

September 2021

Your Home, Your Neighbourhood

for council tenants and leaseholders



Annual Report 2020/21

Local resident Warda Farhi with one of the murals created near The Furnival at Burngreave

Also in this issue:

Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-23
Our priorities for 2021/22 • Council's One Year Plan



Welcome...

to Sheffield Council Housing Service's Annual Report 2020/21, which looks back on our performance over the last year.

As always tenants have helped us design and write this report, which this year focuses on customer engagement and how we have all worked together to keep things going during a difficult and disruptive year.

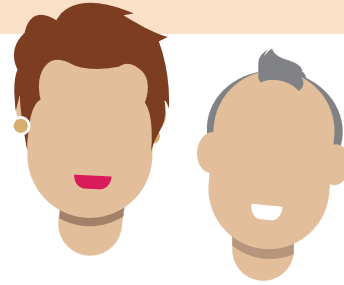
We also outline our priorities for the coming 12 months, which is especially important this year as we look to the future with hope and positivity.

Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods Service



Your Home Standard

Putting customers at the heart of what we do



Customer engagement has always been important but the Covid pandemic encouraged us to look at different ways of reaching out to our tenants.

During the last 12 months we have developed our Facebook page, greatly increasing the number of followers. At the height of the pandemic, we were sending email updates to customers weekly and then fortnightly, with important news and information. We have also proactively contacted people to update or get new email addresses for our distribution list.

Like many others, we used technology to keep in touch and engage with others, including Zoom coffee mornings and meetings. We used digital channels to ensure important consultations, competitions and projects went ahead as usual.

Almost 1,200 customers helped us review our Customer Standards, which set out priorities for each service area that we can measure our performance against.

Although many of our face-to-face services had to stop, we continued to support tenants through proactive telephone welfare checks and by working closely with the Community Response Team. Some housing staff were temporary re-deployed to help support isolated and vulnerable people. Our 1,200 sheltered residents have continued to receive on-site support and activities in a Covid-safe way. We have continued to offer free IT support and training to Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs) and any customer who needs help to improve their digital skills through our partnership with Heeley Trust.

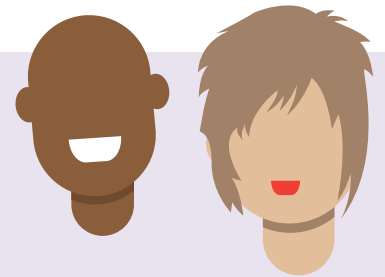
And tenants and leaseholders worked with us to write our Customer Engagement Strategy for 2021-2023, which outlines how we'll make it easier for people to be involved in our work and influence how we deliver services in the future (more details further on in this report).

Thank you to everyone who completed our online survey about proposed changes to how we let social housing in the future. We had over 3,000 responses and lots of suggestions about how we can make improvements to the system.

We will use this feedback going forward to inform how we can better meet the needs of our customers and the demand for housing in our city in the years to come. Look out for updates in our regular email bulletins.

- We contacted by telephone 35,444 (19 out of 20) households during the pandemic to offer support
- We carried out 173 adaptations in 2020/21, with half of fast track applications completed in 17 weeks
- We completed 121,521 repairs, including 13,167 emergency repairs
- More than 9 out of 10 tenants thought the Housing Plus visit was useful and that any support needs were identified and addressed

Neighbourhood and Community Standard



Last year we had a bumper number of entries to our Green Fingers gardening competition. Our judges were blown away by the standard set by tenants, who were definitely making the most of their outdoor and indoor spaces while spending more time at home. And as we all know, gardening is great for the mind, body and soul!

It was hard to pick some winners from our virtually judged competition so a big thank you to everyone who entered. It's brilliant to see how many people value and take pride in their own gardens and green spaces.

- Citywide 99.8% of fly-tipping was removed within target and 100% of offensive graffiti removed within one day

- An average of 8 out of 10 people were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live and thought the shared green areas around their home are well maintained
- Three quarters of people thought the shared staircases, landings and areas around their home were kept clean



Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

Lifting spirits during difficult times is important and our furry and feathered friends have certainly played their part. To celebrate this, we held our first ever virtual pet show competition, looking for the Cutest Pet and the best Pet Story about what your animal friend means to you. We had over 30 entries and really enjoyed looking through your lovely photos and reading your heart-warming and, sometimes, moving stories. Thank you to everyone who took the time to take part.

- The average time to answer customer calls increased in 2020/21 from 3 to 14 minutes for the Housing Contact Centre and from 3 to 4 minutes for Repairs. The big increase in call wait times was due to the pandemic and staff shortages due to self-isolation
- 6 out of 10 customers found it easy to make a complaint (see our complaints page later on for more information about this)
- Nearly 8 out of 10 customers said Sheffield City Council was easy to deal with

- Over 7 out of 10 people were satisfied that the housing service listens to their views and acts on them
- 83% were likely to recommend the housing service to family and friends



Tenancy Standard

The Covid pandemic didn't dampen people's enthusiasm for the Community Fund scheme, which grants pots of money to projects that benefit our tenants. Despite changing restrictions throwing plans into the air, many of you still managed to apply for funding and get projects off the ground, including The Furnival at Burngreave. They used their Community Fund grant to provide a craft club for local

women that helps develop language skills through conversation, build friendships and gain confidence. A second project saw two colourful murals created in the area by local people, which encouraged creativity, an enjoyment of the outdoors and neighbourhood pride.

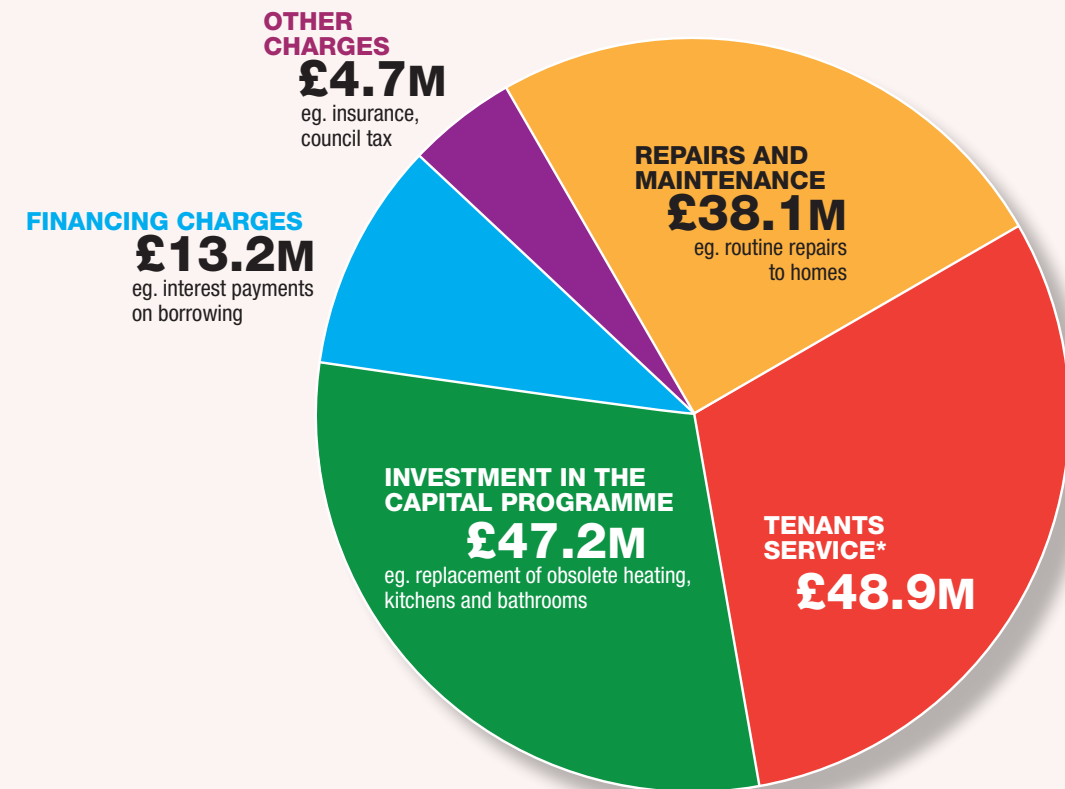
- Nearly 8 out of 10 people were satisfied with the service provided when dealing with their rent
- The average number of weeks a property was vacant increased to 23 from 10 in 2019/20
- Tenancy turnover decreased to just under 6% due to a freeze on lettings
- Nearly 7 out of 10 tenants were satisfied with how their anti-social behaviour complaint was dealt with, a figure we want to increase



Value for money

More than 8 out of 10 tenants think that the rent they pay is value for money.

* 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.



Investing in new council homes

We are working hard to increase our housing stock with a combination of environmentally-friendly new builds and purchased properties.

Over recent years we have completed new build schemes at Hackenthorpe, Parson Cross, Darnall and Manor, with several more in the planning pipeline.

Current projects in progress include builds at Arbourthorne and Parson Cross.

Our Homes for All Delivery Plan sets out how we will provide new housing stock in the city, alongside work with the private sector to create a mixed balance of quality housing.



Find out more about this and our new build schemes at www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/housing/increasing-council-homes.html

Compliments and Complaints

Over the coming months, there will be a sharper focus on complaints we receive about the housing service, how we handle them and what lessons we can learn for the future.

We are planning to adopt the Housing Ombudsman's new Complaints Handling Code, which sets out good practice for dealing with complaints. This will compare us to other social landlords on complaints handling, as well as sharing best practice and learning across the sector.

We have recently assessed ourselves against the new code to identify what we are doing well and where we need to improve. As a result of this, we are updating our complaints process in the next few months, with

guidance and feedback from the Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel (HANAP). We will also engage with customers as we make the changes.

We always try to learn from complaints and make changes that will improve our services or the way we work. As a result of a complaint about diary sheets, we now scan documents and send them to staff who are working remotely, so there are no delays in investigating and progressing cases. We are also encouraging the use of electronic diary sheets that customers email to us, saving time. Officers can collect diary records from customers that are not able to complete and send them electronically.

Read more about the new code and our self-assessment at:
www.sheffield.gov.uk/content/sheffield/home/council-housing/housing-complaints-handling.html

Our current performance

In 2020/21 we problem solved 6.2 out of 10 complaints, compared with 6.1 in 2019/20. These are complaints that we aim to respond to quickly, resolving them within three days. Our performance was affected by the pandemic and we didn't meet this target - the average was 13 days for the housing service - so we need to improve on this figure and be more responsive to 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 2020/21 7.4 out of 10 investigations and investigation reviews were completed in 28

days, compared to 7.3 last year. Against our 60% target, overall customer satisfaction with complaint handling for investigations and reviews is 39% and 54% for problem solved complaints.

We know we need to improve both the timescales for responding and also customer satisfaction and will aim to address this in our new complaints process. If you have any ideas about how we can improve customer satisfaction, please get in touch.

We are pleased that customers are generally satisfied that the officer who dealt with their complaint treated them with courtesy and respect.

	Compliments	Complaints
Rehousing	0	80
Rents	1	24
Repairs	98	856
Estates	6	38
ASB	0	43
Community Engagement	0	1
Investment	1	4
Tenancy Management	12	13
Point of Contact	2	44



Customer Engagement Strategy

We have worked with tenants and leaseholders to develop this strategy, which aims to make it easier for more people to be involved in our work and influence how we deliver our services.

In summary we want to:

- provide easy and convenient access to information and engagement/ involvement opportunities
- ensure customers and their communities can influence what we do
- engage effectively with local people and communities to improve what we do
- make sure that all involved in our services recognise and value customer engagement
- support and resource customer engagement work so that it delivers outcomes

To find out more about the Strategy and ways you can get involved with our work, go to www.sheffield.gov.uk/tenants

Sheffield City Council's One Year Plan

This report sets out practical steps the Council will take and actions it will deliver to improve the lives of everyone who lives in the city.

To improve housing for tenants it will:

- Make it easier to report issues and book repairs
- Reduce the backlog of repairs by early 2022
- Peer review the housing repairs service
- Build new council homes
- Retrofit the existing stock to improve energy sustainability

Read more about the community and neighbourhoods plans at <https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk> (use 'search documents' on the left hand side).



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 over 5,000 followers. From 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, posts on

the page were liked over 4,700 times and generated a reach of over 1.4 million.

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/

Annual Update Information for 2019-20 to 2020-21

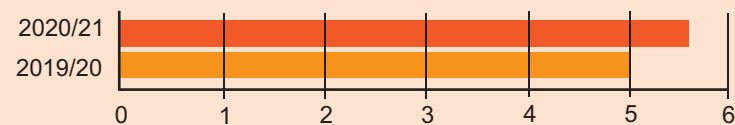
Rent and Income

After a difficult start to the year due to Covid, current arrears recovered well and were contained at the level reported, due to the huge emphasis on supporting tenants through those difficult times

Current tenant arrears (£m)



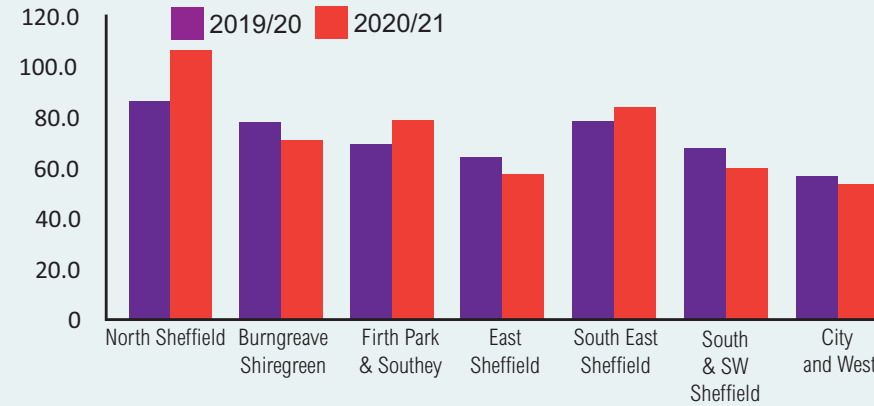
Former tenants arrears (£m)



Antisocial Behaviour

The total number of new cases for 20-21 remains at the same level as 19-20 but there was a 7% increase in noise nuisance reports, possibly as a result of the pandemic and the requirement to remain at home

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

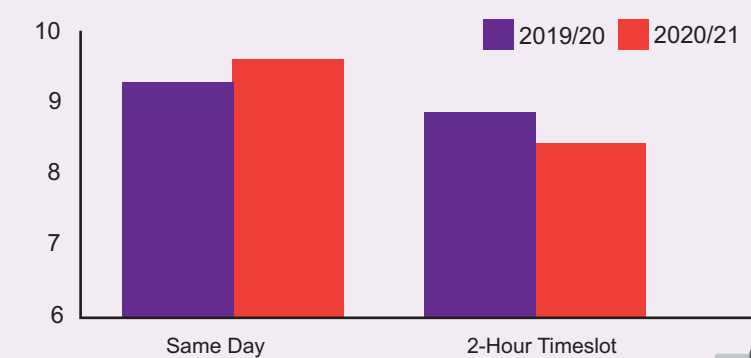


	2019/20	2020/21
Satisfaction score with the way the ASB case was dealt with	7.1	6.8

Repairs

First time fix is a key priority for tenants and we have made significant improvements here. Satisfaction and appointments kept within the 2 hour timeslot have dipped, but are expected to rise as Covid restrictions ease.

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



Satisfaction with Repairs visit

	2019/20	2020/21
Satisfaction with the Repairs visit	9.3	9.2

Supply of Council Housing

The number of properties sold under right to buy reduced by 42.5% in 20/21 compared to 19/20. This is partly due to the impact of Covid.

	2019/20	2020/21
Number of General Needs	37,713	37,494
Number of properties sold under the Right to Buy scheme	374	215

There were 14% more properties built or acquired in 20/21 compared to 19/20. The increased average cost reflects the number of SCC new build completions alongside the buoyant housing market and increased acquisition cost.

	2019/20	2020/21
Number of properties acquired or built	101	115
Average unit cost including fees, purchase price and all repairs (£)	70,559	103,061
Number of new homes built or acquired by Registered Providers	26	70

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
Total	14227	740

The Parks and Countryside Service maintains separate green areas

Our Properties

Property types by bedroom numbers

	0 Bed	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5+	Total
Bedsit	153	3	-	-	-	-	156
Flat	6		3,251	117	3	1	14,280
Maisonette	-	13	2,054	689	8	1	2,765
House	-	54	7,477	9,750	370	22	17,673
Bungalow	2	1,630	935	52	-	1	2,620
Sheltered	175	784	105	1	-	-	1,065
	336	13,386	13,822	10,609	381	25	38,559



Housing and Neighbourhoods Service Priorities for 2021/22



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 and develop plans to expand our current scheme

Over the years this number has increased, with our current ambition being to deliver 3,100 council homes by 2028/29. We continue to develop our plans by looking at what housing is needed in which areas.

Invest in further health and safety measures, including new fire safety improvements

Work continues to ensure our council homes, especially high-rise tower and flat blocks, are safe. This includes addressing outcomes from

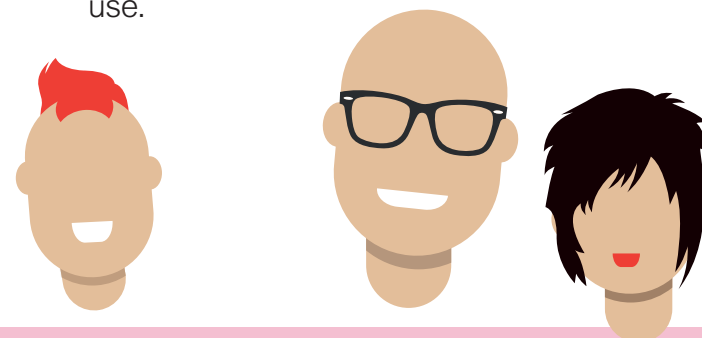
Building a Safer Future and the Fire Safety Bill, ensuring we comply with the latest regulations and investing where additional fire provision is needed.

Deliver improvements to our tenants' homes to make sure they continue to be well maintained

As well as ensuring our homes remain safe, modern and warm, we will explore opportunities to improve properties, reduce carbon emissions and make existing homes more energy efficient. We will also carry on making environmental improvements such as paths, boundaries and communal spaces.

Develop plans to respond to the Council's ambitions to address climate change and how council housing can contribute to achieving zero-carbon emissions by 2030

Around 31,000 of our council homes already have an EPC C rating and over the next 10 years we aim to raise the rating on remaining properties. We will continue to explore retro fitting our existing stock. Our new builds have increased thermal efficiency and air tightness but we are also looking at future low-carbon emitting, no-gas homes. We will continue to take advantage of Government grant schemes to make homes greener. We will also explore new technology to help reduce our carbon footprint, minimise energy use in our offices and review the environmental impact of the transport we use.



Proactively manage our neighbourhoods, supporting existing, new and prospective council housing tenants

We have been reviewing the way we manage and deliver council housing services, listening to feedback from tenants and comparing ourselves with other providers – both in terms of cost and service. In 2021/22 we will look at different ways we can support our customers at all stages of their tenancy when they need that extra help. We will also explore the way we support new tenants.

Make improvements to our estate services

In 2021/22 we will be working to ensure our clean and green services are efficient, provide value for money and make our estates places where people want to live. We engaged with over 700 tenants and residents in 2020 via an online survey, asking how we can make improvements to flat and maisonette block communal areas. That feedback will help us shape future services.