



**Better Services**

**Better Opportunities**

**Better Communities**

# **Report to Tenants 2014-15**

Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance

# Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce Clackmannanshire Council's second report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

As you would expect it has been another busy year for the Housing and Community Safety Service. In the last two years we've added 111 homes to the Council's stock through new build and "off the shelf" purchases. A repairs appointment system has been implemented, and once again improved our "Customer Service Excellence" rating. This is the Government backed standard which tests in great depth those areas that research has indicated are a priority for customers, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude.

We have begun a rigorous process of self-assessment. This has involved redesigning a lot of what we do to ensure that the services we provide to customers are cost-effective, and improving. It is worth noting that significant savings have been made without limiting in any way the service provided.

However, we are far from complacent. As you will see from our comparisons with other landlords, in many areas our performance is very good, and in others there is room for improvement.

It is my belief that aspects of our service should stand comparison with any landlord in Scotland. Excellence in customer service is our expectation, and that is what we are striving for.

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

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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](http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/find-and-compare-landlords)

### What do the tables mean?

<b>Indicator Name</b>	<b>iX</b>	
<b>Clacks Result</b>	<b>xx%</b>	
How did we compare?		
Best	Worst	Average
xx%	xx%	xx%

14/15 result

The data refers to the performance period 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015.

### 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 who 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 results of satisfaction within this report are from the 2013 survey.

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

Housing Business Management Team  
Clackmannanshire Council

Kilncraigs

Alloa

FK10 1EB

0845 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.

In our Tenant Satisfaction and Aspiration Survey 2013, we asked you how satisfied you are with the overall service we provide as your Landlord. 90% of you said you are satisfied. This survey is due to be carried out again during 2016.

In this survey we asked you what would be your preferred level of involvement in our work. 76% of respondents are happy just to be kept informed. We do this by putting Housing related articles in the Council newsletter The View and producing this annual report.

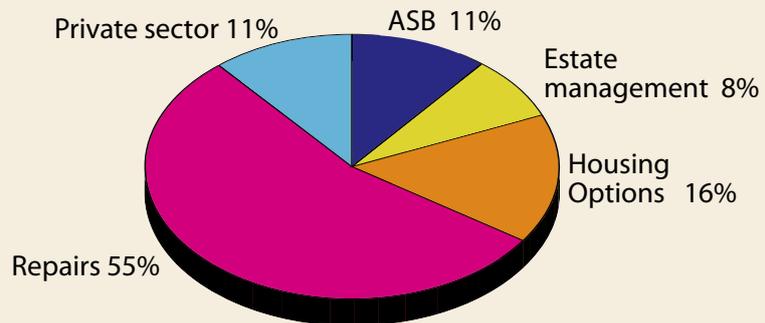


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### Complaints to the Service

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman complaints framework for all Councils and Social Landlords dictates how we manage complaints. This is a two stage process with 1st stage complaints being responded to within 5 working days and 2nd stage complaints that require more investigation should be responded to within 20 working days.

### Complaints by service area



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

	13/14		14/15	
	1st stage complaints	2nd stage complaints	1st stage complaints	2nd stage complaints
Complaints received	29	3	32	6
Responded to in full in by the landlord in the reporting year	100%	100%	100%	83%
Complaints upheld by the landlord in the reporting year	31%	33%	41%	50%
Complaints responded to in full within the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman timescales	90%	100%	100%	100%

We take complaints about the services we provide very seriously and we look to resolve issues quickly. We have upheld more complaints this year and we look to learn lessons about how we can provide a better service. With over half of all complaints received relating to repairs, we will look at this area to identify improvements.

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# Housing Quality and Maintenance

## Outcomes 4 & 5

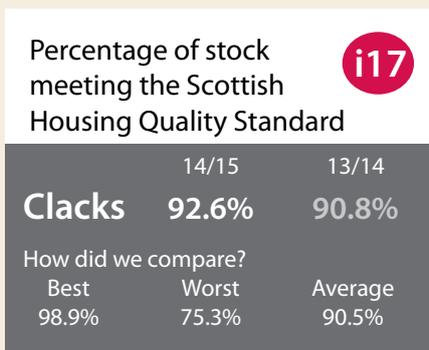
Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- 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.

Most of the rent tenants pay goes towards repairing and maintaining the housing stock. Clackmannanshire Council is committed to ensuring that all its properties meet and maintain the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

Out of all Local Authorities we are still 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.

In the last financial year we have invested nearly £7 million on key projects improving the condition of the Housing stock. This has been an extremely busy but successful year with many upgrade projects being delivered improving housing condition for many tenants throughout Clackmannanshire. Our current compliance with SHQS is 92.6%.

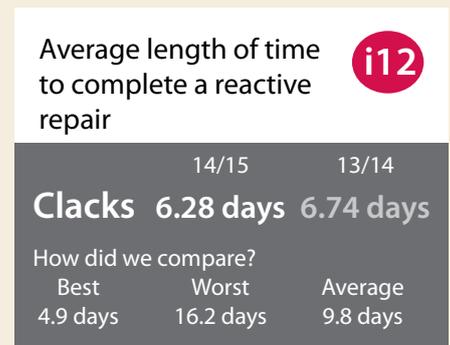
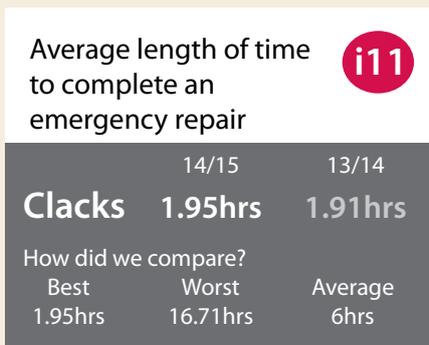
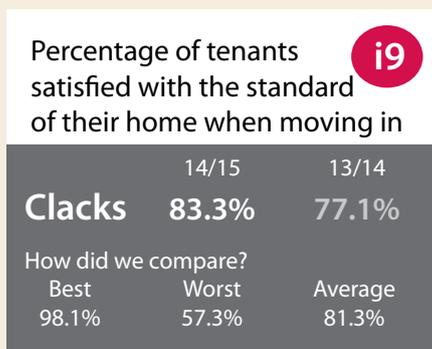


- 1040 Bathroom replacements and upgrades
- 313 Central Heating systems 25 Kitchen replacements
- 299 Safe electrical upgrades
- 250 stock condition surveys
- 191 garden fence replacements
- 121 door entry upgrades
- 39 Roofs replaced
- 33 flats in Pine Grove refurbished
- 27 Front door replacements
- 23 houses Roughcasted

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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.

- Patch based working

Over the last year we have piloted patch based working. Previously, our officers would work over a large geographical area. In the pilot we had officers responsible for specific areas and streets. This allowed them to focus on local issues and really get to know the tenants in their patch. This has been successful and we are now looking to have all our Housing Officers working in their own patch.

- 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.

- Garden monitoring

Garden monitoring is high on our agenda, particularly in the Summer months. In this last year we reviewed our procedure to deal with tenants who are not keeping their gardens at an acceptable standard. This review lead us to place more emphasis on talking to tenants to encourage them to maintain their gardens. We have recently been looking at opportunities to work with 3rd Sector organisations to help maintain gardens. This could be an opportunity to provide training and employment to local residents.

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Percentage of tenants satisfied with management of their neighbourhood

i17

**Clacks** 83%

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
93%	67%	72%

Percentage of ASB cases resolved within locally agreed target

i19

	14/15	13/14
<b>Clacks</b>	82.1%	74.6%

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
116.6%	24.7%	82.3%

Abandonments as percentage of stock

c11

	14/15	13/14
<b>Clacks</b>	0.72%	1%

How did we compare?

Best	Worst	Average
0.15%	1.68%	0.69%

# 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

### Tenancy Management Team

When we identify that a tenant may need some extra support to remain in their tenancy, our Tenancy Management Team helps to address these needs. We do this through intensive tenancy management. This can mean anything from weekly visits to ensure a tenant is putting their rubbish out to engaging other support providers where specific expertise is required. We have been working over this last year to improve our knowledge of support agencies available in the local area. The Alcohol and Drug Partnership hosted a networking event where Officers learned about the local support available and how to access it.

As Universal Credit is now active in this local area, we have worked with the DWP to make sure our Officers are well informed and can assist tenants with an application for Universal Credit. Officers will also help where they can with budgeting, including managing rent payments.

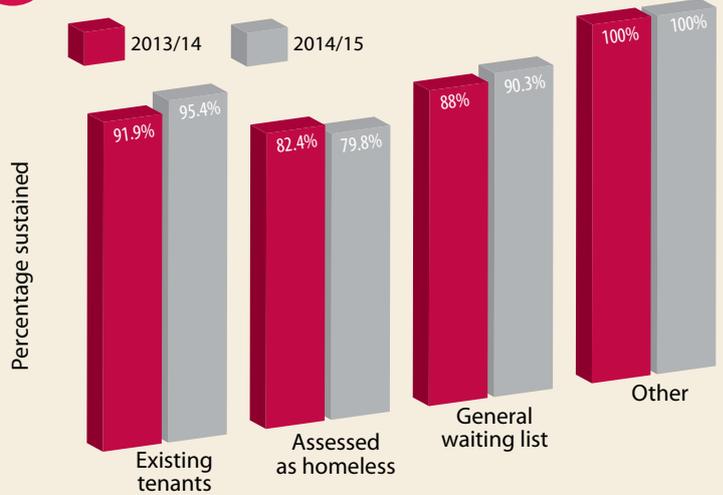
### Money Advice Service

Where tenants need help with more complex money issues, 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 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



9



10

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

i22

	14/15	13/14
<b>Clacks</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>81%</b>
How did we compare?		
Best	Worst	Average
100%	62%	86%

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

i12

	14/15	13/14
<b>Clacks</b>	<b>38 days</b>	<b>67 days</b>
How did we compare?		
Best	Worst	Average
19 days	155 days	52 days

# Access to Housing

Home@Clacks is the dedicated Housing Options Shop at Kilncraigs.

Within Home@Clacks you can:

- 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
- 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.
- 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.

Over the last year we have been looking at how we deliver services to our customers and we have made some changes. Now when you come into Home@Clacks we aim to ensure the officer you speak with initially will be with you through each stage of your journey to a new home. This means that your Housing Officer will assess your housing need, support you if you are in temporary accommodation and will assist you to make the move into your new home. Our Housing Officers are highly skilled, however there may be times where they cannot meet their customer's support needs. Where this is the case, the Housing Officer will call on the help from specialist agencies and will ensure their customer gets the support they need to move onto permanent accommodation. As well as dealing with individual customers needs, our new way of working looks to let our properties as quickly as possible. We are now carrying out viewings of properties earlier in the void period so that once a property is ready, we have an applicant ready to move in.



11

12

Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year **i21**

	14/15	13/14
<b>Clacks</b>	8.2%	8.3%

Average length of time to re-let properties in the last year **i35**

	14/15	13/14
<b>Clacks</b>	40 days	40.4 days
How did we compare?		
Best	14 days	
Worst		92 days
Average		41 days

# 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**

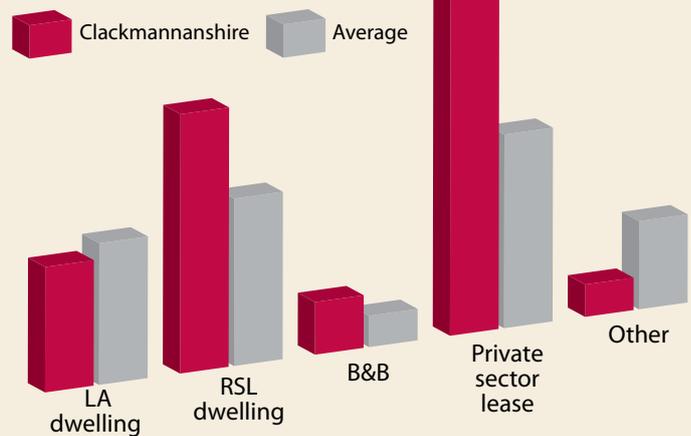
	14/15	13/14
<b>Clacks</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>99%</b>
How did we compare?		
Average		103%

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 provision 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 have increased our temporary accommodation within Clackmannanshire in the past year and this has enabled us to reduce the need to use B&B accommodation.

### Average length of time in Temporary accommodation by type



13

# 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 Westthugh Alva where Gypsies and Travellers are able to rent a pitch. There are 16 pitches on the site.

Average weekly rent per pitch

**i36**

<b>Clacks Result</b>	<b>£85</b>
How did we compare?	
Average	£65.71



14

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

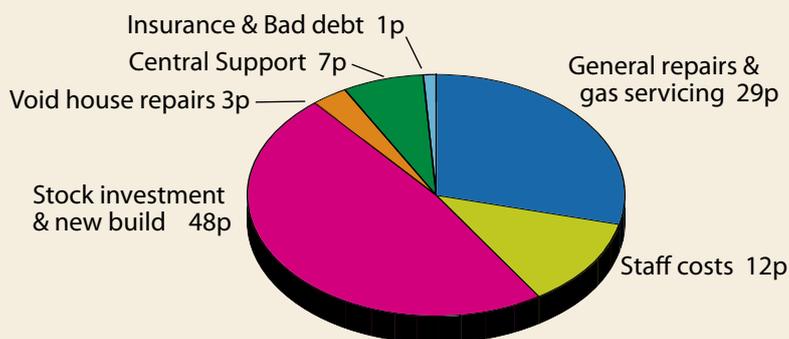
Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that::

- Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

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
- tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

### Spend per £



15

### Weekly Rent Charge

Size of Home	Number owned	Average Rent	Scottish Average*	Difference
1 apartment	27	£63.81	£64.03	0.3%
2 apartment	1,341	£65.54	£68.54	4.4%
3 apartment	2,249	£67.23	£69.60	3.4%
4 apartment	1,239	£68.92	£75.69	8.9%
5 apartment	133	£70.85	£84.04	15.7%

\*Average of all local authority landlords and RSLs.

Your rent money pays for all the services provided to you as a tenant. For every £1 of rent you pay, 77p 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.

Percentage of tenants who feel the rent for their property represents good value for money

i29

**Clacks 79.9%**

How did we compare?  
Best 88.6% Worst 62.3% Average 76.4%

### Rent arrears

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

Rent collected from tenants as a percentage of total rent due

i30

14/15 13/14  
**Clacks 99% 96%**

How did we compare?  
Best 100% Worst 96% Average 99%

The changes to Housing Benefit have had an impact on arrears so we have been preparing to manage tenants on Universal Credit as it is introduced in this area. We have utilised the available Discretionary Housing Payment to help offset the arrears.

Amount & percentage of former tenant arrears written off

c23

Former tenant arrears £621,881  
Arrears written off £54,247  
% written off 8.7%

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 have introduced a new way of working to make sure that we manage our empty properties as efficiently as possible.

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

i34

14/15 13/14  
**Clacks 1.1% 0.85%**

How did we compare?  
Best 0.33% Worst 2.66% Average 1.1%

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 communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.
- Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

The Tenant Participation strategy is the document that outlines how the Housing & Community Safety service will consult with their tenants and service users on a range of major housing issues that affect them as part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The strategy is reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with staff, partners and a tenants working group.

Last year we signed up to the 'Stepping Up to Scrutiny' programme commissioned by the Scottish Government. It was delivered by the Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland in partnership with HouseMark Scotland. The programme involved tenants forming a Scrutiny Panel and staff and Elected Members attending workshops to familiarise them with the process of Tenant Scrutiny.

The scrutiny panel carried out a pilot exercise where they identified from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2013 and the Report to Tenants 2013/14 that they would like to look at Access to Housing and Support. From the Satisfaction Survey they could see staff were helpful, only 75% of respondents were satisfied with the information needed to make a choice



about their housing options. As a consequence of this the panel looked at Housing options to see where improvements, if any, could be made to the service provided.

The panel identified some strengths and weaknesses that were shared with the Housing Service to be considered for action. The Panel will now consider where they would next like to focus their attention.

**If you are a tenant and are interested in joining the Scrutiny Panel, please contact the Community and Tenant Participation Coordinator on 01259 450000.**

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

i3

**Clacks Result 81%**

How did we compare?  
Average 80%

Percentage satisfaction with opportunities to participate in the decision making processes

i6

**Clacks Result 79%**

How did we compare?  
Average 70%