



**Clackmannanshire
Council**

www.clacksweb.org.uk

Tenants News Summary Summer 2011

Welcome to the Tenants' Newsletter

Following the feedback received at the [Scottish Social Housing Charter consultation event](#), you 'the customer' told us you wanted the Housing service to produce a short summary regularly telling you about recent housing activity and actions. Therefore, the housing service will be developing further an on-line tenants newsletter. The articles contained in this document detail our recent activity and performance results, these will feature in the first edition.

If you would like to comment on the style of the tenants newsletter or suggest articles or information you would like to see, please contact us at:

Contact:

Tenant Participation

Tel: 01259 450000 (please hold and ask the customer service adviser for Performance and Information Team)

Email: housing@clacks.gov.uk

Customer satisfaction results

We are always looking at ways of improving our services and we need you to tell us how we are doing so that we know when we are getting things right and we know where we need to improve. We also compare ourselves with other social housing providers so that we know how we are performing in comparison with others. Here are some recent results for 2010/11 showing what our customers have told us and how we compare with others on some key service areas.

** 2010/11 figures from Scottish Housing Best Value Network Annual Benchmarking Report*

Tenant satisfaction with the Allocations process

Clackmannanshire Council **96.5%**

Scottish Average **70%**

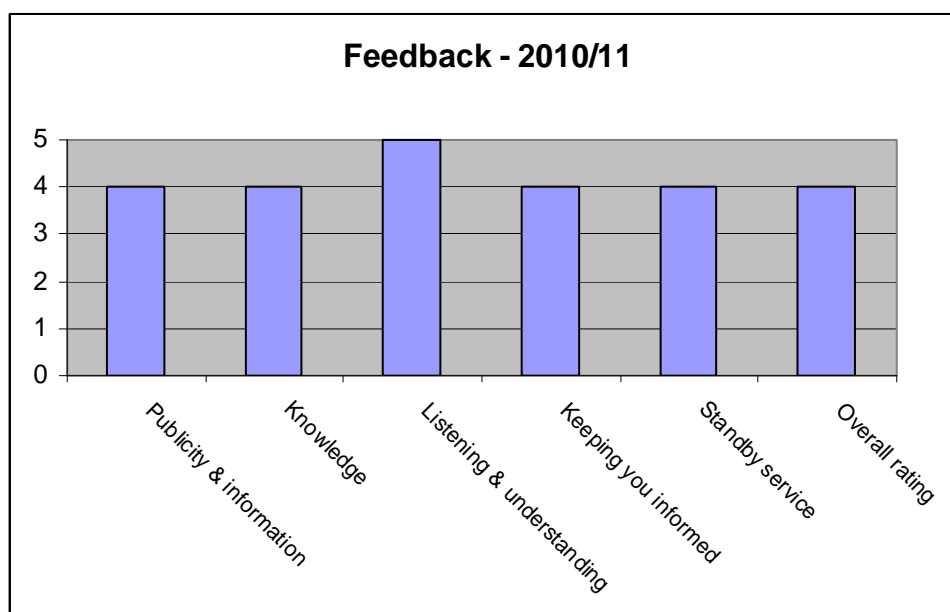
Tenant satisfaction with ASB and Neighbour Nuisance service

Since the beginning of January 2010, we have asked you to tell us how you feel about our service when we deal with your neighbour complaint.

We work to achieve a positive outcome in all neighbour disputes, and although we recognise that this may not always be possible we hope that your continued feedback will help us to concentrate on those areas you think we can improve on, such as the information we provide about the service.

So far, we have received the following feedback:

54% of tenants who were asked how they feel about our service while dealing with their neighbour dispute 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011 responded. Tenants were asked to rate different aspects of our ASB service on a score of 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Very good). The results are shown below.



When we compare these results with the 10 other Local Authorities who provided their results on this indicator for the Scottish Best Value Network Annual Benchmarking report for 2010/11 we compare well. The average satisfaction rate was 51% and 87.5% of Clackmannanshire tenants said that they were satisfied with our service.

Tenant satisfaction with the Repairs Service

Clackmannanshire Council 93.5%

Scottish Average 92.5%

New tenant satisfaction with the standard of void property/new let

Clackmannanshire Council 96.5%

Scottish Average 71%

Clackmannanshire Council were the second highest performer on this indicator compared with the 14 others who provided results.

From these results we can see that our customer satisfaction levels are good and that we are doing well in comparison with other housing providers.

Complaints about service received in 2010/11

We also record and monitor the complaints we receive from our customers so that we can learn lessons from these and know what action we need to take to improve our services.

We are pleased that the level of complaints we receive from our customers is relatively low in comparison with other housing providers. The indicator used to measure this in the Annual Benchmarking Report is the number of complaints about service per 1000 tenancies. Compared with the 18 other housing providers who provided results on this indicator, we received relatively few complaints about our service last year (2010/11) with just under 10 complaints received per 1000 properties compared with the average for the 18 other housing providers of 24 complaints per 1000 properties.

In total, 48 complaints about service were received during the financial year 2010/11.

Performance results on key indicators

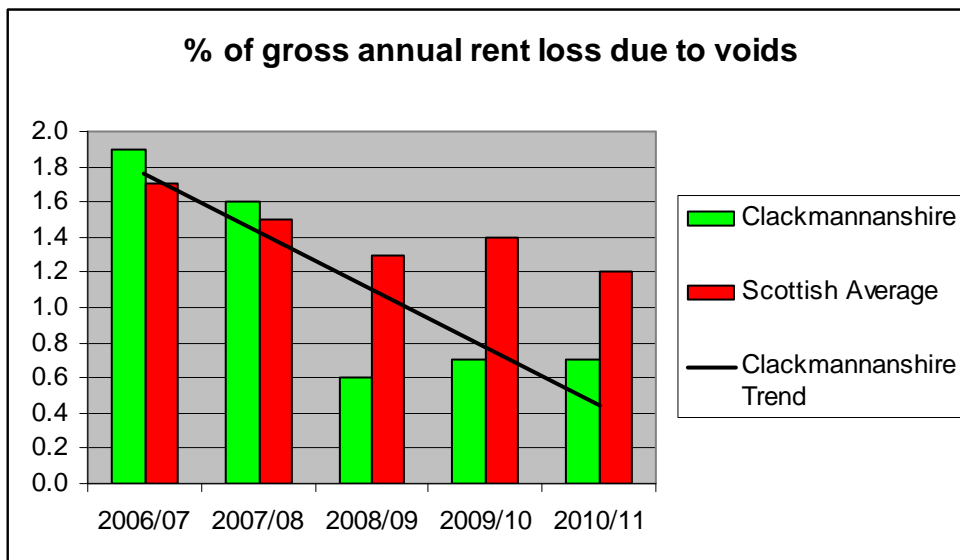
A number of key performance indicators tell us how we effectively we are performing in key service areas and we have just received information that tells us how we compare with other housing providers on a range of performance results. Some further analysis will be done but for now, here are some results to show you how we are doing and how we compare with others.

Rent loss due to empty properties

We measure the level of rent loss due to houses remaining empty when they are available for letting.

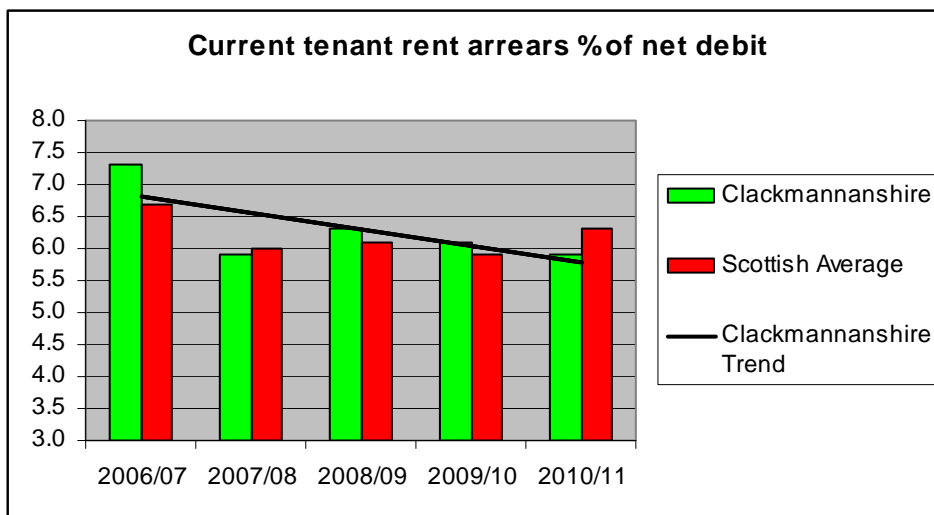
The chart below shows our performance on this indicator over the past 5 years and although there has been a very slight increase in the past 2 years the trend is still positive and we are performing better than the average of 1.2% with of the gross annual rent loss at 0.7% in 2010/11.

Our performance in this area remains strong and this is due to our continued focus on streamlining the processes relating to the management of void properties, management of the waiting list and the allocation of properties.



Current tenant rent arrears as % of net debit

This is a measure of the council's performance in collecting rent due from current tenants.



The chart shows our performance over the past 5 years with the overall trend showing a reduction. By reducing current tenant arrears to 5.9% last year we exceeded our target and performed well compared with others with the average at 6.3%.

Helping new tenants

We want to provide excellent service to our customers and to help new tenants when they move into their tenancy. As part of our service we aim to make contact with all new tenants in the first few weeks of their new tenancy.

Unfortunately some tenants terminate their tenancy within the first year. Of the tenancies let in 2009/10, 15% terminated within the first 12 months of their tenancy. Some of these tenants have had a positive change to their circumstances which means they have wanted to give up their tenancy, but others have left their tenancy because they have had difficulties in coping with the responsibilities of living in their own home and maintaining their tenancy. Compared with others the rate of Clackmannanshire tenants terminating in the first year of their tenancy is relatively high. The average for 2010/11 for other housing providers was 9.5% and this tells us we need to do more to help

tenants keep their tenancy. We want to do more to help people to be able to keep their tenancy.

In 2010/11 we successfully achieved our target of making 3 contact attempts with 100% of all new tenants within the first 6 weeks of their tenancy. This remains our target, but we have now introduced a number of additional visits to be carried out to make sure that tenants get regular contact with us throughout the first year of their tenancy, so that we can offer help if needed.

We have now introduced quarterly visits or phone calls to tenants to offer any help that the tenant may need with their tenancy. This will mean that we are on hand to help with any possible issues at an early stage of a tenancy so that we can help tenants to stay in their home. It will also give us a good opportunity to capture some customer feedback on the service they are receiving.

We will record and monitor the information we collate and this will help us to know what we need to do to improve our service to help new tenants remain in their tenancy.

Working with our partner to make communities better places to live

Last year we recorded a sharp increase in the number of complaints from residents about anti-social behaviour of some tenants in particular streets in the Alva area.

Tenancy Management team manager Julie Strain suggested the solution of a Problem Solving Partnership with housing and police. PSPs are considered to be best practice as a multi-agency approach to problem solving within communities. They can be instigated and managed by agencies other than the police e.g. Councils or Fire and Rescue services.

The purpose of a PSP is to more effectively address crime and anti-social problems by analysing the problems in an area and working together to address the underlying problems.

This approach had never been used before in Clackmannanshire. As the PSP progressed the proactive joint working of housing officers and police led to 38 separate neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour cases being dealt with.

Cases ranged from low level nuisance such as noise, partying and dirty closes, to more serious incidents involving criminal activity such as damage to property, fencing and door entry systems. Information sharing and joint working has resulted in a reduction in incidents and complaints about nuisance and anti-social behaviour in the areas. We have also received positive feedback from residents in the area and participants at the recent Estate Inspection who told us that they felt the area had recently improved. The police have also reported a significant reduction in crime in the area.

The recent activity and positive results show that anti-social behaviour will be dealt with and resolved and that working in partnership with police and others, we can make a difference.

Estate Walkabouts are a success with customers

We completed the Spring Walkabouts on 10th June 2011 and we asked each participant to complete a questionnaire to tell us what they thought of the walkabout. We asked for an overall rating for our estate inspection and

walkabout service. The scores range from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good) and the average score for the Spring Walkabouts earlier this year was 5.

We are delighted that those who took part gave such a high rating for our service and we hope to maintain this high standard so have set our target for the full year at 5 (very good).

One of the things that we learned from the consultation event held earlier this year was that Clackmannanshire Tenants welcome Estate Management walkabouts but want better communication about when they are taking place and how to get involved.

We want you to be proud of where you live and during the walkabouts you can help us identify things that could be improved so we can ensure your neighbourhood is clean, tidy and a place where people want to live, work and play.

Our housing staff are constantly out and about, and these walkabouts are a formal chance for tenants and residents to accompany senior staff, community constables and elected members and give feedback.

Our next round of Walkabouts are taking place from 15th August to 30th September so if you are interested in joining our staff on a walkabout and would like more information on how to take part please call 01259 450000, email housing@clacks.gov.uk or check the events diary on ClacksWeb.

You said, We did

You told us how we can improve the way you can provide us with feedback and make our complaints process simpler

- so we have taken action to act on what you said.

You told us that we need to improve publicity about our estate walkabouts

- so we have put updated information on our website and we have included a reminder in this edition of Homing In to make sure that customers who want to take part are aware of when the next estate walkabout is scheduled to take place in your area.

Read more below about what we have done to improve services as a result of feedback received from you.

We continuously strive to improve our services to customers and consulting our customers is an essential part of our business to make sure that we deliver services that meet our customers needs and expectations.

We recently asked some of our customers for their feedback on the leaflet that outlines the Council's Corporate Customer Care process so that we can assess how effectively the process is for our customers to provide comments or make a complaint.

We also surveyed Housing staff to get their views.

From this we learned that:

We need to make it easier for customers to make comments about our service or to make a complaint if service is not satisfactory.

We must provide clear information to customers about when they will receive an acknowledgement and a response to their complaint.

We need to make sure that comments and compliments about our service are actively recorded and that this information is shared.

As a result we have:

- Shared the results of our customer and staff surveys with Council colleagues to feed into the review of the Council's Corporate Customer Care process
- We provided information in the staff Core Brief to make sure that everyone is aware of how to record feedback and comments from customers
- reviewed our internal processes
- identified the need for staff awareness training to make sure that compliments, comments and complaints are correctly recorded and that staff are clear on the processes to act upon them to improve services.

Recording of comments and feedback from customers has already improved and we have received many positive comments about staff. One customer wrote in to tell us about the positive impact an individual member of staff had made on their family and praised the thoughtfulness, attention to detail and courteous attitude which had made things easy for them.

Housing Business Management System

Clackmannanshire Council wants to provide an excellent housing service. We operate a range of housing and property services which show clear evidence of good practice and continuous improvement over many years. Despite the improving operational performances within Housing and the Property Contracts Unit, the various existing IT support systems are not linked up properly, short in performance reporting, and some no longer fit our purpose. They are also due for re-tendering in line with the Council's Contract Standing Order's.

We have identified financial and operational benefits from the purchase and installation of a new system and we anticipate the estimated savings from this will repay the investment made. The main areas which will benefit from a new system include ;

- A comprehensive stock database,
- An integrated response repairs system including an appointment scheduling system,
- An empty property tracking system,
- A person centred management system,
- An estate management facility,
- An intake system for lettings and homelessness,

This project will be taken forward in 4 stages and a selected IT provider will be working with the Council early in the next financial year from April.

Customer Service Excellence

Customer Service Excellence is supported and promoted by the Scottish Government and has been developed to offer public services a practical way to drive customer focused change in their organisation. Clackmannanshire Council also has a clear aim that customers should be at the heart of what we do and for this reason we are committed that all services including Housing and Property services should meet this standard. This is part of a wider commitment to improving services. Housing will undergo the accreditation process in August 2011 which will be the beginning of a 3 year process of annual check upon service delivery.

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

Clackmannanshire Council is committed to tenant participation and the delivery of customer focussed services. The Council has made the development of a Scottish Social Housing Charter a central feature of this commitment over the past year. A central theme coming from consultation on the new Charter has been transparency in how tenants rent money is managed. Rent money is paid into the Housing Revenue Account which is managed in a 30 year Financial Business Plan in line with legislation and guidance. A commitment has been made that in 2010/11 a representative of the Tenants Federation will be invited to join the HRA Board in a quality assurance role.