

# Our Performance Report 2021–2022

**Meeting the Scottish  
Social Housing Charter**



# Welcome to your report on Places for People Scotland's performance during 2021 to 2022

## Customer Scrutiny

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets outcomes for customers that the Scottish Housing Regulator expects us to achieve.

Getting feedback from customers was an essential part of preparing this Performance Report. We ran workshops over two days covering each of the Charter outcomes and Places for People Scotland colleagues presented evidence for each part.

Customers who are members of the National Customer Group, including Janet Boston who is the Chair, came along to ensure the customer voice was truly heard.

Getting customer feedback on our performance helps us to understand what we are doing right and where we could make improvements. If you would like to get involved with scrutinising our services, please find out more by visiting the Get Involved page on our website:

## [Get involved | Ways to get involved](#)

We have set out the highlights and areas for improvement as well as the key performance and satisfaction statistics for April 2021 to March 2022.

## Scottish Housing Regulator

You can read about our performance on the Scottish Housing Regulator's website. This includes their reports on our performance; how we compare with others; our full Charter return; and our audited accounts. You can access all the information here:

## [Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association Ltd | Scottish Housing Regulator](#)

Please note that we are trading as Places for People Scotland but our legal name is Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association Limited.

Please call us on **0131 657 0600** if you need any help.



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**My focus is on helping customers in Scotland with a programme to transform our existing homes, creating more homes and communities, and to provide support with the cost-of-living crisis.**

A warm welcome from

**Tom  
Norris**





## Affordability

The affordability of rent is one of my main focuses and this year we prioritised this across all our rentals.

We follow guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator, and we use the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's Affordability Tool. This tests whether our rents meet the recommended affordability level of 30% of all income — including benefits.

This year we varied rents across our communities to deliver both fairer and more affordable rents. We will continue to do this over the coming years. Feedback from customers in the rent consultation supported this change. Affordability has improved with the average now 29.4% of income spent on rent compared to 30.7% of income.



#PeopleFirst™

## Helping people

We continue to help our customers and local communities, extending initiatives that we launched during the pandemic to ensure that they benefit people long-term. The Hays Community Hub was such a programme, established during Covid, it helped people express themselves and learn new skills — and we've now extended it to help more customers. The core of the Hub is the Hays Community Pantry which offers discounted food for local people – including fresh produce such as fruit, veg and bakery items offered free of charge.

We launched our pilot furniture initiative, donating furniture from our development show homes, and transporting it to customers. Our team created an inventory of available furniture, aligned with the customers who needed support. The programme has already made a difference with 50 large furniture items and soft furnishings distributed. Customers to benefit

include an individual who had lost her sofa after a fire, a family with four young children who were gifted a table and chairs, and a customer who was moving from a homeless shelter into their first home and was given a starter pack of a bed, sofa, cushions, bedding, coffee table, TV unit, bedside tables and more to settle them into their new home.

We have invested £18,359,900 in maintaining our homes and have built 351 new properties across Scotland.

**Tom Norris**

Managing Director Scotland

## Equalities

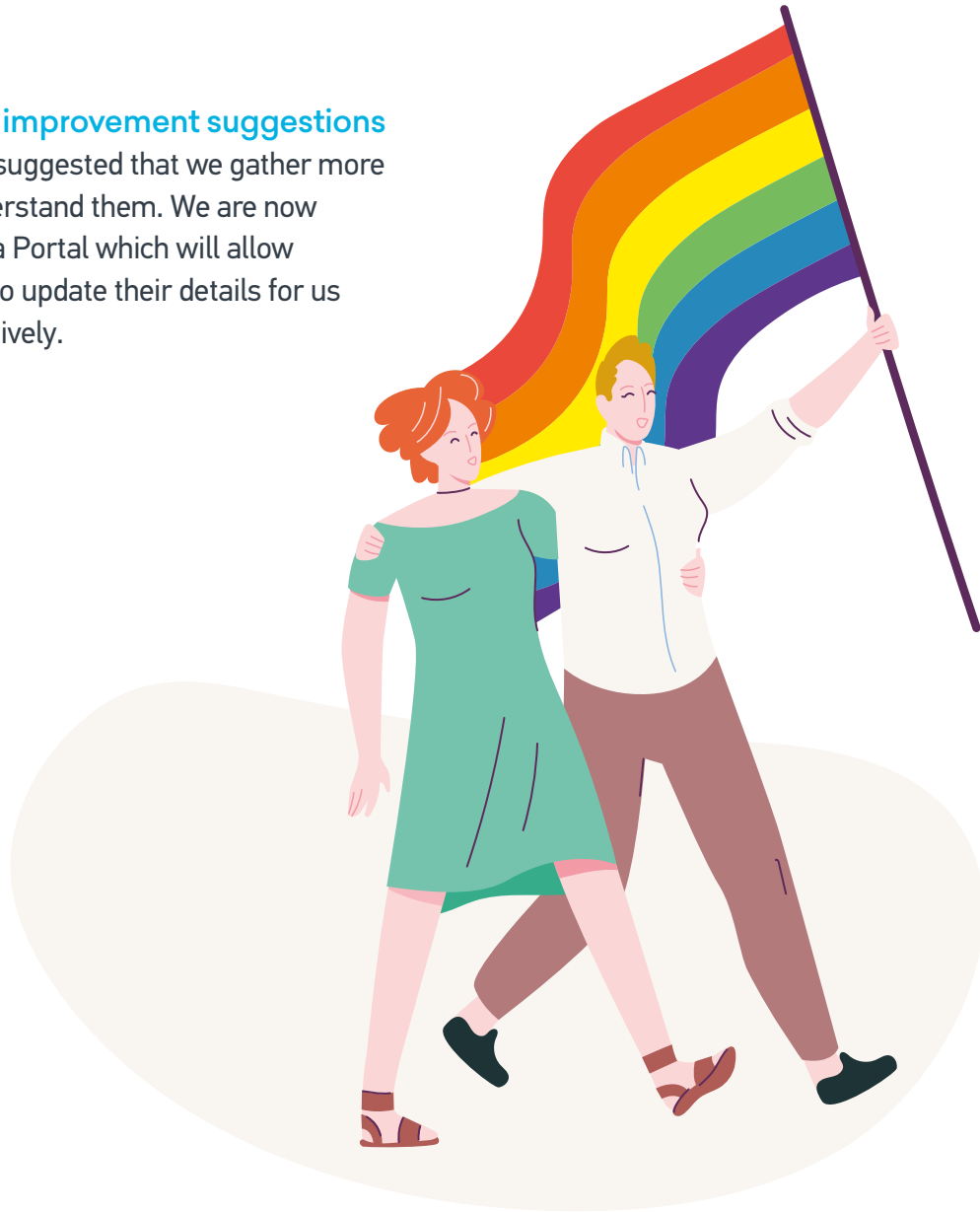
**The Scottish Social Housing Charter says that social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.**



- We carry out assessments on how our policies, actions, and services impact on different groups of people. These are called Equality Impact Assessments and they help us to identify if any group could be affected and how we can fix that.
- Customers can now scrutinise and review our policies and Equality Impact Assessments and will get the training they need to do it.
- All colleagues must complete mandatory equalities training. This is important as it gives them the skills required to maintain their inclusive approach to customers. We are designing a new programme that all colleagues who work with customers will need to complete. There will be different levels of accreditation according to the different roles, this means the training will be relevant to the work they do.

### Customer improvement suggestions

Customers suggested that we gather more data to understand them. We are now developing a Portal which will allow customers to update their details for us to use effectively.



## Communication

**The Scottish Social Housing Charter says that social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.**



**87%**

of customers in a survey tell us that we are good at keeping them informed







- Communication comes in many forms, including a quick update on the phone, meeting customers at their home, newsletter updates, letters, social media, and website.
- When we communicate with our customers our aim is to provide a range of communication methods and formats, in a timely, clear, transparent, and accessible manner.
- This year we carried out a review of information for customers on the website which resulted in easy-to-read documents starting with topics such as safeguarding.

### Customer improvement suggestions

Customers would like us to communicate more and with local news and positive stories.



## Participation

**The Scottish Social Housing Charter says that social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.**



**90%**

of customers in a survey told us they were happy with the opportunities to get involved





- We've created more ways for customers to get involved. These aim to help design services and to give customers the opportunity to tell us what they think about our services, policies, and processes.
- We consulted customers on changes to emergency repairs, on the rent increase and the new flexible, fairer approach to rent increases.
- There are national and local groups with flexible opportunities for involvement with almost 100 customers taking part in Scotland.
- The National Customer Group (NCG) represents the customer's voice and works with local customer involvement groups to ensure there is a two-way communication between the Places for People Regulated Board and customers.
- The NCG will help improve services and share best practice. They now regularly check policies and services and challenges our performance.
- The Places for People Scotland Tenant Participation Strategy is required by law and has been adopted for the whole of Places for People as it is best practice in involving customers.

### Customer improvement suggestions

Customers would like meetings to be more informal to encourage attendance and to be careful that the words we use don't put people off.



## Quality of housing

**The Scottish Social Housing Charter says that social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated; are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH1) by December 2020.**



**85%**

of customers in a survey said they were satisfied with the quality of their home



### Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS)

- The SHQS is in place to ensure homes are energy efficient, safe and secure, not seriously damaged, and have kitchens and bathrooms that are in good condition.
- At the end of March 2022, 73% of our homes met the standard against the 100% target. 1,728 homes did not fully meet the standard.
- Abeyances and failures have increased year-on-year mainly due to the Fire Alarm System and Electrical Installation Condition Report requirements not being fully met. We have plans in place to address these this year which will improve our performance.
  - 1,105 were classified as fails and will be addressed in 2022/23.
  - 449 were classified as exemptions, due to technical reasons or disproportionate costs.
  - 174 were classified as abeyances due to customer refusals. We regularly review these to see if we can get access.



### Letting Standards

- During last year, we invested in 498 empty homes for re-let at an average cost of £2,887
- Some challenges had a knock-on effect on our letting targets, as empty homes needed essential repairs before they could be let.



### Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH1)

- 92% of our homes meet the standard against the target of 100%.
- By the end of the year, 5,916 homes met the standard with 398 still to meet the standard and 146 were exempt.

### Customer improvement suggestions

Customers would like to see our plans for improvement in advance.

## Repairs, maintenance and improvements

**The Scottish Social Housing Charter says that social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.**



### Routine repairs

- We make sure all routine repairs are attended to within our 28 days target.
- Last year we attended to 12,735 routine repairs in an average of 17.22 days.
- We achieved a repair fixed first-time rate of 94% - to match ARC return against the 89% target.
- We kept 99.60% of repairs appointments against the target of 92%.

**92.7%**

of customers in our Repairs Satisfaction Survey were satisfied with repairs, which is over the 90% target.



### Emergency repairs

- We make sure emergency repairs made safe within our 24 hours target and the average time taken to make an emergency repair safe for a customer was 13.77 hours.
- We carried out 7,540 emergency repairs.
- We consulted customers before changing our target from 12 hours to 24 hours. We also consulted on what an emergency repair is. [The detail of this is on our website.](#)



### Gas checks

**99.98%**

of homes had a valid gas safety certificate against the 100% target.

**99.4%**

satisfaction with the annual gas and electrical safety checks against the 90% target in our Gas Servicing and Electrical Testing surveys.

## Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs)

An EICR is a formal document that is produced following an assessment of the electrics in a home. It must be carried out by an experienced qualified electrician or approved contractor.

- At the end of March 2022, 86.58% of homes had an EICR dated within five years.
- We added 3 additional contractors to support us team to improve our performance.

## Fire Alarm Systems (LD2s)

- 423 homes need a fire alarm system upgrade.



## Improvement work

This includes arranging major replacements in homes and communal areas:

- Kitchens and Bathrooms
- Windows and Doors
- Roof and Render
- Gas heating
- Painting
- Solar PV
- Lifts
- Fire safety equipment – sprinklers and fire alarm systems

From April 2021 to March 2022 we delivered £6.8 million on planned investment, which covered £2.3 million of replacement kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors and roofs. We spent £1 million on heating upgrades including commercial and domestic gas and electric systems. A further £1.8 million was spent on fire safety works including LD2 fire systems and fire alarm upgrades and £1.2m on electrical safety completing the EICR tests. The remaining £0.5m was spent on staffing, fees, communal lifts, lighting and security upgrades.

## Customer improvement suggestions

Customers would like more information in advance about investment plans.





## Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

**The Scottish Social Housing Charter says social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.**

**83%**

of customers in a survey said they were satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in





### Estate Management – stair cleaning

- The cost for stair cleaning was £490,000 for the year, covering 280 of our developments.
- The selection process to choose a contractor has more emphasis on quality than price. It's 60% on quality and 40% on price.
- The contractor gives us additional 'community benefit' to our neighbourhoods, an example of this is a community clean up.
- Developments receive a weekly or fortnightly clean. This depends on building age and condition. The cleaning standard is based on an agreed specification. The cleaning is inspected daily by the contractor's operations manager. We aim to inspect each stair every three months by our own colleagues.
- From April 2021 to March 2022, 43 stairs were deep cleaned at an average cost of £580. Emergency cleans are also carried out as needed when issues are reported by customers and colleagues.

### Estate Management – landscape maintenance

- The annual cost for landscaping was £330,000 covering 174 developments.
- The contractor works to agreed specifications and standards and this is inspected and monitored by the contractor, our inspectors, and grounds maintenance consultant. We also rely on feedback from customers.
- There are fortnightly visits at site from April to October; and in November to March the winter maintenance is undertaken. This means around 14 summer visits and 10 winter visits.



### Anti-social behaviour (ASB), neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

- There was a reduction in ASB cases of 111 (47%) compared to the 22% increase last year.
- We also saw a reduction in neighbour related contacts from customers of 166 or 7%. This is still significantly higher than pre-Covid contacts about neighbours.
- 97% of cases were responded to within our five-day response time, an increase from 96% last year.
- Our performance for the 28-day target for ASB cases decreased from 85% to 64%.
- The coronavirus did have an impact on our services during most of 2021-22. This included:
  - We only carried our high risk visits with Police Scotland
  - Pressures on other stakeholders and services such as Police Scotland, social work and courts
  - Changing legal position on tenancy enforcement
  - Increased incidence of mental health problems
  - Colleague wellbeing and absence
  - Home working.

### Partnerships

People who experience multiple complex needs can be hard to reach, disengaged with services and commonly experience poor physiological and psychological health, frequently made worse by problematic substance use.

They can find themselves locked into a disempowering, destructive and debilitating cycle, unable to sustain independent living, positive relationships, and meaningful social interaction. This can lead to anti-social behaviour, issues with neighbours and repeated involvement with the police and criminal justice system.

Our multi-agency and partnership approach to enable customers to sustain a successful tenancy is critical.



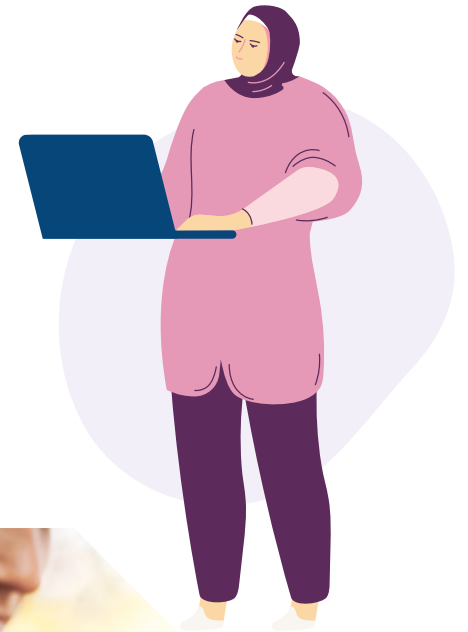
## Housing options

**The Scottish Social Housing Charter says social landlords work together to ensure that people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them. People at risk of losing their homes get advice on what they can do to prevent this. Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.**



- Our colleagues in the Lettings Team are available to give information and advice on housing options and we have information on our website.
- We share information on housing options in the following ways. We don't rely on digital only information to make sure it's accessible:
  - Website
  - Email and phone enquiries
  - Sign posting to other organisations such as to local councils and others for specialist advice.
- We are members of Edindex common housing register for Edinburgh. We have our own common housing register called Home Search for East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian. Applications are reviewed every year for both.

- Changes in customers' circumstances are easily updated and changes can be made by customers themselves online.
- We support local authorities with their homeless applicants as required by law, with their Rapid Rehousing plans and Housing First initiative.



## Access to housing

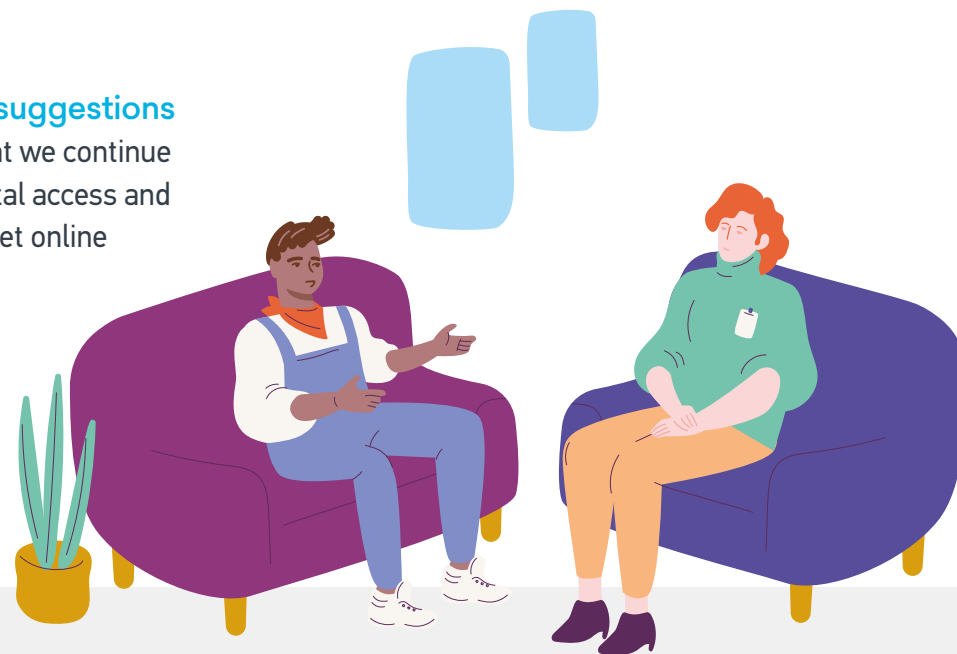
The Scottish Social Housing Charter says people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.



- We are Edindex partners along with the other housing associations in Edinburgh, Edindex is run by The City of Edinburgh Council. Customers only need to complete one application.
- The Edindex website has a full range of information and our own Home Search for other council areas has a useful ‘help’ facility.
- Our customers can apply for mutual exchanges and transfers. Some of our homes are let for transfers only.
- Where we don’t have a common housing register in place we get nominations from the local councils. These are Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire, and Falkirk.
- We support customers with their applications especially if they have difficulty with online access.
- Our lets for the past 4 years are detailed to the right.

### Customer improvement suggestions

Our customers suggested that we continue to support those without digital access and support more customers to get online through learning.



Source of let	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Existing customers	27	27	62	<b>63</b>
Applicants	184	147	131	<b>262</b>
Mutual exchanges	56	45	33	<b>57</b>
Nominations from councils	15	128	99	<b>85</b>
Homeless applications	238	231	133	<b>212</b>
Other sources	60	44	34	<b>109</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>788</b>

## Tenancy sustainment

**The Scottish Social Housing Charter says social landlords ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.**





### Support for customers

- We have a risk-based approach for our support, and we focus on customers who need the most support to sustain their tenancies.
- We support tenancies from early allocation of new homes. Our Housing Officers and other colleagues help customers with issues at an early stage. This could include support needs identified through the allocation process and working closely with vulnerable customers.
- For customers at high risk, our Housing Officers will help in the short term to resolve whatever issue is affecting the tenancy. This could include rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, and condition of the home and garden.



- in 2021, we supported 268 new customers who were at high risk to sustain their tenancies and 330 existing customers who needed lower-level support to sustain their tenancies.
- We also referred new and existing customers to our financial inclusion team including to the New Tenancy Support Officer, who helped customers access the Scottish Welfare Fund.
- We also provided practical help through our tenancy sustainment fund including issuing starter packs, and access to hardship funds.
- We made referrals to and partnered with other organisations for very specific support including health and social care services, and outreach services on addiction and homelessness.



### Medical adaptations

- Adaptations help customers with their independence and dignity, improve their quality of life, and allow them to stay in their own homes.
- We are grateful for the £178,150 grant from the Scottish Government and £106,000 from the City of Edinburgh Council. We also directly funded £40,000 of adaptations.
- In 2021/22 we delivered 332 adaptations - grant funded medical adaptations, helping customers to remain in their homes.
- Adaptations can include grab rails, wet floor showers and ceiling mounted hoists.

## Financial Inclusion Team

- Our Financial Inclusion Team provide a range of individually tailored services for any customer who needs it, including energy, money, debt and benefits advice, benefits appeals representation, grant applications and more.
- We provided a face-to-face, home visiting service and offered telephone and email advice. We assign a caseworker till the matter is resolved for the customer.
- Our customers received a total financial gain of over £1.6 million for 1,041 customers including £503,276 in rent related benefits, £275,145 in disability benefits and £220,477 in earning replacement benefits.
- 50% of referrals were for women; 74% had a vulnerability; and 16% were over pension age.

- In 2021, we added lots of new information on the following pages of our website for customers who like this kind of information:
  - Your Home with Us
  - Your Wellbeing
  - Money and Advice



## Cost-of-living crisis

We are providing support for colleagues and customers in response to the increasing challenges in society from energy costs, inflation, rising interest rates and food prices. The Cost of Living Taskforce is a cross functional team with colleagues from across the business.



Here's some of the support in place:

**Hardship funds** - customers can access our hardship fund to get help towards essential household items.

**Engaging with partners** - supporting food banks in our communities to ensure customers can access support if required.

**External forums and training** – our colleagues attend welfare rights forums to share best practice, information, and challenges. They deliver training for customer facing colleagues on understanding fuel poverty and identifying this at the earliest opportunity to support customers.

**Improved referral process and communication** – we introduced a new way to make referrals easier and quicker for colleagues and keep them updated regularly on our work and how we can help.

## Value for money

**The Scottish Social Housing Charter says that social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.**



**86%**

of customers in a survey said they feel the rent for their home represents value for money



## What we are doing to maximise value for money

- The national lockdown at the start of the financial year had an impact on our lettings, maintenance, and income collection services. All services were fully reinstated before the end of the financial year, and we have been focusing on the backlog of activity.
- We are pooling and sharing resources for some services which gives us expert central teams and cuts down on duplication. Working smarter with improved processes and technology helps make the customer and colleague experience smoother and quicker.
- Accessing external grants such as for adaptations ensure we can help our customers and communities thrive whilst reducing the impact on our own budgets.
- We can ensure value for money by getting the right balance of quality and price when procuring suppliers and material.



## Our performance

	2019	2020	2021	2022	Target
Total losses from empty homes	0.70%	0.71%	<b>1.96%</b>	<b>2.11%</b>	<b>1.35%</b>
Average repair cost for each empty home	£1,577	£2,516	<b>£2,096</b>	<b>£2,910</b>	<b>£2,555</b>
Average re-let times	24 days	22 days	<b>47 days</b>	<b>86.3 days</b>	<b>22.5 days</b>
Current arrears	4.24%	4.66%	<b>5.29%</b>	<b>5.41%</b>	<b>3.65%</b>

### Empty homes loss

During the national lockdown, all letting activities were paused but we had homes being handed back to us. We saw void loss increase from 0.71% to 1.96% and again to 2.11% in the last year. We streamlined the lettings processes and added additional resources to help improve performance. We remain focused on meeting our target.

### Repairs Costs

There was an increase in number of repairs, both new requirements and completing repairs that were delayed. We continued to prioritise emergency repairs. There were also challenges sourcing materials, parts and equipment, and recruiting more construction trade colleagues.

The challenges with the repairs service had a knock-on effect on our letting targets, as empty homes needed essential repairs before they could be let.

## Re-lets

The average cost of getting an empty home to the re-let standard is £2,887

We have continued to see an increase in very poor condition of homes when people move out. This means it takes longer to re-let the home and has an impact on the average cost for each empty home.

## Arrears and bad debts

Current arrears increased from 4.66% to 5.29% and again to 5.41% due to some customers struggling to pay. We are committed to help prevent our customers falling into debt and provide advice, support, and guidance to customers whose arrears are increasing. Our Income Collection Team manually review increasing cases to ensure every effort to contact the customer is in place and arrange potential personal visits by themselves or other teams. We have a fund to help customers at risk of eviction who are trying to resolve the issue, making payment and every effort they possibly can to sustain their tenancy.



## Rents and service charges

**The Scottish Social Housing Charter says that social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them. Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including details of any individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.**



### Rent Affordability

Since 2018 we have used the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) affordability tool for our rent affordability testing. It uses a “moderate incomes” approach using incomes just above the level that would make households typically eligible for Housing Benefit. The lowest 30% of earnings is the benchmark, then adjustments are made for differences between single households, families, and pensioners. Our aim is to balance rents for customers and align their rents to an average of 30% of their income.

### A New Rent Increase Approach

The Scottish Housing Regulator guidance asks registered social landlords to balance affordability and the ability to deliver services and manage homes. The rent increase policy at Places for People Scotland has traditionally been retail price index (RPI) in September plus 1%.

Due to concerns around affordability of rents for some from the rent consultation feedback for the 2021 increase, it was agreed that the approach to rent setting would be reviewed for 2022 increase and beyond to get the average rents below 30% of household income across our homes. The review looked at affordability of rent in relation to size of the home and also its local authority (LA) area.

### Rent Consultation

We invited feedback from customers on a proposed flexible range of rent increases from April 2022. The purpose of the more flexible approach was to address the broad range of affordability rates across the homes and to improve fairness.

The range we consulted on was 1% to 3.9%. The consultation took place in late 2021 using an email campaign. The consultation paper was also posted on the website with paper copies of this and the survey available in our retirement developments.

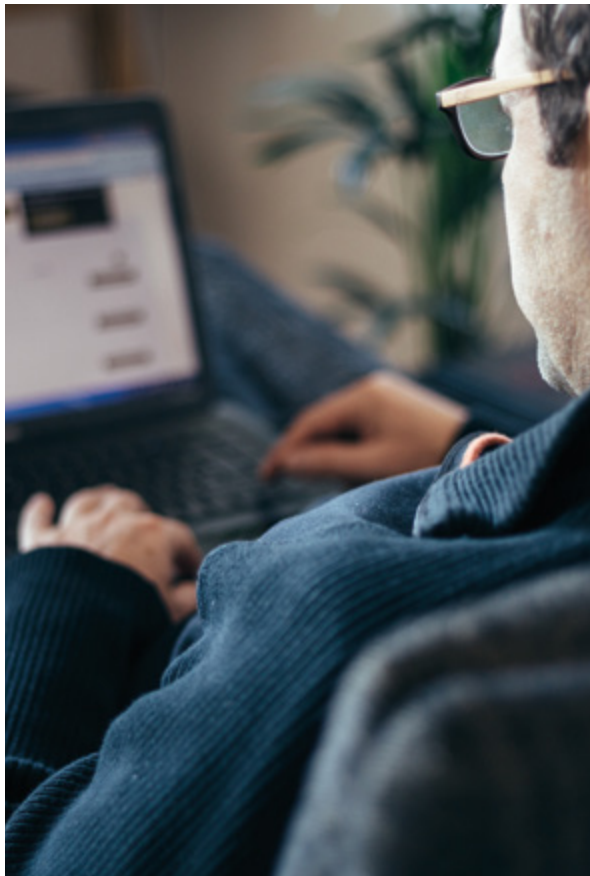
323 customers completed the rent increase survey. 77.71% of respondents agreed with our flexible approach to improve affordability and fairness and 62.23% agreed with the proposed increased range of 1% to 3.9%.

### Retail Price Index (RPI) History

RPI – retail price index	%	Rent Increase	%
September 2016	1.0	<b>2017-18</b>	2.0
September 2017	2.0	<b>2018-19</b>	3.0
September 2018	3.0	<b>2019-20</b>	2.5
September 2019	2.5	<b>2020-21</b>	2.4
September 2020	1.1	<b>2021-22</b>	2.0
September 2021	4.9	<b>2022-23</b>	0 to 3.9










### Rent increase April 2022

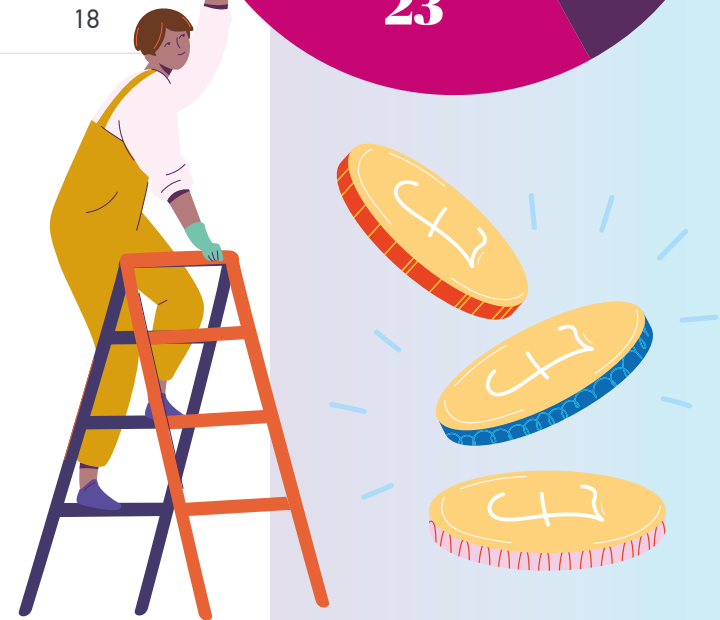
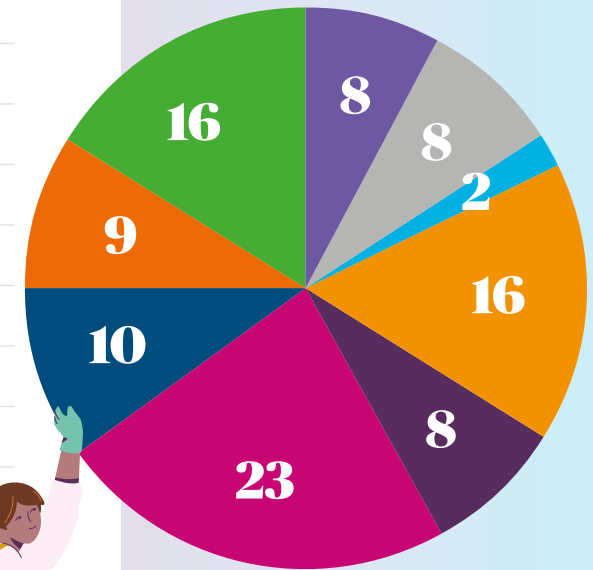
A range of 0% to 3.9% was agreed following customer feedback. The average affordability of rents within Places for People Scotland in September 2021 was 30.7% and after the flexible rent increase was applied the affordability improved across all areas and the average dropped from 30.7% to 29.4% in April 2022.



### How rent is spent

The illustration below shows how each £1 of rent is broken down:

	21-22	20-21	19-20
 Housing management	8	11	12
 Service charge	8	8	7
 Rent losses from bad debt	2	1	1
 Routine maintenance	16	15	15
 Planned maintenance	8	10	10
 Major repairs investment	23	14	24
 Depreciation	10	11	9
 Interest charges	9	3	4
 Available for reinvestment	16	27	18



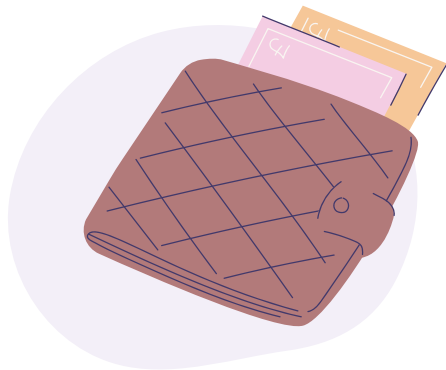


### Housing management

This is the cost of the teams who provide lettings, income collection, tenancy management and support services including office administration and equipment costs. It also includes senior management, finance, and human resource functions.

### Service charge

This is a charge in addition to the rent for provision of a specific service. For example, the cost of an onsite member of staff in a retirement development would be charged only to each home within that development. When we measure affordability of rents, we include any service charges.



### Rent loss from bad debt

This is money that is due to us in rent that we have been unable to collect. An example would be rent arrears owed by current and former customers.

### Routine maintenance

Often referred to as day-to-day repairs. These are not planned as we can't anticipate where repairs will be required.

### Planned maintenance

Repairs and servicing that we know we will carry out during the year such as annual gas servicing and electrical testing.

### Major repairs investment

These are projects that improve homes. Examples are windows, heating, kitchen and bathroom replacements. It also includes any work to bring homes up to energy efficiency standards.

### Depreciation

When we have made a long-term investment into improving a home, rather than recording the full value of this cost in a single year we spread it over the life of the asset. As an example, the cost of £2,000 to replace a kitchen would be spread over 20 years at £100 each year.

### Interest charges

When we borrow money we have to pay interest on our loans.

### Available for reinvestment

Cash generated from our rental income that we directly invest in building new homes and investing in existing homes. Any money left over from our rental income, after paying all our costs, is available to spend on building new homes and improvements.

# Places work when they work for everyone

Visit [placesforpeoplescotland.co.uk](https://placesforpeoplescotland.co.uk)

Call 0131 657 0600

Email [PFPScustomer@placesforpeople.co.uk](mailto:PFPScustomer@placesforpeople.co.uk)

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