

# Your Home, Your Neighbourhood

for council tenants and leaseholders



## Annual Report 2021/22

Gigs in the Garden  
at Ernest Copley House, High Green

**Also in this issue:**  
Back to business as usual  
Our priorities for 2022/23 • Community Fund

# Welcome...

to Sheffield Council Housing Service's Annual Report 2021/22, which looks back on our performance over the last year.

As always tenants have helped us design and write this report, providing feedback from start to finish.

We also outline our priorities for the coming 12 months, setting out what we want to do and how we're going to do it.

**Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods Service**



## Back to business as usual

Now the pandemic is behind us and - hopefully - life can get back to normal, we are focused on making our service the best it can be.

Successful schemes such as our apprenticeship programme are back up and running and our staff are able to visit customers again for annual housing visits - last year we managed to complete under 19,000, during which over 80 households were referred for financial support and/or food banks.

Neighbourhood Offices have opened their doors again although we are keen to continue to develop our online and digital channels, which proved invaluable during the pandemic.

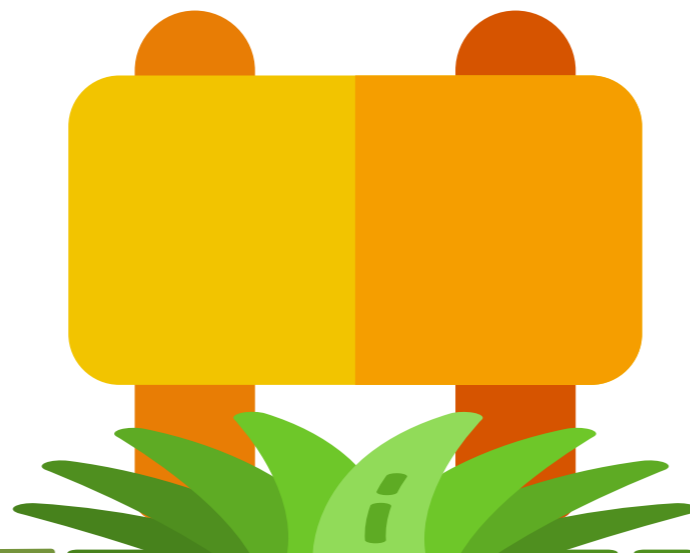
Our Facebook page continues to grow - find us **@SheffHousingAndNeighbourhoods** - and we are getting good engagement on Next Door, a newer community platform where you can receive information relevant to your local neighbourhood - find out more at <https://nextdoor.co.uk/agency/sheffield-city-council>

We have managed to keep the Community Fund programme going throughout the last two years, with organisations continuing to bid for money (find out more on page 5).

Since October 2018, we have received over 230 applications and invested over £275,000 in community projects.

We have worked hard to help tenants with financial issues caused by the pandemic and, more recently, the cost of living crisis. Email bulletins, social media posts and our website have signposted people to help, information and advice. At the end of March 2022, 46% of tenants were paying their rent by Direct Debit.

We also acknowledge and are working on resolving issues and problems caused by Covid, such as the repairs backlog and reduction in lettings. We hope the situation will be much brighter this time next year.



## Your Home Standard

The Housing Service has a long history of employing apprentices, one we're extremely proud of. Our last recruitment drive led to over 100 expressions of interest.

We always encourage applications from the communities we serve, striving for quality and diversity. Our most recent recruits included a good mix of ages, including school leavers and mature adults either re-entering the workforce or entering for the first time after raising children.

- We offered a Housing Plus annual visit to 29,361 households and carried out 18,990 discussions
- We carried out 447 adaptations, of which just over 92% were completed within timescale
- We completed 125,484 repairs, including 9,081 emergency repairs
- Just under 9 out of ten tenants thought the Housing Plus visit was useful and that any support needs were identified and addressed

## Cost of living help and support

We understand that the Covid pandemic and current cost of living crisis have made life much harder for many people. We have done lots of work to try and help where we can and signpost people to further support and information.

In 2021/22 we helped over 3,000 people get additional financial support to help them pay their rent, totalling over £1.6 million. We also supported an additional 2,000 tenants to start paying their rent by Direct Debit

In that time:

- 386 Hardship Fund Grants were awarded, totalling £240,559.98
- 1,395 Yorkshire Water Support Awards were granted, totalling £800,207.11
- 128 tenants were referred to Citizens Advice for specialist debt advice
- We helped people claim 1,236 Discretionary Housing Payments, totalling £621,435.92
- We funded Credit Union budgeting accounts for 29 tenants



## Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

For the first time last summer we organised a series of festival-type events for our sheltered residents - and they seemed to hit the right note with audiences.

Ten Gigs in the Garden took place from July through to mid September across the city in sheltered communal gardens. Each featured live singers and entertainment in a musical extravaganza that celebrated bringing people together after a tough 18 months.

- It took an average time of 11 minutes to answer customer calls to the Housing Contact Centre
- 70% of customers were satisfied overall with the housing service
- Just under 70% of customers said Sheffield City Council was easy to deal with and thought that the housing service listens to their views and acts on them
- 80% of tenants would recommend the housing service



### Follow us on Facebook

If you've not already, why not follow our Housing and Neighbourhoods Facebook page.

We'll keep you up-to-date with all the latest news and updates for tenants, leaseholders and residents.

We have built up almost 5,200 followers. From 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, posts

on the page generated a reach of over 2.3 million, an increase of 78%. In that period we also had 4,281 visits to our page.

Our page is getting more and more active with news, community projects, events, surveys and queries, so why not join the conversation.

## Neighbourhood and Community Standard



It was fantastic to see so many people coming out to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this year. We helped fund several of the events that took place across the city, including those organised by Brindley and Lower Wincobank Tenants and Residents Associations. It was lovely to see people spending time together again! A big thank you to everyone who helped organise these community events.

- Citywide 99.8% of fly-tipping and 98.4% of offensive graffiti was removed within target
- 77% of people were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live and thought the shared green areas around their home are well-maintained
- 73% were satisfied that communal areas are kept free of litter and graffiti



## Tenancy Standard

Our Community Fund scheme continues to grant pots of money to projects that benefit our tenants.

Despite the Covid pandemic and changing restrictions, many people still managed to apply for funding and get projects off the ground.

St Mary's Church put their Community Fund grant towards the running costs of its Family Choir, which welcomes people of all ages, abilities and social backgrounds. It promotes fun, friendship and confidence building while helping to combat loneliness and isolation.

- 73% of people were satisfied with the service provided when dealing with their rent
- The average number of weeks a property was vacant decreased from 23 to 20

- Overall tenancy turnover has increased from 5.4% to 6.9%
- 65% of tenants were satisfied with how their anti-social behaviour complaint was dealt with, a figure we want to increase



# Investing in new council homes



In 2021/22 52 properties were acquired by the housing service and there are currently 221 new homes being built that are due for completion this year.

We are building new retirement living homes at Parson Cross that provide purpose-built, high quality accommodation within easy reach of shops and everyday amenities.

Buchanan Green will boast the latest assistive technology and first class facilities for its residents. It will provide 1 and 2 bedroom apartments, as well as some bungalows, for people over 60.

To find out more visit [www.sheffield.gov.uk/buchanangreen](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/buchanangreen), call 0114 293 0000 or email [homesareasheltered@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:homesareasheltered@sheffield.gov.uk)



## Compliments and complaints

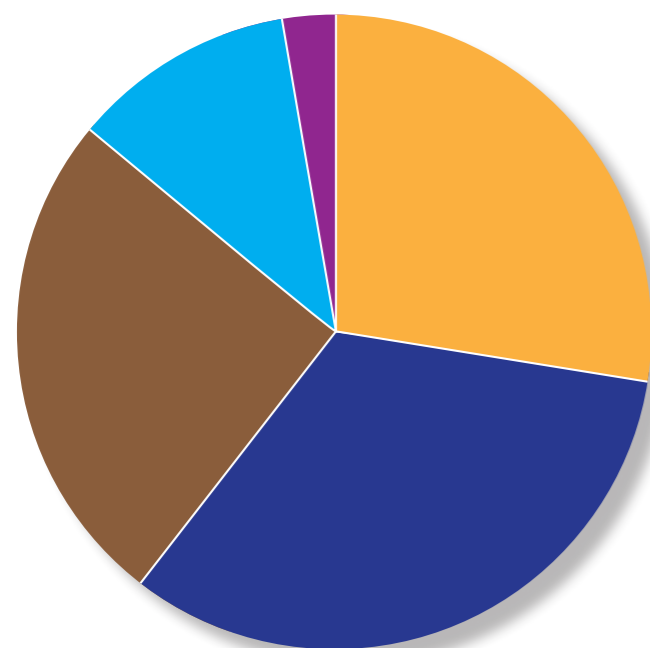
Over the past year we have worked hard to improve how we respond to, and learn from, complaints. During this time, the Housing Ombudsman has also updated its Complaints Handling Code to help further improve complaints handling across all social housing.

We have assessed ourselves against the updated Code and, overall, we measure well against the requirements. Our policies and procedures are in line with the Code, our tenants have access to clear information about how to make a complaint, and we put things right when something has gone wrong.

We also identified parts of the Code which we don't yet fully comply with. We need to be quicker at responding to complaints, and to improve how the learning from complaints is shared more widely across the service and with customers.

You can read more about the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code, and our self-assessment against it, here: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/)

## Value for money



80% of people think the rent they pay is value for money

<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	<b>Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b> £44.5M eg. routine repairs to homes
<span style="color: darkblue;">●</span>	<b>Tenants Service*</b> £53.3M
<span style="color: brown;">●</span>	<b>Investment in the Capital Programme</b> £39.2M eg. replacement of obsolete heating, kitchens and bathrooms
<span style="color: lightblue;">●</span>	<b>Financing Charges</b> £13.1M eg. interest payments on borrowing
<span style="color: purple;">●</span>	<b>Other charges</b> £4.1M eg. insurance, council tax

\* The Housing and Neighbourhoods Service 'buys in' some services from other parts of the Council for things like running the call centre, legal services, building management, publicity and public relations.

## Our current performance

In 2021/22 we received 417 complaints about housing services and 1806 about housing-related repairs.

We problem solved 5.5 out of 10 housing and 5.8 out of 10 repairs complaints within the three day target. These are complaints that we aim to respond to and resolve quickly. The average however was 8 and 9 days for housing and repairs respectively so we need to improve on this figure and be more responsive when dealing with complaints.

Not all complaints can be resolved quickly and we have to carry out further investigations before we can respond.

If customers are not happy with the investigation response, a senior manager can carry out a review, with the aim of responding within 28 days.

In 2021/22 6.2 out of 10 investigations and investigation reviews for housing were completed in 28 days, and 4.6 for repairs.

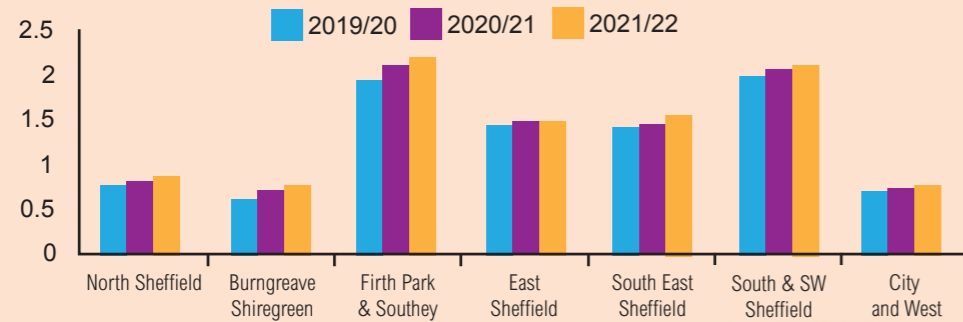


# Annual Update Information for 2019-20 to 2021-22

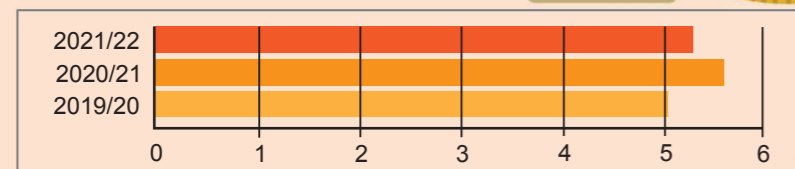
## Rents and Income

Current arrears increased by £400k in 2021/22, reflecting the difficult financial situation many tenants find themselves in, with 2,171 more claiming Universal Credit at March 22 (compared to 12 months earlier). Many of these created arrears in the first few months of their claim. Former tenants arrears reduced in 2021/22 as we refocused resources back into this area of work after supporting current tenants through the Covid pandemic.

### Current tenant arrears (£m)



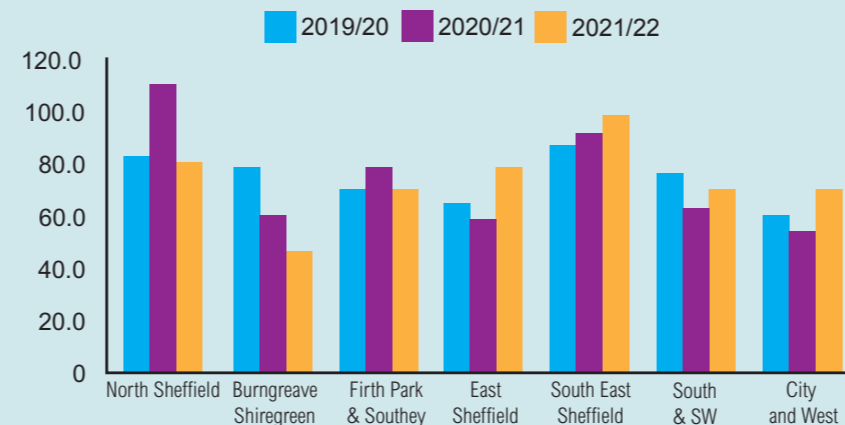
### Former tenants arrears (£m)



## Anti-social Behaviour

The total number of new cases for 2021/22 remains around the same level as 2020/21, however noise nuisance remains the highest reason for reporting.

### New ASB cases per 1,000 properties for 2019-20 to 2020-21



### Satisfaction score with the way the ASB case was dealt with

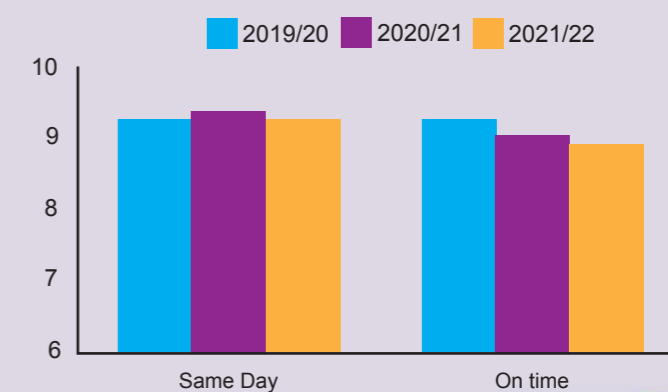


Customer satisfaction around how cases were dealt with has decreased slightly and some work is underway to better understand the reasons behind this.

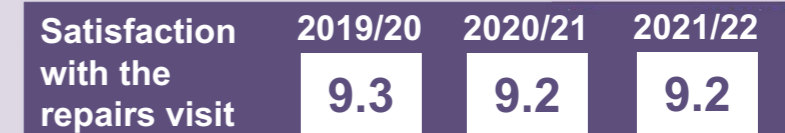
## Repairs

First time fix continues to be a key priority for tenants. Our appointment timescales have dipped slightly in 2021/22 but we expect these to increase as we make improvements to our appointments to our appointments system. Satisfaction levels however have remained the same.

### Same day and 2-hour time slot (out of 10)



### Satisfaction with Repairs Visit



## Our tenant profile

Our tenants are a diverse range of ages ethnicities and religions. Some tenants also identify as disabled.

	Male	Female		With	Without	No info
Gender	17,463	23,280	Disability	11,266	27,106	2,371

	White	Mixed	Asian/Asian British heritage	Black/African British heritage	Other heritage	Not said	No info
Ethnicity	31,876	1,028	1,529	3,324	1,902	698	386

Mobility issues are the most common problem

	Hearing	Mobility	Sight	Other	Multiple	Not said	No info
Disability type	453	4,801	237	4,129	689	234	30,200

The largest age group is between 41 and 60

	Under 21	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	100+	No info
Age band	199	11,574	14,981	11,217	2,765	7	-

## Green Spaces

The Housing and Neighbourhoods Service is responsible for many of the green spaces adjoining our estates.

Neighbourhood Area	Number of grassed areas	Acreage of grassed areas
Burngreave & Shiregreen	141	5
City & West	1529	72
East	3142	169
Firth Park & Southey	1173	58
North	2291	89
Sheltered	428	18
South & South West	3212	200
South East	2311	129
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,227</b>	<b>740</b>

The Parks and Countryside Service maintains separate green areas

We have around 3,400 allotment plots across 80 sites. Almost all have waiting lists but a handful don't.

Find out more on our website:  
[www.sheffield.gov.uk/parks-sports-recreation/allotments](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/parks-sports-recreation/allotments)

## Our Properties

Property types by bedroom numbers

	0 Bed	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5+ Bed	Total
Bedsit	163	3	-	-	-	-	<b>166</b>
Flat	6	10,874	3,221	115	3	1	<b>14,220</b>
Maisonette	-	13	2,011	666	8	1	<b>2,699</b>
House	-	55	7,383	9,557	369	21	<b>17,385</b>
Bungalow	2	1,640	930	50	-	1	<b>2,623</b>
Sheltered	175	780	105	1	-	-	<b>1,061</b>
	<b>346</b>	<b>13,365</b>	<b>13,650</b>	<b>10,389</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>38,154</b>

We have adapted 6841 of our properties to make them suitable for people with mobility problems, long-term health needs or learning disabilities. Work carried out includes extensions, ramps, hoists, lifts and wheelchair step lifts.



# Housing and Neighbourhoods Service Priorities for 2022/23



**Consultation on our Housing and Neighbourhood Service priorities takes place throughout the year with our tenants. This helps us understand what our customers think about our current services but also helps identify what is important to them as we shape future services.**

## **Deliver our stock increase programme to build and acquire more council homes**

One of our key ambitions is to increase the number of council homes we have, looking at what type of housing is needed in which areas. As of September 2021, we had acquired or built 732 additional properties and 221 new homes are currently in construction.

## **Deliver improvements to our tenants' homes to ensure they continue to be well maintained**

It is important for us that our tenants feel safe and comfortable in their homes.

Our 5-year investment plan sets out planned improvement and upgrade works to roofs,

kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors, as well as electrical upgrades, heating replacements and energy efficiency improvements.

## **Deliver year-on-year targets to achieve the 'Better Repairs Project'**

We are making changes and improvements to our repair processes so we can deliver an efficient and reliable service, as well as work through backlogs created by the Covid pandemic.

The new IT system introduced in 2021 will enable better and smarter working, with less back-office administration, and over the next 12 months we will continue to modernise and invest in the service.

## **Invest in fire safety measures to ensure our council homes comply with emerging building safety laws**

Work will continue in 2022/23 to ensure our council homes, especially high-rise tower blocks and flat blocks, are safe.

The Building Safety Bill - which came into force in April 2022 - considers the building and its occupants, providing residents with more rights and decision making about their homes.

We are putting plans in place to comply with the new legislation, bringing forward fire safety improvements to blocks and developing a resident engagement plan.

## **Deliver on plans to ensure all our homes reach Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) level C by 2030**

There are around 6,900 council homes that are currently below this level.

We will make improvements through cavity, loft and wall insulation, as well as heating improvements. We have secured grant funding

to deliver energy efficiency works to 517 of our council homes and will continue to explore further funding opportunities in 2022/23.

## **By 2022, produce a roadmap showing further options for council housing's contribution to achieving Sheffield's ambition of net-zero by 2030**

The roadmap will help us estimate the funding needed to improve our council stock so we can make the best cost-effective decisions as part of our plans. We are working with other landlords to share ideas and will continue to collaborate with partners in 2022 to maximise any opportunities to make our council homes greener.

## **Improve customer access, the management of complaints and implement recommendations from the Race Equality Commission**

We are reviewing how we manage and respond to complaints to improve and make the process easier.

Ensuring all our tenants have the same level of access to our services is vitally important. In 2021 we submitted evidence as part of the Race Equality Commission - the final report is expected in 2022, after which we will make changes and implement the recommendations.

### **Deliver improvements to our frontline neighbourhood housing services**

We understand that some tenants need more support than others so will provide a more tailored approach to help the most vulnerable.

We will develop better partnership working with other council services in our neighbourhoods and estates to ensure we can tackle tenancy and estate-related issues better and more efficiently.

### **Work closely with council colleagues to support the development of Local Area Committees across the city**

In 2021, seven Local Area Committees (LACs) were set up to promote the involvement of local people in the democratic process and bring decision-making closer to local people. The LACs are a way for people to get involved in making a difference to their local communities.

As council housing services are delivered across the city, we will ensure our business plan priorities feed into the LACs' priorities and plans.

### **Develop apprenticeship, employment and training opportunities to create a workforce representative of council housing communities**

The Housing and Neighbourhoods Service continues to promote and offer apprenticeships

in a number of roles across the service each year. Many of our apprentices become permanent members of staff. The scheme helps us improve diversity within the workforce so we will continue to promote and encourage people from a range of backgrounds and communities.

### **Invest in updating our IT infrastructure so it integrates with wider council systems**

We are working towards a modern housing management system that is easier for both our customers and staff to use. A review of all our computer systems is underway to try and remove duplication and time-consuming processes. The outcome will be more efficient working practices and an improved service for tenants.

### **Develop different ways of working post COVID-19 and address any remaining backlogs caused by the pandemic**

A key priority for 2022/23 is to resume services safely, increase front line service activity and tackle tenancy breaches - and other issues - that are having a negative impact on individuals and estates.

We will look to take a more pro-active and multi-partnership approach to dealing with tenancy management issues within our neighbourhoods.

Read our full Business Plan for 2022/23 on our website at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing)

This document can be supplied in alternative formats,  
please contact 0114 205 3333

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