

Housing



ANNUAL REPORT

Housing Services 2022/23



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and our future plans** Page 7



Housing

ANNUAL REPORT

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How we are performing and our future plans



Convenor statement

Danny Devlin

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 2022-23 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.

This year we are placing a strong emphasis on supporting tenants and customers with the challenges of cost of living, which continue to hit local communities hard. We are also pushing forward with improvements to the quality and responsiveness of our services which reflect what customer feedback tells us. We are also getting more tenants involved in helping make change happen. Our new housing IT system is now live, providing improvements in how staff work. Work on our customer portal, which will make our services easier to access digitally, as we go forward, is currently ongoing. Building new good quality homes for rent, and investing in existing homes our tenants live in, remains a top priority for us.

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 go forward with exciting plans for stronger tenant and customer engagement.

Get involved: customerengagement@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk



Get involved



We regularly hold consultations, send out surveys and speak to tenants to find out what we are doing well and areas we can improve. We're delighted when customers take the time to give us feedback on work we have completed. This ensures we are providing the best possible services.

If you would like to become involved please contact:

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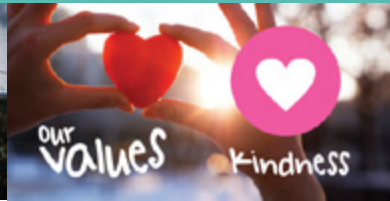


Vision for the future of housing

We are an ambitious service, proud to serve the local community and to ensure that we provide the best services possible for our tenants and customers. We are constantly looking at ways to improve and want our customers to be happy with the quality of our services and the homes we provide.



Suzanne Conlin
(Senior Housing Manager)



It's important that customers can access the advice, support and information that they are looking for, when they need it. With that in mind, our offices remain open to the public 5 days a week with staff available to speak to face to face, on the phone or online. Our Neighbourhood Housing and Maintenance staff are also actively out in the community supporting and consulting with tenants and residents.

We have made progress in the last year, driving forward our vision through:

- "Go Live" of a new Housing IT system which we use for our core business, including to manage tenancies and estates, monitor waiting lists and allocate homes, and log repairs which are reported to us. Our online customer portal is in development and services will begin to go live in the coming months, e.g. to complete housing applications, bid for council houses, access your rent account etc.
- We have provided opportunities throughout the year to get advice or get involved with us, through our new Neighbourhood Housing Officers, Neighbourhood Inspections programme and piloting of Housing Surgeries in the local community.

We are also about to embark on a large-scale survey of our tenants and factored owners, to get up to date feedback on satisfaction with our services and performance as a landlord. We will use this to continue to make improvements in the areas most important to our customers. 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



INTRODUCING NEW MANAGER

Tracy Lindsay – Housing services manager (service delivery - customer)



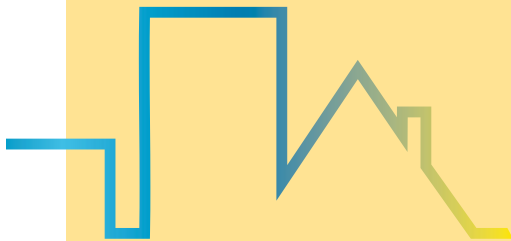
Tracy joined the service this year and is responsible for our Customer Teams who have a focus on delivering services not only to council tenants but other residents such as private renters and owner occupiers, and to those looking for a home through our waiting list, or who are homeless. Whilst the services delivered are wide ranging, the primary aim of enhancing the quality of life of those who access any of the services is universal.

The Neighbourhood Housing Officers are responsible for the management and upkeep of our estates, ensuring tenants meet their tenancy obligations including the payment of rent. Officers are on hand to assist with neighbour disputes, management of anti-social behaviour and leading on initiatives which enhance environmental conditions in gardens, open spaces and common areas.

The Housing Options Team are responsible for allocating our homes, including Sheltered and new build homes. The team also provide a range of housing options advice to prevent homelessness, but when unable to they carry out a statutory assessment for homelessness and manage those cases, as well as referring those in need to other parts of the team, such as for temporary accommodation and housing support.

The Housing Support and Temporary Accommodation Team allocate and manage all temporary accommodation as well as providing outreach support to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. An additional team supports young residents within our Supported Accommodation project. The Sheltered Accommodation Team provide support and ongoing management of our eight sheltered housing complexes across the district.

Last but by no means least, our Private Sector Team deliver services to private landlords and their tenants in relation to landlord registration and compliance. This team also manage our aids and adaptations service which provides grant funding for modifications which assist households with medical needs to remain in their own homes.



Customer care, engagement and communication

Introducing Lorna and Martin, as both are new in post over the last year and how to get in touch with them.



How do we compare?

We have had an improved performance for 2022/23 for our Customer Care and Engagement Team.

For complaints handling, we moved from 14th to 9th of all Councils on the average days it takes us to complete Stage 1 complaints (from 5.49 days in 21.22 to 4.44 days in 22.23) and from 12th to 8th on average days it takes us to complete Stage 2 complaints (20.64 days in 21.22 to 16.84 days in 22.23).

You can find out more about customer satisfaction with our services later in this report, and how this compares with other Councils and social landlords.

We use your feedback to make improvement to our service.



We had a suggestion that instead of letting you hear about compliments we have received in this section, you would like to hear about changes we're making after hearing feedback – so this is our first **You Said We Did!**

We have heard some feedback that our engagement isn't as inclusive as it could be...

... so we are now holding consultations on how you wish to get involved with Housing Services, as your input helps improve our service. You can give us your feedback online by scanning the QR code below or by calling 07788 553465 or 07741 235 272.

Housing surgeries

... other areas of the Council would like surgeries in their areas, so we have moved from Barrhead to Newton Mearns just now and this will move on to another area in the coming months. Please contact us if you would like a surgery in your area.

Everything is in Barrhead!

... we hosted our latest engagement event on Friday 6 October at Thorntree Hall in Thornliebank to meet with customers from all parts of the local authority.



ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Housing surgeries

Our customer engagement team have trialled housing surgeries monthly in conjunction with staff from our allocations, housing maintenance and neighbourhood housing teams in Neilston and Barrhead. We have worked with community partners in Neilston and Dunterlie to do this. We have recently started providing surgeries in Newton Mearns and the first one here was the best one attended yet. The feedback we are getting is that people outwith the Barrhead area struggle to engage with us and would like more opportunities to speak to us in their local areas. There are plans to run a few more in Newton Mearns then a move on to other neighbourhoods in East Renfrewshire.



Housing services customer engagement open day



Due to the success of the open day in 2022 we hosted another engagement event on October 6th 2023. We looked at how we support customers to feedback on service quality and customer care, and the ways that suit them best to get involved. We also covered our

plans for improvement and a range of information and advice on key matters including dealing with the cost of living pressures, preventing dampness and mould, our online services, and recruiting tenants and customers to get more involved.



The yearly neighbourhood inspections are in full swing and have been well attended by departments across the Council, and other partners, to ensure we have a strong

Neighbourhood inspections



joint approach to addressing issues. Inspections at all eight sheltered housing sites are complete and we are working our way through each of our neighbourhood areas.

Inclusivity

One major piece of feedback we have been given over the last year is we are not inclusive enough of all tenants and customers, so we are getting into conversation at every opportunity we can to discuss how people want to engage with us. The world has also changed and we need to move with the times and look at when and how customers can get involved with us. Not all people who

wish to engage are able to attend during office hours, or face to face, so we are consulting at present and looking at different ways. This includes how we make better use of what customers tell us on a day-to-day basis when they are in contact with the service, and not just through events and surveys. Many of our customers want to be able to give feedback on an issue of importance to them, when they need to, but may not want to get more heavily involved or have time to complete lots of different surveys.

Other things we do

In the last number of months, our customer engagement team have been involved in lots of different engagement ranging from facilitating meetings, speaking to tenants on one-to-one basis, networking with community groups and attending other organisations events. We also help facilitate meetings of the SHER Group (Sheltered Housing East Renfrewshire).





How we are performing and our future plans

This section provides detail on our performance in key areas of our work and services in the last full year, 2022-23. We show our achievements against The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) and this has also informed our Annual Assurance Statement for 2023. The tables show how we

compare to our performance in previous years and against the average of all local authorities in Scotland, and with all Scottish social landlords. It highlights where we are performing well and areas in need of improvement using a traffic light system:

Service delivery (customer) estates and tenancies

Indicator	ERC Housing 2022-23	ERC Housing 2021-22	Local Authority Average 2022-23	Housing Sector Average 2022-23	Position
% of new tenants housed who were still in their tenancy 12 months later	94.43%	89.36%	91.4%	91.2%	●
Average time to complete medical adaptations	30.69 days	23.51 days	46.9 days	46.8 days	●
% of anti-social behaviour cases resolved	93.88%	96.49%	91.4%	94.2%	●

Our performance in dealing with anti-social behaviour and estates issues remains strong. There has been a small number of tenancies which have not sustained for those housed mainly through our general waiting list, and we are reviewing the contact with and support we offer to those beginning a tenancy. Our refreshed Neighbourhood Housing Officer team also allows us to work more closely with all tenants in our estates and support them to remain in their tenancy.

Our performance in completing vital medical adaptations for our tenants remains high, despite taking slightly longer to complete in 2023-24, and provides critical support so that people with disability, mobility or cognitive issues can live as independently as possible at home.



Property services, assets and capital programme

East Renfrewshire Council Housing Services own 3126 homes including 244 sheltered homes. We also own and lease a number of temporary and supported properties to support the most vulnerable. Through our Council House Build programme, we added a further 94 new council homes to our stock in 2022/23.

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.

We have 100% compliance in ensuring gas safety certificates are renewed each year by their anniversary, ensuring we keep tenant safety at the forefront of our efforts.

Indicator	ERC Housing 2022-23	ERC Housing 2021-22	Local Authority Average 2022-23	Housing Sector Average 2022-23	Position
% of properties meeting SHQS at year end	59.21%	49.52%	70.9%	79.0%	
% of tenants' homes meeting EESSH1**	99.71%	98.3%	87.96%	91.01%	
Number of properties that failed to have a gas safety check by anniversary date	0	0	454	1032	

* 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 largely affected by our compliance with renewal of Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's). This dipped in 2021/22 when the renewal period for EICR's dropped from 10 to 5 years, meaning a dip in SHQS compliance solely relating to this element with just under half of homes meeting standard. Many other landlords have faced similar dips and are challenged to get these certificates in place and bring the pass rate for SHQS back to previous levels.

Our focus in 22.23 has been on renewal of EICR's to maximise the number of homes with a valid certificate.

By the end of 22.23 64% of our homes now had a valid EICR, achieved through commissioned survey work. We have a target for 100% compliance with EICR requirements by the end of 2023-24. Considering other reasons why properties may not meet SHQS (e.g. abeyances or exemptions) we expect our SHQS compliance to be above 90% at the end of 2023-24.



Housing repairs

Our repairs service is delivered by the Housing Maintenance Team supported by external contractors for specialist work.

The performance is excellent, illustrated in our response timescales for emergency repairs at 2.77 hours, and a reduction in time to complete non-emergency repairs since last year. The quality of repair work is also evident through a top quartile performance for jobs completed right first time (98.38%).

Challenges remain in sourcing materials and retaining and attracting skilled tradespersons.

Continuing improvement is focused on communicating more clearly with customers on what to expect for certain types of repairs, and to continue to increase satisfaction with the repairs service.

Indicator	ERC Housing 2022-23	ERC Housing 2021-22	Local Authority Average 2022-23	Housing Sector Average 2022-23	Position
Average time to complete emergency repairs	2.77 hours	2.66 hours	4.70 hours	4.2 hours	●
Average time to complete non-emergency repairs	7.09 days	8.35 days	9.7 days	8.7 days	●
% of day to day repairs completed 'Right First Time'	98.38%	98.97%	88.2%	87.8%	●

Rents, empty homes and value for money

East Renfrewshire Council rents although higher than the Scottish Council Average in 2022/23, are broadly in line with the average for all social landlords but notably lower than other social landlords operating in the East Renfrewshire area.

We agreed a rent increase for 23/24 (5% with a limit of £5 per week), which would support ongoing investment in our homes but acknowledged the challenges tenants face through cost-of-living pressures and national guidance requiring modest sector-wide increases for this reason.



Our rent setting consultation later in 2023 will again seek an increase which will support vital investment in existing and new homes, but also see rents remain affordable.



	Average Weekly Rent	ERC Housing 2022-23	Local Authority Average 2022-23	Housing Sector 2022-23
All Properties		£88.15	£81.02	£87.59
1 Apartment		£75.63	£66.46	£78.26
2 Apartment (One bedroom)		£77.46	£75.21	£83.46
3 Apartment (Two bedroom)		£89.58	£80.60	£86.28
4 Apartment (Three bedroom)		£103.28	£87.15	£93.96
5 Apartment (Four bedroom)		£105.74	£94.23	£103.72

Value for money



Gross rent arrears are those owed by both current and former tenants combined and are the value of rent and related charges that remain unpaid. Post-pandemic a significant increase in rent arrears across the country, given the financial challenges households face, has made it challenging for landlords to reverse this trend and reduce monies owed.

Our implementation of a fresh Arrears Recovery Plan, for both current and former tenancy arrears, has allowed us

to focus on engaging more directly and providing additional support to our tenants to help meet their rent payments and reduce arrears.

This has resulted in a notable reduction in outstanding rent in 2022-23, with a reduction of £125,000 in the value of rent arrears owed by current tenants. It will prove challenging to continue to reduce rent arrears at the same rate in future years, but we will continue working closely with our tenants to tackle this.

Indicator	ERC Housing 2022-23	ERC Housing 2021-22	Local Authority Average 2022-23	Housing Sector Average 2022-23	Position
Gross rent arrears as % of total rent due	7.36%	9.95%	9.6%	6.9%	



281 Lets

Housing options and access to housing

We re-let 281 existing homes in 2022-23, a reduction on previous years in part reflective of the improvements we have made in eliminating long term empty properties and turning properties around more quickly for re-let. The timescale to turn empty homes around is also reducing and now in line with the local authority average. These improvements are also shown through the reduction in rent lost through properties being empty.

We also built 94 new council homes last year and a further 25 households on our queue were nominated by us and accepted an offer from a local housing association. Despite this an ongoing increase in pressure is building from waiting lists, with demand outstripping the rate at which we can provide more homes.

The Council's waiting list now sits at an all-time high of around 6400 with 1640 of these joining the list in the last

year or so. Homeless approaches also remain the highest we have seen at around 440 applications in the year 2022-23 reflecting the limited alternative housing options people have to find an affordable home in East Renfrewshire. Last year, 70% of all lets were to households facing homelessness.

We saw a reduction in tenancy offers refused last year but would wish to reduce refusals further. Although Choice Based Letting is used and we have improved choice for homeless households, the homes which do become available for letting do not always reflect the types and locations of homes that people might need. This year we will put forward revisions to our allocations policy and processes to support choice and balance the needs of those who are homeless, with those on our other waiting lists in urgent need of rehousing.

Indicator	ERC Housing 2022-23	ERC Housing 2021-22	Local Authority Average 2022-23	Housing Sector Average 2022-23	Position
Average length of time to re-let properties	62.94 days	99.84 days	66.9 days	55.6 days	●
% of rent due lost through empty homes	0.95%	1.41%	1.7%	1.4%	●
% of tenancy offers refused	47.1%	51.17%	38.5%	30.9%	●

Customer engagement and satisfaction



We have continued surveying our tenants on a range of issues throughout 2022-23 and continue to see improvements in levels of satisfaction from a previous pandemic dip as we have recovered our frontline service delivery. Although on some matters we still have headway to make on getting satisfaction to the same levels as other landlords in some areas, very visible improvements have been achieved across the board in our customers views about us.

We are also underway with a large-scale tenants' and factored owners survey over the autumn, being carried out independently on our behalf by Knowledge Partnership. This will allow us to gather a broader range of views and get a clearer picture of where our services are viewed positively, and where we can do better. This will allow us to remain responsive to customers' needs.

We are also currently working with our staff and customers to strengthen the voice they have in making service improvements happen, through scrutiny and influencing practical improvements via our neighbourhood inspections and housing surgeries.

This places customers at the centre of what we do, including improving communication, clarifying the standards they should expect and offering proactive routes for tenants and customers to get involved.

We ensure we consider the needs of our tenants and customers, and the equalities and human rights matters that may affect them, when we are reviewing or planning services. This includes ensuring impact assessments are carried out thoroughly. We also understand the need to have good data about the protected and other characteristics of our customers and gather this through our key service functions.

However, there can be challenges in ensuring this information is kept up to date on an ongoing basis, and the implementation of our new housing management system and customer self-serve portal will be used as a key tool in allowing tenants and other customers to provide us with important information about them.

Indicator	ERC Housing 2022-23	ERC Housing 2021-22	Local Authority Average 2022-23	Housing Sector Average 2022-23	Position
% Overall satisfaction with landlord	82.05%	72.24%	83.2%	86.7%	
% Satisfied with quality of home	82.91%	70.99%	81.8%	84.2%	
% Satisfied rent is good value for money	80.10%	70.15%	81.9%	81.8%	
% Satisfied with landlord contribution to management of neighbourhood	78.33%	68.47%	82.5%	84.3%	
% Satisfaction with keeping informed about services & decisions	77.84%	75.76%	81.1%	89.7%	
% Satisfied with repairs service	81.40%	70.29%	89.4%	88.0%	
% Satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision-making	68.06%	66.18%	76.5%	85.9%	



Tenant survey

We are partnering with independent consultants Knowledge Partnership to carry out our large scale tenants survey, to gather your views on ERC Housing Services. Surveys will be carried out in October through November and will include some mystery shopping exercises, to test how easy it is to communicate with and access the service.

Knowledge Partnership are aiming to carry out face to face surveys with over 500 tenants across mainstream and sheltered housing. They will also conduct a smaller phone survey across a number of our factored owners to gather views.

All feedback matters, and this will help us make improvements in the areas most important to our customers.

Tenant information service and scrutiny group

As part of our ongoing effort to improve customer care, the Tenant Information Service (TIS) are working with Housing Services to develop our approach to Customer Scrutiny. This will involve bringing together any interested tenants to discuss a particular area of the service, who will then be presented with related evidence to have a better understanding of the current approach. The group would then discuss the pro's and con's of various approaches, including value for money to help develop a recommendation and improvement plan.

TIS will support the customer led scrutiny group, by providing information, participation in scrutiny sessions and handling resulting improvement plan and developing a group which will allow more involvement from customers.

If you would like to find out more or get involved please email: customerengagement@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk



Housing ANNUAL REPORT

This document can be explained to you in other languages and can be provided in alternative formats such as large print or Braille. For further information, please contact Customer First on 0141 577 3001 or email customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Faodar am pàipear seo fhaotainn ann an Gàidhlig agus ann an cruthan eile mar ann an clò mòr agus Braille. Airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, feuch gun cuir sibh fios gu Customer First air 0141 577 3001 no post-d gu customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

इस सूचना-पत्र मे उल्लेखित सूचना यदि आप हिन्दी अनुवाद मे चाहे तो कृपया सम्पर्क करे ।

如果您想得到该资料所含信息的译文，请联系：

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਇਥੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ اس ایف ایٹ میں درج معلومات کا ترجمہ اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو ہم سے رابطہ کریں

