



In Our House

Dundee Area Scrutiny Panel

Annual Report

2018-19



Shining a Spotlight on Housing Performance

A Very Warm Welcome to Dundee Area Scrutiny Panel's Annual Customer Report on Housing Services for 2018/19.

Dundee City Council and Elected Members are committed to assisting the Dundee Area Scrutiny Panel in developing approaches and recommendations which hopefully lead to improvements in Housing Services for all current, and potential future customers.

As detailed in the Scottish Social Housing Charter, all Scottish landlords must aim to achieve outcomes that are set by the Scottish Housing Regulator. These range from gas safety to tenant satisfaction. Following publication of these figures we can then measure our performance with other, similar sized Local Authorities across the country to see how we compare.

Although they couldn't include everything sent to the Regulator in this report, the Panel have chosen some of the most relevant indicators to share with readers, which provide a snapshot of the Council's performance over the last year. Details of how to obtain the full comparison report can be found inside.

I certainly hope you find this report engaging, interesting and informative. Also, if you feel there is something you would like to know more about, or feel could be included in future editions, please do not hesitate to Get Involved and Have Your Say.

email: HaveYourSay@dundeecity.gov.uk
for more information on how you can Get Involved

Councillor Anne Rendall,
Convenor of Neighbourhood Services



Contents

Pages

- 4 Scrutiny Panel Overview
- 5 Tenant Led Inspections & Mystery Shopping
- 6 How Your Rent is Spent - Tenant Event
- 7 Rent Consultation & New Build news
- 8 Housing in Numbers
- 10 Performance & Satisfaction
- 12 Shining a Spotlight on Housing Performance

Scrutiny Panel Overview

The Dundee Area Scrutiny Panel are a group of volunteers who use housing services and through partnership working, decide on the areas of service they wish to take a closer look at, or scrutinise.

The Scrutiny Panel don't work alone - they are helped by Tenant Inspectors and Mystery Shoppers who conduct investigations on instruction from the Panel. The Council would like to express its thanks to them and the rest of the Scrutiny Panel for their continued support, dedication and hard work.

Below is an overview of this year's achievements and what's next on the agenda for the Scrutiny Panel in 2019/20:

Outcomes

In the last year the Scrutiny Panel has:

- Overseen implementation of recommendations following Mystery Shop of Customer Services in Housing;
- Continues to oversee implementation of recommendations following Tenant Led Inspection of communications from Anti-Social Behaviour Services;
- Reviewed guidance and forms for housing applications;
- Identify the impact of re-categorising from sheltered to amenity housing.

Next Steps

During 2019/20 in addition to reviewing its work priorities, the Scrutiny Panel hopes to:

- Oversee recommendations following the implementation of a new Repairs System;
- Continue to oversee implementation of recommendations following Tenant Led Inspection of communications from Antisocial Behaviour Services;
- Review website and new tenant pack tenant information and ensure it is up to date and tenants have access to the correct information;
- Work closely with the Council to consult with customers on important issues involving Housing Services.

Quotes

"Over the years the Scrutiny Panel have helped the Council to see things from a customer's perspective. This was important when considering the Housing services it provides to ensure they meet the customer's needs and requirements. It has certainly been rewarding knowing we have played our part".

Yvonne Tosh, DASP Member

Tenant Led Inspections & Mystery Shopping

We Will:-

- be open and honest and explain our decisions
- deal with your enquiry promptly and explain reasons for any delay
- give you the information you need about our services
- listen to what you have to say
- treat you with respect and courtesy
- aim to get things right first time
- apologise to you when we get things wrong and then put things right



Local Authorities provide a range of customer services, however, (unlike private sector suppliers) residents are not normally in the position of being able to choose an alternative provider. Tenant Led Inspections and Mystery Shopping exercises are therefore an important tool in providing valuable customer opinion about what areas the Council can improve, but also, where they get it right too.

A Tenant Led Inspection uses groups of between 3 and 8 independent customers to look at a specific part of the housing service, find out its strengths and weaknesses, make recommendations for any improvements then present their findings to the Council.

Purpose of a TLI inspection is to find out:

- Is the service working as it should?
- Does practice relate to policy and procedures?
- Where parts of the service could be improved.



Although generally made up of the same amount of participants as Tenant Led Inspections, Mystery Shoppers are given a prepared set of scenarios to test housing services;

- Face to face
- Over the phone
- By email/letter
- Website/webform



Mystery Shopping is different from Tenant Led Inspections in that it explores the actual customer experience as a snapshot in time and records specific details of that particular experience. As such, it can be a very powerful tool for service managers and help to highlight clear action points for improving service delivery, whilst also identifying good practice. The Scrutiny Panel will continue to use these methods to hold Dundee City Council to account in the provision of services to its customers.

How Your Rent is Spent

On Saturday June 22nd 2019 Dundee City Council, in association with the Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations, and the Scrutiny Panel, held a joint tenant consultation event in the Steeple Church, to provide information on what tenants' rent pays for and how rent levels are set each year.

The DFTA also presented their Business Plan, which highlighted how they intend working with the Council on tenant matters and priorities. To find out more about the DFTA, please visit their Facebook page.

The purpose of the Event was to:

- Provide tenants with information about what their rent pays for;
- Raise awareness of how rent levels are set;
- Hear from tenants about what their priorities are;
- Present Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations Business Plan.



The event was promoted widely on social media including Facebook and Twitter, along with distribution of posters and information through partner agencies. Tenants who had expressed interest in how their rent is spent during last year's rent consultation were also invited to come along and get involved.

During the session we held workshops and discussions, which gave tenants a better understanding of how housing services are paid for from their rent. It was also an ideal opportunity to answer questions and discuss future spending priorities.

Some of the issues raised included the following:

- Costs to fit External Wall Insulation (EWI) - These are funded by Government grants for owners and the Housing HRA Capital Plan. Works are being carried out by Scottish and Southern Energy; Shower Charge Policy - Concerns were raised about fairness and value for money. However, it was agreed that costs would still have to be covered to balance the Housing HRA Revenue Budget if this were to be removed;
- How We Measure Fuel Poverty - This is taken from the Scottish Household Survey statistics and income data which is showing a marked improvement over recent years;
- Making Homes Energy Efficient - We continue working towards meeting the Energy Efficiency in Scottish Social Housing (ESSH) target set by Scottish Government by 2020 whilst continuing to address fuel poverty throughout Dundee.

Next Steps

Feedback gathered from the event will be used to inform the rent setting process in this and coming years. In particular, it was noted that the Council would:

- Hold discussions with the DFTA to further investigate tenants' concerns regarding antisocial behaviour;
- Continue to encourage customer participation and involvement in future events;
- Consider the implications of removing the shower charge as part of the forthcoming budget process;
- Ensure tenants' views on priorities are highlighted to Elected Members as part of the rent setting process.



Rent Consultation



Every year, between November and December, Dundee City Council embarks upon an ambitious Rent Consultation. The aim is to involve as many tenants as possible in the decision making process of setting the level of rent increase for the coming year. The Council use a wide range of methods for tenants to get involved, including face to face, letter, newsletters, online survey, social media, e-mail, QR code (mobile scanning app), text and public meetings.

Rent options are also displayed on posters throughout the city, along with community and council office notice boards, libraries, homeless units and sheltered lounges. We also use postcards which can be filled out and posted in the ballot boxes provided in around 30 locations across the city. So, if you see any of these during this time, please get involved and have your say.

In addition to the above strategy, collaboration and teamwork between Communities and Housing staff enabled the Council to carry out a comprehensive door canvassing exercise of tenanted properties. This led to the highest return in recent years of 2287 responses. This equates to a little over 18% of tenanted homes that gave their opinion, which is one of the highest in Scotland.

New Build News



Housing chiefs have revealed that between April 2018 and March 2019, 161 social rented housing units were built in Dundee, most of which were two bedroom flats. These figures represent brand new energy efficient, warm and easy to heat homes for 161 city families.

With our partners in Hillcrest, Abertay and Angus housing associations Dundee City Council have been able to develop new homes close to schools and community facilities that people want to rent. Of the 161 units, 51 were houses and 87 flats, 8 were built to be wheelchair accessible and 15 were community care units.

The £20m cost of the building programme was funded from the Scottish Government, Dundee City Council and the three housing associations, with most of the new build homes completed in Alexander Street, with Fintry Drive/Finavon Street and Eliza Street also sites where multiple units were developed. Other homes were built in St Ann Lane, Gray Street Lochee and Kirkton Road.

Work is due to start on more than 450 new affordable homes in areas across the city using empty sites to add to the 161 completed by the council and our partners in the past 12 months.

Quotes

"I just wanted to explain how grateful I am for our new home. My family's life has been made so much easier. Being an adapted house, I can now provide my disabled daughter with proper cleaning facilities without having to carry her upstairs. We love it and couldn't be happier, thank you."

Caryann, Alexander St New Build Tenant

Housing in Numbers

The next couple of pages describe how the Council performed against the main indicators set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. For more detail on the Council's performance and comparison with other social landlords, please visit the Scottish Housing Regulator's website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/find-andcompare-landlords

Repairs

5.15 days

was the average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 6.56 days.

8.25 hours

was the average time taken to complete emergency repairs, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 3.65 hours.



83.3%

of reactive repairs were completed 'right first time', compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 92.5%.

Medical Adaptations



387

Medical adaptations were completed to assist tenants in their homes.

68 days



was the time taken to complete applications for medical adaptations, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 49 days.

Quality & Maintenance

Since 1st April 2015 all social housing should meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

100%

of properties met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 92.5%.

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) was introduced in March 2014 and set a first milestone for social landlords to meet for social rented homes by 31 December 2020.

84.2%

of properties met the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 80.9%



Tenancy Sustainment



83.4%



of new tenancies to applicants from the Council's waiting list were sustained for more than one year, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 88.8%.

Gas Safety

99.8% 

of Dundee City Council housing stock had their Gas Safety Record renewed by the anniversary date, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 98.3%.

Complaints

127 complaints received

88.28% of 1st stage complaints were responded to in full within the timescales set out by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 98.3%.



House Allocations



number of houses let in 2018-19



new applicants were added to the list



of applicants on the waiting list at the end of March 2019

Factoring



The percentage of homeowners satisfied with the factoring services for general maintenance of common areas such as stair cleaning, we provide was

49.6% compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 67%

Performance & Satisfaction

The following pages describe how we performed against some of the main indicators for the Scottish Social Housing Charter and results from the Survey of Tenants And Residents (STAR).

Customer Satisfaction

Measuring how happy tenants are with the services we provide gives us insight into how we can constantly improve. The main way that we measure satisfaction is through a "Survey of Tenants and Residents" (STAR Survey) which we do every three years, the last one was done early 2018. Taking everything into account, nine in ten tenants are satisfied with the overall Housing Services they receive, with satisfaction levels comparing well with other Local Authorities figures

- Most tenants, 86%, say that the provision of information by the Council is good.
- Three in four tenants, 76%, are satisfied with opportunities to participate in the council's decision making process.
- Tenant satisfaction with the condition of home for 'relets' is high at 92%.
- Most tenants, 85%, are satisfied with the council's management of their neighbourhood.
- Around 9 in 10 tenants say that rent is good value for money overall.

Quality and Maintenance

The Council has met the SHQS as set out in 2015. The annual Council Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Plan is around £22 million including expenditure to maintain housing stock at to SHQS level, to upgrade the thermal insulation of houses to meet EESSH by 2020 and to build new Council housing.

To deliver EESSH, the Council works closely with the Scottish Government to maximise funding from the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland (HEEPS) to deliver external wall insulation (EWI) and provide thermal insulation to mixed tenure properties. Currently 84.2% of properties meet EESSH compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 80.9%.

Repairs

A large amount of rent payers' money is spent on making sure that council houses are kept in a good state of repair. It is important to our tenants that repairs are carried out quickly and that they are done well. Last year Dundee City Council carried out 53,580 repairs to its houses.

The average time taken to complete emergency repairs was 8.24 hours, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 3.65 hours. The average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs was 5.15 days, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 6.56 days. 83.39% of reactive repairs were completed 'right first time' compared to the Scottish Average of 92.52%

Medical Adaptations

The Council does all that it can to make sure that its tenant's homes are suitable for their needs. Adaptations can be big or small and range from handrails to making houses wheelchair accessible. During 2018/19 financial year:

387 medical adaptations were completed to assist tenants in their homes during 2018/19. On average it took 68 days to complete applications for medical adaptations, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 49 days.

House Allocations

Dundee City Council operates what is called a "Common Housing Register" together with Hillcrest, Caledonia and Abertay Housing Associations. This means that applicants are all on a single list, which helps us to meet applicants needs better and improves the housing options and application process for customers.

The number of applicants on the waiting list at the end of March 2019 was 7274, of which 3933 were added during the year to March 2019.

Tenancy Sustainment

The Housing Service has established a Tenancy and Estates Service which aims to place the emphasis on ensuring our tenants are given the help and assistance they need to manage and maintain their council tenancy.

Tenancy Officers provide tenancy advice and information to our tenants prior to the start of the tenancy; at the start of the tenancy; and continuing throughout the lifetime of the tenancy. There are a number of key actions:

- Early intervention and identification of need
- The introduction of a Readiness for Tenancy Tool to assess need and to determine how to support the tenant
- Adopting a holistic approach to needs assessment
- Locality based services, working collaboratively with various partner agencies, delivering for our tenants
- Delivery of a person centred approach, with the aim of helping the tenant to sustain the tenancy at the heart

83.44% of new tenancies to applicants from the Council's waiting list were sustained for more than one year, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 88.82%.

Antisocial Behaviour

The Council works closely with Police Scotland and other regulatory bodies to discourage antisocial behaviour. This may mean working with people through mediation, warnings or in serious cases issuing Antisocial Behaviour Orders. The Council's Antisocial Behaviour Team deals with complaints for homeowners and renters regardless of landlord.

78.74% of antisocial complaints were resolved within locally agreed targets compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 87.86%.

For more detail on the Council's performance and comparison with other social landlords, please visit the Scottish Housing Regulator's website:

www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/find-and-compare-landlords

The Council surveys a sample of service users every three years to measure satisfaction against some of the most important indicators in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

Shining a Spotlight on Housing Performance

Figures from the STAR survey 2018-20



90%

said they were satisfied with the overall housing service the Council provided, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 83%



76%

of tenants were satisfied with the opportunities to participate in Dundee City Council's decision making processes, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 74%



89%

of tenants who had repairs or maintenance carried out were satisfied with the service they received, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 92%



87%

of tenants feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 81%



92%

of new tenants were happy with the standard of their home when moving in, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 88%



85%

of tenants are satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 82%



91%

of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 83%



86%

felt that Dundee City Council was good at keeping them informed about its housing services and outcomes, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 81%

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