

Housing Services Annual Report

2021 - 2022



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Introduction



I am delighted to introduce the 'Annual Report' for tenants and service users for financial year 2021 to 2022.

The process of producing our 'Annual Return against the Charter' and publishing an annual report has become well established.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter was developed by the Scottish Government. It aims to help improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide. It will also support the Scottish Government's long-term aim of creating a safer and stronger Scotland. It will do so by:

- stating clearly what tenants and other customers can expect from social landlords and helping them to hold landlords to account.
- focusing the efforts of social landlords on achieving outcomes that matter to their customers.
- establishing a basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator to assess and report on how well landlords are performing. This assessment will enable the Regulator, social landlords, tenants and other customers to identify areas of strong performance and areas needing improvement.

The Council is required to produce an Annual Assurance Statement which covers Housing Services' performance and we must submit it to the Scottish Housing Regulator by October each year. This information must also be made available to tenants and service users on the Council's website. This information is available from:

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/H/annual-assurance-statement-housing-services.htm>

The annual report for tenants has grown and developed over the last few years and will continue to do so over the coming years. In developing this report we've compared performance over the last three years and have highlighted trends.

Orkney Islands Council has shown strong performance in many areas – our properties are in good condition, we have a low number of repairs per property, we have delivered well against the energy efficiency standards we are required to meet, our current rent collection is high and our response to homelessness is good.

We undertook a tenant satisfaction survey earlier this year and this recorded some challenges in relation to satisfaction levels across the areas of performance reported through the Annual Return against the Charter. The satisfaction survey result is disappointing but in line with the

mood of the nation at this time of challenge – coming out of the pandemic years and into a cost of living crisis. This is a reflection being felt by public sector services in their entirety currently. Equally we will take the results of the survey into account in planning our services.

Of course, the Council also faces significant challenges in the form of restricted budgets. While we have delivered a significant programme of newly built housing in recent years, this has now reduced as a result of financial pressure on the Housing Revenue Account and the impact on tenants' rents. However, during 2021, 36 newly built properties became available, and a further 8 properties were completed in 2022.

Areas where performance could be improved include the time it takes to return empty properties to an appropriate standard so they can be re-let and recovery of rent arrears.

The reporting period covered by this report, is up to the end of March 2022. A period in which the COVID-19 pandemic continued to present many challenges for our staff, our contractors and our tenants. This included rising costs of supplies to undertake repairs and improvements and delays in deliveries. In recent months we have been very aware of financial challenges which affect our tenants as a result of rising electricity prices and the cost of living crisis. Please remember that our staff are here to help support tenants through these difficult times, and will be happy to provide advice and assistance as required.

For the last two years the Service has published the annual report electronically only, as a result of the pandemic. This was intended to minimise the use and handling of paper by all involved. This approach is more cost effective than physically printing and posting annual reports to all our tenants and therefore we would propose to continue to publish it annually through our website. Our website has Recite Me assistive software. We recognise however, that not everyone has access to the internet and therefore if you would still like to receive a paper copy, we will make one available on request or if you need a copy in a different language or format that can also be provided, on request.

I'd like to thank staff and our contractors for all their work and for their commitment over another challenging year. I'd also like to thank our tenants for taking the time to contribute to the development of this report. We really appreciate all of your feedback regarding the style of the report, and on the information contained within. This helps us to improve our services.

I hope you find this report interesting and informative. If, however, you feel there is room for improvement please let us know.

Yours,

Councillor Gwenda Shearer,

Chair of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.



Performance figures for 2021 to 2022 are shown first with figures for 2020 to 2021 and 2019 to 2020 shown below to allow comparison. This information allows you as a Council tenant to see the work we are doing to improve housing services, and how we compare to some similar Scottish Councils. We have chosen both Highland and Shetland Islands Councils. Although Western Isles and Argyll and Bute Councils would be broadly comparable, both have transferred their housing stock to a Housing Association which represents a significant difference and therefore they have not been included.

We are required to carry out a wholesale tenants' satisfaction survey every three years. However, because the tenants in properties change over a period of time, we have taken the decision to undertake the tenants' satisfaction survey every two years instead. The section on Tenant Engagement is based on the survey which was undertaken earlier this year.

Throughout this report we have used both thumbs up / thumbs down symbols for highlighting performance. In addition, we have used a coloured traffic light system. This is as follows:



Good progress made; action plans continue to show how further improvement will be achieved.



Evidence of progress and understanding of the issues but with more to do to achieve real impact.



Poor performance where improvements could be made.

A web accessible version of this report is available from www.orkney.gov.uk. In order to allow the web accessible version to be read with a reader, such as Recite Me, a full stop has been inserted after every figure to ensure a pause is inserted.



Our Housing Stock

At 31 March 2022 the Council owned 1,009 homes, having increased from 964 the year before. The Council began a programme of building additional social rented houses in 2009 to 2010 and by 31 March 2022 had completed 275 new houses representing an increase in stock of 37%. The total rent due to your landlord for the year was £3,768,570. The Council increased its weekly rent on average by 2.6% from the previous year. The rental increase at 2.6% was below the rate of inflation which was 3.1% at September 2021.

We are committed to continuing to build new houses and working in partnership with Orkney Housing Association Ltd in order to address housing need. However, the sheer size of our former building programme is not something we could continue to deliver in the long term for reasons of affordability. Therefore, it is likely that future build programmes will become more modest.

Size of home.	Number owned.		
	March 2022.	March 2021.	March 2020.
Bedsit.	28.	27.	27.
1 Bedroom.	387.	360.	354.
2 Bedroom.	324.	311.	307.
3 Bedroom.	245.	245.	245.
4 Bedroom and larger.	21.	21.	19.

Where properties have reduced in number, this is usually because the Council sells a small number of properties which we no longer require. There are no longer any Right to Buy sales as this ended with effect from 1 August 2016. However, we may choose to sell a property because we have too many in a particular area which no longer has enough demand, or because a property requires substantial investment to meet the required standards. Occasionally the Council also purchases a property to enhance its stock for reasons such as insufficient supply in a given area or of a particular type, but this is now unusual.



Quality of Housing

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) is a challenging standard which ensures a property is in a good standard of repair, meets challenging energy efficiency standards, is provided with modern facilities and services and is healthy, safe and secure. The Council was required to meet this standard by March 2015 and continue to do so thereafter.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Percentage of stock meeting the SHQS.	2021-2022.	81.99%.	28.94%.	71.83%.	74.57%.
	2020-2021.	93.80%.	76.25%.	97.70%.	90.44%.
	2019-2020.	92.33%.	99.59%.	95.57%.	95.36%.
Percentage of stock regarded as exempt, in abeyance or fail.	2021-2022.	18.01%.	71.06%.	28.17%.	25.43%.
	2020-2021.	6.20%.	23.75%.	2.30%.	9.56%.
	2019-2020.	7.67%.	0.41%.	4.43%.	4.64%.

Work was carried out to install various improvements including kitchens, bathrooms and window replacements both to meet required standards and tenant priorities. Work remains ongoing to install replacement heating systems, insulation upgrades etc to help improve the energy efficiency and meet the standards required.

From February 2022, there was a requirement to meet revised standards for smoke alarm systems, specifically these were to be interlinked. A programme of works was undertaken to upgrade existing smoke detection systems in line with revised requirements. There have been some unexpected difficulties including supply issues. We are working with a number of tenants where there have been issues with access for various reasons. Progress continues to be made. This has impacted on the level of properties meeting the SHQS and the percentage of stock regarded as exempt, in abeyance or failing the standard.

A property may be classified as being in abeyance when work cannot be done for 'social' reasons relating to tenants' or owner-occupiers' behaviour. For example, where the tenant is elderly or suffering from a medical condition such that they do not wish work to be undertaken on their home at this time.

Abeyances have increased from 15 in 2020 to 2021 to 43 in 2021 to 2022. Exemptions have decreased slightly from 19 for 2020 to 2021 to 18 for 2021 to 2022. In terms of the SHQS 25 properties failed this standard for 2020 to 2021 and in 2021 to 2022 there were 98 properties. Most of these are marginal fails and this was most commonly around a need for a more modern Energy Performance Certificate. These are being progressed currently.

In addition, social landlords required to meet a challenging standard on energy efficiency by December 2020. This is the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). The

Council has delivered well against the first EESSH and is relatively well placed nationally in this respect.

A further, more challenging energy efficiency standard is expected to be required by 2032. The Scottish Government is currently revising its guidance on the standard. These standards are in addition to the SHQS.

The Council is well underway with the process of planning to meet the expected enhanced standard by 2032. Figures are as follows.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Properties meeting EESSH.	2021-2022.	96.13%.	80.10%.	76.30%.	87.56%.
	2020-2021.	88.12%.	76.80%.	74.60%.	86.45%.
	2019-2020.	85.76%.	74.79%.	73.92%.	85.76%.

Currently we expect that this will be the last year that the SHQS and EESSH are reported separately.

We are committed to continuing to improve the quality of our housing stock through our housing investment programme. Investment in repairs and maintenance totalled £1.8m for financial year 2021 to 2022. This investment makes sure our tenants' homes, as a minimum, continue to meet the SHQS and EESSH and those that are currently in abeyance are gradually brought up to the relevant standards as the issues allow. It also ensures that we are on target to meet the EESSH2 by December 2032.

Our tenants told us:

- that 76% of tenants were satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in.
- that 75.29% of tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home.

We have made progress towards meeting the EESSH and will continue to do so over the coming year. We will continue to develop our plans for meeting EESSH2 by the deadline of 2032.



Repairs, Maintenance and Improvement

The area of repairs is one where context is particularly relevant with some Councils setting very challenging timescales for completion well ahead of the legislative requirement. Orkney's geography does present some challenges in that respect.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Average number of hours to complete emergency repairs.	2021-2022.	10.06.	2.49.	5.82.	4.16.
	2020-2021.	6.18.	2.27.	8.52.	4.22.
	2019-2020.	6.29.	2.29.	5.99.	4.10.
Number of emergency repairs per house.	2021-2022.	0.27.	0.25.	1.18.	1.01.
	2020-2021.	0.26.	0.31.	1.43.	1.16.
	2019-2020.	0.23.	0.29.	1.14.	1.14.
Average working days to complete non-emergency repairs.	2021-2022.	15.34.	14.57.	7.53.	8.87.
	2020-2021.	17.14.	19.52.	7.92.	6.74.
	2019-2020.	11.53.	11.20.	5.31.	7.10.
Number of non-emergency repairs per house.	2021-2022.	1.26.	2.04.	1.41.	2.10.
	2020-2021.	1.09.	1.75.	1.10.	1.30.
	2019-2020.	1.23.	2.18.	1.98.	2.02.

The Council records low numbers of repairs per house and this is an example of positive performance. The Council's housing stock is subject to significant investment and therefore is in good condition, leading to a low number of repairs.

The time taken to deliver emergency repairs has declined for financial year 2021 to 2022. Generally, this figure has been distorted by a proportion of cases which were outwith the timescales.

The requirements for contractors recording emergency repairs are complex. We undertake an analysis of repairs which are outwith the timescales and work with our contractors to seek to improve this. Issues during 2021 to 2022 include some errors in recording. Mainland contractors have increasingly undertaken repairs on some of the isles and this has been affected by weather and travel disruption.

The time taken to deliver non-emergency repairs has improved from last year. The Council continues to work closely with contractors and aims to improve its performance wherever possible.

Issues which have arisen include some of those which have affected housing providers nationally including difficulties with the supply of some parts and challenges with recruiting enough staff in certain trades.

When we asked tenants, during 2021 to 2022 about their experience of repairs undertaken, 91% were satisfied with the repair and 6% were dissatisfied with the time to undertake the work. This compares with 2020 to 2021 when, 91% were satisfied with the repair and 5% were dissatisfied with the time to undertake the work.

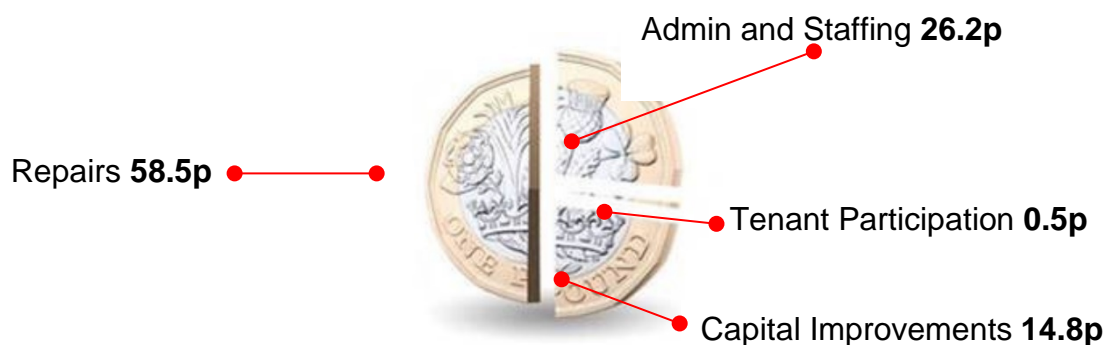


Average Rents

Orkney is Scotland's smallest Local Authority Housing Service and as such economies of scale are a factor in the rental charges. However, Orkney Islands Council's rental charges are broadly comparable to other similar areas.

Size of home.	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Bedsit.	2021-2022.	£62.21.	N/A.	£68.53.	£75.95.
	2020-2021.	£60.31.	£52.55.	£67.22.	£76.61.
	2019-2020.	£59.24.	£50.29.	£64.07.	£73.42.
1 Bedroom.	2021-2022.	£75.27.	£69.22.	£72.85.	£81.32.
	2020-2021.	£72.93.	£68.75.	£71.87.	£79.59.
	2019-2020.	£71.65.	£66.42.	£69.41.	£77.44.
2 Bedroom.	2021-2022.	£89.45.	£79.85.	£80.58.	£84.18.
	2020-2021.	£86.33.	£79.00.	£79.02.	£82.67.
	2019-2020.	£84.90.	£77.66.	£76.30.	£79.44.
3 Bedroom.	2021-2022.	£88.10.	£94.23.	£89.75.	£91.48.
	2020-2021.	£86.29.	£93.06.	£87.80.	£89.82.
	2019-2020.	£84.70.	£91.33.	£85.20.	£86.20.
4 Bedroom+.	2021-2022.	£108.98.	£114.73.	£100.06.	£100.74.
	2020-2021.	£107.54.	£110.38.	£97.96.	£99.99.
	2019-2020.	£99.46.	£108.21.	£94.60.	£95.29.

The cost of providing and maintaining Council housing is funded by our tenants' rents. The chart below shows how every £1 in rent you pay is spent.



The percentage of our tenants who feel their rent represents good value for money decreased to 69.30% from 80.71% previously, compared with the Scottish average of 82.51% for financial year 2021 to 2022. We will take this information into account when we consult with our tenants on any rental increase for 2022 to 2023.

Rent collection is very important to the Council. We are committed to being as efficient as possible in this respect and have processes in place to help us collect as much rent as possible. Performance in 2021 to 2022 improved from the previous year and we are slightly higher than the Scottish average.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Rent collected as a percentage of the total rent due in the reporting year.	2021-2022.	99.50%.	100.59%.	99.56%.	99.28%.
	2020-2021.	96.59%.	96.75%.	99.28%.	99.06%.
	2019-2020.	94.66%.	99.17%.	98.52%.	99.14%.
Percentage gross rent arrears of rent due.	2021-2022.	14.35%.	11.38%.	5.46%.	6.34%.
	2020-2021.	14.64%.	11.46%.	5.38%.	6.14%.
	2019-2020.	11.22%.	10.19%.	4.63%.	5.81%.
Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year.	2021-2022.	1.42%.	2.26%.	1.02%.	1.43%.
	2020-2021.	1.34%.	2.22%.	0.84%.	1.37%.
	2019-2020.	0.64%.	1.92%.	0.66%.	1.25%.

Gross rent arrears were challenging, throughout 2021 to 2022, as a result of the COVID-19 impact. At 31 March 2022 they had decreased slightly from the year before. Gross rent arrears include both current arrears and those of tenants who have left our accommodation while in arrears (former tenant arrears).

In order to try and reduce rent arrears the Council is working closely with Orkney Citizen's Advice Bureau to refer tenants for assistance at an early stage in the process. Improvements continue to be made to internal processes and Housing staff are focussing on helping tenants who are in financial difficulty to access advice and assistance. Every attempt was made and continues to be made, to recover outstanding arrears wherever possible. The Council continues to actively and prudently pursue former tenant arrears rather than writing them off.

While this is detrimental to rent arrears performance, it is important that this money is recovered.

Although the overall level of arrears remains high, the rent collected has increased to 99.5% from 96.59% the year before which shows that the sustained focus on rent arrears is starting to net results.



Access to Social Housing

Housing allocations to household by type are as follows:

	Reporting Year.	Homeless Households.	Waiting List Applicants.	Transfer Applicants.	Other.
Orkney Islands Council.	2021-2022.	39.53%.	34.88%.	17.44%.	8.14%.
	2020-2021.	35.71%.	48.57%.	15.72%.	0.00%.
	2019-2020.	30.56%.	48.61%.	20.83%.	0.00%.
Scotland Average.	2021-2022.	39.10%.	37.66%.	19.07%.	4.17%.
	2020-2021.	43.83%.	34.30%.	18.19%.	3.68%.
	2019-2020.	41.99%.	34.27%.	23.29%.	0.45%.

Generally, allocation of council properties is well balanced between a range of needs groups as shown in the table above. In some situations, a household may refuse an offer of accommodation. For example, their circumstances have changed and they no longer wish to live in that area. The percentage of tenancy offers refused in 2021 to 2022 was 32.64%, in 2020 to 2021 was 25.00%, and 2019 to 2020 was 36.61% therefore performance in this area has declined. During 2021 to 2022 there were issues with a newly completed housing scheme relating to the numbering of properties and the involvement of other bodies – an issue not within the control of the Housing Service. To correct this, 16 offers had to be recorded as made in error and distorted the figure on offers refused. If these were removed, figures on offers refused would have been 24% which shows an improvement.

We continue to monitor the reasons for refusal in an attempt to reduce the number of refusals. We had intended to introduce a new lettings policy which would include making choice central to our allocations process, by 1 April 2021, however this has been delayed due to COVID-19 and is now planned by 1 April 2023. This should reduce the number of refusals and therefore speed up the process of re-letting properties.

We had 73 properties become available for re-let in 2021 to 2022.



Tenancy Sustainment

We also consider how many tenancies are sustained longer than a year. This is affected by a household's personal choices. Tenancy sustainment shows sustained performance overall for 2021 to 2022. The reasons for tenancies not being sustained for longer than a year, are varied and include the tenancies ending due to the tenant going into hospital or residential care, the tenant passing away, households moving outwith Orkney and those who sought housing in another sector perhaps because they bought a property.

We have a small housing support service which aims to assist households who may need some additional help to enable them to manage their tenancies.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland.
Tenancies began in previous year remaining for more than a year - existing tenants.	2021-2022.	93.33%.	87.50%.	97.55%.	94.21%.
	2020-2021.	100.00%.	81.82%.	97.10%.	94.36%.
	2019-2020.	100.00%.	91.89%.	91.83%.	93.80%.
Tenancies began in previous year remaining for more than a year - applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless.	2021-2022.	91.18%.	93.55%.	90.85%.	90.22%.
	2020-2021.	90.91%.	91.30%.	87.39%.	90.16%.
	2019-2020.	88.89%.	86.67%.	89.43%.	87.63%.
Tenancies began in previous year remaining for more than a year - applicants from your organisation's housing list.	2021-2022.	86.67%.	84.62%.	91.88%.	89.88%.
	2020-2021.	85.29%.	81.09%.	90.91%.	90.21%.
	2019-2020.	90.57%.	77.91%.	83.10%.	88.46%.



Empty Homes

The time taken to re-let properties is influenced by a number of factors including the need to undertake remedial works, the level of demand for property in an area and Orkney's geography. Properties must meet a certain standard before being re-let.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland.
Number of lettable self-contained houses that became vacant in year	2021-2022.	73.	113.	1346.	47214.
	2020-2021.	78.	111.	1014.	41806.
	2019-2020.	72.	152.	1143.	25189.
Percentage becoming vacant in year.	2021-2022.	7.95%.	7.05%.	9.61%.	7.76%.
	2020-2021.	8.94%.	6.95%.	7.35%.	6.95%.
	2019-2020.	8.59%.	9.47%.	8.30%.	8.19%.
Average number of days to re-let property.	2021-2022.	52.10.	101.85.	35.77.	51.57.
	2020-2021.	62.46.	124.44.	44.23.	56.29.
	2019-2020.	35.79.	55.96.	31.94.	35.30.

The percentage of lettable self-contained properties becoming vacant during the year decreased slightly to 7.95% in 2021 to 2022, from 8.94% in 2020 to 2021 and 8.59% in 2019 to 2020. This figure varies from one year to another.

There has been a reasonable reduction in the average number of days to re-let properties from the previous year which had been impacted by COVID-19 and the restrictions around house moves during the first lockdown, We will continue to try and reduce the number of days to re-let properties.



Homelessness

We are committed to ensuring that homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice and are offered good quality temporary accommodation where this is needed. In addition, we are committed to continuing to offer support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

We work in partnership with Orkney Housing Association Ltd by offering permanent accommodation to homeless households through a process called Section 5 referrals. The table below shows the number of homeless households permanently housed in this way.

During 2021 to 2022 we had 132 homeless presentations. For the same period, the Council had a statutory duty to secure permanent accommodation for 55 households at 31 March 2022. Twenty-two households, or 40% were referred to Orkney Housing Association Ltd for permanent rehousing.

	2021-2022.	2020-2021.	2019-2020.
Percentage of homeless households referred to Registered Social Landlords.	40%.	48.19%.	31.91%.

For financial year 2019 to 2020, there were changes made to the indicators for homelessness. This means that a more modest level of reporting is required for the Annual Return against the Charter. Meantime, we have retained these indicators as we feel that they provide relevant information for our tenants and service users.

During 2021 to 2022 our number of homelessness presentations declined slightly. This is something that is not within the Council's control. The time between homeless presentation and the case being completed, that is the household being permanently rehoused, declined slightly to 27 weeks from 27.7 weeks the year before. The reason for this was purely about availability of permanent accommodation of the right size and in the right area. A total of 21 cases waited over a year to be permanently rehoused.

	2021-2022.	2020-2021.	2019-2020.
Number of Homeless Presentations.	132.	136.	118.
Average length of time (days) in temporary accommodation.	187.8.	167.74.	137.48.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland.
Number of Permanent Lets to Homeless Applicants.	2021- 2022.	73.	28.	527.	*
	2020- 2021.	25.	31.	398.	*
	2019-2020.	22.	46.	439.	11313.

* Comparator information not available due to changes in reporting requirements.



Estate Management and Anti-social Behaviour

We endeavour to ensure our schemes and residential streets remain attractive and safe places to live.

Orkney has a very low level of anti-social behaviour with few cases of serious anti-social behaviour. Our anti-social behaviour policy was significantly reviewed in 2019 with the addition of realistic and proportionate targets.

Orkney's relatively low-level anti-social behaviour includes noisy parties and nuisance relating to pets, parking and shared areas. The number of complaints raised can vary significantly from year to year. Our performance in respect of resolving the issue is very good. The figures for 2021 to 2022 relate to a total of 10 cases. Eight were resolved within the target timeframe, 2 cases are still open.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland.
Percentage of reported anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed targets.	2021-2022.	80.00%.	100.0%.	78.02%.	94.67%.
	2020-2021.	20.00%.	100.0%.	73.48%.	94.40%.
	2019-2020.	66.67%.	100.0%.	82.66%.	94.10%.
Percentage satisfied with management of the neighbourhood they live in.	2022.	66.86%.	83.36%.	88.01%.	85.09%.
	2020.	86.01%.	83.36%.	67.99%.	84.26%.
	2018.	76.44%.	72.87%.	67.99%.	87.77%.

The feedback relating to the management of the neighbourhood has declined. We are considering the data received and looking at measures to improve the situation.



The Council offers various opportunities to enable tenants to participate in the decisions which affect them. There are a range of opportunities available in respect of membership of residents' groups, being part of the Residents' Panel or coming along to our biennial Tenants' Day, which unfortunately could not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions. We also use a range of surveys including that on our annual rental increase.

Figures from this year's Customer Satisfaction Survey show a decline in satisfaction with the opportunities given to tenants to participate in their landlord's decision making processes. This has fallen to 60.46% which is lower than 83.78% two years previously. We are keen to encourage tenants to become involved in the development of any policy decisions or changes to service delivery. We also hope that large events such as tenants' day will be able to resume.

We have regular smaller events for our tenants to attend, to contribute feedback. The Residents' Panel, is a joint venture with the Orkney Housing Association Ltd (OHAL). While OHAL has both tenants and shared owners on the panel, the council seeks purely tenants. Initially the panel attracted a lot of interest from tenants but we are keen to again attract additional members to the panel.

This year the panel has looked at a number of areas including the Annual Assurance Statement which looks at Housing Service's performance. It has also been involved in discussions around the Council's performance in comparison to other small Councils. The panel's feedback has a direct influence on any changes / improvements made to these services.

The panel works closely with the Wick Interested Tenants' Group usually meeting annually for an update on how each group are getting on and the work they have been doing. This is a good opportunity to get new ideas and also a good social occasion.

In addition, to the Residents' Panel, there are opportunities to join a residents' group. Grieveship Residents' Association (GRA) is very active and always keen to attract new members. GRA provide a regular update to our Tenants' Newsletter, Housing News. This may be about the new projects they have undertaken to improve their area for everyone.

Tenant participation is an area which is adapting and changing as a result of the COVID-19 situation and there have been more opportunities to engage by electronic means.

Your views are important to us and allow us to assess whether there are things we could do to improve our services.

We have recently appointed a new Tenant Participation Officer, Claire Pritchard and she hopes to engage with tenants and provide help with the creation of tenants' organisations in other areas; some funding may be obtained.

If you are interested in finding out more about Tenant Participation or have an interest in coming along to the Residents' Panel then please contact Claire Pritchard on 01856 873535 or e-mail claire.pritchard@orkney.gov.uk.



Satisfaction

Our tenants told us:

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided.	2022.	75.77%.	79.48%.	85.91%.	87.74%.
	2020.	91.86%.	79.48%.	78.30%.	82.59%.
	2018.	84.27%.	78.85%.	78.30%.	90.12%.
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the Council keeping you informed.	2022.	69.80%.	78.68%.	92.51%.	91.15%.
	2020.	92.44%.	78.68%.	69.14%.	86.41%.
	2018.	87.35%.	75.48%.	69.14%.	91.60%.
Percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate.	2022.	60.46%.	59.77%.	93.81%.	86.81%.
	2020.	83.78%.	59.77%.	55.95%.	81.48%.
	2018.	63.22%.	57.96%.	55.95%.	86.48%.



Communication and Participation

Complaints and compliments

Complaints concerning our Housing Service are dealt with using the Model Complaints Handling procedure which is used by all Local Authorities and Housing Associations. It consists of two stages:

Stage 1 – Frontline Resolution.

These complaints are dealt with as close to point of service delivery and as promptly as possible. The target for completion is 5 working days.

Stage 2 – Investigation.

In these complaints and independent investigation is undertaken by an allocated Investigating Officer. The target for completion is 20 working days.

Stage 1 Complaints.	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland.
Complaints received.	2021-2022.	17.	7.	237.	*
	2020-2021.	28.	9.	203.	*
	2019-2020.	46.	11.	301.	10330.
Percentage of complaints upheld.	2021-2022.	77.77%.			
	2020-2021.	50.00%.			
	2019-2020.	47.82%.			
Percentage of complaints responded to within Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's recommended timescales.	2021-2022.	100.0%.	100.0%.	98.75%.	96.76%.
	2020-2021.	100.0%.	100.0%.	100.0%.	96.95%.
	2019-2020.	97.87%.	100.0%.	97.16%.	97.29%.

* Comparator information not available due to changes in reporting requirements.

Stage 2 Complaints.	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Complaints received.	2021-2022.	10.	6.	101.	*
	2020-2021.	7.	1.	94.	*
	2019-2020.	5.	3.	123.	1379.
Percentage of complaints upheld.	2021-2022.	28.57%.			
	2020-2021.	57.14%.			
	2019-2020.	40.00%.			
Percentage of complaints responded to within Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's recommended timescales.	2021-2022.	63.34%.	100.0%.	96.77%.	93.79%.
	2020-2021.	100.0%.	100.0%.	100.0%.	96.95%.
	2019-2020.	100.0%.	100.0%.	92.74%.	92.04%.

* Comparator information not available due to changes in reporting requirements.

There has been a decline in complaints responded to within the timescales set by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. We received 11 stage 2 complaints, and of those 3 were not concluded before the end of the financial year. Without these, the percentage responded to in full would have been 87.5%. Every effort is made to ensure we address complaints as swiftly as possible, equally we try and make sure the situation is fully addressed. A small number of complex complaints have affected this indicator.

Complaints by Topic.	Total.	Complaints Upheld.
Repair timescales.	10.	9.
Quality of Repair.	8.	5.
Council policy/procedure.	2.	1.
Staff conduct/attitude.	1.	1.
Condition of property.	1.	0.
Other.	2.	1.

In 2021 to 2022 we aim to continue to improve the number of complaints responded to within the target timescales and our monitoring of these.

Compliments

We also record the number of compliments we receive. For 2021 to 2022 there were 29 which represents a 625% increase from the previous year, when there were 4. The compliments for 2021 to 2022 were as follows:

- Quality of Service/repairs (27)
- Quality of advice/accommodation (2)

Looking Forward

Overall, our performance is generally positive and shows improvements in some areas on the previous year. We are committed to further improvements and will endeavour to evidence this over future years.

Future Plans for improvements:

- Energy Efficiency Measures.
- Re-roofing works.
- Continue to improve performance on re-lets to minimise rental loss.
- Improve the planned renewal and upgrade works to provide better information to tenants and enable us to predict and plan works more efficiently.
- Continuing to expand the role of the Residents' Panel and endeavour to improve opportunities to participate in decision making.
- Continue to improve our performance regarding monitoring of repairs.
- Improve our performance regarding rent arrears collection.
- Improve opportunities for tenant participation.
- Improve tenant satisfaction generally.

Accessibility

This document has been created with accessibility standards applied. This means that best efforts have been made with the goal that every person, no matter what their abilities, can access the information included effectively.

This document uses a clearly laid out design, using the Arial font with a minimum size of 12pt. Clear paragraph spacing has been applied to the document to enable readers to clearly follow the order in which the information included is best read.

The web based, electronic version of this document has passed accessibility tests so that assistive software such as “Recite Me” for people with visual impairments will read out all information included correctly. All images included within the document also contain alternative text so that they will be described by assistive software.

The contents section of this page has been created with hyperlinks to each section of the document to make the navigation of the document easier. At the end of each section there is a link back to the contents section to reduce the amount of scrolling required to find relevant information.

If you have accessibility issues when reading documents, Orkney Islands Council Housing Services would encourage any feedback you would like to submit regarding the accessibility of this document. This feedback can be sent in a number of ways with details available in the ‘Contact Information’ section.

If you require this document in another language or format, please let us know.

Contact Us – Housing and Homelessness

Address:	Orkney Islands Council, School Place, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY.
Telephone:	01856 873535.
Email:	housing@orkney.gov.uk Please state ‘Annual Report’ in the email title if you are sending accessibility feedback for this document.
Website:	www.orkney.gov.uk/housing

If you have any views or ideas as to how we could improve the design and content of this report for next year, please either complete the form overleaf or contact Housing Services.

Question 1: How did you find the length of the report? (Please tick).

Too long. Just right. Not long enough.

Question 2: How satisfied are you with the following? (Please tick).

	Very satisfied.	Fairly satisfied.	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.	Fairly dissatisfied.	Very dissatisfied.
Format.					
Information.					
Layout.					
Comparison with previous year's performance.					
Comparison with other local authorities.					
Comparison with the Scottish national average.					

Question 3: How easy or difficult did you understand the following? (Please tick).

	Very easy.	Fairly easy.	Neither easy nor difficult.	Fairly difficult.	Very difficult.
Performance information.					
Traffic light thumbs up/down.					

Question 4: Is there anything you would like to see included in future or general comments on this year's performance report?