect the ongoing hard work carried out by the Housing and Community Safety Service. Meeting the outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter is paramount for the Council and we are always working towards achieving excellent outcomes for our tenants and customers. 2014/15 is already shaping up to be another full year with more new homes and improvements due to be delivered. I hope you enjoy reading the report.

Cllr Les Sharp
Housing, Health and Care Committee
(Convenor)



Our Improvement Plan for 2014/15 can be viewed on ClacksWeb



Get Involved
Call us on 01259 450000
and ask for the
Tenant Participation Coordinator

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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How to use this report

In each section of this report you will find:

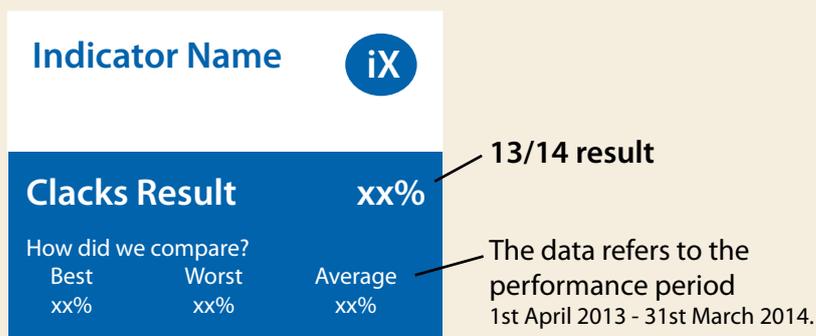
- relevant Charter Outcomes
- performance indicators
- some explanation about our results

Performance indicators

The data is from the SHR Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)

This data is available from the Scottish Housing Regulator website www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/find-and-compare-landlords

What do the tables mean?



How we compare to others

Where we can, we have compared ourselves to other Scottish Local Authority landlords and have given the average based on Scottish Local Authority landlords.

Measuring your satisfaction

During the Summer of 2013, we commissioned a face to face survey with 900 of our tenants and service users. The survey was carried out by research company BMG chose a random sample of tenants. This survey has given us a privileged insight into what you think of us as your landlord and a solid base to work from to improve the services we provide to you. Thank you to all those who took part. We will be carrying out another full tenant satisfaction survey in 2016. Most of the satisfaction results within this report are from this survey.

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If you would like further information about anything in this report please contact:

Housing Business Management Team
Clackmannanshire Council
Kilncraigs
Alloa
FK10 1EB

01259 450000

housing@clacks.gov.uk

Customer / Landlord relationship

Charter Outcomes 1& 2

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing service so that:

- every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their new landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

It is important that we have a good relationship with our customers so that we provide the kind of service that they need.

We asked you how satisfied you are with the overall service we provide as your Landlord. **90%** of you said you are satisfied. We looked at this satisfaction over the different settlement areas and we can see that customers in Sauchie and Fishcross are most satisfied. We are using this information to:

- Understand the issues that are affecting tenants on a local basis
- Identify whether there are any differences in dissatisfaction from tenants dependant on age or the areas they live in.

Satisfaction with Respondents	Over 65 years	Under 65 Years
The way Clacks deals with your enquiries	88%	80%
Listens to views & acts upon them	76%	70%
Opportunities to participate in the decision making processes	84%	76%

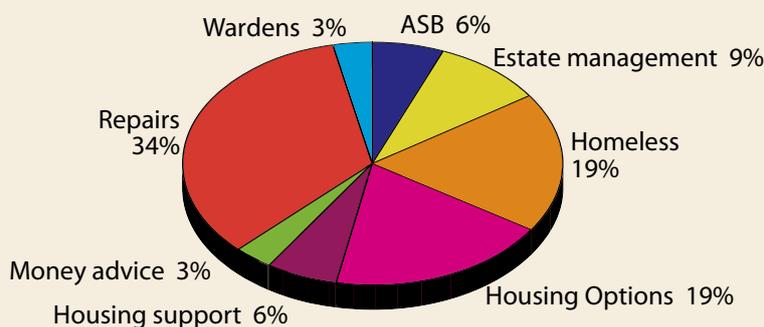
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It is clear we need to look at how we interact with our younger tenants to make sure we are delivering the services they need in the way they need them. We will identify how we can do that better throughout the coming year.

Complaints to the Service

In 2012 the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman published a complaints framework for all Councils and Social Landlords to manage complaints better. The process is now split into 2 stages. 1st stage complaints should be responded to within 5 working days. 2nd stage complaints that require more investigation should be responded to within 20 working days.

Complaints by service area



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i4+5 Percentage of 1st & 2nd stage complaints

	1st stage complaints	2nd stage complaints
Complaints received	29	3
Responded to in full in by the landlord in the reporting year	100%	100%
Complaints upheld by the landlord in the reporting year	31%	33%
Complaints responded to in full within the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman timescales	90%	100%

We take complaints about the services we provide very seriously and we look to resolve issues quickly. We responded in full to all 32 complaints received during 13/14. All of the 2nd stage complaints and almost all of the 1st stage complaints were responded to within the set timescales.

Housing Quality and Maintenance

Outcomes 4 & 5

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair.
- tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

The largest proportion of rent tenants pay goes towards repairing and maintaining the housing stock. We have been working towards achieving the Scottish Housing Quality Standard as well as delivering the higher Clacks Standard. This has covered a variety of areas including:

- 1197 replacement bathrooms
- 63 disabled bathroom replacements
- 19 secure door entry systems installed in common blocks
- 320 central heating replacements
- 13 major disabled adaptations
- 257 asbestos removals
- 1 full house conversion
- 43 kitchens replaced
- 82 front doors replaced
- 33 flats completely refurbished in Pine Grove

Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard

i17

Clacks Result 90.8%

How did we compare?		
Best	Worst	Average
96.3%	62.1%	84.4%

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The way in which the SHQS compliance rate is calculated has changed recently. This means that our compliance rate currently sits at 90.8%. Some properties are exempt from being brought up to SHQS but we need to include them in the calculation. We have 382 properties that are exempt.

We are pleased that out of all Local Authorities we are the top performer at completing emergency repairs. Reactive repairs (non emergency), include repairs due to be completed within 1 week and repairs due to be completed within 4 weeks. 92% of 1 week repairs and 86% of 4 week repairs are currently completed within these target times. With the introduction of repairs appointments, the service plans to exceed this outcome in 2014-15 therefore reducing the average days.

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in

i9

Clacks Result 77.1%

How did we compare?		
Best	Worst	Average
94.6%	60.9%	74.6%

Average length of time to complete an emergency repair

i11

Clacks Result 1.91 hours

How did we compare?		
Best	Worst	Average
1.91 hrs	19.37 hrs	7.4 hrs

Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home

i10

Clacks Result 88.4%

How did we compare?		
Best	Worst	Average
92.3%	69.2%	81.1%

Average length of time to complete a reactive repair

i12

Clacks Result 6.74 days

How did we compare?		
Best	Worst	Average
3.08 days	17.41 days	10.01 days

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A day in the life of the Housing Service

With many different teams delivering different services to our tenants and customers, it is sometimes hard to keep track of who does what. Here is what a few of our staff get up to in a day.

Katie Hislop
Senior Housing Officer
Tenancy Management

// I cover a variety of interesting tasks every day and no two days are the same!

Today so far I have responded to an enquiry from the local MSP about some antisocial behaviour issues in their constituency and received a complaint from an owner occupier about a close. This afternoon I am due to secure a property where the tenant is in prison, carry out a joint visit with the SSPCA to inspect the conditions some animals are currently being kept in and while I'm out, I'll do some garden inspections. Like I say, the tasks are varied!

As I am a Senior Housing Officer, I also have some staff development to work on. We always make sure our staff have the support they need to do the best job they can. Sometimes it's the small things that make the biggest difference, like when we installed an outside tap to make it easier for some tenants to water their community garden. This is a rewarding job as I find I am learning all the time. There's always new situations that I've not come across before. //



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George McEwan
Facilities Management
Supervisor

// My day starts earlier than most.

I get in at about 7:40am and start to organise the days work for the different trades. It is mostly void properties that I work on so the trades are varied. Each property is checked when the last tenant moves out and we identify what works need to be carried out to get it ready for the next tenant. The majority of the work required relates to joinery, plumbing or plaster and painting. It is my job to organise the work so that the properties are ready as quickly as possible. Most properties don't require much but when we do get a property that needs some major work I liaise with other teams to get the work done. This could be anything from replacing a bathroom to dealing with asbestos. I enjoy juggling all the different aspects of getting a property ready to let. I always know we've done a good job when I step back and think I'd live here. //



Lee Sneddon
Housing Options

// At Home@Clacks we deliver a person centred service and we tailor our approach to each individual client's needs so we rarely have the same day twice. This morning I took

a client through our Housing Options assessment. Throughout this process we look at all of the housing and accommodation options open to each individual. This isn't just Council housing, we look at private sector too as we can offer the rent bond guarantee scheme to help clients secure a let. It can be difficult working in the Housing Options Team as we can't give everyone the exact home they might want. I recently received a thank you letter from an applicant. It's really nice when clients appreciate the service we provide, reminds me why I do this job. //



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Neighbourhood and Community

Charter Outcome 6

Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure that:

- tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

We want all of our tenants to enjoy living in their neighbourhood. To ensure that you do, we have a number of measures in place to help make our communities safe and nice places to live.

- MATAAC (Multi Agency Tasking And Coordinating)

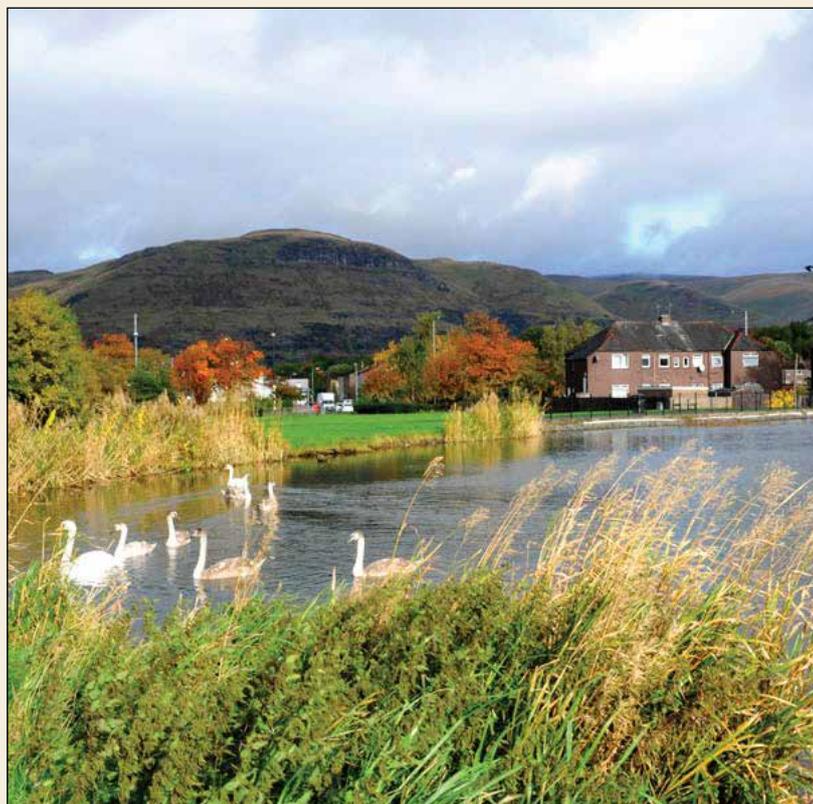
This multi-agency group includes the Council, Police Scotland and local Housing Associations who work together to deliver a coordinated approach to combat antisocial behaviour in the local community. Partnership working in this way helps to create effective relationships between the different agencies and deliver better outcomes for the community.

- Annual tenancy visits

This last year has seen us introduce annual tenancy visits. By meeting our tenants once a year it allows us to build a relationship with those of you who we might never meet. As well as getting to know your Housing Officer, you get an opportunity to raise any issues you may have with your tenancy.

- Garden monitoring

Throughout the year, but in particular throughout the summer months, we monitor our estates and gardens. If a tenant is not keeping their garden to the acceptable standard, we have in place a procedure to deal with this. In January 2014 we reviewed how we handle enforcement of garden conditions. We now place more emphasis on talking with tenants and encouraging them to look after their garden before sending formal letters. The new procedure also involves a Senior Housing Officer authorising formal enforcement action where required. These procedures will be reviewed again in January 2015 to see how effective they have been.



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Percentage of tenants satisfied with management of their neighbourhood

i17

Clacks Result 83%

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
93%	67%	72%

We are pleased that so many of you are satisfied with the management of your neighbourhood. There is still room for improvement so we will continue to monitor our estates to ensure that they meet your expectations.

Abandonments as percentage of stock

c11

Clacks Result 1%

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
0.2%	1.8%	0.7%

The number of abandoned properties has increased in the last year. Work is currently underway to improve identification of the support needs of housing applicants and the provision of appropriate support, including intensive tenancy management, particularly at the early stages of a tenancy.

Percentage of ASB cases resolved within locally agreed target

i19

Clacks Result 74.6%

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
113.6%	35.6%	78.5%

With your help we set our targets for resolving ASB at 20 weeks. We managed to resolve almost three quarters of our cases within this timescale. This is in line with our expectations as some complex cases take time to reach an acceptable conclusion. 100% of respondents were satisfied with the service they received.

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Tenancy Sustainment

Charter Outcome 11

Social landlords ensure that:

- tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations

Housing Support Team

The introduction of The Housing Support Services (Homelessness)(Scotland) Regulations 2012 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to assess whether persons found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness need housing support services. We have a Housing Support Team who offer support to tenants who need some extra help to manage their tenancy. The officers give advice and assistance in many different areas such as, advising or assisting a person to settle into a new tenancy, budgeting, and engaging with other services. The majority of service users currently working with the Housing Support Team have been homeless applicants.



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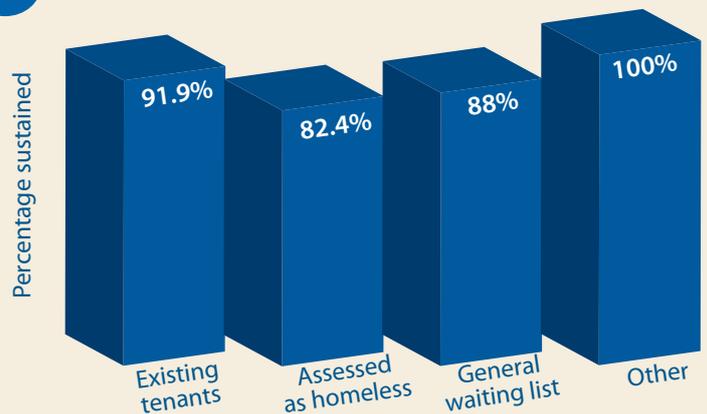
Money Advice Service

The Money Advice Service offers help and advice about managing your money. We can check your benefit and tax credit entitlement, give advice about dealing with debt including rent arrears and we can contact creditors on your behalf. We aim to achieve sustainable outcomes for tenants to help them remain in their home.

Adaptations

If you are disabled or experience an illness that means you need to have your home adapted, we are able to assist with this. Adaptations fall into 2 categories, minor and major. All requirements for major adaptations are assessed by a Social Care Officer who will then recommend what changes need to be made. We aim to carry out adaptations as soon as we can.

i20 Tenancies Sustained for more than a year



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Percentage of approved applications for medical adaptations completed during the reporting year

i22

Clacks Result 81%

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
100%	32%	93%

Average time to complete approved applications for medical adaptations during the reporting year

i23

Clacks Result 67 days

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
10 days	236 days	49 days

Access to Housing and Support

Charter Outcomes 7, 8, 9 & 10

The Charter requires Social Landlords to work together to ensure:

- People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them
- tenant and people on housing lists can review their housing options
- people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness
- people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

Home@Clacks, the new dedicated Housing Options Shop, is now open at Kilncraigs.

Within Home@Clacks you can:

- Have a Personal Housing Plan carried out using our Housing Options Assessment Tool
- Speak to officers about Council Housing Stock and the prospects of receiving an offer
- Get advice on preventing homelessness and make an application if necessary

Home@Clacks has been designed to be accessible and welcoming, where staff are friendly and provide you with the information you need.

- Get money and welfare benefits advice from trained officers, if you are at risk of losing your home, or you wish to rent from a private landlord.
- Apply for our rent bond guarantee scheme to help you to get housing from a private landlord.
- See a selection of properties available for rent from Ochil View Housing Association and private landlords.
- Use our self serve facility where you can access sites that can help you to resolve your housing need. You can also access employment sites if you are looking for a job.

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We are part of a Housing Options Hub that includes Perth & Kinross, Angus, Fife, Dundee and Argyll & Bute Councils. To ensure that we are providing a fair access to housing, we have recently taken part in a Customer Satisfaction Survey Pilot along with the other members. The questions in the survey were developed in conjunction with service users and were split into 3 categories. Participants in the survey were encouraged to think about some different aspects of the service they received, if they felt the staff put them at ease, didn't judge, explained the process and informed them how long the process would take.

Question	Clacks Result	Hub result
Were staff helpful and approachable?	83%	81%
Did you get the information you needed to make a choice?	75%	82%
Were your needs met?	75%	81%

It's positive to see that throughout the Housing Options Process 83% of you were satisfied that staff were helpful and approachable. As only 75% of you were satisfied with getting the information you need and thought that your needs were met, we will look to improve in these areas.

Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year

i21

Clacks Result 8.3%

Average length of time to re-let properties in the last year

i35

Clacks Result 40.41 days

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
14.4 days	71.51 days	40.1 days

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In the coming year, our priority is to make better use of our own housing stock and seek flexible solutions to meet customer needs and aspirations.

Homeless

Charter Outcome 12

Local councils perform their duties on homelessness so that:

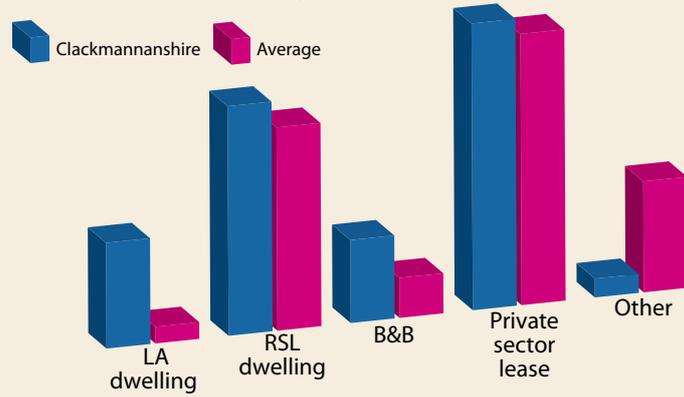
- homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

Percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made **i26**

Clacks Result 99%

How did we compare? Average 107%

Average length of time in Temporary accommodation by type



All housing applicants, including those presenting as homeless, are taken through the Housing Options process. They are offered support and advice throughout the application.

The offer of temporary accommodation is a key element of the homelessness assessment process. In Clackmannanshire we have access to a variety of temporary accommodation options. We use B&B and our use is slightly above average. We are increasing our

temporary accommodation within Clackmannanshire this year and this will enable us to reduce the need to use B&B accommodation.

Percentage satisfied with the quality of temporary accommodation **i28**

Clacks Result 92%

How did we compare? Average 87%

Gypsies / Travellers

Charter Outcome 16

Local councils and social landlords with responsibility for managing sites for Gypsies / Travellers should manage the sites so that:

- sites are well maintained and managed

Clackmannanshire Council have a facility at Westhaugh Alva where Gypsies and Travellers are able to rent a pitch. There are 16 pitches on the site.

Average weekly rent per pitch **i36**

Clacks Result £56.28

How did we compare? Average £65.71



When we asked the residents if they were satisfied with the management of the site 100% of those who responded were satisfied.

Getting good value from rents and service charges

Charter Outcomes 13,14 & 15

Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:

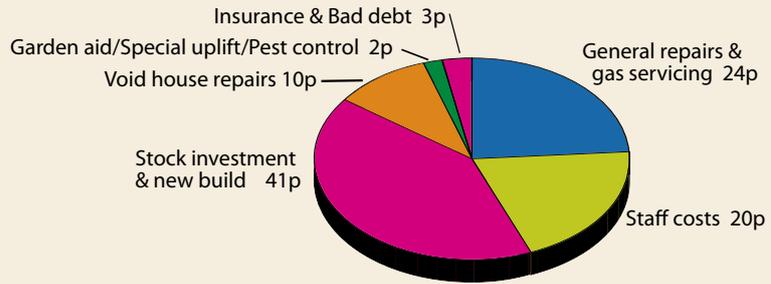
- a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them

Managing your money

Your rent money pays for all the services provided to you as a tenant. For every £1 of rent you pay, over half goes towards maintaining your home through repairs and other stock investment.

The level of rent you pay is less than the Scottish Average but we have managed to deliver the higher Clacks Standard and continue to make improvements to your homes.

Spend per £



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Indicators

Size of Home	Number owned	Average Rent	Scottish Average*	Difference
1 Apartment	25	£59.08	£59.56	-0.8%
2 Apartment	1318	£60.63	£65.18	-7%
3 Apartment	2240	£62.19	£67.19	-7.4%
4 Apartment	1241	£63.75	£73.07	-12.8%
5 Apartment	134	£65.52	£81.68	-19.8%

*Average of all local authority landlords and RSLs.

Rent collected from tenants as a percentage of total rent due

i30

Clacks Result 96.3%

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
102.8%	95.9%	99.1%

Percentage of rent lost through properties being empty in the last year

i34

Clacks Result 0.85%

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
0.38%	3.48%	1.4%

Amount & percentage of former tenant arrears written off

c23

Former tenant arrears	£569,207
Arrears written off	£54,417
% written off	9.6%

Rent arrears

We proactively manage our rent arrears and aim to provide support and advice to the tenants who fall behind with their rent.

Our arrears have increased over the last year. The changes to Housing Benefit and the introduction of the Under Occupation charge have had an impact on arrears. We have utilised the available Discretionary Housing Payment to help offset the arrears.

It is important that we minimise the time that houses are empty. We aim to carry out any repairs and let them again as quickly as possible to minimise the rental income lost while they are empty. We had an increased number of voids during 13/14 so our void rent loss has increased slightly compared with the previous year. We are working on how to make sure that we manage our empty properties as efficiently as possible.

When tenants leave and they have rent arrears we still look to recover the arrears. If we cannot recover them we will write off the arrears in line with the Council's policy.

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Participation and Scrutiny

Charter Outcome 3

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

We provide a range of options which give our tenants and other customers a variety of choices and opportunities to be involved. It is particularly important to provide flexibility given the diversity of all participants, tenants' needs, aspirations and individual circumstances.

We recognise that tenants may want to take part in different ways. Some people may want to receive some information and others may want to be more actively involved in specific activities like a community group or the Clackmannanshire Tenants and Residents Federation. 81% of you said we are good at keeping you informed about our services and decisions.

The survey also highlighted that overall, 79% of respondents are satisfied with the opportunities to participate in Clackmannanshire Council's decision making processes.

Older tenants are more satisfied so we need to try to engage with our younger tenants.

Percentage satisfaction with opportunities to participate in the decision making processes

i3

Clacks Overall	79%
Over 65	84%
Under 65	76%

Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions

i6

Clacks Result 81%

How did we compare? Average 78%

Over half (54%) of respondents reported no particular reason for being dissatisfied and a further 1% said 'don't know'. The reason mentioned by the largest proportion of respondents was "only given limited opportunities to air views". When asked about their preferred level of involvement in Clackmannanshire 76% are happy to be kept informed. Sixteen percent would like to have a say, with a smaller proportion (4%) looking to be involved in making decisions.

Scrutiny

Customer scrutiny is different from tenant participation. Good scrutiny ensures that there are opportunities for the public to influence and improve the services they receive. Scrutiny ensures that decision making processes are clear and accessible to the public and that the people taking decisions are held accountable for those decisions.



Current scrutiny activities include:

- Estate management walkabouts
- Study Visits to various parts of the service

To ensure that we are providing opportunities to tenants and service users to influence and improve services, we have signed up to

the Government's Stepping up to Scrutiny training and learning programme. There will be separate sessions for tenants and service users, staff and Elected Members. This will be delivered during the Autumn of 2014. If you are interested in being involved in this programme, please contact us for further information.

Get Involved - call us on 01259 450000 and ask for the Tenant Participation Coordinator