

Your Home, Your Neighbourhood

for council tenants and leaseholders



Annual Report 2022/23

Also in this issue:

Getting ready for the Regulator

Our priorities for 2023/24 • Tenants getting involved

Welcome...

to Sheffield Council Housing Service's Annual Report 2022/23, which looks back on our performance over the last year.

Tenants have once again 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



2022-23 in Summary

During 2022-23 we have been able to resume most of our services safely. The pandemic resulted in a large amount of disruption to our key services such as repairs and front-line services. Over the last year we have been working hard to combat the backlogs.

Rising inflation rates, energy prices and household costs in 2022-23 have impacted heavily on our tenants and the services we provide. We supported our tenants during this time by developing a tailored service for different customer groups, helping those in need to manage their money and commitments to rent. We continue to collaborate and work with other organisations such as the Department of Work and Pensions, Children's Services, and charities to ensure our tenants and their families are supported.

Some of our other achievements for 2022-23 included:

Our Neighbourhood Teams handled over 150,000 interactions with customers, with our Neighbourhood Officers helping to sustain tenancies and maintain strong and connected neighbourhoods which people are happy to call home.

We have continued to challenge and tackle anti-social behaviour, overseeing a reduction in the number of ASB cases, and improved satisfaction from tenants in our handling of ASB. This will contribute to the maintenance of strong and connected neighbourhoods.

We successfully delivered retirement living homes at Buchanan Green, which provide independent living and flexible support for older people. This is a new model of integrated care that may form a blueprint for future schemes.

We made our first Shared Ownership properties available, which will help first-time buyers and those that do not currently own a home, to buy a share of a property.

We worked with the local community and partners to finalise our Gleadless Valley Masterplan, which over the next 10+ years will regenerate the area and allow residents to thrive.

We have also been reviewing our IT systems to see how they can be improved. We will start to implement a new system in phases throughout 2024 which will help us to work more efficiently, remove duplication and ultimately provide a better service to our tenants.

We hope you enjoy reading our Annual Report and encourage you to get in touch with us with any feedback and ideas.

Regulator Ready

The Grenfell Tower fire in West London, which caused the deaths of 72 people in 2017, resulted in a number of changes to the law and regulations with respect to housing and building safety. Further changes were made following the death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in December 2020 from a respiratory condition caused by extensive damp and mould in his home. The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 was subsequently passed in July 2023.

The Act means that we must ask tenants what they think about a range of issues to do with their homes and tenancies. We must publish the results of this in a manner that is timely, clear, and easily accessed by tenants. The 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures' (TSMs) created by the Regulator are as follows:

- Overall satisfaction with the service provided by your landlord.
- Satisfaction with repairs.
- Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair.
- Satisfaction that the home is well maintained.
- Satisfaction that the home is safe.
- Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them.

- Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them.
- Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect.
- Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints.
- Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.
- Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.
- Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour.

We have already been asking tenants these questions via our neighbourhood surveys, which are completed by telephone. They give us vital information about exactly what tenants think and feel about their homes and the service they receive. The results of these surveys are analysed each month by officers, managers and councillors on the Housing Policy Committee.

Sheffield's Housing Service is likely to be inspected by the Regulator within the next year or so. We take this very seriously and are preparing by testing ourselves with the help of the Housing Quality Network to make sure that we are performing as well as we possibly can.



Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs)

TARAs are the bedrock of tenant involvement: they are entirely independent of Sheffield City Council, but we provide support by attending meetings, listening to tenants and enabling involvement by providing IT training, including how to promote activities and events on social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and to update their pages on the Sheffield Directory. TARAs provide a variety of social activities, as well as linking in to relevant housing teams and Councillors.

TARAs are varied in size, from Gleadless Valley (around 2,500 members) to Brindley & Mundella (just over 100).

Our Engagement and Development Officers supported TARAs to achieve many great things in 2022-2023.

Wincobank Wombles, Scraith Wood Litter picking team and the Lindsay Litter Pickers staged monthly litter picks to enhance their areas.



Stocksbridge and Upper Don TARA Dog Show at the Inman Pavilion and Canal Barge Trip, which included a two-and-a-half-hour journey from Sheffield Quays to Tinsley Viaduct. The day was enjoyed by all and the scones with clotted cream and jam went down well with a cup of tea or coffee.

Heeley Community TARA was our first hybrid TARA, enabling those to become involved who are unable to attend in person or prefer to attend virtually. This has been a success and will continue.

Arbourthorne TARA started a lunch club, and from a standing start they now provide food and social activities for 59 attendees.

Darnall have worked with the neighbourhood team and now have monthly drop-ins, which are attended by one of the estate patch officers.

The Scraith Wood TARA is working in partnership with the landscape department from the University of Sheffield to regenerate an unloved green space for all the community.

Southey and Shiregreen TARAs celebrated King Charles III's Coronation in style by singing and dancing in the rain!

The Burngreave/Firth Park and Southey/Shiregreen TARAs have had a remarkably busy year, empowering their own communities to work together. They arranged a number of day trips, ran breakfast clubs, fantastic warm spaces and met the Lady Mayoress at the Town Hall.

We are supporting tenants to establish four TARAs within the Northeast. We have attended welcome events at Carwood and met seven members of the community who are interested in restarting the TARA. We also had a great time at Longley Four Greens, promoting our new ways of engaging and generating lots of interest in restarting the TARA in the area. The South and East areas each have local area housing forums back up-and-running and attendance from the local TARAs is good.

While these events are great fun and bring people together, they also provide valuable opportunities for tenants and residents to discuss issues and provide feedback to our Engagement and Development Officers

Ideas are often best shared in less formal environments such as social events: TARAs do not have to operate by formal meetings. Without people volunteering none of this could happen, Sheffield City Council thank you for the time and commitment that you provide.

If you want to know more information about joining a TARA in your area or setting up a new TARA, then please email us at getinvolved@sheffield.gov.uk



Improving our engagement with tenants

There are now numerous ways to become involved. We welcome all input from tenants, whether it is a single comment on one of our forums, a response to a survey or involvement in a scrutiny project over several weeks.

We have created pages on Have Your Say. Here, you will find information and links, including to our Engagement Pit Stop (<https://haveyoursay.sheffield.gov.uk/tenant-engagement-landing-page>).

Tenants & Residents Virtual Community

Join our online community that brings tenants, residents and local groups together in one place. You'll be able to find out about what's happening using our map and share your ideas on making your community a better place to live. This page belongs to you and those around you in your community.

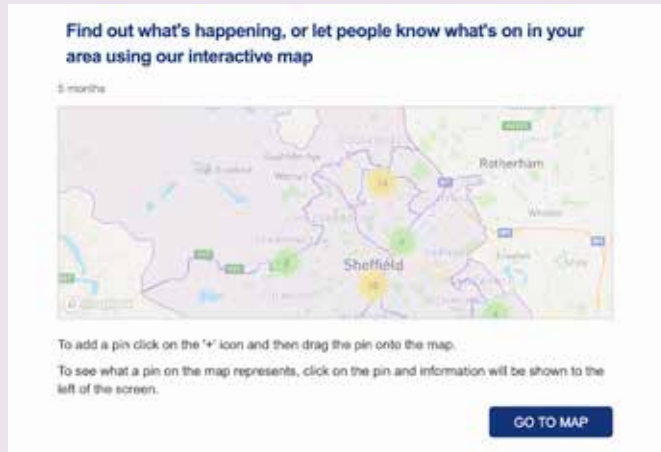
The more you can tell us, the better: your input and feedback will help to shape future services.

- During 2022-23 we have handled over 144,000 housing calls made to the contact centre
- It took an average time of just under 14 minutes to answer customer calls to the housing contact centre
- 80% of tenants agreed that Sheffield City Council Housing Service treated them fairly and with respect
- 63% of tenants were satisfied with the overall housing service



Interactive map

We're excited to have an interactive map for the whole of the city to use to add on events, local groups or organisations and public access points. Click on the image below to take you to the map to view or to add on your pin.



Key dates

Key dates for events that are happening near you are easily found on the page. These are regularly updated by our team, but please add your own community events to promote them.

Ideas and tenant Survey

We value your ideas and opinions and would like you to share what works well for your community on our ideas board.

Tell us what you think about our Virtual Community here - https://haveyoursay.sheffield.gov.uk/tenants-and-residents-virtual-community?tool=brainstormer#tool_tab

For more information or help on using this page, email getinvolved@sheffield.gov.uk or call 0114 273 5566.



Maher Dinawi, our ARCH (Association of Retained Council Housing) tenant representative popped into one of our Council Housing First Point Offices at Hillsborough Barracks. He met our Neighbourhood Support Team to introduce himself and talk about his role at ARCH. Jared, one of the Neighbourhood Support Officers met with Maher to explain his job-role around first line support and advice/guidance available to our customers. Maher found this really useful, as did Jared – another great example of tenant engagement!

ARCH Tenants' Group is made up of tenant Representatives from ARCH member authorities across England. See link for further info - <http://www.arch-housing.org.uk/>

If you would like to get involved, email us at getinvolved@sheffield.gov.uk



Follow us on Facebook

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

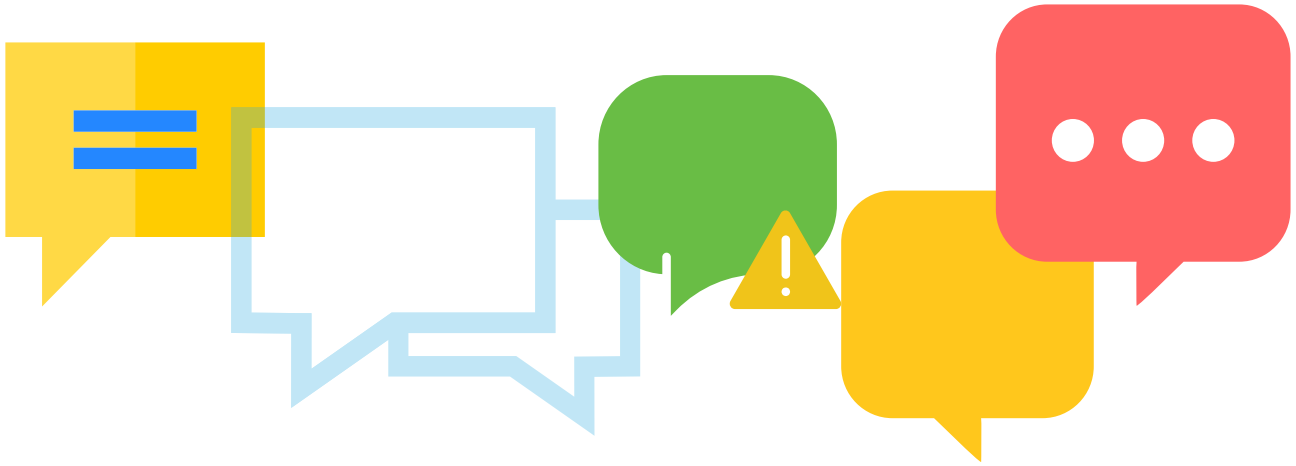
We'll keep you up-to-date with all the latest news and updates for tenants, leaseholders and residents.

The number of followers has increased to over 5300.

From 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, 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.

Search for us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SheffHousingAndNeighbourhoods/



Complaints

We aim to deliver high quality services, but we know that sometimes things go wrong and that you might not always be satisfied with our services. If that happens, you can make a complaint and we will try to deal with that complaint as fairly, effectively and promptly as we can.

From April 2022 to March 2023, we received a total of 3379 complaints from tenants about their housing services. 2772 of these were about the repairs service. The next highest numbers were relating to our Neighbourhood Teams, the Rehousing service and the Income Management team.

Whilst it's never good to hear that someone is not happy with a service they received or with something we have done, complaints are important feedback and we treat them in a positive way. They give us valuable insight into how customers view our services and how we deliver them, and we use them to improve what we do.

Examples of this are:

We received a complaint from a community organisation which regularly uses one of our community buildings to run their events. They were experiencing difficulty in obtaining the keys to be able to access the building, and this was in turn impacting on the tenants attending these events. We have therefore changed how we manage community building keys to make it easier for organisations to make best use of our spaces.



After receiving a complaint from a tenant about the service from one of our interpreters, detailed feedback was sent to the team that manages the contract with our interpretation provider so that the issues could be raised and resolved directly with them.

A complaint was made by a tenant that her requests for someone from our service to contact her about an ASB issue had been ignored. Upon investigation, it was found that requests for contact were not being recorded properly by one of our teams. In response to this, improvements were made to how such requests are logged on our housing system, to ensure that they don't get missed. When handling tenants' complaints, we must follow the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code, which aims to ensure that all social landlords deal with complaints in a fair and efficient way.

We have assessed ourselves against the Ombudsman's 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 two elements of the Code which we don't yet fully comply with. We need to improve how the learning from complaints is shared more widely across the service, and also how we share complaints information with customers. This will be a priority for us over the coming months.

You can read more about the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code, and our self-assessment against it, here: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/council-housing/housing-complaints-handling>



Your Home Standard

We have worked to renew the roofs on more than 7,000 council homes, improving insulation, installing new roof tiles, and ensuring the roofs are fit for the future. Earlier this year, we began a 3-year programme to replace the roofs of 18 of our tower blocks located throughout the city. The roofs had exceeded their operational lifespan and needed replacing. The new programme has involved the removal of the roof and insulation and replacing them with new materials. The new roofs will prevent water leaks and extend the lifespan of the tower blocks.

The upgraded insulation will also improve the energy efficiency of the blocks. To complete the work, Tucker & Tunstall has been appointed as the contractor, and work on the reroofing to the blocks began in June 2023. Although each block's completion will take approximately 8-10 weeks, there will be minimal disruption as access to tenants' homes will not be needed.



Cornhill, Crawshaw, Adelphi and Wentworth blocks have been completed so far in 2023: the Martin Street blocks are scheduled for completion before the end of 2023.

Tenants can find out more information about current and future works at AMT-GeneralEnq@sheffield.gov.uk or 0114 2930000.

Throughout 2022/23, we achieved the following:

- We completed over 103,000 repair jobs, with over 83% of our repairs being completed right first time
- 81% of our tenants were satisfied with the quality of the repairs they received
- We completed 514 adaptations, including level access showers, ramps, equipment and extensions and installed 115 stairlifts to properties with vulnerable customers
- We Installed 912 new boilers including boiler conversions and full central heating systems in our council homes.
- Installed 115 stairlifts to properties with vulnerable customers.
- Retrofitted insulation and ventilation in 120 properties as part of the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 2 project.
- Provided 2,836 homes with electrical upgrades which mean they are now compliant with the Electrical Safety regulations.
- Completed 2,807 stock condition surveys.

Neighbourhood and Community Standard

We prioritised the cleanliness of our neighbourhoods with our Estates Teams working throughout the year to clean and remove items from over 2,500 communal areas in flats, maisonettes, and tower blocks. By doing this we contributed to making our neighbourhoods strong and connected, and somewhere that people are happy to call home.

The Flower Estate TARA have been working with their neighbourhood team to improve life for those living in the area. An estate walkabout identified an area often used for fly tipping. TARA members spent two hours clearing up the rubbish so that the Burngreave and Firth Park Estates Team could take it away, instantly making a positive difference to the area.

Our Response Operatives unblocked 4500 chutes and removed 3000 items of communal waste across the 350 maisonette blocks and tower blocks across the city, creating a cleaner environment for customers.

Our Gardening Teams completed 264 vacant gardens for new tenants moving into our properties across the city, ensuring that gardens were returned to a manageable standard.



We proactively contacted our most vulnerable tenants through nearly 7,000 home visits and 2,500 phone contacts, making 1,600 referrals to other agencies or services for support.

We provided a range of cost-of-living help and support to our tenants impacted by the current economic uncertainties, including making 279 Hardship payments to prevent tenants losing their homes.

We received over 4,000 fly-tipping reports on council housing land. 100% of this rubbish was removed within 24 hours of being reported.

69% of tenants said they were satisfied with how communal waste was managed and the recycling facilities within their council housing blocks.

Tenancy Standard

The cost-of-living crisis continues to have a serious impact on many within our community, with people and families having to make tough decisions around eating, heating, and debt. Our Hardship Fund payments are made to those who need support – they do not have to pay them back.



In 2022/23 we have awarded just over £150,000 in Hardship Fund payments, helping to support 279 of our council housing tenants, enabling them to stay in their homes.

Throughout 2022/23 we have also supported tenants in other ways, including the following:

- Offering targeted help to vulnerable tenants.
- Training housing staff on utilising the Council's cost-of-living toolkit and working with partners such as Citizens Advice, foodbanks, and charities.
- We helped to support 2589 new tenancies.
- 79% of new tenants were satisfied with their new council home and felt that they had all the information they needed at the start of their tenancy and where to go for support.

Investing in new council homes



We remain committed to building new council homes and increasing supply through market acquisitions, purchasing homes directly from developers and working closely with Sheffield Housing Company on our joint venture partnership.

Resourcing impacts and inflation costs have continued to affect the delivery of new homes – but as we move forward into the new financial year we are setting our targets with these pressures in mind

We will continue to deliver on a range of schemes as we move

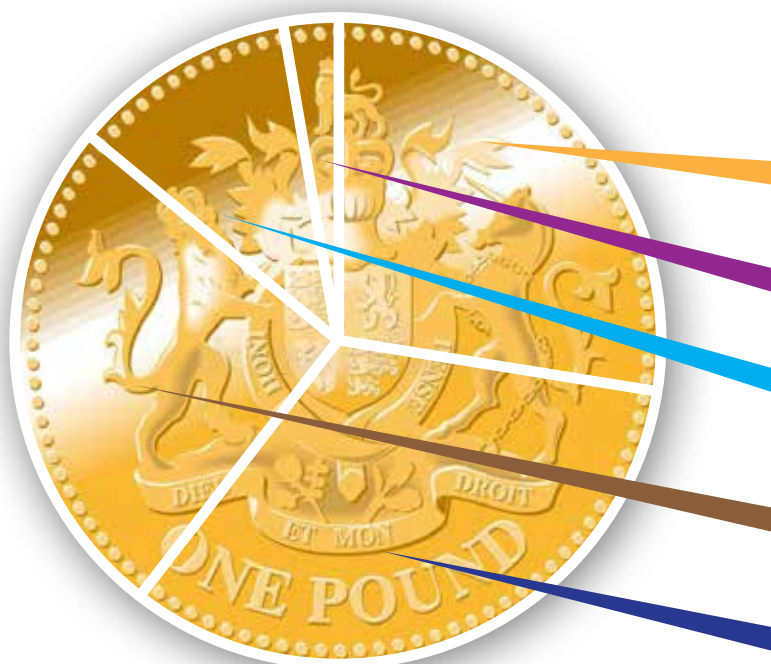
The Stock Increase Programme is a major contributor to increasing affordable homes in the city and was key to our 2022/23 priority of creating more rented council, affordable and specialist housing options.

In 2022/23 we delivered 270 new council homes as part of our stock increase programme. This included 177 new build homes and 93 homes bought off the open market.

into the new financial year, including acquiring properties to house Ukrainian and Afghan refugees supported by Government awarded funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund.



Value for money



Tenants rent is spent as follows:

Repairs & Maintenance small and large repairs, including damp and mould.	£51.7M
Other Charges this includes costs such as insurance and Council Tax.	£5.2M
Financing Charges e.g interest payments on loans to pay for new homes and capital investments (see below).	£13.0M
Capital Investments big projects, including replacement of kitchens, bathrooms and heating systems.	£34.1M
Tenants Service e.g. front-line housing services, estate services, rehousing, rents and support services (Legal, Finance, HR and IT).	£58.7M

Investing in our workforce



Apprentice and Graduate Programmes

The Housing and Neighbourhoods Service continues to promote and offer apprenticeships in a number of roles across the service annually. This allows us to develop apprenticeship, employment and training opportunities to create a workforce representative of council housing communities.

On successful completion, all of our apprentices are retained in the service and

are offered roles within the teams they have trained in. This year we have created 26 apprentice opportunities across a number of teams and various levels within the service. We will continue to promote and encourage people from a range of backgrounds and communities.

In addition to our Housing Apprenticeship Programme, we remain committed to the National Graduate Development Programme, which offers graduates an opportunity to join the workforce for a period in order to hone their leadership skills by working on key exciting projects.



Older Persons Independent Living Service

The Older Persons Independent Living (OPIL) Service provides housing management and support to older people living in our 30 sheltered housing schemes, our new retirement living with care scheme and three schemes for people with learning disabilities.

OPIL Neighbourhood Officers usually work across 3 schemes, undertaking a person-centred plan with every tenant to:

- Sustain their tenancy.
- Maintain their independence, health and wellbeing.
- Support them to lead the life that they want to lead.

Neighbourhood Officers will also support residents to:

- Pay their rent and access benefits.
- Be safe and secure within their home, in the scheme and wider community.
- Access services, such as Care and Health, equipment and adaptations, cleaning and shopping.
- Become involved in activities and events that are held in the scheme or wider community.

As part of the support plan, they will provide regular wellbeing visits depending on individual needs.

The Young at Heart Project supports residents' health and wellbeing and enables them to develop hobbies, make new friends and reduce social isolation. Regular scheme meetings are held at each scheme, which provide an important opportunity for residents to meet and discuss relevant issues.

Our OPIL caretaking team keep communal areas in our schemes clean and safe. They also provide a friendly face and point of contact in the absence of the Neighbourhood Officer.

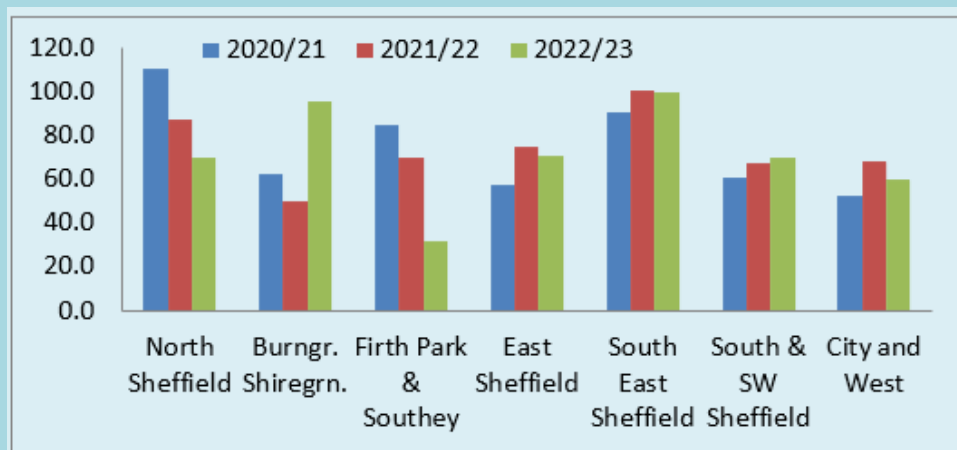
The OPIL Neighbourhood Support team provide rehousing information and advice to customers, advertise and match vacant properties, ensure that all schemes have sufficient resources and monitor enquiries, complaints and feedback.



Annual Update Information

Anti-social Behaviour

New ASB cases per 1,000 properties



Customer satisfaction at how ASB cases are dealt

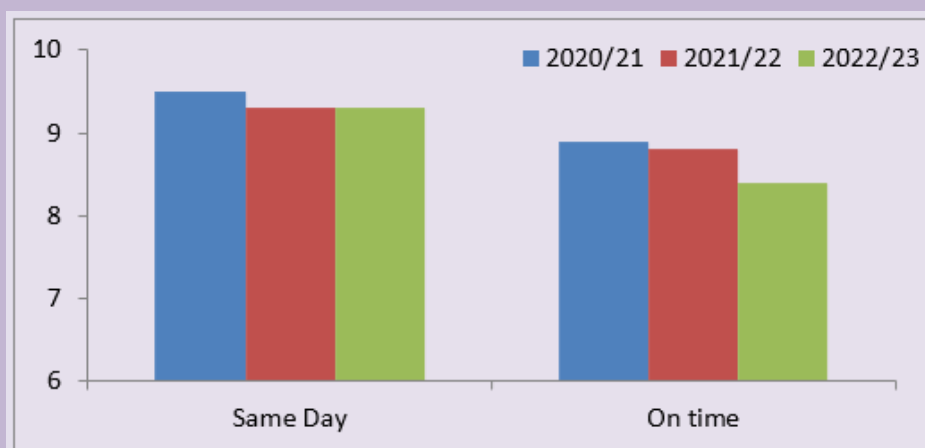
2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
68%	65%	60%

Expressed as a percentage of tenants who were satisfied or very satisfied.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) remains a concern for tenants, though the picture is varied across the city. Most areas have experienced a decrease or a minor increase in cases with only Burngreave and Shiregreen showing a major increase during 2022-2023. Satisfaction with how ASB cases are managed by the council continues to gradually decrease. Tenants did, however, become more satisfied with the speed of the response throughout 2022-2023. At the end of this period, 65% of tenants were satisfied with the speed of response to their ASB complaint.

Repairs

Number of repairs (out of ten) completed



Overall satisfaction with the repairs service % of tenants who were satisfied or very satisfied

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
85%	81%	78%

Repairs are clearly a priority for tenants and Housing and Repair Services. We completed over 103,000 repairs during the year, nearly 2,000 per week. As general awareness of damp and mould increases, as have the number of associated repairs – this is partially due to repairs staff reporting damp and mould issues while on other jobs. 90% of day-to-day repairs are being completed on time and during the last quarter of 2022-2023, we kept over 94% of appointments.

2020-21 to 2022-23

Green Spaces

Number of green spaces throughout the city

Neighbourhood Area	Number of grassed areas	Acreage of grassed areas
Burngreave & Shiregreen	164	6
City & West	1625	75
East	3363	208
Firth Park & Southey	1274	92
North	2398	95
Sheltered	463	19
South & South West	3276	207
South East	2420	148
Total	14,983	849

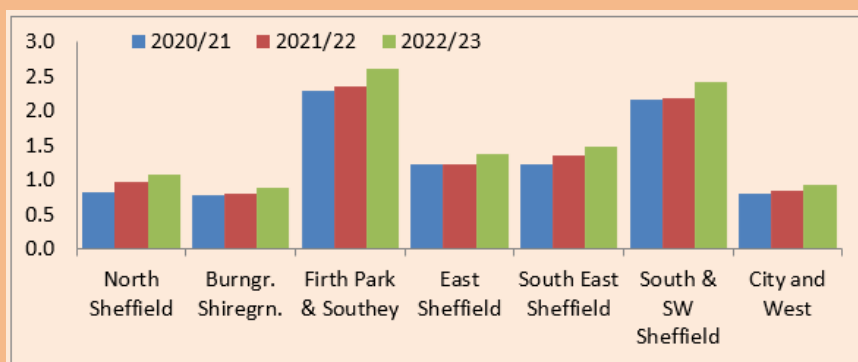


Sheffield is rightly proud of its green spaces, both those that are wild and those that we maintain. We have more than 3,000 allotments across around 80 sites in the city. For more information about allotments, go to <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/parks-sport-recreation/allotments>

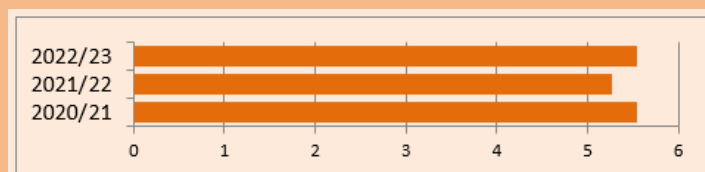


Rents and Income

Current tenant arrears (£m)




Former tenant arrears (£m)






The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact many people, including many of our tenants. In 2022-23 we awarded just over £150,000 in Hardship Fund payments to support 279 of our tenants. We also supported tenants in other ways, including offering targeted help to vulnerable tenants; training housing staff on utilising the Council's cost-of-living toolkit and working with partners such as Citizens Advice, foodbanks, and charities.


Our tenant profile

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

	White	Mixed	Asian/ Asian British heritage	Black/ African British heritage	Other heritage	Did not say	No info
 Ethnicity	32,614	1,204	3,153	3,707	897	888	412

	Hearing	Mobility	Sight	Other	Multiple	Did not say	None
 Disability	435	4,716	247	4,302	601	220	32,344

	Male	Female	Age	Under 21	21-40	41-60	61-80	81+
 Gender	18,374	24,501		276	12,336	15,520	11,735	3,008

	Christian	Muslim	Buddhist	Other	No Religion	Did not say	No info
 Religion	15,581	3,926	98	684	12,492	4,055	6,039

Our properties

Number of properties by type and number of bedrooms

	0 Bed	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5+ Bed	Total
Bedsit	163	3	-	-	-	-	166
Flat	3	10,937	3,183	109	3	1	14,236
Maisonette	-	13	1,980	652	8	2	2,655
House	-	52	7,269	9,370	395	17	17,103
Bungalow	2	1,642	945	50	-	1	2,640
Sheltered	175	780	105	1	-	-	1,061
	343	13,427	13,482	10,182	406	21	37,864

Handyperson Service

**FREE
SERVICE**

Sheffield Council
Tenants



This is a free service for Sheffield Council tenants to get a helping hand with the smaller jobs in their home. It is available to those who are over 60, disabled or have severe health problems. All areas of the city are covered, including sheltered housing schemes.

We can help with jobs that will prevent tenants climbing or tripping, or will enhance security and avoid risk, such as:

- Clear pathways/trim hedges to allow access.
- Grit access ways in bad weather.
- Small areas of painting.
- Fit toilet seat.
- Repair fencing.
- Fix a lock to a garden shed.



Contact us: Call: 0114 273 5555

Visit: Your local First Point or Neighbourhood Office

Online: www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing



Housing and Neighbourhoods



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.

Increase our budget for the repairs service to create a better repairs experience for customers

We have made some enhancements over the past 12 months by introducing a new IT system and new ways for tenants to report repairs. However, improving the speed with which we deal with repairs remains one of the top priorities for the Business Plan in 2023/24. A new Better Repairs Board has been established, and the budget for the service has been increased by £6.7m.

Protect investment in our housing stock, improving homes to reduce the on-going demand on our repairs service

Our investments will be focussed on our housing stock, to improve tenants' homes, encourage sustainability and to reduce future repairs.

Council tenants should live in safe, warm, secure, and modern properties in attractive neighbourhoods: these are our absolute priorities. We will continue to work more closely with the Repairs and Maintenance Service to further improve tenants' experiences.

Tackling damp and mould in council homes through a new Task Group focussed on raising awareness and delivering remedial action

The government has emphasised the damp and mould issues in social housing. The Council have set up a Damp and Mould Task Group to undertake a full review of how the council deals with damp and mould cases and to oversee any changes to working practices. Funding has been made available so that the council, other landlords, the public health service and the NHS can work together.

Service Priorities for 2023/24



Continue to work towards the Council's Net Zero target and address the growing fuel poverty crisis through improving the insulation and heating systems of council homes

Over the next five years, we will invest £300m to improve the fuel efficiency of homes. An additional £35m in funding will contribute to reducing carbon emissions and improving the energy efficiency in our homes. Sheffield is going beyond the government guidance in this area (which is that all social housing must meet this standard by 2035).

Pursue external funding opportunities from Government and other sources to accelerate the retrofitting of Sheffield's housing stock

An external, independent report will closely inform our work on retrofitting housing, which will provide a clear plan for achieving a good level of energy efficiency in all our homes and, therefore, Net Zero carbon emissions.

Improve the management of disrepair claims, communicating clearly with customers and tackling backlogs

Our five-year investment strategy will improve the overall quality of our homes. In the short-term, the 2023-24 budget has prioritised outstanding disrepair claims and repairs. We have reviewed our processes so that tenants will be able to get faster results without having to resort to legal action. Communication with tenants has been identified as a key area that will see significant improvements this year.

Reduce the time that properties are empty, restructuring our services to get homes ready for new tenants as quickly as possible

Given the shortage of council rented homes in Sheffield, we continue to improve efficiency so that homes are not empty for any longer than necessary between lets. Teams have been restructured to support this aim. Relet times will be a major focus of the council this year.

Improve our gas servicing performance to achieve improved compliance, using legal remedies as appropriate

The Council is committed to achieve 100% compliance in this area – this is a key priority. A new Gas Servicing Policy was approved at the end of 2022 to support this.

Support tenants to manage their finances, providing advice and increased hardship payments for those in need

We know that many tenants are struggling to make ends meet. Our Cost of Living webpage and tailored budgeting support provide practical help, along with our Hardship Fund, which we intend to significantly increase this year.

Improve the customer experience, making it easier and quicker to get in touch with us and responding to, and learning from, complaints when things go wrong

We know that we must improve our response to tenants who try to contact us. We aim to meet the Housing Ombudsman's best practice outcomes following improvements across all three main customer service channels – online, by telephone and in-person.

Increase the opportunities for tenants to get involved in shaping services, allowing tenants to tell us what they think and help us to improve

Tenants are the best placed to tell us how we are doing and we want to increase the opportunities for them to do so, and to become

more actively involved in shaping our services. We will continue to support the work of Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs) so that all tenants have the opportunity to contribute in a way that suits them.

We will be fair and respect all our customers, addressing issues raised by the Race Equality Commission

We treat our tenants with fairness and respect, but we know that we can do much better. The Council's Race Equalities Commission Report Action Plan will drive many of our commitments in this area. Our services must respond to the needs of all our tenants and under-represented groups must become more involved in our work and have a voice.

We will invest in our staff, developing the 'housing profession' and offering new opportunities for apprentices

Alongside tenants, our staff are central to everything that we try to achieve. We are committed to providing opportunities for apprentices and graduates in Sheffield, ensuring a committed and representative workforce. Housing is a critical service and we will seek to provide opportunities for more of our staff to become 'housing professionals', increasing the quality of our service.

We will deliver our Landlord Commitments, created by tenants, for tenants

Our Landlord Commitments (which can be seen on our website here <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/council-housing/our-landlord-commitments>) are based on priorities that tenants identified. They will continue to form the basis of our priorities for improvement.

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