ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

Item: 12

Education, Communities and Housing Committee: 11 November 2026.

Housing Services – Performance.

Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

1. Overview

1.1. This report presents the Housing Service's benchmarked performance in relation to other councils and Housing Associations within its peer group, for information.

1.2. The Council is a member of Scotland's Housing Network, previously known as Scottish Housing Best Value Network, having joined a number of years ago.

1.3. Scotland's Housing Network is an organisation that offers a benchmarking service to councils who wish to be members. It also offers other related services including sub-groups to discuss good practice.

1.4. Membership is optional, as is attendance at sub-groups. However, in order to benefit from the service, each council must provide detailed data on its performance in relation to a range of service areas.

1.5. Scotland's Housing Network undertakes a benchmarking service amongst all member councils. This is useful as it allows a comparison and identification of each council's weaker areas and also allows identification of top performers which can be beneficial when seeking to improve service areas. Most members are happy to share information and provide guidance in areas where their performance is good.

1.6. Membership of the peer group is detailed at section 5.2 below. Western Isles Council, being an authority which has transferred its housing stock, is part of a separate peer group.

1.7. The service areas covered include void management, stock turnover, rent arrears, homelessness, repairs, Scottish Housing Quality Standard and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.

1.8. Members were previously advised of offers made to the Council in relation to making the best use of membership of Scotland's Housing Network, including training opportunities.

1.9. In October 2026, representatives from Scotland's Housing Network presented a report to the Council's Housing Service on its performance relative to other councils during 2025/26 and gave their analysis of the findings.

1.10. Scotland's Housing Network also offers discussion forums online and has developed a self-assessment website to assist member authorities to make progress in relation to adopting a greater emphasis on performance management and improve services accordingly.

1.11. Performance of Housing Services for the reporting period of 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 is detailed in Appendix 1 to this report. Where available, data is displayed for a three-year period to allow comparison.

2. Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:

i. Note the Housing Service's benchmarked performance in relation to other councils and Housing Associations within its peer group, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Scottish Social Housing Charter

3.1. Housing organisations are required to report against the Scottish Social Housing Charter which was introduced in 2012 and has been reviewed twice since then in 2017 and 2021. The revised Charter was launched on 1 November 2022.

3.2. Councils are required to publish an Annual Report against the Charter, and this was done in October 2026. The Annual Report is available on the OIC website.

3.3. Information on the Scottish Social Housing Charter is available here.

4. Annual Assurance Statement

4.1. The Scottish Housing Regulator introduced the requirement for an annual assurance statement to be submitted from October 2019. This is a process whereby the Scottish Housing Regulator looks for assurances from local authorities that Elected Members have been informed of performance across the Housing Service and are satisfied that the governance process is sufficiently robust to allow them to sign off the certificate of assurance.

4.2. The Annual Assurance Statement for Orkney was recommended for approval by the Education, Communities and Housing Committee on 9 September 2026 and subsequently approved by Council on 6 October 2026.

4.3. The Annual Assurance Statement for Orkney is available from the OIC website.

5. Orkney's Performance by Comparison

5.1. Scotland's Housing Network has implemented a system of peer groups in order to compare performance with other relevant Councils. Orkney's peer group includes "all small councils" which is deemed to be those which hold housing stock of less than 10,000.

5.2. The peer group includes:

- Angus Council.
- Clackmannanshire Council.
- East Dunbartonshire Council.
- East Lothian Council.
- East Renfrewshire Council.
- Midlothian Council.
- Moray Council.
- Perth and Kinross Council.
- Shetland Islands Council.
- South Ayrshire Council.
- Stirling Council.
- Hebridean Housing Partnership.
- Hjaltland Housing Association.
- Orkney Housing Association.

5.3. As well as looking at comparison in performance between Orkney and other members of the peer group, it is important to assess performance for various other reasons, including:

- To ensure that 'the direction of travel' is towards improvement.
- To critically assess and analyse where further improvements could be made.
- Where another Council has performed better, to consider whether any of their practices would assist in this area.
- To ensure that, in Orkney, the Council continues to look at the areas where performance can be assessed and a determination made as to whether there are other areas that could be included.

- To ensure that assessment is continual, but equally to ensure that this information is used for valid purposes, being to consistently improve the services offered.

5.4. The following areas have been covered:

- Customer Satisfaction.
- Housing Quality and Maintenance.
- Access to Housing and Support.
- Homelessness.
- Neighbourhood and Community.
- Getting Good Value from Rents.
- Re-lets and Voids.

For Further Information please contact:
Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation), extension 2174, email lesley.mulraine@orkney.gov.uk.

Implications of Report

1. **Financial:** No financial implications arising directly from the report.
2. **Legal -** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
3. **Corporate Governance:** Not Applicable.
4. **Human Resources -** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
5. **Equalities –** An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for performance monitoring.
6. **Island Communities Impact –** An Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required for performance monitoring.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
   ☒Growing our economy.
   ☒Strengthening our communities.
   ☐Developing our infrastructure.
   ☐Transforming our council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
   ☒Cost of Living.
   ☒Sustainable Development.
   ☒Local Equality.

☒Improving Population Health.

9. **Environmental and Climate Risk -** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
10. **Risk -** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
11. **Procurement -** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
12. **Health and Safety -** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
13. **Property and Assets -** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
14. **Information Technology -** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
15. **Cost of Living -** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.

Background Papers

Scotland's Housing Network Performance Presentation – September 2026.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Performance Information.

Appendix 1

ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL



Housing Services - Performance 2025/2026

www.orkney.gov.uk

Contents

1. Customer Satisfaction 3

2. Housing Quality 5

3. Access to Housing and Support 8

4. Homelessness 10

5. Neighbourhood and Community 12

6. Getting Good Value from Rents 13

7. Re-Lets and Voids 16

8. Direction of Travel 18

1. Customer Satisfaction

1.1. Members were previously advised of the outcome of the wholescale tenant satisfaction survey that the Council is required to do every three years. The Council has undertaken to do these every two years, to ensure the data is more current. Previously the survey was undertaken by sending out a paper survey to every household. A different approach was taken this time with most households taking part in a telephone survey with the opportunity given to complete a paper survey for those that requested it.

1.2. The table below shows the level of tenant satisfaction relating to key charter outcomes in comparison to Scotland's Housing Network and peer group averages:

Indicator from the Scottish Social Housing Charter at time of Survey.	Orkney level.	Scotland's Housing Network average.	Peer Group average.
Overall service provided by landlord (indicator 1).	77.27%	87.60%	81.66%
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions (indicator 2).	74.33%	91.35%	83.63%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision-making processes (indicator 5).	62.35%	88.07%	79.97%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (indicator 7).	70.57%	86.64%	82.01%
Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with repairs and maintenance service (indicator 12).	85.23%	88.05%	86.60%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in (indicator 13).	67.92%	84.94%	81.14%
Percentage of tenants who feel the rent for their property represents good value for money (indicator 21).	63.57%	82.01%	78.86%

1.3. The above satisfaction figures relate to the wholescale tenant satisfaction survey of 2026 and are therefore current. Consideration needs to be given to updating tenant satisfaction information between major surveys which some councils have done. In Orkney, while information is collected in various forms, response rates

are generally low which may result in statistical distortions. The wholescale tenant satisfaction survey requires a 40% response rate. A wholescale tenant satisfaction survey was undertaken in Spring 2026 with revised figures being available for submission as part of the Annual Return on the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator in May 2026. The outcome of the survey was reported to Education, Communities and Housing Committee in September 2026. A new wholescale tenant satisfaction survey will take place in Spring 2028.

1.4. Regarding complaints per 100 homes, this is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	4.19	6.98	4.75
2024/25.	4.61	6.40	6.40
2023/24.	4.69	6.14	4.27

1.5. The average time to respond to a stage 1 complaint was 6.93 days in 2025/26, an increase from 3.38 days in 2024/25. The SHN average was 5.36 days and the Peer Group 9.34 days.

1.6. The average time to respond to a Stage 2, which is a more complex complaint, was 30.08 days, an increase from 17.40 days in 2024/25. The SHN average was 28.69 days and the Peer Group 121.18 days. While performance was above both the Council's target and the SHN average, benchmarking data shows some significant outliers within the sector. The Peer Group average was influenced by a small number of landlords reporting exceptionally high response times.

2. Housing Quality

2.1. 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 presents some challenges in that respect.

2.2. The average time taken to complete emergency repairs in hours is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	7.24	3.45	3.38
2024/25.	9.72	3.89	3.47
2023/24.	8.98	3.95	4.14

2.3. The average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs in days is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	14.60	8.75	12.77
2024/25.	15.62	9.13	13.93
2023/24.	17.23	8.96	10.77

2.4. All reactive repairs completed Right First Time were:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	72.09%	95.29%	95.99%
2024/25.	72.84%	88.02%	89.18%
2023/24.	74.50%	88.45%	92.38%

2.5. Whilst performance has improved year on year, repair completion times continue to be influenced by contractor availability, specialist works, materials procurement and the logistical challenges associated with delivering repairs across island communities.

2.6. Emergency repairs performance improved during 2025/26, with the average completion time reducing from 9.72 hours in 2024/25 to 7.24 hours. Whilst performance remains above both the Scottish and Peer Group averages, the Council continues to face additional challenges associated with island

geography, weather disruption, ferry availability and access to specialist contractors. Of the 374 emergency repairs, 16 (4.28%) were outwith the 24 hour period, 3 of these were completed in 30 hours plus. These delays were primarily due to contractor fails, difficulties in sourcing specialist parts, access issues, third-party dependencies such as utility providers, and heavy snow fall which made travelling impossible. Several isles jobs were also affected by weather related disruption and contractor availability. The Council continues to work closely with contractors to ensure accurate reporting.

2.7. While the contractor operates an appointments system for repairs, this is not within the control of the Council and consequently the Council states that it does not offer a repairs appointments system. Ideally the Council should be fully involved in this process. Many landlords do offer an appointments system and report against this accordingly. Consideration is being given regarding how to further develop this process.

2.8. The average time to complete a medical adaptation in days is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	38.16	46.61	35.09
2024/25.	38.78	44.37	40.97
2023/24.	30.09	44.77	53.50

2.9. The average time taken to complete medical adaptations reduced slightly from 38.78 days in 2024/25 to 38.16 days in 2025/26. Performance remains better than the Scottish and Peer Group averages. There were 55 adaptations completed in 2025/26 compared to 63 adaptations in 2024/25. Housing Services continue to work closely with partner services to ensure adaptations are completed as quickly as possible.

2.10. The level of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	93.88%	89.53%	84.77%
2024/25.	93.85%	87.32%	80.01%
2023/24.	80.38%	84.36%	74.00%

2.11. The Council was required to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by March 2015 and maintain the standard thereafter. There has been a marked increase in the stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. This has followed intensive work in this area and only a small number of properties remain non-compliant. During 2025/26, the Council maintained a high level of compliance at 93.88%. Remaining failures are concentrated within a relatively

small number of properties and primarily relate to EPC, EICR and LD2 compliance requirements.

2.12. A total of 40 properties fail on a single SHQS criterion. Of these, 37 relate to Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), 1 relates to LD2 smoke and heat alarm compliance, 1 relates to secure common front door entry, and 1 relates to rising or penetrating damp. A further 5 properties fail on two or more SHQS criteria. These include combinations such as EICR (electrical installation condition reports), LD2 alarms, bathroom standard and lead-free pipework. In addition, 11 properties are recorded as being in abeyance, and 8 are recorded as exempt. The exemptions consist of three former schoolhouses for which formal Committee approval has been given for disposal, one property where legal constraints prevent the necessary compliance works from being undertaken, and the remaining properties are exempt due to disproportionate costs. Local contractors have assisted the Council and significant work has gone into ensuring properties meet the required standards. The Council continues to work with the Scottish Housing Regulator to evidence compliance. and it is expected that performance around the Scottish Housing Quality Standard will continue to improve for financial year 2026/27.

2.13. The Council must also ensure that its properties meet and maintain the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing from December 2020. The Scottish Government had previously introduced a second phase of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH2), which aimed for all social housing to achieve a higher energy efficiency rating by 2032, with a midpoint target set for 2025. The Scottish Government is currently reviewing the second Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH2). Its consultation closed in March 2024. Delivery of the standard is temporarily on hold pending this review. Final guidance has not been published yet. This revised standard is intended to guide future investment in the energy performance of social rented homes and support Scotland’s national target to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2045. Committee has received an annual update report at the June cycle of meetings, regarding progress towards the existing standards.

2.14. The average time taken to resolve cases of damp and/or mould was 28.86 days. No cases that were recorded as resolved were subsequently reopened. This suggests that remedial actions undertaken were effective in addressing the underlying issue rather than providing only a short-term solution.

2.15. Overall, Housing Quality performance remains strong. The Council has maintained SHQS compliance above both the Scottish and peer group averages, medical adaptations continue to perform better than the Scottish average, and emergency repair performance improved during the year. While repair completion times and right first time repairs remain areas for improvement, overall performance remains positive.

3. Access to Housing and Support

3.1. Lets to households by type are shown in the table below:

Year.	Homeless Households.	Waiting List applicants.	Transfer Applicants.	Other.
2025/26.	53.93%	40.45%	5.62%	0%
2024/25.	50.55%	38.46%	10.99%	0%
2023/24.	64.56%	32.91%	2.53%	0%

3.2. For 2025/26 lets to homeless households were 45.68% across Scotland's Housing Network and 53.54% in respect of the peer group average.

3.3. The turnover of properties is shown in the table below:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	7.65%	6.84%	6.45%
2024/25.	7.72%	7.13%	6.76%
2023/24.	8.70%	7.18%	6.72%

3.4. Tenancy turnover impacts on void rental loss, former tenant arrears and tenancy sustainment.

3.5. Abandonments as a percentage of housing stock is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	0.31%	0.42%	0.44%
2024/25.	0.43%	0.45%	0.46%
2023/24.	0.66%	0.47%	0.47%

3.6. The percentage of all new tenancies sustained from the previous year was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	91.11%	92.45%	93.62%
2024/25.	87.34%	91.62%	92.04%

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2023/24.	90.00%	91.17%	91.96%

3.7. The reasons for some tenancies not being sustained included reasons such as death, hospitalisation, leaving Orkney and moving into other housing sectors. This indicator is about the personal circumstances of the households concerned and not necessarily within the control of the Council.

3.8. Regarding the level of sustainment of new homeless tenancies, this was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	93.48%	91.55%	92.91%
2024/25.	94.12%	90.98%	91.15%
2023/24.	95.12%	90.31%	91.51%

3.9. During 2025/26, homeless tenancy sustainment remained strong at 93.48%, exceeding both the Scottish and Peer Group average. Tenancies not sustained were primarily influenced by individual household circumstances rather than tenancy management issues. The Council continues to provide tenancy support and early intervention measures aimed at preventing tenancy failures and promoting long-term tenancy sustainment.

3.10. The level of evictions as a percentage of housing stock was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	0.21%	0.21%	0.14%
2024/25.	0.11%	0.20%	0.14%
2023/24.	0.11%	0.16%	0.14%

3.11. Overall, performance remains positive, with low levels of abandonments and evictions, strong tenancy sustainment and a balanced distribution of allocations between homeless households and waiting list applicants.

4. Homelessness

4.1. The Committee receives an update report on the level of homelessness in Orkney annually at the June cycle. That report contains significant levels of performance information. Consequently, only key indicators are covered below.

4.2. The number of homeless presentations was as follows:

Year.	Number of homeless presentations.
2025/26.	161.
2024/25.	113.
2023/24.	144.

4.3. As a national comparator, the national average for homeless presentations per 1,000 people is 7.47 cases. In Orkney there are 7.30 cases per 1,000 people.

4.4. Homeless presentations increased during 2025/26 and continue to place pressure on the Service. As reported through the report to June Committee on the annual homelessness performance information. Demand has contributed to live case numbers increasing, longer case completion times and greater use of temporary accommodation. The Service continues to implement preventative approaches through housing options and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to minimise homelessness where possible.

4.5. The average time from homeless presentations to completion of duty in weeks was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.
2025/26.	41.57	39.57
2024/25.	43.86	40.00
2023/24.	33.29	39.71

4.6. The assessment outcomes for those assessed as unintentionally homeless were as follows (excludes lost contacts):

Outcome.	Orkney.		Scotland's Housing Network.	
	2024/25.	2025/26.	2024/25.	2025/26.
Housed by Council.	78.57%	66.67%	45.49%.	58.89%
Housed by Housing Association.	14.29%	33.33%	31.49%	18.35%

Outcome.	Orkney.		Scotland's Housing Network.	
	2024/25.	2025/26.	2024/25.	2025/26.
Private Rented Sector.	0%	0%	3.02%	3.45%
Returned to friends etc.	0%	0%	3.34%	3.47%
Hostel.	0%	0%	0.11%	0.07%
Returned to previous accommodation.	0%.	0%	4.34%.	4.27%
Other outcomes (known).	0%	0%	7.77%	8.26%

4.7. The majority of unintentionally homeless households who secured settled accommodation did so through the allocation of permanent Council housing. This mirrors the wider allocations data which shows that 53.93% of Council lets during 2025/26 were made to homeless households, demonstrating the significant contribution in meeting statutory homelessness duties.

4.8. The length of stay (in days) in the Council's furnished temporary accommodation is as detailed below:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.
2025/26.	353.	237.
2024/25.	305.	238.
2023/24.	205.	226.

4.9. Overall, homelessness services continue to achieve positive outcomes, with a high proportion of homeless households securing permanent accommodation through permanent Council housing. However, increasing homelessness demand, rising live caseloads, longer case completion times and increasing lengths of stay in temporary accommodation demonstrate ongoing pressures within the wider housing system and remain key areas of focus for 2026/27.

5. Neighbourhood and Community

5.1. The prevalence of anti-social behaviour is determined by the number of complaints per 100 tenancies, as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	0.90	7.24	6.78
2024/25.	2.25	7.13	6.36
2023/24.	1.43	7.51	6.01

5.2. Orkney generally has a low level of anti-social behaviour with few cases of serious anti-social behaviour. Issues generally constitute complaints of noise including parties, disposal of waste or failure to dispose of waste appropriately and disputes regarding parking and shared gardens. Performance improved during 2025/26, reducing from 2.25 cases per 100 tenancies to 0.90 cases. This remains substantially better than both Scottish and Peer Group averages.

6. Getting Good Value from Rents

6.1. The average weekly rent is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	£98.72	£103.10	£89.08
2024/25.	£94.87	£97.59	£84.03
2023/24.	£88.25	£91.80	£79.90

6.2. For 2025/26 the annual rental increase at 4% is below the Scotland's Housing Network average of 6.05% and peer group average of 6%.

6.3. The level of rent collected as a percentage of rent due is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	99.07%	99.68%	99.73%
2024/25.	98.84%	100.17%	100.01%
2023/24.	102.47%	99.40%	98.93%

6.4. The information outlined above represents the total amount of rent collected over the year from both current and former tenants for the current and previous years as a percentage of rent due in the reporting year.

6.5. The gross rent arrears (including both current and former tenants) as a percentage of rent due is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	12.12%	5.90%	7.30%
2024/25.	9.43%	6.16%	7.48%
2023/24.	12.58%	6.77%	8.67%

6.6. Current rent arrears as a percentage of annual gross rent due is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	6.54%	3.75%	4.39%

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	3.98%	3.85%	4.57%
2023/24.	7.11%	4.46%	5.33%

6.7. The Council continues to experience challenges associated with rent arrears, reflecting wider affordability pressures and the ongoing cost of living environment. A strong emphasis continues to be placed on early intervention, income maximisation, welfare advice and proactive engagement with tenants experiencing financial difficulty. The Council also works closely with partner agencies to support tenancy sustainment and reduce the escalation of arrears.

6.8. Although the overall level of arrears remains high, the rent collected as a percentage of rent due in the year was 99.07% for financial year 2025/26, up from 98.84% in the previous year, demonstrating continued effectiveness in rent collection despite increasing arrears pressures.

6.9. The table below shows the percentage of tenants in arrears annually at 31 March:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.
2025/26.	51.77%	34.91%
2024/25.	41.76%	28.13%
2023/24.	36.43%	32.89%

6.10. The proportion of tenants in arrears increased to 51.77% at 31 March 2026. However, a significant proportion of arrears cases relate to relatively low value debts, and the Council continues to focus on early engagement and sustainable repayment arrangements.

6.11. The percentage of tenants who had arrears at the point their tenancy ended was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.
2025/26.	42.47%	40.32%
2024/25.	23.61%	42.47%
2023/24.	63.29%	44.76%

6.12. The level of former tenant arrears as a percentage of rent due was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	5.58%	2.15%	2.90%

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	5.45%	2.31%	2.91%
2023/24.	5.47%	2.31%	3.34%

6.13. Nationally there are high levels of former tenant arrears written-off. The Council previously actively and prudently pursued former tenant arrears rather than writing these off, however this had a detrimental impact on overall rent arrears performance. Statistics, benchmarking and information provided by other Councils indicated that more commonly the practice is to progress higher levels of write-off of former tenant debt in order to ensure limited resources are appropriately targeted at current arrears. In addition, the Scottish Housing Regulator has encouraged a more robust process of writing off former tenant arrears, where it is unlikely this debt can be recovered inside existing levels of staffing resource.

6.14. Accordingly, the Council's approach had been reconsidered to ensure an appropriate balance to target resources at recovering current arrears while ensuring that former tenant arrears are recovered where possible but equally where this is unlikely to have a positive outcome, former tenant arrears will be written off in order to streamline processes and ensure statistics are reflective of the actual position. This will take time to affect the statistics, however. Write-offs for financial year 2025/26 totalled only £6,088.70, or 2.24% of the former tenant arrears outstanding. This is due to the process being reviewed which has impacted on write offs this year. The figures are as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	2.24%	27.25%	16.38%
2024/25.	0.08%	34.20%	24.10%
2023/24.	33.72%	27.06%	16.82%

6.15. It remains important to ensure that former tenant arrears are continually reviewed and former tenant arrears are analysed on a 6 monthly basis to ensure that the most appropriate action continues to be taken to recover the debts outstanding. These are difficult types of debt to recover and in some instances may take many years to clear.

7. Re-Lets and Voids

7.1. Void rental loss percentages are shown in the table below:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	1.65%	1.13%	1.38%
2024/25.	1.47%	1.27%	1.33%
2023/24.	1.49%	1.39%	1.12%

7.2. There has been a slight increase in void rental loss outlined above.

7.3. Overall, the average time in days for re-let of properties was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2025/26.	77.68	51.70	62.28
2024/25.	60.65	60.59	56.17
2023/24.	71.43	56.79	53.07

7.4. Regarding the increase in the average time to re-let properties shown above, a total of 69 properties were re-let during 2025/26. This figure is affected by a small number of properties which are subject to low demand and consequently were vacant for an extended period of time. During 2025/26 there were two properties that took 742 days to re-let in total, one of these required significant works and there were delays in the other property being returned to the Council. There were a further four island properties categorised as low demand that took 994 days in total. During 2024/25 there was one supported accommodation unit, one sheltered and one very sheltered property which together took 539 days. A further two island properties categorised as low demand took 413 days in total. This compares to properties with a long re-let period in 2023/24 where there was one property that was void for over 200 days, taking 1,050 days, without this property the average would have been reduced to 58.8 days.

7.5. Regarding the category of Value for Money, positive performance was achieved in relation to rent collection, which increased to 99.07% during 2025/26. However, gross arrears, current arrears and the proportion of tenants in arrears all increased during the year and remain areas of focus. The Service continues to prioritise early intervention, tenant support and sustainable repayment arrangements to improve performance in these areas.

7.6. The situation with re-lets and voids however, it is important to remember that these can be affected by a small sample size being disproportionately affected by a differential in respect of longer-term vacancies in low demand and sheltered

stock. A small differential in respect of sample size can lead to potentially large percentage increases in this figure.

8. Direction of Travel

8.1. Scotland's Housing Network provides a summary outlining good performance and areas where improvement could be made.

8.2. Positive performance for Orkney for 2025/26 includes:

- Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs.
- Average time taken to complete medical adaptations.
- Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- Percentage of approved applications for medical adaptations completed.
- Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than one year for applicants assessed as homeless.
- Abandonments as a percentage of lettable stock.
- Evictions as a percentage of lettable stock.
- Number of anti-social behaviour complaints received per 100 properties.
- Percentage collected of rent due.
- Percentage of lets to homeless applicants.
- Average time taken to resolve cases of damp and mould.
- Number of resolved damp and mould cases subsequently reopened.

8.3. Areas where performance could potentially be improved or continue to be improved for Orkney are as follows:

- Overall satisfaction with the service provided by the landlord.
- Satisfaction with being kept informed about services and decisions.
- Satisfaction with opportunities to participate in decision making.
- Satisfaction with the quality of the home.
- Satisfaction with the management of the neighbourhood.
- Tenants who feel rent represents good value for money.
- Percentage of reactive repairs completed right first time.
- Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than one year.
- Average time from homeless presentation to completion of duty.
- Length of stay in temporary accommodation.
- Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due.
- Current tenant arrears as a percentage of annual rent due.
- Former tenant arrears as a percentage of rent due.
- Percentage of tenancies in arrears at year end.
- Average time taken to re-let properties.
- Void rental loss.