

**ANGUS COUNCIL**  
**COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

15 November 2016

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER RETURN: RESULTS**

**1. BACKGROUND**

Since April 2012 when the Scottish Government's Social Housing Charter came into force, the Council has reported its performance through the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) against the set of indicators to show we are meeting the Charter standards and outcomes. The purpose of this annual return is to monitor performance to ensure quality and value for money for tenants and customers for the services they receive. The results are published annually for all Local Authorities (LAs) and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Scotland, and because of this, we are able to compare performance which helps us make improvements within our own services by adopting good practice of other landlords. The Charter Return is reviewed after each submission by our Housing Management Team and tenants, which allows the results to be discussed, and for future targets to be set.

Within Angus Council, Housing Improvement Teams (HITs) (formerly known as Service Improvement Groups, or SIGs) have been set up to identify areas for improvement and set in place plans to deliver these improvements. The HIT's aims are to make improvements in service and performance through staff and customers involvement, and to tackle legislative, regulatory and audit requirements.

There are four HITs, each made up of a core group of Communities staff and subgroups where required, including other council staff and tenants/service users. For each of the four HITs the core group agrees an action plan, based on current understanding of performance in each area as well as any legislative changes and good practice guidance.

The four HITs are:

1. Income Management
2. Maintaining & Improving Homes
3. Housing Options
4. Homes & Communities

These HITs correspond with the Charter outcomes and the indicators which form the ARC.

**2. DETAIL**

**Income Management**

The remit of the Income Management HIT consists of achieving good value from rents and service charges, including arrears and voids. There are currently five main indicators which fall within the Income Management HIT.

	Angus 2014/15	Scottish Average 2014/15	Angus 2015/16	Scottish Average 2015/16
Current Arrears as a % of Gross Rent	5.91%	6.30%	6.62%	6.42%
% Rent Loss due to Empty Properties	1.72%	1.11%	1.03%	1.05%
% Rent Collected in the Year	100.03%	99.06%	100.03%	99.32%
Average Time (Days) Taken to Re-let all Properties	77.5 days	41.5 days	39.1 days	40.7 days
% of Tenants Satisfied that our Rent Represents Value for Money	74.50%	77.10%	80.40%	79.30%

Current arrears as a percentage of gross rent have increased to 6.62% for 2015/16, although this is only slightly higher than the Scottish average. The Council is taking steps to reduce this through service redesign and a corporate debt management procedure.

The figure for percentage rent loss due to empty properties has been steadily decreasing over the past three years, and currently sits at 1.03%, slightly lower than the Scottish average of 1.05%. There has been more focus through HIT work, and advertising properties through the Immediate to Let section of the Council website has also been beneficial.

The Council's performance in % Rent Collected in the Year has remained higher than the Scottish average for the past three years, and has been at 100.03% for the past two. The new corporate debt management procedure should ensure that this continues.

In the Average Time (Days) Taken to Re-let all Properties indicator we have performed better than the Scottish average, with 39.1days and 40.7days respectively. Advertising difficult to let properties on the Immediate to Let section of the Council's website has considerably reduced void loss. Properties which have previously been void for a long period of time have now been able to be re-let, causing a drop of 38.4 days in the average re-let time between 2014/15 and 2015/16.

This year 1,000 people were surveyed by an independent company to assess % of Tenants Satisfied that our Rent Represents Value for Money. 80.4% were satisfied, which is an increase on the 2014/15 result of 74.5%.

### **Maintaining & Improving Homes**

The Maintaining & Improving Homes HIT ensures that properties are well-maintained, that any repairs are completed to a high standard, and that the tenant is kept informed about when the repair will be carried out. This HIT includes four main indicators.

	Angus 2014/15	Scottish Average 2014/15	Angus 2015/16	Scottish Average 2015/16
% of Repairs Completed First Time	46.20%	87.70%	97.60%	89.90%
% of Repair Appointments Kept	34.70%	90.20%	99.96%	93.40%
Total % of Stock Meeting SHQS	85.00%	92.90%	92.10%	93.00%
% Satisfaction with the Repair Service	97.30%	87.00%	82.40%	88.00%

The Council's performance in % of Repairs Completed First Time has improved significantly in the past year, and is at 97.60% for 2015/16. This is above the Scottish average for the same period. A lot of system work has been carried out to reflect contract guidance for the indicator. Closer monitoring of contracts and giving support to contractors where necessary has also led to this increase in performance. In addition, the indicators have been written into the new contracts, so that contractors are obligated to complete the relevant sections about each repair completed. The Council's performance in % Repair Appointments Kept has also increased, and is 99.96% for 2015/16. This is also above the Scottish average of 93.4%, and the improvement is due to the system improvements mentioned above.

In 2015/16 the % Satisfaction with the Repair Service was 82.4%, compared to a Scottish average of 88%. This is a drop in performance compared to the previous year, and results were gathered via an independent survey. In previous years, this indicator was completed using data provided by contractors when responsive repairs were completed.

### **Housing Options**

The Housing Options HIT aims to ensure that there is a consistent approach in the delivery of the Housing Options Service in line with current policies and procedures. The service provides advice to anyone who needs it to help them find, keep and maintain their home.

	Angus 2014/15	Scottish Average 2014/15	Angus 2015/16	Scottish Average 2015/16
% of Tenancies Sustained more than 1 year	89.40%	88.70%	89.80%	83.70%

% of Tenancies Sustained more than 1 year has increased slightly to 89.8% in 2015/16, which is higher than the Scottish average. A service redesign has led to the Housing Options team being located across local offices, meaning that services are more accessible for those who need to use them. There has been an increase in the activities carried out to improve prevention of homelessness, resulting in good level of engagement with those who may be at risk of homelessness.

However, we are seeing an increase in the number of homeless presentations across Scotland, and in Angus the total for 2015/16 was 853 – almost 200 more than the previous year. The Scotland-wide change in the number of presentations may be due to a decrease in prevention work and general Housing Options work. The Government are attempting to trial new ways to increase the Housing Options approach across Scotland.

In Angus the average time spent in Temporary Accommodation across all types in 2015/16 was 104.18 days, compared to the Scottish average of 96.79 days. We have continued to increase the stock of Council temporary accommodation throughout the year. We don't use hostels or Private Sector temporary accommodation, and use Bed & breakfast as a last resort, with the average days being 2.5, compared to the Scottish average of 26.12.

### Homes & Communities

The Homes & Communities HIT encompasses tenancy management, estate management, anti-social behaviour and gypsy travellers. The main indicators for this HIT look at the level of tenant satisfaction with the management of their home, and the number of ASB cases reported and resolved.

	Angus 2014/15	Scottish Average 2014/15	Angus 2015/16	Scottish Average 2015/16
% of Tenants that were Satisfied with the Management of their Home	70.00%	81.10%	82.40%	81.40%
% of Anti-Social Behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved	91.30%	80.70%	92.40%	85.50%

In 2015/16 82.40% of Angus Council tenants were satisfied with the management of their home. This is a slight increase in the previous year's performance, and also slightly above the Scottish average. The question was asked as part of the independent survey carried out, and is linked to overall satisfaction.

The percentage of anti-social behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved has increased to 92.40% for 2015/16. This is an increase of 1.1% on the figure for 2014/15, and is 6.9% higher than the Scottish average for 2015/16. The Council resolves ASB in a number of ways, and follows a well set out guideline of steps to be taken, which range from the initial advice and investigation, through to eviction for the most serious cases where other attempts to resolve have been unsuccessful.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, there have been several key changes in the performance for 2015/16 compared to 2014/15.

With regard to Income Management, rent arrears have increased, but improvements have been made in the void process, leading to void & re-let times successfully reducing.

Under Maintaining & Improving Homes there has been a drop in repairs satisfaction, although this may be attributed to the change in the process of data collection. The repairs carried out right first time and appointments kept have improved as a result of changes to make these contractual conditions of maintenance contractors.

In Housing Options the rate of tenancy sustainment has improved, which may be due to the changes in moving staff members from the Housing Options team to be situated within each Community Housing Team office.

In Homes & Communities, overall satisfaction with the service has improved. There have also been improvements in the percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of their home, and in the percentage of anti-social behaviour cases reported and resolved. The Council performed higher than the Scottish average, with 92.4% of anti-social behaviour cases reported in 2015/16 which were resolved.

The service is very much heading in the right direction with improvements in performance across the board.

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