



Housing Services

Annual Report 2024 - 2025

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Introduction

I am delighted to introduce the 'Annual Report' for tenants and service users for financial year 2024 to 2025.

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: [Housing Services web page](#).

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.

Last year we undertook a significant piece of work around housing need and strategy development. We have also really developed and analysed our business plan to ensure we are very clear on how many additional properties we can build, and the amount of money we need to invest in our existing stock.

In respect of social rented housing, the Council faces significant challenges in the form of restricted budgets but equally there is a high level of housing need and so we plan to continue to develop social rented housing ourselves. We built 4 new properties at Moar Drive, Kirkwall, in 2024 - 2025. In addition we purchased 32 properties. We intend to build up to 150 properties over the next decade. We will also work with partners including Orkney Housing Association Ltd to ensure affordable housing continues to be developed.

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, time to complete emergency repairs and recovery of rent arrears.

The reporting period covered by this report, is up to the end of March 2025. A period with a range of challenges for our staff, our contractors and our tenants. This included rising costs of supplies to undertake repairs and improvements and delays in deliveries. We made significant progress in relation to the data relating to our electrical installation condition reports (EICR) and the installation of remaining interlinked smoke alarms and in compliance with the Scottish Quality Housing Standard. We have also worked closely with the Scottish Housing Regulator to improve standards in certain areas including EICR, emergency repairs and tenant engagement. We have been very aware of financial challenges which continue to affect our tenants as a result of the ongoing 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 four years now the Service has published the annual report electronically only. This approach has reduced our use of paper and is more cost effective than physically printing and posting annual reports to all our tenants. We will continue to publish it annually through our website. Our website has 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.

Yours,

Councillor Gwenda Shearer,

Chair of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.

Annual Report

Annual Report

Performance figures for 2024-2025 are shown first with figures for 2023-2024 and 2022-2023 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 between March and May 2024 and therefore we will undertake another one in the Spring of 2026.

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.

Your Home

Your Home

Our Housing Stock



As of March 31, 2025, our Council owned 1041 self-contained homes, which is an increase from the 1,011 homes we had the previous year. The Council began a programme of building additional social rented houses in 2009 -2010, and by March 31 2025 we had successfully completed 279 new homes, marking a significant 37% boost to our housing stock.

In the 2024-2025 financial year, the total rent payable to us by our tenants for the year amounted to £4,547,550. To ensure our housing remains affordable, we increased our weekly rent by just 4% on average from the previous year. We are committed to continuing to build new houses and working in partnership with key partners including Orkney Housing Association Ltd to address housing need. We have recently undertaken a review of our financial business plan and, providing sufficient Scottish Government grant is available, will aim to build up to 150 houses over the next decade.

Size of Home.	Number Owned.		
	March 2025.	March 2024.	March 2023.
Bedsit.	28.	28.	28.
1 Bedroom.	395.	384.	384.
2 Bedroom.	332.	325.	326.
3 Bedroom.	258.	246.	245.
4 Bedroom and larger.	20.	20.	22.

When we see our property count drop, it's typically because we've sold a few that we no longer need. While the Right to Buy scheme concluded on August 1, 2016, we may choose to sell a property. This may be because we have too many properties in an area with decreasing demand. Alternatively, we may sell a property if it needs a significant upgrade to meet standards and is vacant. There are also times when we also acquire properties. We do this to strengthen our housing stock when there's a shortage in a specific area or for certain housing types. Our goal is to keep our housing options responsive to our community's needs.

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.	2024-2025.	93.85%.	86.55%.	58.58%.	87.00%.
	2023-2024.	80.38%.	72.22%.	44.60%.	84.36%.
	2022-2023.	52.82%.	65.01%.	40.27%.	79.02%.
Percentage of stock regarded as exempt, in abeyance or fail.	2024-2025.	6.88%.	13.45%.	41.42%.	13.00%.
	2023-2024.	19.62%.	27.78%.	55.40%.	15.64%.
	2022-2023.	47.18%.	34.99%.	59.13%.	20.98%.

We've been making a series of improvements, including the installation of new kitchens, bathrooms, and windows. These upgrades not only align with required standards but also with the preferences of our tenants. We're also actively working on installing new heating systems and enhancing insulation to boost energy efficiency and meet the necessary standards.

In 2024-2025, we continued to see significant progress in the percentage of properties meeting the SHQS with 93.84% of our properties now meeting compliance, up from 80.38% in the previous year. This improvement highlights our commitment to addressing previous challenges, including issues identified with our electrical installation condition reports (EICR). Thanks to a focused improvement plan, 99.4% of our properties now hold valid EICR certificates. For the remaining properties, other issues have temporarily prevented us from completing this work. Additionally, we've successfully installed interlinked smoke alarms in 99.6% of our properties. We're continuing to collaborate with our tenants to gain access to the remaining few, and we extend our thanks to them and our contractors for their support.

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.

The number of abeyances decreased from 18 in 2023-2024 to 12 in 2024-2025. We also saw a drop in exemptions from 11 in 2023-2024 to 5 in 2024-2025. Regarding the SHQS,

there were 166 properties that did not meet the standard in 2023-2024, and this number decreased to 46 in 2024-2025.

In addition, social landlords were required to meet a challenging energy efficiency standard by December 2020, known as the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). We've performed well in meeting this standard and are in a favourable national position. Looking ahead, a more demanding energy efficiency standard is expected by 2032, with the Scottish Government currently revising its guidance. These standards work in conjunction with the SHQS to ensure the quality of our housing remains high.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Properties meeting EESH.	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%.

2021-2022 marked the final instance in which we reported the SHQS and EESH separately, in line with national guidance. We are committed to enhancing the quality of our housing stock through our housing investment programme. In financial year 2024-2025, we allocated a total of £1.95 million for repairs and maintenance. This investment ensures that our tenants' homes, at the very least, continue to meet the SHQS and EESH, and we are steadily addressing properties in abeyance to bring them up to the required standards as issues allow. We expect a challenging new standard called the Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) by December 2032 (pending any adjustments following the Scottish Government's review).

Our tenants have shared their thoughts, and the feedback is positive:

- 76% of tenants expressed satisfaction with their homes when they moved in.
- 68% of tenants were content with the overall quality of their homes.

We have made progress towards meeting the EESH and will continue to do so over the coming year. We will continue to develop our plans for meeting SHNZS by the expected deadline of 2032 but are waiting for the Scottish Government's guidance.

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.	2024-2025.	9.72.	2.20.	3.54.	3.47.
	2023-2024.	8.98.	2.30.	4.13.	3.96.
	2022-2023.	9.12.	2.46.	5.47.	4.17.
Number of emergency repairs per house.	2024-2025.	0.37.	0.17.	0.97.	0.98.
	2023-2024.	0.38.	0.23.	0.81.	0.97.
	2022-2023.	0.28.	0.21.	0.87.	0.99.
Average working days to complete non-emergency repairs.	2024-2025.	15.62.	8.40.	7.65.	9.13.
	2023-2024.	17.23.	10.30.	9.16.	8.97.
	2022-2023.	15.16.	21.58.	7.59.	8.69.
Number of non-emergency repairs per house.	2024-2025.	1.64.	2.17.	1.34.	2.25.
	2023-2024.	1.59.	2.23.	1.30.	2.26.
	2022-2023.	1.50.	2.28.	1.30.	2.20.

The Council's ability to keep repairs per house at a minimum is a sign of our effective performance. This is largely due to our ongoing investment in maintaining our housing stock, ensuring it's in good condition, and resulting in fewer necessary repairs.

There has been an increase in the time taken to deliver emergency repairs from 8.98 hours in 2023-2024 to 9.72 hours in 2024-2025.

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. We will seek to reduce this timescale.

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 2024-2025 about their experience of repairs undertaken, 85.94% were satisfied with the repair and 5.72% were dissatisfied with the time to undertake the work. This compares with 2023-2024 when, 88.64% were satisfied with the repair and 7% were dissatisfied with the time to undertake the work.

Value for Money

Value for Money

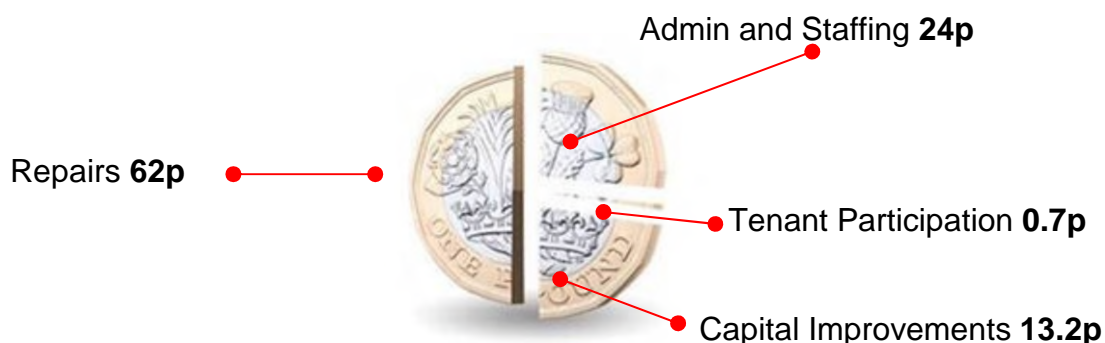
Average Rents



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.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Bedsit.	2024-2025.	£70.14.	£58.11.	£79.93.	£87.12.
	2023-2024.	£65.74.	£55.36.	£74.15.	£82.24.
	2022-2023.	£63.82.	£53.04.	£70.10.	£78.26.
1 Bedroom.	2024-2025.	£85.39.	£76.09.	£82.37.	£93.27.
	2023-2024.	£79.61.	£72.50.	£76.27.	£87.87.
	2022-2023.	£77.23.	£69.38.	£73.44.	£83.46.
2 Bedroom.	2024-2025.	£101.90.	£87.58.	£91.83.	£96.00.
	2023-2024.	£84.76.	£83.51.	£84.86.	£90.29.
	2022-2023.	£92.00.	£79.96.	£81.52.	£86.28.
3 Bedroom.	2024-2025.	£100.52.	£103.11.	£102.24.	£104.51.
	2023-2024.	£93.27.	£98.52.	£94.43.	£98.30.
	2022-2023.	£90.45.	£94.22.	£90.65.	£93.96.
4 Bedroom plus.	2024-2025.	£122.89.	£126.42.	£114.16.	£115.58.
	2023-2024.	£115.89.	£120.32.	£105.65.	£108.27.
	2022-2023.	£111.82.	£115.14.	£101.33.	£103.72.

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 64% from 69.30% previously, compared with the Scottish average of 81.58% for financial year 2023 -2024.

Rent collection is very important to the Council. We are committed to being efficient and have processes in place to help us collect as much rent as possible. Performance in 2024-2025 declined from the previous year but 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.	2024-2025.	98.84%.	100.81%.	99.82%.	100.19%.
	2023-2024.	102.47%.	100.04%.	99.04%.	99.40%.
	2022-2023.	99.33%.	100.96%.	98.02%.	99.03%.
Percentage gross rent arrears of rent due.	2024-2025.	9.43%.	8.48%.	6.42%.	6.17%.
	2023-2024.	12.58%.	10.97%.	7.16%.	6.74%.
	2022-2023.	12.65%.	11.27%.	7.05%.	6.86%.
Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year.	2024-2025.	1.47%.	2.29%.	0.89%.	1.28%.
	2023-2024.	1.49%.	1.84%.	0.87%.	1.39%.
	2022-2023.	1.32%.	2.25%.	0.96%.	1.40%.

The Council places great emphasis on rent collection and remains committed to improving its efficiency. We have put in place processes to collect as much rent as possible. Our performance in the 2024-2025 period saw a slight decrease compared to the previous year, for current rent collection.

During the 2024-2025 period, rent arrears continued to pose challenges. The cost of living crisis has posed some challenges. However, there is some positive news: as of 31 March 2025, gross rent arrears decreased by 3.15% compared to the previous year which is significant. These arrears include both current arrears and those from tenants who left our properties while still owing money (former tenant arrears).

We worked in partnership with Orkney Citizen's Advice Bureau so tenants who are having difficulty in making payment, are referred for assistance at an early stage. We have also been working on improving our internal processes and providing support to tenants facing financial difficulties.

It is important to highlight that we are making every effort to recover outstanding arrears, including those from former tenants. This is important as arrears impact on the rent charged for everyone. We are committed to ensuring rents remain affordable for all our tenants.

Despite the ongoing challenges, it's worth noting that the overall rent collected has remained relatively stable at 98.84% for the year 2024-2025, this is slightly lower than the 102.47% collected in the 2023-2024 period. We remain committed to managing our rent arrears and ensuring that we collect as much rent as possible.

Your Tenancy

Your Tenancy

Access to Social Housing



	Reporting Year.	Homeless Households.	Waiting List Applicants.	Transfer Applicants.	Other.
Orkney Islands Council.	2024-2025.	50.55%.	38.46%.	10.99%.	0.00%.
	2023-2024.	64.56%.	32.91%.	2.53%.	0.00%.
	2022-2023.	51.25%.	41.25%.	7.50%.	0.00%.
Scotland Average.	2024-2025.	46.07%.	31.26%.	18.72%.	2.34%.
	2023-2024.	44.20%.	33.12%.	17.57%.	5.11%.
	2022-2023.	41.22%.	35.58%.	18.40%.	4.80%.

There has been a drop in the number of properties let to homeless households from 64.56% in 2023-24 to 50.55% in 2024-25, this is closer in line to our figures from 2022-23. There has been an increase in the number of lets to transfer and waiting list applicants.

Sometimes, households may decline an offer of accommodation. This can happen if their circumstances change, and they no longer wish to live in a specific area. The percentage of tenancy offers refused in 2024-2025 was 17.65%, this was a slight increase from 12.09% in 2023-2024.

We are actively monitoring the reasons for refusals to find ways to reduce them. We had initially planned to introduce a new lettings policy that would make choice central to our allocations process by 1 April 2021. However, this has been delayed and is now scheduled for early 2026. This change should help reduce the number of refusals and speed up re-letting properties.

In 2024–2025, we successfully let 91 homes in total — 71 re-lets of existing properties, alongside 16 off-the-shelf purchases and 4 new-build homes.



Tenancy Sustainment

We also carefully track how many tenancies last for more than a year, although this can be influenced by a household's personal choices. Overall, our performance in tenancy sustainment decreased from 2023-2024.

Various reasons can contribute to tenancies not being sustained for longer than a year. These include situations where tenants go into the hospital, pass away, move out of Orkney, or seek housing in another sector, such as purchasing a property.

To provide extra assistance for households that may require support in managing their tenancies, we maintain a small housing support service. This service aims to help households who may benefit from additional guidance to ensure the success of their tenancies.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Tenancies began in previous year remaining for more than a year – existing tenants.	2024-2025.	50.00%. *	95.83%.	97.06%.	94.61%.
	2023-2024.	100%.	90.00%.	96.22%.	94.18%.
	2022-2023.	100%.	89.66%.	96.09%.	94.45%.
Tenancies began in previous year remaining for more than a year – applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless.	2024-2025.	94.12%.	100%.	89.02%.	90.98%.
	2023-2024.	95.12%.	76.92%.	91.42%.	90.31%.
	2022-2023.	94.44%.	96.43%.	88.57%.	90.33%.
Tenancies began in previous year remaining for more than a year – applicants from your organisation's housing list.	2024-2025.	76.92%.	76.93%.	93.30%.	91.46%.
	2023-2024.	81.82%.	82.09%.	94.71%.	91.37%.
	2022-2023.	89.47%.	81.01%.	94.47%.	90.98%.

* Relates to a tiny number of tenancies. We don't publish numbers where they are below 5 in case a household is identifiable. Small numbers can have a big impact on a percentage.

Empty Homes



The time taken to re-let properties is influenced by a few 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 Average.
Number of lettable self-contained houses that became vacant in year.	2024-2025.	72.	108.	1,086.	41,130.
	2023-2024.	79.	113.	1,180.	44,501.
	2022-2023.	83.	122.	1,348.	49,957.
Percentage becoming vacant in year.	2024-2025.	7.72%.	6.84%.	7.38%.	7.18%.
	2023-2024.	8.70%.	7.17%.	8.10%.	7.18%.
	2022-2023.	9.06%.	7.70%.	9.42%.	7.42%.
Average number of days to re-let property.	2024-2025.	60.65.	96.11.	53.95.	60.22.
	2023-2024.	71.43.	73.79.	38.68.	56.79.
	2022-2023.	57.94.	87.69.	32.07.	55.61.

The percentage of self-contained properties becoming vacant during the year saw a slight decrease in 2024-2025, to 7.72% from 8.70% 2023-2024 and 9.06% in 2022-2023. This figure varies from one year to another.

There has been a decrease from the previous year in the average number of days to re-let properties. 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 (OHAL) 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 2024-2025, there were 113 homeless presentations. For the same period, the Council had a statutory obligation to secure permanent accommodation for 91 households by 31st March 2025. Of these, 13.19% (equivalent to 12 households) were referred to Orkney Housing Association Ltd for permanent rehousing.

	2024-2025.	2023-2024.	2022-2023.
Percentage of homeless households referred to Registered Social Landlords.	13.19%.	20.79%.	25.29%.
Number of households permanently rehoused by OHAL.	16.	20.	21.

Since the financial year 2019-2020, we have only needed to report a very modest amount of information in the Annual Return against the Charter regarding homelessness. However, we continue to use additional indicators because we believe they offer valuable information for our tenants and service users.

In 2024-2025, the number of homelessness presentations decreased. It's important to note that this is something beyond the Council's control. The time it takes between a homelessness presentation and the household being permanently rehoused, decreased slightly to 29.6 weeks from 29.7 weeks the previous year. It has remained challenging in respect of having suitable permanent accommodation of the right size and within the right area. During this period, a total of 37 cases waited over a year to be permanently rehoused.

	2024-2025.	2023-2024.	2022-2023.
Number of homeless presentations.	113.	144.	142.
Average length of time (days) in temporary accommodation.	280.	207.	187.
Number in temporary accommodation at financial year end.	74.	75.*	70.*

* This information relates to the position on one day of the year being 31 March. In addition it does not include households who have chosen to stay temporarily with family and friends.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Number of permanent lets to homeless applicants.	2024-2025.	46.	36.	584.	*
	2023-2024.	51.	28.	607.	*
	2022-2023.	41.	26.	633.	*

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

Your Neighbourhood



Your Neighbourhood

Estate Management and Anti-Social Behaviour

We are committed to maintaining the appeal and safety of our schemes and residential streets, making them pleasant places to live.

Orkney has a low level of anti-social behaviour, with few cases of serious anti-social behaviour. The relatively low-level anti-social behaviour in Orkney includes concerns like noisy parties, issues related to pets, parking, and shared areas. The number of complaints raised can vary from year to year. However, our performance in resolving these issues is notably strong. In the year 2024-2025, there were a total of 21 cases, and all were successfully resolved within the designated timeframe.

	Reporting Year.	Orkney Islands Council.	Shetland Islands Council.	Highland Council.	Scotland Average.
Percentage of reported anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed targets.	2024-2025.	100.00%.	50.00%.	86.98%.	93.37%.
	2023-2024.	100.00%.	100.00%.	86.43%.	94.28%.
	2022-2023.	100.00%.	100.00%.	49.04%.	94.21%.
Percentage satisfied with management of the neighbourhood they live in.	2024-2025.	59.04%.	81.50%.	74.31%.	84.67%.
	2023-2024.	66.86%.	83.36%.	88.01%.	85.09%.
	2022-2023.	86.01%.	83.36%.	67.99%.	84.26%.

The feedback relating to the management of the neighbourhood has declined. Previously we have undertaken some consultation with the Residents Panel around this area and found that this related to grounds maintenance in council schemes but in addition included footpaths and playparks not within the Housing Service's remit. There were also concerns raised around abandoned cars in car parks within schemes. This is something that should be reported to the Housing Service directly. We will undertake further consultation around this area.

Tenant Engagement



Tenant Engagement

Feedback from our tenants and service users is very important - it allows us to shape policy, implement improvements and make decisions with tenant's views in mind. The Council provides various opportunities for tenants to actively engage in decisions that affect them. There are many ways in which tenants can engage, and we aim to provide a range of opportunities to suit everyone, utilising both online and in-person methods. Tenants have the chance to participate in Residents' Associations (or groups), join the Residents' Panel, or join our Armchair Panel. We also use a range of surveys, including the annual rental increase survey. Surveys allow us to measure our tenant's views and gauge feedback, which is given consideration when making decisions or changes to the service.

The most recent Customer Satisfaction Survey results showed an increase in satisfaction regarding the opportunities for tenants to participate in their landlord's decision-making processes. Satisfaction in this area increased to 72.0% in 2024, up from 60.46%, in 2022. We are eager to encourage tenants to get involved in shaping policy decisions and influencing changes to the service delivery, which is why we promote engagement in our surveys and advertise them in advance.

Throughout the year, we host regular events and meetings where our tenants can actively engage with us and contribute their feedback. An example of this being our Residents' Panel. The Residents' Panel is a joint venture with the Orkney Housing Association Ltd (OHAL) - members meet several times a year to scrutinise service areas, discuss matters related to housing and provide their feedback. 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 and recruitment is on-going.

This year, the Residents' Panel met to consider the Annual Assurance Statement, they consulted on several key areas relating to the Housing Service's performance. More specifically, the Panel was asked for their views on why there had been a decrease with satisfaction with areas of the service, this included satisfaction with the neighbourhood, repairs service and the quality of the home. The Panel's feedback is given due consideration, and has a direct influence on any changes or improvements that we make to these areas of the service. Further, members of the Residents' Group are given the chance to attend digital meetings with the Northern Tenant Partnership where Landlords and tenants from Northern Scotland meet to discuss and share ideas relating to housing.

In addition to the Residents' Panel, tenants are also given the opportunity to join a local Residents' Association or form their own. Residents' Associations are formed by local community members who work together to maintain and improve their local area. Residents' Associations may also be consulted on matters that might affect their local area. Associations that are registered may be eligible for funding that can be used towards local projects and running their Group. Grieveship Residents' Association (GRA) is currently Orkney's longest standing Residents' Association. They are very active and always keen to attract new members. This year, staff from the Housing Service attended GRA's annual general meeting where they were pleased to hear about the various projects the group was undertaking and the positive impact they had on the local community. As well as GRA, we also have a newer Residents' Association – Flotta Burnside Residents' Association. Our Tenant Participation Officer visited Members of the Group this year, where she was delighted to hear about positive work the group was doing to improve their local community.

We are also keen to widen engagement and provide accessible opportunities for people to take part. This is why we formed the Armchair Panel, which gives tenants the opportunity to take part in consultation opportunities from the comfort of their own homes. Tenant participation is an area which is adapting and has changed in recent years with many more opportunities to engage by electronic means.

As well as our scheduled meetings, we also host a range of 'one-off' events. Examples of this include our Tenant Participation Pop-up events, where we aim to promote and encourage tenant engagement. We hosted a number of these events across Kirkwall and Stromness where they were well attended.

Information provision is an important part of tenant engagement and we aim to provide regular information and important updates to our tenants and service users. To improve our information provision and reach a wider audience, we have created a Facebook page for the Housing Service where we post regular updates and information. This can be found at www.facebook.com/OIChousingServices. We have posted a variety of information on our Facebook page this year, including important updates on the Radio Teleswitch Service and digital phoneline changes. We have also promoted our Armchair Panel and shared useful information from other organisations relating to money, support and benefits.

The Housing Newsletter is another important way for us to share information with our tenants and service users. This year, we conducted a survey which gave tenants the option to receive the Newsletter online, or as a paper copy via post. This allows tenants to read the Newsletter in a way that suits them, helping to encourage engagement.

Claire Pritchard, - our Tenant Participation Officer - continues to try and engage with tenants, recruit members to our various Panels and provide help with the creation of tenants' organisations in other areas. Claire is working to improve Tenant Participation and encourage engagement through a variety of creative ways. Work has been done this year to update and improve our existing Tenant Participation Strategy, which underpins our key aims and methods for engagement. This will help to contribute to more effective means of engagement in the coming years. Work has also been done to improve options for tenant participation during the sign-up process for new tenants.

If you are interested in finding out more about tenant participation or have a query about the Residents Panel, Armchair Panel or Residents' Groups, 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.	2024.	73.59%.	79.00%.	72.12%.	86.49%.
	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.	2024.	74.00%.	*	*	*
	2022.	69.80%.	78.68%	92.51%.	91.15%.
	2020.	92.44%.	78.68%.	69.14%.	86.41%.
Percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate.	2024.	70.87%.	52.83%.	81.85%.	87.66%.
	2022.	60.46%.	59.77%.	93.81%.	86.81%.
	2020.	83.78%.	59.77%.	55.95%.	81.48%.

* Comparator information not available.



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 an 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 Average.
Complaints received.	2024-2025.	24.	*	*	*
	2023-2024.	27.	*	*	*
	2022-2023.	29.	8.	116.	*
Percentage of complaints upheld.	2024-2025.	79.17%.	*	*	*
	2023-2024.	86.21%.	100.00%.	98.31%.	95.34%.
	2022-2023.	77.77%.	*	*	*
Percentage of complaints responded to in full.	2024-2025.	100.00%	100.00%.	95.45%.	96.26%.
	2023-2024.	100.00%	100.00%.	100.00%.	96.71%.
	2022-2023.	100.00%	100.00%.	98.75%.	96.76%.

* 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.	2024-2025.	19.	*	*	*
	2023-2024.	14.	*	*	*
	2022-2023.	14.	6.	74.	*
Percentage of complaints upheld.	2024-2025.	53.33%.	*	*	*
	2023-2024.	44.44%.	*	*	*
	2022-2023.	42.58%.	*	*	*

Percentage of complaints responded to in full.	2024-2025.	78.95%.	92.85%.	85.59%.	89.87%.
	2023-2024.	100.00%	100.00%.	90.37%.	90.69%.
	2022-2023.	77.78%	50.00%.	85.37%.	92.53%.

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

The number of Stage 1 complaints responded to in full in 2024-2025 remained the same, at 100%. There was a drop in the percentage of Stage 2 complaints responded to in full. We received a total of 19 stage 2 complaints. This is up slightly from 14 in 2023-2024.

We are dedicated to addressing complaints as quickly as possible while ensuring that each situation is thoroughly and comprehensively resolved.

Complaints by Topic.	Total.	Complaints Upheld.
Failure to provide service.	5.	2.
Delay in providing service.	12.	10.
Standard of service provided.	18.	11.
Dissatisfaction with policy.	5.	4.
Conduct / attitude of staff.	2.	0.
Other.	1.	0.

Compliments

We really appreciate the 43 compliments we received in 2024-2025, relating to our repair services.

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 tenant participation and endeavour to improve opportunities to participate in decision making.
- Continue to improve our performance regarding delivery of repairs.
- Improve our performance regarding rent arrears collection.
- 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 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's Housing Service 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 Services

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 subject 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.

Feedback

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 easily 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?

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