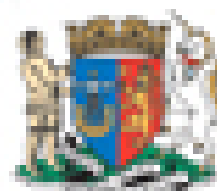
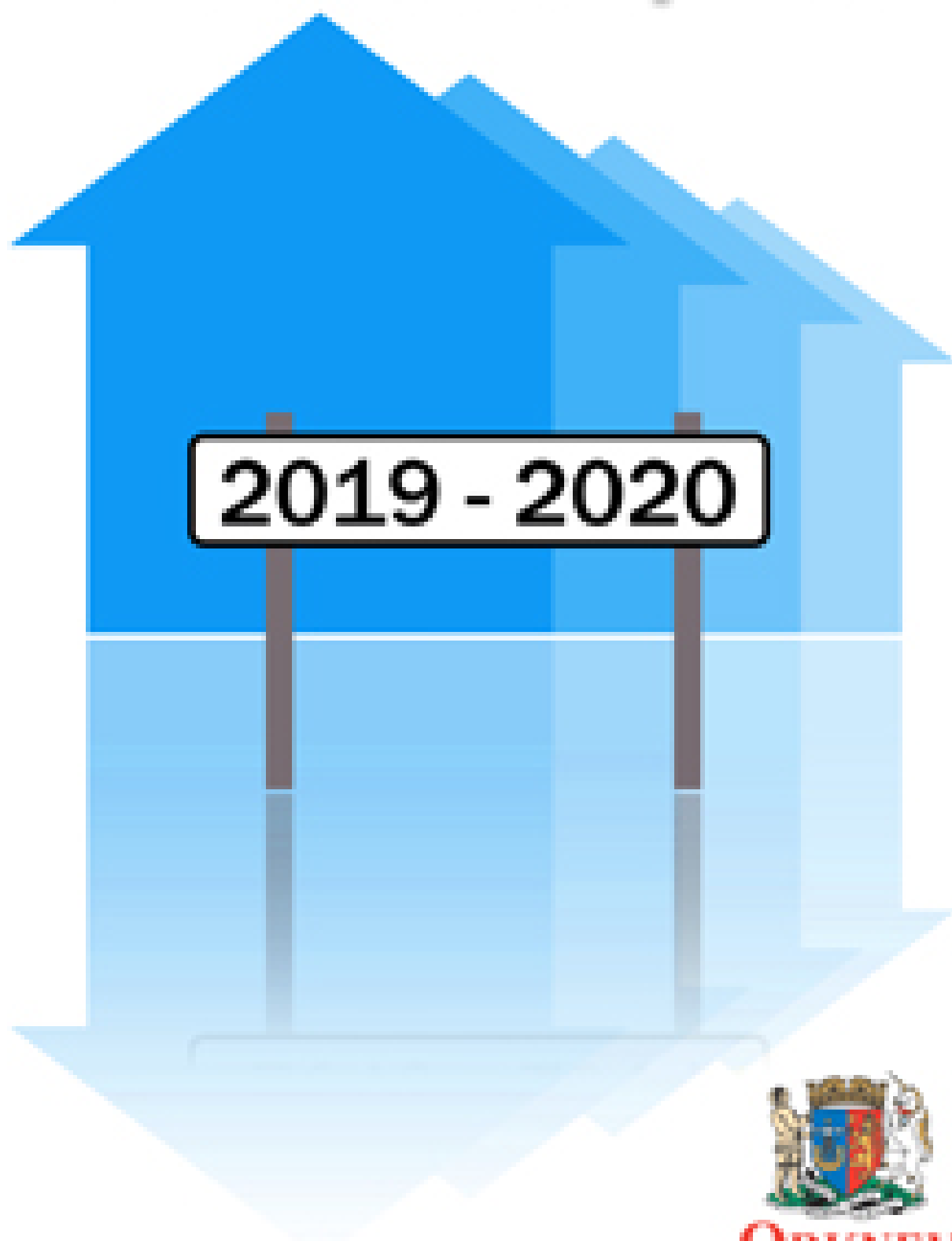


Housing Services Annual Report



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

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Introduction



I am delighted to introduce the 'Annual Report' for tenants and service users for financial year 2019 to 2020.

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 and reviewed in 2017. 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.

This is the second year that the Council has now produced an Annual Assurance Statement. The Annual Assurance Statement 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 and our responses to homelessness and anti-social behaviour are good.

We undertook a tenant satisfaction survey earlier this year and this recorded improved satisfaction levels across the areas of performance reported through the Annual Return against the Charter.

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. 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 meeting energy efficiency targets in an area off the gas grid and with a relatively harsh climate.

The reporting period covered by this report, is up to the end of March 2020. Therefore, the COVID-19 situation only impacted on the data for the last week of that period. However, the situation has produced many challenges for our staff, our contractors and our tenants which may well have an impact for some time. You may notice some changes within the report. There have been changes to the performance information we are required to monitor. We will also publish the report electronically as part of our response to the COVID situation. This is to minimise the use and handling of paper by all involved. However, we recognise 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.

Our staff are here to help support tenants through these difficult times and are happy to provide advice and assistance as required.

I'd like to thank staff and our contractors for all the work they have done in order to continue to deliver a service in line with Scottish Government requirements and guidance, throughout the last few months.

I'd also like to thank our staff for their commitment and 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.

As always, this information is available in a range of formats and languages on request. It is also available on our website which in turn allows the report to be translated, and features such as Browse Aloud to be used.

Yours

Councillor Gwenda Shearer

Chair of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee



Performance figures for 2019 to 2020 are shown first with figures for 2018 to 2019 and 2017 to 2018 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 are doing in comparison 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 Browse Aloud, a full stop has been inserted after every figure to ensure a pause is inserted.



Our Housing Stock

At 31 March 2020 the Council owned 952 homes, having reduced from 955 the year before. The Council began a programme of building additional social rented houses in 2009 to 2010 and by 31 March 2020 had completed 230 new houses representing an increase in stock of 31.9%. The total rent due to your landlord for the year was £3,674,281. The Council increased its weekly rent on average by 1.8% from the previous year.

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 2020	March 2019	March 2018
Bedsit	27	27	27
1 Bedroom	354	355	355
2 Bedroom	307	307	307
3 Bedroom	245	246	248
4 Bedroom and larger	19	20	20

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	2019-2020	92.33%	99.59%	95.57%	95.36%
	2018-2019	89.84%	99.88%	95.54%	94.32%
	2017-2018	91.75%	99.88%	94.68%	94.20%
Percentage of stock regarded as exempt, in abeyance or fail	2019-2020	7.67%	0.41%	4.43%	4.64%
	2018-2019	10.16%	0.02%	4.46%	5.68%
	2017-2018	8.25%	0.02%	5.32%	5.80%

Traditionally Orkney has recorded a higher proportion of properties classified as an exemption or in abeyance than is true for Scotland generally. 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.

During the year we have focused on refreshing our data and work has continued to try and reduce the level of abeyances and exemptions. We have also improved the depth of information held on our stock. This has led to a significant reduction in abeyances and exemptions. Abeyances have reduced from 31 in 2017 to 2018 to 20 by 2018 to 2019 and to 14 in 2019 to 2020. Exemptions have reduced from 34 in 2017 to 2018 to 15 by 2018 to 2019 and remain at 15 for 2019 to 2020. However, in turn this has caused a temporary increase in the number of properties failing the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Fails rose from 3 properties at year end in 2017 to 2018 to 55 for 2018 to 2019 and dropped to 40 properties being recorded as failing the Scottish Housing Standard for 2019 to 2020. Most of these are marginal fails and we are progressing works intended to address the reason for failure on the majority of the properties concerned throughout the year.

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. Currently a programme of works is ongoing to upgrade existing smoke detection systems in line with revised requirements.

In addition, social landlords are required to meet a challenging standard on energy efficiency by December 2020. This is the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH). This is in addition to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. The Council is well underway with the process of planning to meet the standard. Figures are generally positive and are as follows.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Properties meeting ESSH.	2019-2020	85.76%	74.79%	73.92%	85.76%
	2018-2019	84.70%	66.94%	71.79%	93.20%
	2017-2018	81.50%	58.22%	67.60%	75.32%

Currently we are in a positive position for delivering the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing and are relatively well placed nationally in this respect. We expect a further, even more challenging energy efficiency standard for future years. We are committed to continuing to improve the quality of our housing stock through our housing investment programme. Investment in repairs and maintenance totalled £1.25m for financial year 2019 to 2020. This investment makes sure our tenants' homes, as a minimum, continue to meet the SHQS, those that are currently in abeyance are gradually brought up to the SHQS as the issues allow and that we are on target to meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by December 2020.

Our tenants told us:

- that 75% of tenants were satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in.
- that 87.76% of tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home.

We have made progress towards meeting the ESSH and will continue to do so over the coming year. We expect further enhancements to the ESSH in the future.



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.	2019-2020	6.29	2.29	5.99	4.10
	2018-2019	8.34	3.97	5.79	3.65
	2017-2018	7.29	2.63	6.41	3.96
Number of emergency repairs per house	2019-2020	0.23	0.29	1.14	1.14
	2018-2019	0.21	0.25	0.89	1.09
	2017-2018	0.28	0.30	0.87	1.14
Average working days to complete non-emergency repairs.	2019-2020	11.53	11.20	5.31	7.10
	2018-2019	10.27	17.33	7.18	6.56
	2017-2018	10.94	15.40	7.40	6.38
Number of non-emergency repairs per house	2019-2020	1.23	2.18	1.98	2.02
	2018-2019	1.19	2.40	1.81	2.10
	2017-2018	1.43	2.88	1.80	2.24

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 improved over the year. New processes mean that the Council's in-house technical staff will undertake some of the emergency repairs themselves where they are able to do so. The time taken to deliver non-emergency repairs has declined from last year. The Council continues to work closely with contractors and aims to improve its performance wherever possible. One of the main factors for the decline in performance was due to contractors being very busy and there being difficulties in obtaining sub-contractors with availability.

When we asked tenants, during 2019 to 2020 about their experience of repairs undertaken, 91% were satisfied with the repair and 4% were dissatisfied with the time to undertake the work. This compares with 2018 to 2019 when, 90% were satisfied with the repair and 3% were dissatisfied with the time to undertake the work.



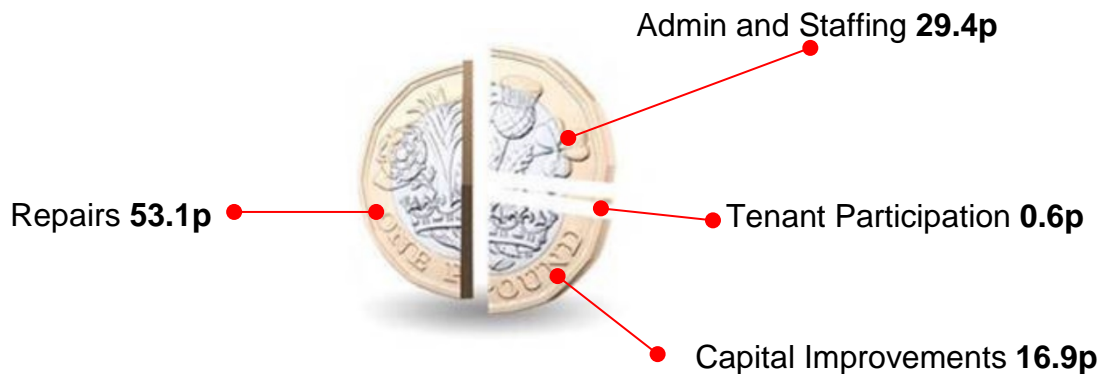
Average Rents



Orkney is Scotland's smallest Local Authority Housing Service and as such economies of scale are a factor in the rental charges. However, its 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.	2019-2020	£59.24	£50.29	£64.07	£73.42
	2018-2019	£57.85	£48.35	£61.55	£70.22
	2017-2018	£56.16	£46.74	£61.31	£67.44
1 Bedroom	2019-2020	£71.65	£66.42	£69.41	£77.44
	2018-2019	£70.20	£63.95	£67.66	£76.10
	2017-2018	£67.99	£61.89	£67.08	£73.33
2 Bedroom	2019-2020	£84.90	£77.66	£76.30	£79.44
	2018-2019	£82.98	£75.94	£73.98	£77.70
	2017-2018	£80.70	£74.64	£73.40	£74.94
3 Bedroom	2019-2020	£84.70	£91.33	£85.20	£86.20
	2018-2019	£82.93	£89.67	£82.60	£84.44
	2017-2018	£80.52	£87.91	£82.13	£81.37
4 Bedroom	2018-2019	£99.46	£108.21.	£94.60	£95.29
	2018-2019	£97.13	£108.80	£110.18	£93.49
	2017-2018	£94.30	£106.82	£109.32	£90.39

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



The percentage of tenants who feel their rent represents good value for money increased to 80.71% from 73.21% previously, compared with the Scottish average of 83.41% for financial year 2010 to 2020.

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 2019 to 2020 declined slightly from the previous year.

Last year the Council developed new processes through its new computer system, to improve the efficiency of making empty properties ready for re-let and improvements remain evident. However, rent arrears have risen. The rollout of Universal Credit in September 2018 has impacted on the recovery of rent arrears and this has been a factor nationally.

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 are being made to some internal processes and Housing staff are focussing on helping tenants who are in financial difficulty to access advice and assistance.

	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.	2019-2020	94.66%	99.17%	98.52%	99.14%
	2018-2019	98.23%	98.64%	98.98%	99.10%
	2017-2018	98.76%	99.81%	98.11%	99.20%
Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year.	2019-2020	0.64%	1.92%	0.66%	1.25%
	2018-2019	1.13%	2.11%	0.78%	0.88%
	2017-2018	1.78%	1.71%	1.03%	1.10%



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	2019-2020	30.56%	48.61%	20.83%	0.00%
	2018-2019	28.72%	56.38%	12.77%	2.13%
	2017-2018	31.25%	54.69%	14.06%	0.00%
Scotland Average.	2019-2020	41.99%	34.27%	23.29%	0.45%
	2018-2019	43.11%	35.12%	21.25%	0.52%
	2017-2018	42.90%	34.84%	21.75%	0.51%

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 2019 to 2020 was 36.61%, in 2018 to 2019 was 34.75%, and 2017 to 2018 was 49.25% therefore performance in this area has declined slightly. We continue to monitor the reasons for refusal in an attempt to reduce the number of refusals. We intend to introduce a new lettings policy which will include making choice central to our allocations process, by 1 April 2021. This should reduce the number of refusals and therefore speed up the process of re-letting properties.

We had 72 properties become available for re-let in 2019 to 2020.



Tenancy Sustainment

We also consider how many tenancies are sustained longer than a year. This is affected by a household's personal choices. All categories of tenancy sustainment either improved or stayed the same for 2019 to 2020. The reasons for tenancies not being sustained for longer than a year, are varied and include the tenancies ending due to households moving out with Orkney, health reasons and employment reasons.

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	2019-2020	100.00%	91.89%	91.83%	93.80%
	2018-2019	100.00%	93.75%	93.82%	93.60%
	2017-2018	89.66%	97.22%	93.09%	93.73%
Tenancies began in previous year remaining for more than a year - applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless	2019-2020	88.89%	86.67%	89.43%	87.63%
	2018-2019	87.50%	83.33%	89.61%	87.88%
	2017-2018	88.37%	97.14%	89.01%	87.01%
Tenancies began in previous year remaining for more than a year - applicants from your organisation's housing list	2019-2020	90.57%	77.91%	83.10%	88.46%
	2018-2019	85.71%	87.01%	85.78%	87.90%
	2017-2018	91.55%	80.65%	87.77%	88.01%



Empty Homes

The time taken to re-let properties includes factors such as properties undergoing works, the level of demand for a property in that 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	2019-2020	72	152	1143	25189
	2018-2019	94	175	1176	25967
	2017-2018	123	191	1089	25568
Percentage becoming vacant in year	2019-2020	8.59%	9.47%	8.30%	8.19%
	2018-2019	10.89%	10.28%	8.36%	8.23%
	2017-2018	14.30%	11.93%	7.98%	8.35%
Average number of days to re-let property	2018-2019	35.79	55.96	31.94	35.30
	2018-2019	52.93	49.75	36.79	31.89
	2017-2018	49.10	45.50	36.64	34.26

The percentage of lettable self-contained properties becoming vacant during the year dropped (an improvement) from 14.30% in 2017 to 2018 to 10.89% in 2018 to 2019 and 8.59% in 2019 to 2020, which is predominantly a result of there being no newly built properties for allocation.

We continue to endeavour to introduce changes to our procedures in respect of managing empty properties and our methods of recording this information should reduce the number of days to re-let for the next reporting year.



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 2019 to 2020 we had 118 homeless presentations. For the same period, the Council had a statutory duty to secure permanent accommodation for 94 households. This includes households from the previous financial year still awaiting rehousing. Thirty households, or 31.91% were referred to Orkney Housing Association Ltd for permanent rehousing.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland.
Percentage of homeless households referred to Registered Social Landlords	2019-2020.	31.91.	19.59.	4.07.	27.91.

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. This section of the report will change as a result. Therefore, for this year, some comparator information is not available and this is marked by *. Meantime, we have retained these indicators as we feel that they provide relevant information for our tenants and service users.

During 2019 to 2020 our number of homelessness presentations fell. This is something that is not within the Council's control. However, the Council's response to this remained stable. The time between homeless presentation and the case being completed that is the household being permanently rehoused rose significantly

to 25.6 weeks which was the same as the year before. The reason for this was purely about availability of permanent accommodation of the right size and area. A total of 12 cases waited over a year to be permanently rehoused.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland.
Number of Homeless Presentations	2019-2020	118	*	*	*
	2018-2019	134	146	753	38390
	2017-2018	119	148	1360	37129
Average length of time (days) in temporary accommodation	2019-2020	137.48	*	*	*
	2018-2019	90.65	285.57	224.56	102.05
	2017-2018	110.61	388.56	129.41	103.15
Number of Permanent Lets to Homeless Applicants	2019-2020	22	46	439	11313
	2018-2019	27	58	449	11404
	2017-2018	40	48	419	10831

* 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 2019 to 2020 relate to a total of 9 cases. Six were resolved within the target timeframe, 1 outwith that and 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	2019-2020	66.67%	100.00%	82.66%	94.10%
	2018-2019	83.33%	33.33%	82.78%	87.86%
	2017-2018	55.56%	0.00%	82.43%	87.65%
Percentage satisfied with management of the neighbourhood they live in	2020	86.01%	83.36%	67.99%	84.26%
	2018	76.44%	72.87%	67.99%	87.77%
	2016	80.84%	68.17%	69.01%	80.91%

The feedback relating to the management of the neighbourhood has improved which is really positive and reflects Orkney's low level of anti-social behaviour.



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. We also use a range of surveys including that on our annual rental increase.

Figures from our Customer Satisfaction Survey show a significant improvement in satisfaction with the opportunities given to tenants to participate in their landlord's decision making processes. This has risen to 83.78% which is higher than 63% 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 have regular 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 a review of estate management and were 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 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 situation and there may be more opportunities in the future 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.

Our Tenant Participation Officer is available to 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 Sheila McDonald, Tenant Participation Officer on 01856 873535 or e-mail sheila.mcdonald@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	2020	91.86%	79.48%	78.30%	82.59%
	2018	84.27%	78.85%	78.30%	90.12%
	2016	87.65%	74.76%	74.00%	83.05%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the Council keeping you informed	2020	92.44%	78.68%	69.14%	86.41%
	2018	87.35%	75.48%	69.14%	91.60%
	2016	90.80%	67.41%	62.96%	81.23%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate.	2020	83.78%	59.77%	55.95%	81.48%
	2018	63.22%	57.96%	55.95%	86.48%
	2016	65.97%	50.00%	46.01%	71.25%



Communication and Participation

Our tenants told us:

	2020	2018	2016
We are happy to be kept informed with what's happening	84%	63%	64%
We would like to have our say before decisions are made	23%	12%	6%
We would like to be one of the people making decisions	-	3%	2%
Don't know / not answered	-	-	4%
Don't wish to have any involvement at all	-	22%	25%

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.

For financial year 2019 to 2020, there were changes made to the indicators for complaints. This means that a more modest level of reporting is required for the Annual Return against the Charter. This section of the report has changed this year as a result.

Stage 1 Complaints	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland.
Complaints received	2019-2020	46	11	301	10330*
	2018-2019	37	7	252	9,262
	2017-2018	38	2	319	8,806
Percentage of complaints responded to within Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's recommended timescales	2019-2020	97.87%	100.00%	97.16%	97.29%*
	2018-2019	66.67%	71.43%	38.49%	86.93%
	2017-2018	86.84%	100.00%	51.27%	80.91%

Stage 2 Complaints	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Complaints received	2019-2020	5	3	123	1,379
	2018-2019	4	9	20	1,303
	2017-2018	6	14	28	1,325
Percentage of complaints responded to within Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's recommended timescales	2019-2020	100.00%	100.00%	92.74%	92.04%
	2018-2019	40.00%	66.67%	73.68%	83.79%
	2017-2018	60.00%	100.00%	78.57%	76.60%

There has been an improvement in complaints responded to within the timescales set by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Every effort is made to ensure we address complaints as swiftly as possible.

Complaints by Topic	Total	Complaints Upheld
Repair timescales	21	11
Quality of Repair	15	7
Council policy/procedure	4	1
Condition of property	3	1
Staff conduct/attitude	3	0
Quality of service	0	0
Other	0	0

In 2020 to 2021 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 2019 to 2020 there were 4 and these were:-

- Quality of Service/repairs (3)
- Staff Conduct (1)

Looking Forward

Overall our performance is generally positive and shows improvements 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.

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 “Browse Around” 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 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.



Please return questionnaire in enclosed reply paid envelope.

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?

