

# OUR PERFORMANCE

2019/20 **1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2019 - 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020**

## SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES



Developed in Partnership  
with Involved Tenants

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## Councillor Philip Saxton

### Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Wellbeing

**As Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Wellbeing, it again gives me great pleasure to introduce the Council's 7th annual performance report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter.**

Each year this report is produced to give our tenants and other customers information about our housing services, how well they are delivered and how we as a Council compare with other social landlords across Scotland.

Due to Covid-19, the Scottish Housing Regulator agreed to revised timescales for the publication of this report. We would normally issue this report by the end of October each year, however, for this year only it has been delayed until December 2020.

During 2019/20, we again invested in building new council properties

and we purchased properties to increase our supply of affordable housing. We also carried out elements of improvement work, through internal modernisation and external fabric upgrade work in our existing properties. Our teams continued to support tenants and deliver a good quality housing service. Our levels of reported performance are above the Scottish average in a number of areas.

Our work with tenant representatives continued throughout the year, providing opportunities to share information on services and performance. The first tenant-led inspection on the Council's Letting Standard was completed and published in March 2020.

A commitment has been made for Officers and Tenants to progress the necessary actions and monitor

progress through a joint working group.

As in previous years, I have to acknowledge the ongoing work, commitment and dedication of the tenant representatives who continue to give up significant amounts of their own time to help shape and improve our services. In producing this 7th annual report, tenant representatives have again influenced the content and design, making sure it includes information that is important to all tenants.

As we have done in previous years, we will issue the report to tenants who have requested it. Copies of this report will also be available on the Council website or by calling the Tenant Participation Team on 01292 612968.

## South Ayrshire Council Customer Services 0300 123 0900

Housing repairs, housing enquiries and payments, special uplifts, council tax enquiries and payments, waste management.

## Tenants Foreword

It is hard to believe another year has passed and we are now on the 7th Edition of Our Performance Edition, which covers the year from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020, the year before Covid took over. Next year our facts and figures will be very different due to the Pandemic.

The Working Group on the Letting Standard has now completed their findings and submitted their report to Housing Managers, and the members of the Group have joined with Officers within Housing to take the recommendations forward. However, like so many things restrictions have meant further work

and progress have been delayed. A big achievement in the last year has been the huge rise (20%) in the number of tenants who felt that the rent for their property represented good value for money in the Comprehensive Survey carried out in January 2020.

Other good news - new houses are now being built in Maybole and Ayr and the building of new houses in Prestwick and Tarbolton are on the horizon.

At the 2019 TPAS Conference, the TPAS Gold Accreditation Award was given to our Tenant

Participation Team and our Tenant Participation Officer, Gordon Campbell, was awarded Tenant Participation Champion of the Year (see page 7). It was great to see all the hard work of our tenants and officers being recognised nationally.

## SOME KEY FACTS ABOUT SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL AS AT 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020:

South Ayrshire Council currently owns and manages **8,155** properties, made up of general needs housing and sheltered housing designed for older people or people who need housing support. Our stock is made up mainly of flats (over 50%), with the remainder being a mix of houses, maisonettes and bungalows.

**713**

lets were made by the Council during the year:-

**653**

were 'general needs' lets

**60**

were 'sheltered housing' lets

**139**

There were 139 empty properties at the year end

**51**

Mutual Exchanges

**8,155**

homes owned and managed by the Council, made up as follows:-

**66**

Bedsit properties

**2,481**

1 bedroom properties

**3,463**

2 bedroom properties

**1,975**

3 bedroom properties

**170**

4 bedroom plus properties

**54**

properties were added to our stock. 32 new build council owned properties were completed and a further 22 properties were purchased by the Council.

**538**

of our 8155 properties are sheltered housing properties.

**254**

We carried out 254 adaptations in 194 of our properties during 2019/20 to assist tenants who have a disability. 80.6% of approved medical applications were completed in 2019/20. The average time to complete medical adaptations was 23.3 days.

# Tenant Led Assessment

## Leading The Way

**Since January 2018 our Scrutiny and Performance Maintenance Group, comprising of a small group of tenants involved with Tenant Participation, have undertaken the task of reviewing the Letting Standard of South Ayrshire Council Housing Services.**

The Letting Standard was an area of interest for our tenant led assessors due to the trend data from the Settling-In satisfaction surveys regularly showing levels of dissatisfaction with the standard of new homes and the condition of gardens when new tenants move in.

Over this period the assessors conducted a robust assessment which involved; learning processes, skill development, property inspections, information gathering, carrying out interviews and data analysis.

Following the extensive work and findings the tenant led assessors produced recommendations on how to help improve the Letting Standard, reduce refusals on offers and increase the desirability to potential tenants.

The recommendations were drawn together, finalised and presented to the Service Leads for both Housing Service and Property Maintenance and are as follows;

- **Review the current SAC Letting Standard and devise**

**a new Letting Standard incorporating the suggestions laid out**

- **Design the documents relating to the SAC Letting Standard in a more appealing and meaningful way.**
- **Establish a working group to devise the new letting standard which includes tenants along with staff from Housing Services and Property Maintenance.**

After a successful meeting on 22nd October 2019 with the tenant led assessors and the Service Leads of Housing Service and Property Maintenance, the above recommendations were agreed.

Along with the recommendations, the assessors have put forward a number of proposals for consideration which it is hoped will bring further improvements to certain areas covered by the Letting Standard. To be able to provide these suggestions the tenant led assessors carried out inspections of 20 void properties,



where all void repairs had been completed, across various tenures and areas within South Ayrshire. This allowed the assessors to see first-hand what the Letting Standard within South Ayrshire Council is and meant they could provide an action plan with 25 suggestions.

**Housing and Property Maintenance Service Leads have agreed for these suggestions to be taken forward to the Void Service Development Group, so the tenants and the Council can work together to create a new version of the Letting Standard, which will be available in the future.**

**To view the full report you can request a copy or view it online:**

**<https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/tenant-participation/tenant-led-assessments.aspx>**

## Who is the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)?



**SHR is the independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords and local authority housing services in Scotland.**

SHR was established on 1 April 2011 under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. SHR has one statutory objective, to:

*“safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered*

*social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities”.*

SHR regulate social landlords to protect the interests of people who receive services from them. They do this by assessing and reporting on:

- **how social landlords are performing their housing services**
- **RSLs’ financial well-being**
- **RSLs’ standards of governance**

SHR will intervene to secure improvements where they need to.

## Scottish Housing Regulator Engagement Plans

In February 2019, the Scottish Housing Regulator published a new Regulatory Framework, entitled ‘Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland’. This is a statement setting out how they regulate Registered Social Landlords and the housing and homelessness services provided by Councils.

The Regulator now publishes an Engagement Plan for each landlord, this outlines what they will do and what the Regulatory returns landlord must provide them.

**To view the Engagement Plan visit the regulators website at [www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/engagementplans](http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/engagementplans)**

## How we have reported our Performance Information

**This report includes key performance indicators that have been published by the Scottish Housing Regulator following consultation and feedback they received.**

In addition to this, we as a Council have consulted our own tenant representatives and agreed to add some additional indicators and information that they wanted to see included. Throughout this report we have

included details of our performance and have compared this to the Scottish average. This is the average of all landlords (Council and Housing Associations) across Scotland.

You can:

> find out more about the information contained in the Regulators report, and find out more about the role and work of the Regulator. To do this, you can visit the Regulators website at [www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk](http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk)

> view our annual landlord reports  
> compare our performance with other selected landlords  
> see all of the information that we reported on the Charter to the Regulator

If following this report, you want to find out more about our performance or would like to ask any questions you can contact us directly. In addition the Scottish Housing Regulator’s website has lots of information about us as a landlord.

# Tenant Participation Update

## Get involved in your Housing Service!

**Do you know as a South Ayrshire Council tenant there are lots of opportunities for you to get involved, have your say and make a difference for all tenants?**

**During 2019/20 involved tenants along with Housing Services had a number of achievements including:**



*Communities Fun Day*

★ **Delivered our fourth annual Communities Fun Day** in September 2019 with a record breaking 3500 in attendance.

★ **Our Scrutiny & Performance Maintenance group** have successfully completed the assessment of the Letting Standard and have published their report and recommendations from the exercise. The group will continue to monitor the progress and will work with officers on the Void Working Group to investigate and consider their recommendations. You can find out more about this on page 4.

★ **Received Gold Accreditation from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Scotland (TPAS Scotland)** The process for accreditation involved a self-assessment as well as staff and tenant interviews to make sure that everything we do is recognised as good practice. The self-assessment process has allowed the team to identify areas of strength and areas of weakness that will help us improve our Tenant Participation activities.



*Tenants celebrating success at the CIH awards*

★ **Scrutinise the activity of the Housing Revenue Account.** Our HRA Scrutiny group has been active in scrutinising the HRA and have attended various information sessions to find out more about the services the HRA receive.

★ **Continued to develop our Tenants Choir** where tenants can come together and practice their singing skills while developing breathing techniques and exercises that will allow them to sing better and stay active. The Choir carried out their first ever live performance at Troon's Wintertainment event in December 2019 and at the last full Council meeting for 2019 within County Buildings in Ayr.



*Tenants Choir - Troon November 2019*



*Tenants Choir - County Buildings Performance December 2019*



## Awards, Awards, Awards!

The Tenant Participation Team were successful in winning three awards at the Chartered Institute of Housing Excellence Awards in October 2019.

**The team were winners in the following categories:**

- **Excellence in Communications - Communities Fun Day**
- **Excellence in Scrutiny - Scrutiny & Performance Groups**
- **Bob Allan Young Achiever in Housing - Kyle McKay**

Following on from the success at the CIH Awards the team were also successful in receiving two awards at the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Scotland Annual Awards ceremony in December 2019.

Tenant Participation Officer Gordon Campbell received the Tenant Participation Champion of the Year (Officer Award) and the team received runner up in the Best Practice in Reporting Performance Award.

The judges recognised that our annual performance report provides more information to tenants than what is the minimum requirement set by the Scottish Housing Regulator. We work with involved tenants each year to work on the design and content for the yearly report and to ensure that tenants find the information easy to understand.

We could not have achieved the above awards without the commitment of our tenant volunteers.



*Tenants and Officers after collecting the awards received at the Annual TPAS conference 2019*

**If you would like to be a part of some of these projects and help us achieve even more in the coming years, then get in touch with the Tenant Participation Team on 01292 612968 or email [tp@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:tp@south-ayrshire.gov.uk) or find out more online at [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/tp](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/tp)**

## Getting good value from rents and service charges

In 2019/20 the total rent due for the reporting year was **£31,056,353**. We collected **£30,488,479** (this figure includes current and advance rent payments, housing benefit and rent arrears recovered), which was **99.2%** of the total rent due in the year compared to the Scottish average of **99.3%**.

The gross rent arrears as at 31st March 2020 were **£1,061,488**. This was made up of both current tenant arrears and former tenant arrears. The overall arrears outstanding were **3.42%** of the total rent due for 2019/20.

The Council was paid housing costs directly

through housing benefit and from Universal Credit payments for **5,840** households; the total value of payments received in the reporting year was **£19,224,604**.

Following consultation with tenants in October and November 2017 the Council agreed to apply a fixed rent increase of **2%** per annum for the 3 year period 2018/19 to 2020/21, along with a rent freeze on new build properties and a reduction in the rent level of 1 bedroom new build properties to match the local housing allowance cap.

**Our average weekly rents remain below the Scottish average across all apartment sizes.**

Average weekly rent for each apartment size in 2019/20			
APARTMENT SIZE	S.A.C.	SCOTTISH AVERAGE	DIFFERENCE
1 Apartment	£68.00	£73.47	-7.4%
2 Apartment	£73.06	£78.65	-7.1%
3 Apartment	£74.93	£82.26	-8.9%
4 Apartment	£79.09	£89.76	-11.9%
5+ Apartment	£83.57	£98.69	-15.3%

**82.3%**

of tenants who responded to the survey felt that the rent for their property represented good value for money.

**13.5%**

of tenants who responded to the survey felt that the rent for their property represented neither good nor poor value for money.

**4.2%**

of tenants who responded to the survey felt that the rent for their property represented poor value for money.

## Making Best Use of Our Housing Stock and Maximising Rental Income

We are working to make improvements and reduce the overall time we take to re-let empty properties. In 2019/20 the average length of time to re-let properties was **31.4 days** compared to **31.6 days** in 2018/19. The Scottish average was **31.8 days**.

The amount of rent we lost through properties being empty during

2019/20 was **£304,973**. This accounts for a **1%** rent loss, which is compared to the Scottish Average of **1.2%**.

When allocating properties in 2019/20, we made **1,566** offers to applicants, **800 (51.1%)** were refused within the year compared to **50.2%** in 2018/19.

## Help Us to Continue to Reduce Refusals

We undertake an annual review of housing applications and would encourage applicants to ensure that the choices of neighbourhoods and house types accurately reflect the areas and types of property that they would be willing to accept.

This should help us reduce the number of refusals and reduce the time taken to allocate empty properties.



**79.6%**

of tenants who responded to the survey were satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in.

## Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) ensures that tenants' rents paid to the Council are only used to meet the services required to manage and maintain our Council houses. Our total budget, including rents, use of reserves and Government grants was **£33,092,514** and our expenditure was **£31,120,818**. This resulted in a surplus of **£1,971,696**. This surplus is added to existing reserves which have been used to deal with estimated additional costs associated with the current Covid-19 situation and tenants have been consulted on priorities for future investment.

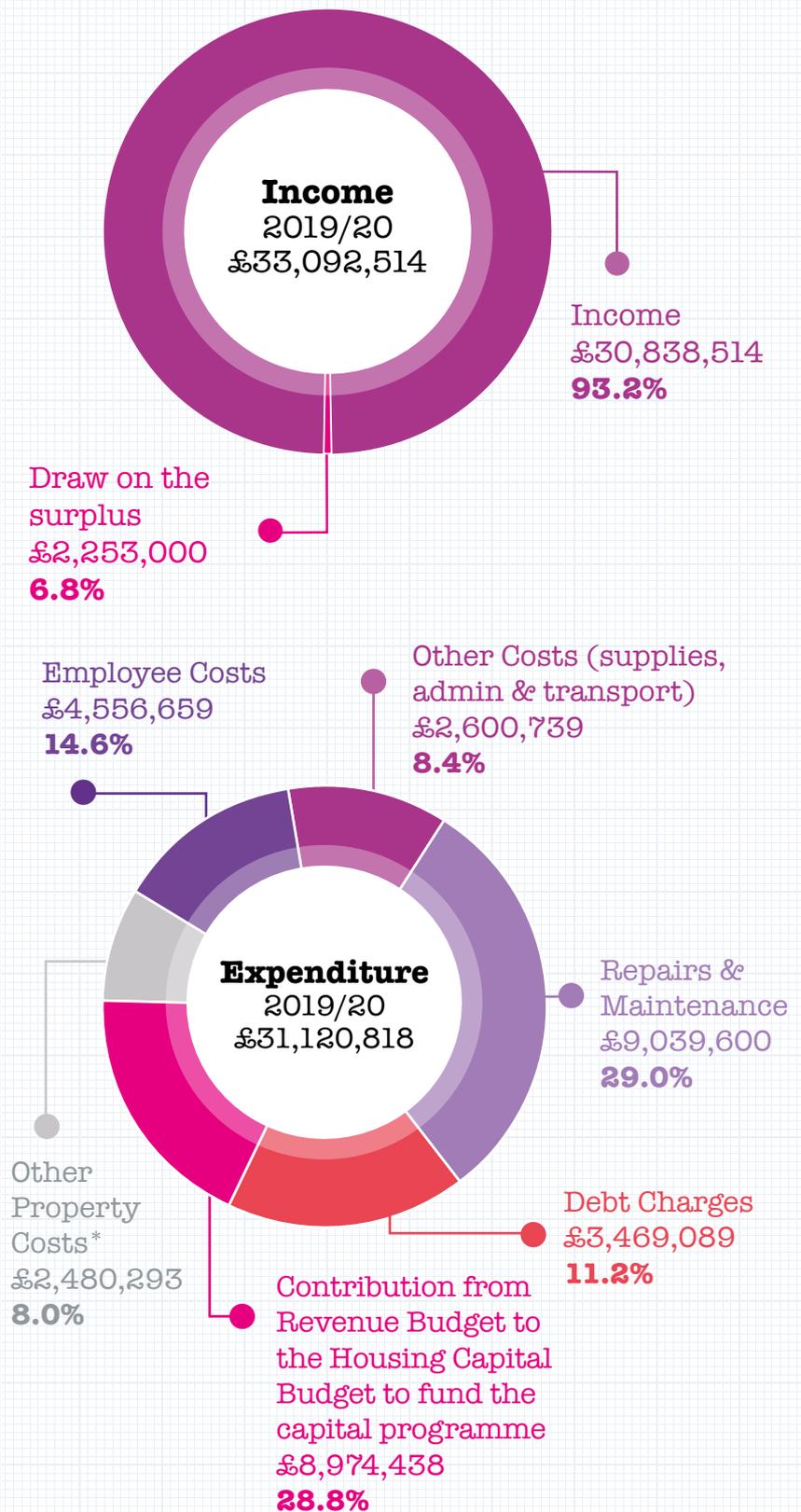
## Access to the Housing Revenue Account

Throughout 2019/20, members of the Tenant Participation Group were involved in a number of different meetings and events on the subject of the Housing Revenue Account. This provided tenants with an opportunity to learn more about the Housing Revenue Account budget and expenditure process. Involved tenants will then use this information along side guidance and framework created by Scotland's Housing Network to undertake a project to scrutinise the current HRA.

The annual meeting for involved tenants where we will outline the budget and expenditure for 2019/20 and the progress in 2020/21 is planned to be held online early next year.

**Please contact a member of the Tenant Participation Team on 01292 612968 or [tp@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:tp@south-ayrshire.gov.uk) for further details or to register for this event.**

## How Your Rent Money Is Used



\*Rates, Water & Sewerage, Gas & Electricity, Fencing Works, Adaptations, Cleaning & Asbestos Management.



**99.2%** of rent was collected as a percentage of total rent due in the year.

# Housing Quality & Maintenance

## Repairs Maintenance & Improvements.

In 2019/20, we:

- ✓ Installed **592** new kitchens
- ✓ Installed **298** new bathrooms
- ✓ Carried out full rewiring including the installation of new smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors in **282** properties
- ✓ Improved loft insulation in **406** properties
- ✓ Carried out roof replacements on **146** properties and re-rendered **132** properties. The Energy Agency installed External Wall Insulation at **97** council owned properties.
- ✓ Installed new double glazed windows in **288** properties in areas throughout South Carrick
- ✓ Replaced **618** full central heating systems and replaced **172** central heating boilers
- ✓ Installed **11** door entry systems in blocks of flats, benefiting **64** council owned properties
- ✓ Carried out rewiring to kitchens and installed new smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors in **317** properties

**87 (1.1%)** of our properties were in abeyance or exemption typically due to owners who did not wish to participate in communal improvements, or tenants who were unable to have work completed due to health issues. **98 (1.2%)** of our properties failed the standard due to energy measures. Our remaining stock of **7,923 (97.7%)** met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).



Dailly



Dunure

## New double glazed windows at properties in Dailly and Dunure.

The window replacement programme will continue throughout non-gas areas in South Ayrshire in 2020/21 and will include properties in Annbank, Tarbolton and Craigie Village.

## Energy Agency Project

As part of the Scottish Government ABS (Area Based Schemes) programme, South Ayrshire Council, in partnership with its managing agent, the Energy Agency, managed a project in which 181 properties received external wall insulation in 2019/20.

As with previous programmes, this was a mixed tenure project in which 163 properties were in private ownership and 18 owned by South Ayrshire Council. The project focused on external wall insulation which is a bespoke installation system designed to insulate properties close to new build standards. The system allows the property to retain heat better reducing the demand on heating systems therefore lowering fuel bills.

In addition, South Ayrshire Council was successful in a bid to deliver an Energy Efficient Scotland pilot project over a two year period, 2018-20. The Energy Agency provided an advice and handholding service to support 'self-funding' householders and SMEs to improve the efficiency of their properties/business premises. The programme utilised existing Scottish Government funded advice services - Home Energy Scotland and Resource Efficient Scotland - providing energy appraisals and bespoke advice.

The Energy Agency also developed a network of accredited installers for householders/SMEs to select an installer. On completion, 60 households received energy appraisals and 19 households proceeded to install various energy efficiency measures (self-funded).

# Repairs

In 2019/20 we spent **£8,131,410** on repairs and maintenance to our housing stock.

## Key Performance Statistics for Repairs and Maintenance to our properties during 2019/20:

	<b>2.5 hours</b>	<b>2.5 hours</b> was the average time we took to complete an emergency repair in 2019/20 against our <b>4 hour</b> target. The Scottish average was <b>3.6 hours</b> .
	<b>7.2 days</b>	<b>7.2 days</b> was the average time we took to complete non-emergency (urgent and routine) repairs in 2019/20, compared to the Scottish average of <b>6.4 days</b> .
	<b>97.8%</b>	<b>97.8%</b> of reactive repairs carried out in the last year were completed right the first time compared to the Scottish average of <b>92.4%</b> .
	<b>91.1%</b>	<b>91.1%</b> of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service compared to the Scottish average of <b>91.3%</b> . <b>4.4%</b> of tenants were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance service. <b>4.4%</b> of tenants were dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.

## Safety In Your Home

Work is currently underway to install additional smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors at some of our properties. If your home requires any safety checks or needs additional smoke alarms or carbon monoxide detectors, you will receive written notification.

We also carry out annual checks on oil, solid fuel and electric boiler heating systems. In addition we carry out 5-yearly fixed electrical testing and we replace smoke detectors every 10 years.

**Please provide access to your home to allow this essential safety work to be completed.**



### Information on Number of Repairs Completed

We completed **30,864** reactive repairs during 2019/20.

**12,445** were categorised as Emergency repairs.

**18,419** were Non-Emergency repairs, made up of:-

- > **7,655** Urgent repairs
- > **9,953** Routine repairs
- > **811** Misc Repairs

### Gas Safety

The way that gas safety performance was reported changed in 2019/20. Of the **7,141** properties that were due to receive a gas safety check in 2019/20, 13 properties (0.2%) did not receive a check within 12 months of the previous inspection.

As part of the annual gas safety check, our contractor will also check the smoke detectors in your home to ensure they are working effectively.

It is important that all tenants allow access to the Council's authorised Gas Contractor for this important check. As a landlord, the Council has a legal obligation to ensure it is complete and where necessary will follow processes to gain entry to a property to complete the check.

**If we require to force entry to your home, you will be recharged for the cost of this work.**



# Satisfaction & feedback

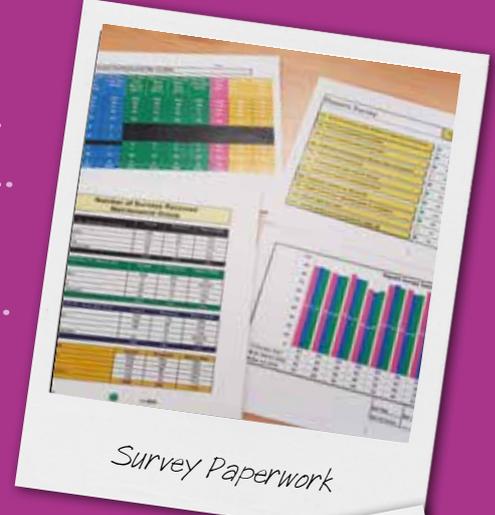
Help us improve the Housing Service -  
Tell us what you think

We continue to use Satisfaction Surveys to gather feedback from our tenants and other customers. This is to help us to develop and continually improve services.

The surveys that we use were developed in consultation with tenant representatives and are in place to give you the opportunity to tell us how well we are doing as your landlord and whether there are things we could do better. It is important to us that we hear from as many of our customers as possible and we would encourage you to take the time to complete our surveys.

Throughout last year we issued tracker surveys to gather your feedback on key elements of service. We have discussed the feedback received at events with tenant representatives. Some examples of changes we have already made to how we deliver services are included in the You Said/We Did section on page 11.

**94.6%** of tenants who responded to the survey were satisfied with the quality of their home.



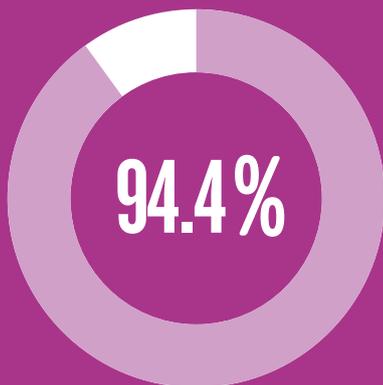
Survey Paperwork



Our tenant participation team review your feedback and ensure that your voice is heard.

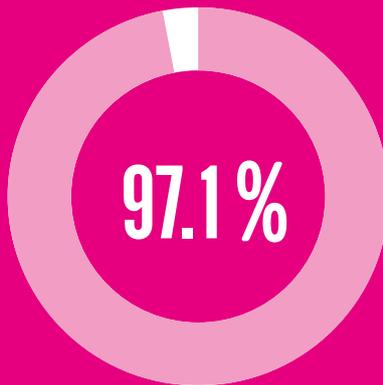
In the last comprehensive survey carried out by Research Resource on the Council's behalf in January 2020, satisfaction results were as follows:

Satisfaction with the overall service provided by the Council as a Landlord



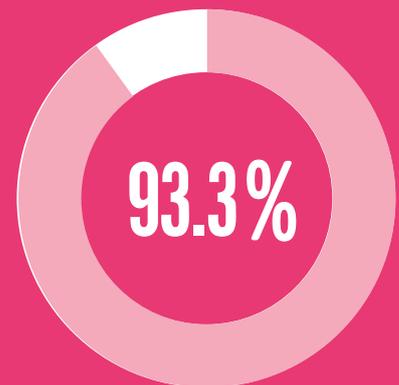
94.4% of tenants who responded to the survey were satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council as a Landlord, compared to the Scottish average of 89.2%.

How good did tenants feel we were as a Landlord, at keeping them informed about our services and decisions?



97.1% of tenants who responded to the survey were satisfied that as a Landlord we were good at keeping them informed about our services and decisions, compared to the Scottish average of 92%.

Satisfaction with the opportunities we gave tenants to participate in our decision making processes

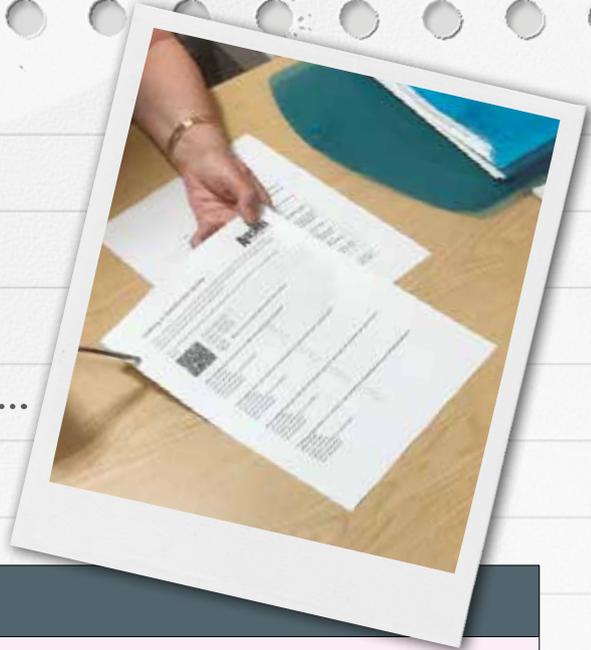


93.3% of tenants who responded to the survey were satisfied with the opportunities we gave tenants to participate in our decision making processes, compared to the Scottish average of 87.2%.

We review all feedback and where possible follow up on any negative comments or levels of dissatisfaction, to help us improve services.

# YOU SAID: WE DID

The table below shows comments that we have received from tenants, service users and customers during 2019/20 and the improvements we have made as a result of them:



YOU SAID 	WE DID 
Some tenants highlighted that it can be difficult to get through to the right person or department when trying to contact us via telephone and it can take multiple attempts to get through.	A new telephone system was rolled out across Housing Services within 2019/20. The system allows staff to be placed into groups based on their team and their individual skills and knowledge meaning that our tenants should find it easier to get through to someone who will be able to assist with them in the first instance.
During the previous South Ayrshire Council rents consultation, 50% of responses stated that more money should be invested into window replacements.	Since the last rents consultation, Housing Services have replaced windows in a number of non-gas properties across South Ayrshire. By the end of March 2021, South Ayrshire Council estimates that a total of 722 properties will have benefited from window replacements.
A number of tenants reported issues with unclear repair times which resulted in missed appointments.	The 'Work Scheduling System' for repairs was fully rolled out during 2019/20. This new system means that all service users should receive a repair appointment at a time that works for them. The user will then receive an appointment confirmation by a text message followed by a further text message when the tradesperson is on their way to the property.

Satisfaction surveys completed by our tenants throughout the year allow us to identify areas where there are high levels of satisfaction.

Below are some quotes from our tenants who were satisfied with the service that South Ayrshire Council provided:

 "Very helpful staff, very quick response with letters etc. I didn't really have a clue how to go about things, but really happy it all went smoothly. A+ service. Thank you!"

 "Staff were kind and understanding regarding my circumstances. They took time to assist filling in my form. Very satisfied with the service I received."

 "Top class service - WELL DONE ALL!"

 "Very satisfied with the service provided. Work always done very quickly."

 "Modernisation completed with minimum disruption and minimum mess and the team were good and understanding. Any issues were dealt with quickly and no fuss."

 "Our complaint was taken seriously and dealt with promptly and we are grateful for the help and advice given."

 "I would just like to say from the start, I have found everyone very helpful and polite."

 "Very helpful! Lots of information!"

We also value negative comments made by our tenants as it shows us areas in which we can improve.

The quotes below are examples of feedback that we have received from tenants which highlight issues and examples of areas where improvement may be required.

 "Very happy with work carried out but had some small issues that took longer than expected to get fixed."

 "It is not always clear where to send things to."

 "South Ayrshire Council will always follow up on any issues that are highlighted by our tenants."

# Neighbourhood & Community

We continually strive to improve the quality of our neighbourhoods.

The feedback you provide assists us to review our processes to ensure we are increasing the quality of your neighbourhoods. Your feedback also allows us to identify areas for targeted community clean ups and targeted cleaning of estates and closes.



*Housing Officers getting involved in community clean up days*



*Housing Services staff working along side other local services on a community clean up*

## Estate Management Inspections

For the duration of 2019/20, Housing Services continued to place a focus on inspections of neighbourhoods throughout South Ayrshire. In doing this, we aim to improve the quality of gardens, closes and communal spaces in every town.

Housing staff continued to carry out visits in order to identify and deal with any potential issues that may be present in communities within South Ayrshire. Any reports that South Ayrshire Council receive from service users are taken very seriously and will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

In addition to routine visits, Housing staff have once again taken part in community clean ups alongside other local services and schools.

## Abandonments

In 2019/20 the Council recovered possession of **100** properties following investigations which confirmed they were abandoned.

We actively investigate and follow up on any reports of unoccupied properties. Therefore if you have concerns regarding an abandoned property please contact your local housing office on: **0300 123 0900**.

In addition, if Housing Services make a number of attempts to contact tenants and carry out unsuccessful visits to properties, we will start the investigation process for abandonment.

## Anti-Social Behaviour

In 2019/20, **202** cases of anti-social behaviour were reported to the council, **175** of those cases were resolved in the reporting year, all of which were resolved within the locally agreed targets. This equated to a reported performance of **86.6%**. There were **27** cases which were reported during 2019/20 that were not closed as at 31st March 2020.

However, none of these cases were outwith the timescales of the locally agreed targets.

**93.3%**

of tenants who responded to the survey told us they were satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in.

# Service to Gypsy / Travellers

## Work completed at our new Travelling Person Site

2019 saw the completion of the new permanent Travelling Persons Site located on Coalpots Road, Girvan. The new site named 'Houdston Reid Lea' is made up of 7 separate chalet-style units which were built specifically with the travelling community in mind. All of the units were designed to meet 'Housing for Varying Needs' standards in partnership with residents to ensure that the properties meet sustainability and energy efficiency standards while still meeting the needs of those who would be living there.

**Work on the site began in early 2019 with work completed ahead of schedule in August of that year.**

**Houdston Reid Lea picked up the award for Affordable Housing Development of the Year (small, social rent) at the Scottish Home Awards 2020. This was a great achievement for the development and everyone involved.**



*Musical Generations at Morrison Gardens*



*Tenants taking part in Musical Generations*

## SHELTERED HOUSING NEWS

**Throughout South Ayrshire, Housing Services manage 538 properties across 18 Sheltered Housing Units. We are committed to ensuring that our properties and units fully meet the needs of our tenants.**

Our Sheltered Housing Units provide the communities within South Ayrshire with a communal facility that helps prevent social isolation for older people. As well as providing housing to its residents, each unit provides a wide range

of activities and events such as; outings, men's dens, coffee clubs and film clubs. Unfortunately in March 2020 all activities were suspended due to the Covid Pandemic.

All of our Sheltered Housing residents and staff are passionate about fundraising for a variety of different charities. Several events were held throughout 2019/20 at all the units, with all funds raised benefiting a number of different charities.

### Musical Generations

Following on from the outstanding success of previous sessions, residents at Sheltered Housing Units throughout South Ayrshire have been continuing to enjoy Centrestage's Musical Generations. The project gives tenants a chance to enjoy a session of music, dance, movement, entertainment and refreshments from within their Sheltered Housing Units.

# Hostels, Supported Accommodation and Temporary Accommodation

**The Council continues to provide temporary accommodation to homeless households. We currently own and manage three hostels and supported accommodation units.**

We also use properties from our own housing stock and the private rented sector as dispersed temporary accommodation.

In 2019/20, 87.6% of the households that were homeless in the last 12 months were satisfied with the quality of the temporary or emergency accommodation. Service users share their opinions with us through feedback surveys.

Here are some of the direct quotes we received from service users in 2019/20:

**“Very clean and comfortable space to live in. Everything was provided and staff couldn’t have been more helpful or supportive.”**

**“Accommodation was large, clean and stocked with necessities.”**

**“Flat and all the fittings were good quality, neighbours were quiet and friendly.”**



*Viewfield Gate*

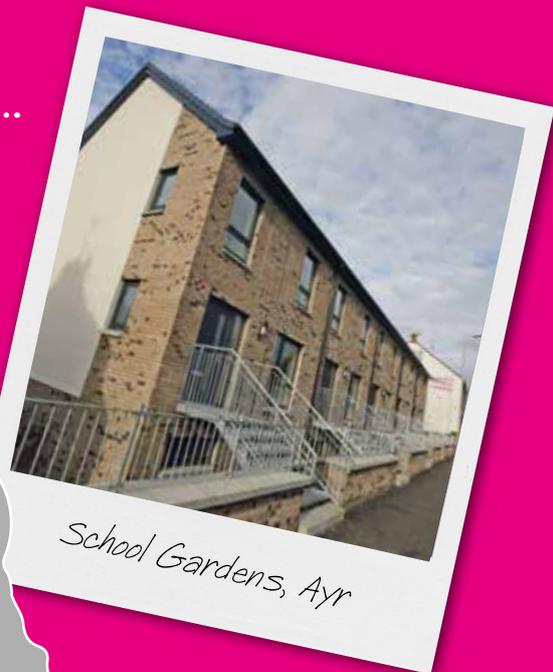


*Secession House*

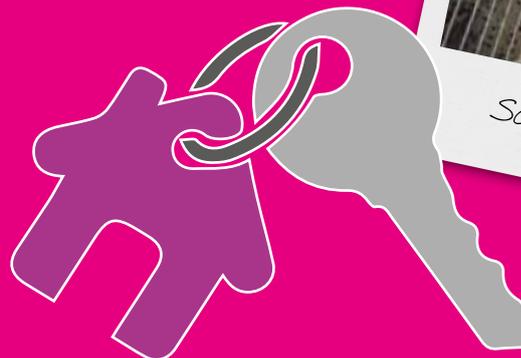
## Access to Housing & Support

**Demand for Housing throughout South Ayrshire remains high. In 2019/20, there were a total of 713 new lets started throughout the year.**

In 2019/20, work was completed on the **26** new properties built on the site of the former Whitletts Primary School in Ayr, now known as School Gardens. The new properties, which range from one to six bedroom, have been designed with energy efficiency and flexibility in mind in order to best meet the needs of tenants.



*School Gardens, Ayr*



# Homelessness

In 2019/20, **1075** housing options interviews were conducted and applicants were provided with advice and information to help them make more informed housing choices. **845** of those **1075** went on to make a homeless presentation.

This is an decrease on the **871** homeless presentations made in 2018/19. Work on housing options and prevention activity is continuing and staff are providing advice and information to an increasing number of applicants. The Council continue to work

closely with other Registered Social Landlords in the area to ensure that applicants on our housing list have access to vacant properties through nominations or referrals.

**For the 5th year running, the Council did not use bed and breakfast as temporary accommodation for homeless households during 2019/20.**

## Achievements

**Type 1 Housing Advice and Information** - In 2019/20 we applied for accreditation under the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers. Following an audit by the Scottish Legal Aid Board, our Housing Options and Support Team successfully gained accreditation from the Scottish Government to provide Type 1 Housing Advice and Information.

**Technology/Information at Work** - Following on from its introduction in March 2019, Housing Services have continued to rollout the new "Information at Work" system. The system allows Housing staff to store data electronically, cutting down on the use of paper and making information easier to access for staff across the service. The system rollout will continue into 2020/21.

Additional technological improvements will continue throughout 2020/21 with the roll-out of Microsoft 365 to all Housing Staff. This will provide staff with a

variety of new tools that will assist them both in the office and whilst out on visits.

**Empty Houses** - We are continuing to work hard to find ways to reduce the length of time it takes to allocate our empty properties. The average time to relet an empty property in 2019/20 was 31.4 days down from 31.6 days in 2018/19. This also means that we are currently below the Scottish average for average time to relet an empty property which currently sits at 31.8 days.

**Award Winning Sheltered Housing** - Several Sheltered Housing Units across South Ayrshire picked up awards at the Regional Housing for Older People Awards in 2019. The units listed below were all winners:

**Arcon Court, Ayr**

**Ardfin, Benmore & Adamton Road, Prestwick**

**Boyle Court, Girvan**

**Logan Drive, Troon**



Congratulations to all the winners and well done to the staff and residents at these units.

**Tenant Scrutiny** - Throughout 2019/20, involved tenants continued the task of reviewing the existing Letting Standard for South Ayrshire Council Housing Services.

Following on from their hard work, the tenants were able to produce a list of recommendations on ways in which they believed that service could be improved and following a meeting held in October 2019 with Service Leads from both Housing Services and Property Maintenance, some of these changes and proposals were agreed.

In 2020/21, South Ayrshire Council will continue to work with the tenants to work towards producing a new version of the Letting Standard.



## Michael Alexander

### Service Lead, Housing Services

**During 2019/20, the Housing Services team continued to provide high quality housing services and the Council's reported performance is better than the Scottish average across a number of activities and services.**

In January 2020, Research Resource were commissioned by the Council to undertake a comprehensive tenants survey. 682 households were surveyed and the results for key indicators are included in this report.

Although these results are very positive and confirm high levels of tenant satisfaction, the Council is committed to continuing to make ongoing improvements.

In 2019/20, the Council dealt with 845 homeless applications and provided 974 temporary accommodation placements

in the reporting year. Work is ongoing to support the prevention of homelessness and to develop and increase the Housing First approach to support those most at risk of tenancy failure and repeat homelessness. To support our approach to the provision of advice and information, the Housing Service applied for accreditation under the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers. Following an audit by the Scottish Legal Aid Board, our Housing Options and Support Team successfully gained accreditation from the Scottish Government to provide Type 1 Housing Advice and Information.

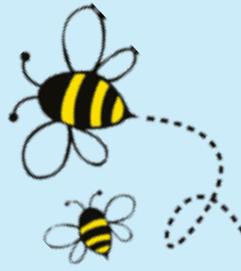
Our commitment to the supply of affordable housing continued, with the completion of the new build housing development at School Gardens, Ayr, providing 26 new properties. In addition, the Council completed a new build Travelling Persons' Site at Girvan, providing new high-quality energy efficient chalet bungalows.

On 29 October 2020, it was announced that this new build development won the award for Affordable Housing Development of the Year (Small, Social Rent) at the 2020 Scottish Home Awards.

Overall 2019/20 was another busy year. The impact of Covid-19 started to affect service delivery at the end of March 2020. Taking account of the restrictions and public health guidance, our offices have been closed. However, we have adapted the way we deliver services to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of tenants and other customers.

**Over the course of 2020/21, we are committed to ensuring that the requirements of the Regulatory Framework introduced by the Scottish Housing Regulator are met, and we will continue to work with our involved tenants to scrutinise service delivery and performance to improve the quality of our housing stock and the outcomes for tenants and other customers.**

# COMMUNITIES FUN DAY



**The 2019 Communities Fun Day managed to break the 2018 record breaking attendee figure with 3,500 people attending the 2019 event.**

Residents from across South Ayrshire once again flocked to the Citadel Leisure Centre for a FREE day packed with fun and information!

Those in attendance were able to get advice from a range of Council services, external agencies

and charities whilst the children were entertained by a variety of attractions.

**Hopefully The Communities Fun Day will be able to return in 2021.**



*SAC Information Desk*



# Housing Services Highlights 2019/20

During 2019/20 housing services have shared lot of highlights with tenants, applicants, services users and communities.

We will continue to work with our communities alongside other partners and agencies to ensure we deliver high quality of housing services.



Tenant Led Assessment Meeting



Tenant assessors out inspecting properties for the Letting Standard



Tenants Choir - Troon Performance November 2019



St Meddams Court residents enjoyed 'a day at the races' in the unit to celebrate the Ayr Gold Cup



Residents of the Sheltered Housing Unit in Dundonald held a charity coffee morning



Housing Services partnered up with Stagecoach to offer free Communities Fun Day transport



The Tenant Participation Team celebrate getting their Gold Certification at the TPAS Awards

This collection of photos highlights some of the good work that Housing Services, Involved Tenants and our communities have been involved in during 2019/20.

 Find us on  
**Facebook**

**South Ayrshire Council  
Housing Services**

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Na życzenie Klienta, informacje te mogą być udostępnione w innych językach oraz formatach.

یتوافر هذا المنشور باللغة العربية على شكل نص خطي فقط.