



Homes & Neighbourhoods

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2022**

CONTENTS

1. Welcome	3
2. Homes & Neighbourhoods at a glance	5
3. Performance	8
4. Service vision	10
5. People	12
6. Finance	16
7. Leadership	17
8. The year ahead	18



1. WELCOME

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Homes and Neighbourhoods annual report. It has been a busy and exciting year, where we have successfully transferred back into the Council, and are now looking forward to the future of local authority housing as set out in the recent Social Housing White Paper.

It has been an unusual time for our homes and neighbourhoods as we moved away from Covid-19 lockdown restrictions and returned to a near full service offer for our tenants. The consequence of the lockdown was the unavoidable slowdown or halt of many of our routine repairs and ongoing refurbishment projects; such as Your Home Your Place. This has inevitably caused a backlog which we are working through; we aim to return to a pre-pandemic position shortly.

We have, in the meantime, learned many lessons. We are adopting some of the innovation and new ways of working the pandemic necessitated. This will make sure our recovery is inclusive and that we are mindful of the differing needs of our tenants and leaseholders.

We are moving forward with increasing our housing stock with new builds across the borough, and we have several projects running concurrently to increase our supply of good quality housing.

Our Abbey Road retrofit pilot project is generating interest beyond Kirklees, with the development nominated for an MJ award. The site recently gained the interest of Kier Stammer, who met with the project team and visited tenants in their 'new' homes.

We have introduced our service excellence principles. The four principles of customer service will strengthen the capacity of the service and with our IT upgrade coming online in 2023, we will have technology to better respond to our tenants. This investment will transform our relationship with tenants so that we can respond quickly and efficiently.

Our multi-million pound programme of building improvement works will continue to enhance current building safety measures. The multi-year programme will introduce enhanced fire safety protection measures across our four high-rise and all low-rise blocks across the borough.

We have done some good work over the last 12 months and the year ahead promises to be an exciting one, with huge opportunities but also challenges. Increased utility bills will be a concern for many and we are helping our tenants by supporting foodbanks and partnering with Green Doctor to offer in-home assessments to reduce energy use and save on bills. As a Council we have developed a Cost of Living support website to offer helpful advice and support for our tenants.

This is a snapshot of our efforts and demonstrates our ambitions to be an excellent social landlord where we deliver the highest possible standards of service.

Finally, I would like to thank our staff and tenants for their patience and understanding during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The last few years were disruptive but pulling together in our communities helped us and will help us further in our recovery.

Councillor Cathy Scott
Cabinet Member for
Housing and Democracy



Welcome from Naz Parkar, Service Director

The last year has been a busy one for Homes and Neighbourhoods. Since transferring into the Council, we have focused on our top priority - keeping you, our tenants, safe - and started working with you to install new fire doors, fire compartmentation and other safety measures at our high-rise blocks. At the same time, we have been developing the longer-term plans for our high-rise blocks at Berry Brow and Buxton House.

We have also listened to your feedback, particularly about the things that matter to you, about your home, the quality of the environment in your neighbourhoods, how you want us to support you to deal with antisocial behaviour and how we communicate with you. As a result, we are investing more in repairs and maintenance works to your homes and, as part of our commitment to improve services, we will ensure we keep you informed.

As we continue our improvement journey, there will be times when things go wrong. We have strengthened the way we respond to your complaints, as well as the compliments you give us so that we can learn from your feedback and treat all our tenants with respect and dignity. The Council's relationship with our tenants as citizens of Kirklees matters to us and we want to work with you, in your neighbourhoods to design solutions and continue to improve the services you receive.

We are aware from what you have told us that the cost-of-living pressures are making life difficult and causing financial anxieties, which is why we have recently completed an energy efficiency pilot, where we have installed renewable technologies and other energy saving measures. The tenants of those homes report that their energy bills have significantly decreased and that their house is much warmer. We will continue to work with those who need money advice and signpost you to support where it is available.

Our plans for this year are ambitious as we continue our improvement journey and will be investing in improvements to our service, safety, and sustainability, and building more affordable homes. The Council is committed to delivering a great customer experience and we are keen to hear from you, whether it be compliment or a complaint, to ensure we continue to learn.

Naz Parkar
Director of
Homes & Neighbourhoods



2. HOMES & NEIGHBOURHOODS AT A GLANCE

Building safety

Making sure our tenants feel safe and comfortable in their home is our top priority. We continue to undertake safety inspections and works across all Building Safety areas including Fire Safety, Asbestos Management, Electrical Safety, Gas Safety, Water Quality and Lift Safety.

There have been a lot of changes to Building Safety requirements over the last year and to make sure that we can continue to meet our obligations, and that we are fully engaging with our tenants and residents, we have been working to respond effectively.

We are reviewing our Policies and Procedures to make sure that we are meeting legal requirements through what we do and how we do it, and that our tenants and residents have the opportunity to feedback and shape our services.

We have been delivering improvements to our fire safety measures in our high-rise blocks including fire alarm systems and fire doors.

Over the next three years, we will be embarking on an ambitious fire safety improvement programme involving over 800 blocks, starting in early 2023. Whilst the works to each block will vary, the programme will involve upgrading fire alarm systems, improvements to emergency lighting, the replacement of fire doors to both flats and communal areas, amongst improvements to other fire safety measures.

We continue to review our Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) on a regular basis and complete routine checks in our blocks to make sure that they are safe, and we are undertaking Person Centred Fire Risk Assessments for our tenants in the high-rise-blocks to ensure that we can provide the right support and assistance.

We are working on a dedicated website to provide not only fire safety advice, but also information on all areas of building safety including videos, guidance and a dedicated point of contact for our tenants and residents for building safety related queries or concerns.



Image above: Harold Wilson high-rise tower in Huddersfield.

Our 2022-2023 programme of asbestos reinspections in our blocks is 100% on target with no overdue inspections. The 2022-2023 programme of asbestos reinspections in our tenants' homes is underway and progressing well. We are in Year 2 of our three-year programme of surveys for where we know there are higher risk asbestos containing materials to make sure that they are not a danger to tenants, and this is 70% complete (an increase of 14% since last year). We also have a programme of asbestos removal works where there is a risk of it becoming damaged.

We continue to undertake gas safety checks in homes (with over 99% completed) and we have a robust process for completing those that are outstanding. A programme of electrical testing in homes is 99% complete and we will continue to work with tenants to complete the remaining tests in 2022.

Our programme of Legionella Risk Assessments in blocks is 100% complete with no outstanding repairs. We have completed the first batch of 100 Legionella Risk Assessments in our tenants' homes and will expand this assessment programme later this year.

We continue to maintain lift servicing and maintenance at 100% and have established a continuous programme of stairlift servicing.

We have had regular independent audits to ensure we are doing what we need to keep our tenants safe. We had an audit review in April 2021 and a dedicated Building Safety Working Group has been focused on delivering the recommendations made to strengthen our processes further, with 76% of the recommendations complete. The final recommendations will be completed by the end of 2022.

We have significantly expanded the Building Safety Team to make sure that we can deliver what we need to keep our tenants and residents safe and are subject to strong governance and challenge from our well established Building Safety Assurance Board.

Investing in properties

Our Assets team are the client lead for the Your Home Your Place programme. This programme delivers replacement and improvement works to those homes and estates that are in the worst condition. The main workstreams that directly relate to tenants' homes are:

- kitchen replacements
- bathroom replacements
- window and door replacements
- roof renewals
- rewires and electrical upgrades
- heating and boiler replacements
- district heating and commercial boiler upgrades
- lift replacements in blocks.

The team also deliver programmes of environmental improvements and cyclical maintenance. This includes:

- the replacement and provision of bin stores
- works to garages and parking areas
- improvements to open spaces and external communal areas
- external repairs and improvements to communal blocks
- retrofit and fabric first improvements to homes to make them more efficient and help tenants reduce their running costs.

In 2022/23 we will deliver improvements to 650 homes under the Your Home Your Place programme. We will also start replacing district heating and commercial boilers in the worst condition and undertake work in retirement living schemes so that heat meters can be installed. A programme of lift replacements in retirement living schemes and high-rise blocks will also be delivered.

In 2022/23, we will complete a four-year programme of environmental, landscaping and biodiversity improvements for 12 blocks within the Cowlersley estate. We will continue our rolling programme of bin store replacements to blocks of flats with communal areas.

We are developing a new five-year programme for external repairs to communal blocks and estates, working closely with our Neighbourhoods teams to improve overall safety and appearance of estates.

Our Development Team helps increase the number of homes we own, creates new neighbourhoods for our residents and delivers large scale renewal and regeneration schemes. The team identifies opportunities for growth from a range of sources including:

- buy-back of right-to-buy Council and private homes
- purchase of Section 106 homes which are delivered through planning agreements with private developers
- building new homes
- converting existing stock into housing.

Investing in improving the standard of our stock and making sure our homes are safe, modern, and warm remains our main priority for 2022-23. We are also committed to investing in building and providing new Council homes and replacing homes lost through Right to Buy.

Increasing the number of new Council homes remains a priority for us. We will be using different construction methods to deliver new homes which help reduce fuel consumption for tenants and contribute to our climate commitments. In 2022/23 we plan to:

- purchase 37 buy-back homes and complete the acquisition of 20 Section 106 homes
- complete the construction of 20 two bed bungalows for older people, 14 two bed houses and 4 refurbished one bed houses

- start on site the delivery of 96 new homes
- take forward design work for major regeneration projects at Berry Brow and Buxton House and for the redevelopment of the former RM Grylls Middle School site
- develop our Asset Strategy and programmes for future investment.

We have also been working in partnership with local voluntary and community sector organisations to build new homes – for example with Happy Days Social Enterprise Group's 'Build & Roof' team, shown in the photograph below.



Reducing energy usage

We are working with the charity Groundwork Yorkshire's Green Doctors to offer energy saving solutions for our tenants living in Council properties. The programme is designed to help check tenants' energy tariffs to ensure they are not overpaying for their energy, set boilers to the most efficient settings, offer tips on how to stay warm and identify repairs which can reduce thermal loss. They also offer debt advice and support in claiming for any benefits they are entitled to. The current funding round will enable us to reach up to 3,500 homes. Each visit will also provide up-to-date EPC and SAP information for our homes.

In 2021/22 we delivered whole house retrofit to eight homes. Homes are now rated in SAP bands A and B and will help residents to reduce their energy usage. In 2022/23 we plan to deliver another eight whole house retrofits. We will be using these schemes to help us understand what works best and how these types of works can support residents with the cost of living.

3. PERFORMANCE

We monitor performance across the service, paying particular attention to our tenant satisfaction measures and the processes that drive those responses.

Our reporting framework ensures scrutiny and challenge at all levels, with regular reporting of our Balanced Scorecard to the Housing Advisory Board, and Tenant Advisory and Grants Panel, reporting to the Regulator for Social Housing and DLUHC, distributing more detailed indicators internally via management dashboards, through to performance being discussed at employee one to ones. Knowing how we are doing and where we can improve is an important part of our process and helps ensure the quality of our operations and that we're held to account with any areas of concern.

In addition to monitoring our direction of travel, we also benchmark against our housing peers, gauging how our performance compares and leading to opportunities to learn from others' successes.

We're developing our 2022/23 framework around the four pillars to support delivery of our Service Vision, and in line with our aim to put tenants at the heart of everything we do. Work is progressing to make our performance more visible to those who reside in our homes.

Information relating to the service our tenants received in 2021/22 can be found below.

Total number of homes = 21,494.

Total number of leasehold properties = 1,081.

Your home and repairs

- Repairs satisfaction = 77% (a reduction of 2% from last year though a positive trend is seen in our STAR survey on page 10).
- Repairs completed at first fix = 94.6% (down 0.1%, 3% above our Housemark peer group average from 2020/21).
- Building safety inspections completed = 99.1% (remaining are no access properties and are in the process to gain access).

Home Standard

The Decent Homes Standard has played a key role in setting the minimum standards that social homes are required to meet since the early 2000s. When the social housing white paper was published in November 2020, the government committed to review the Decent Homes Standard.

Part 1 of the Social Housing Decent Homes Standard Review concluded in autumn 2021. The feedback made clear the standard remains broadly suitable and effective, but that updates may be beneficial.

Part 2 of the review began in spring 2022 exploring both the application of the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector and potential regulatory changes to the standard that would apply to both sectors. A public consultation on the Decent Homes Standard for the private sector is currently ongoing. A public consultation on the revisions to the Standard is awaited following consultation with several working groups and panels including one representing residents of social housing.

Your neighbourhood

- Number of anti-social behaviour cases resolved = 845 (18% reduction from last year).
- Households engaged in tenant involvement activities = 3,653 (50% increase from last year).

New homes

in 2021/22 we:

- built 11 new homes
- acquired 18 homes through buy-back
- converted buildings to provide two additional homes.

Empty homes

- Satisfaction with lettings = 92% (up 9% from last year).
- Empty properties (void) = 362 (an increase of 39 from last year, represents 1.67% of stock, 0.35% above the Housemark peer group median).
- Average overall re-let time = 80 days (a reduction of 30 days, 24 days above the Housemark peer group average for 202/21).
- Average standard re-let time (where the property did not require major repairs) = 56 days (2 day reduction on last year, 7 days above the Housemark peer group average from 2020/21).

Support for you

- Calls answered = 83% (down 8% from last year, 6% below the Housemark peer group average).
- Time to answer = 2 minute 45 seconds (increase of 59 seconds from last year, 47 seconds above the Housemark peer group average from 2020/21).
- Number of employment referrals to providers = 141 (decrease of 18 from last year).
- Number of people starting new jobs = 101 (increase of 9 compared to last year).
- Referrals for money advice = 940 (12% reduction from last year).
- Financial gain generated for tenants (benefits, debts written off, charitable assistance etc) + £1,082,419 (£10,000 increase from last year).

4. SERVICE VISION

Our service vision: Striving to be an excellent landlord by putting tenants and communities first.



Kirklees
COUNCIL
Homes & Neighbourhoods

Our Principles of Service Excellence are:

- E**xperience of the tenant comes first
- E**Xceptional, place-based service delivery
- C**ommunicating well and working with tenants
- E**mpathy and respect for all tenants
- L**earning from and putting right our mistakes
- L**etting tenants know who we are
- E**xceeding expectations and making a lasting impression
- N**ot what we can't do, but what we can do
- C**ontact with tenants is always an opportunity for feedback
- E**nsure we do what we say we are going to do

The delivery of this vision will be underpinned by our service excellence principles:

- **E**xperience of the tenant comes first
- **E**Xceptional, place-based service delivery
- **C**ommunicating well and working with tenants
- **E**mpathy and respect for all tenants
- **L**earning from and putting right our mistakes
- **L**etting tenants know who we are
- **E**xceeding expectations and making a lasting impression
- **N**ot what we can't do, but what we can do
- **C**ontact with tenants is always an opportunity for feedback
- **E**nsure we do what we say we are going to do.



These principles will be supported by our four pillars of service delivery.

1. **People** – a highly motivated, trained and supported workforce that puts our tenants at the heart of all we do.
2. **ICT** – systems and processes that enable robust data and insight, are designed from the tenant's perspective and enable place-based working.
3. **Tenants** – well informed and engaged tenants whose voice will help shape decisions for service design and delivery.
4. **Finance** – using the strength of the Housing Revenue Account to improve the experience of tenants whilst exercising good financial management and control as well as value for money.

By embedding our vision's principles, we will ensure the service leadership is focused on key issues and improving performance for our tenants and stakeholders.

5. PEOPLE

Tenant Advisory Grants Panels

We know that a great community makes a great place to live. We are passionate about making a difference and working together to build vibrant and safe communities where you love to live.

Tenant Advisory Grants Panels (TAGP) ensure tenants are at the heart of everything we do. They drive service improvements and help develop new policies that benefit tenants and leaseholders directly as well as the community as a whole.

Members ensure that tenant and leaseholder concerns about housing issues are raised and addressed and help us deliver improvements in areas such as repairs and how we tackle antisocial behaviour.

The TAGP also review and assess applications made from community organisations to help support neighbourhood improvement schemes. During the last financial year, we delivered grant funds of £39,221 through the Social Investment Fund and £20,826 through Tenant and Resident Association Grants.

These funds were used for many local schemes which brought communities together such as the Netherton Family fun day, Windybank Activities for All and many other neighbourhood focused events.

Satisfaction of tenants and residents

Kirklees Council's Satisfaction of Tenants and Residents (STAR) annual report was undertaken in July 2022. The results show a change in satisfaction levels across the majority of areas (see table below). There has been a significant improvement in the Net Promoter Score which moved from a negative score of -3 to a positive score of 4. The Net Promoter Score is a standardised measure of customer loyalty.

Conducted in May-July 2022, the sample size was 2,527 (12% of total stock).

Question	2021	2022	Change
Satisfied with ease of dealings	61%	69%	+8%
Satisfied with overall service	68%	68%	No change
Satisfied with home being safe and secure	73%	76%	+3%
Satisfied rent provides VFM	78%	81%	+3%
Satisfied with neighbourhood as place to live	66%	73%	+7%
Satisfied service charges provide VFM	65%	62%	-3%
Satisfied with overall quality of home	64%	68%	+4%
Satisfied with repairs and maintenance	64%	65%	+1%
Satisfied views and listened to and acted upon	47%	56%	+9%
Satisfied that Homes and Neighbourhoods makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods and communities	-	60%	TSM
Satisfied with approach to ASB handling	-	49%	TSM
Satisfied that home is well maintained and safe to live in	-	72%	TSM
Satisfied that Homes and Neighbourhoods treats tenants fairly and with respect	-	75%	TSM
Satisfied that Homes and Neighbourhoods keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	-	67%	TSM
Satisfied with approach to handling of complaints	-	50%	TSM
Satisfied that know how to make a complaint	-	80%	TSM
Net Promoter Score	-3	4.4	+7.4

This year's results show we have steadily improved satisfaction from the previous year with our ambition to achieve an upper quartile position (80% + rate of satisfaction with overall service) by April 2025. Based on this year's overall satisfaction of 68%, this is an average 4% annual improvement rate.

Fire safety

- Fire safety newsletters are sent to all High-Risk Residential Buildings (HRRB) this includes high-rise blocks, 6-storey blocks and our retirement living schemes. Newsletters detail how Homes and Neighbourhoods are keeping tenants safe through checks and fire safety improvement works. The newsletters are also an opportunity to relay fire safety information so that residents can keep themselves safe. In retirement living schemes, drop-in sessions have been held with tenants to talk about fire safety.
- We currently have 19 Fire Safety Champions who are tenants or leaseholders who represent the block of flats or scheme where they live. Champions share information relating to fire safety with other tenants and leaseholders; help to advise tenants and leaseholders of their responsibility for fire safety; feedback any concerns in the block relating to fire safety; and take part in block inspections with Housing Officers to monitor communal areas ensuring they are well kept and safe. Fire Safety Champions are also encouraged to work with other local tenant and resident associations on campaigning or community activities.
- Our ambition is to recruit one champion for each building in scope, namely the 4 x high-rise, 12 x 6-storey blocks and 19 x retirement living schemes (RLS). Champions are supported by the Fire Safety Resident Engagement Team to ensure that they can effectively carry out their duties.

BE FIRE SAFE AWARENESS WEEK



Homes & Neighbourhoods

The Fire Safety Engagement team held a 'Be Fire Safe' campaign week at the end of March 2022 across 10 sites in North & South Kirklees. The purpose was to make tenants and

leaseholders aware of what Homes & Neighbourhoods do to keep them safe, what tenants can do to keep themselves safe in regard to fire safety, provide information leaflets on fire safety and carry out fire safety surveys to confirm how satisfied tenants and leaseholders were with Homes & Neighbourhoods.

Tenants and leaseholders were able to ask questions about fire safety and obtain answers, which reassured them and improved confidence in Homes & Neighbourhoods.

We completed 204 surveys across the 10 sites, with tenants confirming they are very satisfied with the steps we take to keep them safe. The Be Fire Safe event was rolled out to all 19 Retirement Living Schemes in North & South Kirklees between 21-25 March 2022. It has given the c.488 tenants a voice to raise any concerns they have around fire safety within their schemes. The residents have found the events very informative, educational and reassuring.

Community safety

- In partnership with Safer Kirklees and West Yorkshire Police, Homes and Neighbourhoods have engaged with communities impacted by criminal behaviour and anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- In July, the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Team (TIET) supported engagement at Windybank in the Liversedge and Gomersal ward which focused on delivering community safety messages and seeking residents' views on the activities they would like to see delivered from the community centre. The feedback helped shape holiday provision for young people in the area and the development of a youth club at the community centre.
- TIET continue to work with the community, TRA, schools and other services at Walpole. Engagement included a clean-up day with residents and the opening of the former family centre to run Halloween and Christmas parties. Sessions have been run in two schools with competitions to rename the existing community based police 'Operation Titlemoor' at Walpole and replace it with 'Walpole Together'.
- Engagement day has also taken place at London Park Estate, with a focus on estate clean up and raising community confidence in reporting crime and anti-social behaviour.

Improving the customer experience

Homes and Neighbourhoods are on a journey to improve the customer experience by delivering excellent services. This includes improving how we respond and what we do when things go wrong.

This year we are improving our approach to complaints handling to ensure the voice of tenants is heard and to develop a positive complaints culture among our staff focused on learning and service improvements. This work also supports the new Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code which acts as a guide for tenants and leaseholders to know what they can and should expect from us, as your landlord, if you have to make a complaint. The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code [housing-ombudsman.org.uk](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk).

Improvements underway include:

- reviewing our current policy and processes
- making it easier for customer to make a complaint
- improving how we monitor performance including how we can involve tenants going forward
- sharing more information with our customers
- training for all staff and working with partners and other Council services to improve the overall customer experience.

2021/22 COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE

In 2021/22 Homes and Neighbourhoods received 720 complaints.

- 64% of complaints were about services in Property
- 18% to Housing Management, 9% to Asset, 8% were not related to a specific service and 1% to Business Assurance. The top five reasons for complaints in 2021/22 were:
 - further works required
 - poor information supplied to tenant
 - poor attitude of staff
 - unsatisfactory quality of work
 - appointment missed.

We received 57 compliments. The top five reasons for compliments were:

- to say thank you
- good/excellent service provided
- staff were understanding and helpful
- professional response
- keeping the tenant updated.

Staff

APPRENTICES

During the financial year 2021/22, we advertised five apprenticeship roles (surveyor, plumber, joiner, gas and electrical engineers) and recruited 12 apprentices to the various roles.

Alongside our external recruitment exercises for apprentices, our existing staff are also taking the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge with various upskilling programmes related to their roles.

We are aware of the workforce challenges we may face in the future and are committed to increasing the number of apprentice recruits during the financial year 2022/23 to ensure we continue to have a skilled workforce to deliver our services.

UPSKILLING/PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

During the financial year 2021/22, we supported 26 apprentices through 2 AAT Account apprenticeships and 24 upskilling apprentice courses using the current Government Apprentice Levy funding. These professional qualifications ensure that our workforce is developed, informed, kept abreast of legislation and is better equipped to service our tenants needs. Our industry standard qualifications from the Institute of Chartered Housing are:

- Housing & property management, Level 3 (Standard)
- Senior housing/property management, Level 4 (Standard)
- Level 5 Diploma-Housing.

Other examples of professional courses include:

- Chartered surveyor (degree), Level 6 (Standard)
- Operations or departmental manager, Level 5 (Standard)
- Operations or departmental manager, Level 5 (Standard)
- ACCA Accountancy or taxation professional, Level 7
- Accounts or finance assistant, Level 3 (Standard)
- CIPS Chartered institute of purchasing and supply
- ILM Institute of leaders and managers.

These support the Government Housing White Paper and Kirklees Homes & Neighbourhoods Business plans.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID AND AWARENESS

Throughout the last financial year, we have made a huge commitment to upskilling our workforce around the realities of mental illness and mental wellbeing. We have started rolling out mental health first aid and awareness training, with over 80 members of staff successfully completing this to date.

We have committed to continuing the rollout of mental health training across the organisation throughout the financial year 2022/23. This will create a more confident and consistent approach to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our community and our workforce.

Technology systems

We know that when you contact us you want to speak to somebody quickly, and have your question answered straightaway. We want this too, but acknowledge we are not always able to achieve this due to the volume of calls we receive.

We continue to explore how we can improve your experience and are reviewing our existing telephony system. This year we will be inviting companies to bid for a contract to deliver an enhanced service.

We know that during the pandemic many customers moved to online, digital, self-service options but recognise that speaking to someone in person is equally important. In response to this, we will extend our existing telephone service and introduce functions such as online chat and other digital options so you can choose how your enquiry is dealt with. You can also see us face-to-face at the Huddersfield and Dewsbury Customer Service Centres.

We welcome your feedback about your experience when you contact us and about how we can improve our service, so please let us know your thoughts.

6. FINANCE

The Housing Revenue Account is a ringfenced fund, which is managed to provide housing services to our tenants and residents across Kirklees. Income is generated mainly from rents and service charges and the expenditure is spent on managing and maintaining Council housing properties.

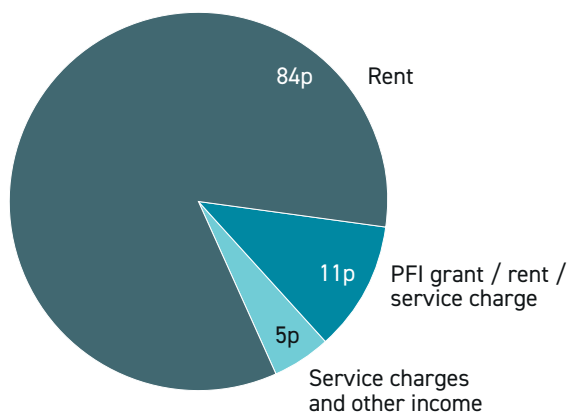
A budget is set each year and the pie charts below represent our income and expenditure through every pound that we will receive and spend during this financial year.

HRA income, 2021/22

For every pound received, the income comes from:

- Rent = 84 pence
- PFI Grant/rent/service charge = 11 pence
- Service charges and other income = 5 pence.

HRA INCOME

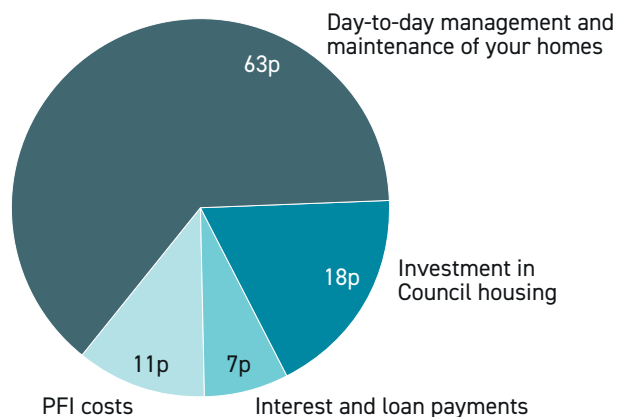


HRA expenditure, 2020/21

For every pound spent, the money goes on:

- Day-to-day management and maintenance of homes = 63 pence
- Investment in Council housing = 18 pence
- Interest and loan payments = 7 pence
- PFI costs = 11 pence.

HRA EXPENDITURE



7. LEADERSHIP

Senior Management Team

Homes and Neighbours is led by a senior management team comprising a Service Director and four Heads of Service. This team provides all the day-to-day operational leadership for the service across all its functional areas, ranging from housing management and repairs to complaints handling and stock investment activities.

NAZ PARKAR - SERVICE DIRECTOR

Provides the overall service leadership and is the strategic link to the Housing Advisory Board and wider Council strategic initiatives.

MICHELLE ANDERSON DORE - HEAD OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Oversees and directs our housing management operations, from applying for a new home to estate management services, along with providing opportunities for tenants to shape our service delivery.

DAVID BROOK - HEAD OF REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Looks after all the repairs to our properties along with bringing void properties back into use and ensuring the safety of tenants through regular gas servicing and similar programmes.

HANNAH ELLIOTT - HEAD OF ASSETS AND COMPLIANCE

Focusses on improving our current stock through programmes to replace major components such as kitchens whilst identifying opportunities to build more homes to meet housing need.

ERIC HUGHES - HEAD OF BUSINESS ASSURANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

Provides oversight and governance to ensure we meet our legal and regulatory objectives and that internal controls are in place to reduce risk to the service.

8. THE YEAR AHEAD

Social Housing White Paper ‘The Charter for Social Housing Residents’

The Social Housing White Paper was published on 17 November 2020 and is part of Government’s response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy. It maps out the future for social housing regulation and is predominantly focused on consumer protection and redress. The paper’s promised regulatory reform is still being delivered with the Social Housing (regulation) Bill still making its way through Parliament.

The White Paper set out a broad range of measures and introduced seven Charter commitments that tenants should expect from their landlords.

- The White Paper set out seven commitments that social housing tenants should be able to expect from their landlord (the Charter set out below).
- It brings together a range of different initiatives and legislative changes from across the housing landscape.
- The overarching themes are building and resident safety, and resident voice. It also aims to deliver the improvements in transparency and accountability.
- To ensure landlords comply with the Charter, the White Paper outlines plans for new regulation (the Social Housing [regulation] Bill) and a strengthened Housing Ombudsman.
- Social landlords will also have to report against new tenant satisfaction measures, with an expectation that residents should be able to access key information from their landlord.
- The paper proposes a potential review of the Decent Homes Standard, new nominated responsible person(s) for health and safety and consumer standards, and an intention to tackle anti-social behaviour by clarifying the roles of different agencies.

With the above in mind the White Paper set out the following ‘Charter’ commitments that the future regulatory landscape should address.

THE CHARTER COMMITMENTS

The White Paper sets out a Charter for residents, comprising seven commitments that every social housing resident should be able to expect. It echoes many of the commitments in the sector’s own Together with Tenants Charter, particularly around resident voice, relationships, accountability, quality, and complaints. The commitments are listed below:

1. To be safe in your home. The government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
2. To know how your landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
4. To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants.
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its board. The government will provide help, if you want it, to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

Whilst the Social Housing (regulation) Bill is still to be enacted other changes to bring the Charter commitments into effect have already been implemented these being:

- **Social Housing Ombudsman:** this service has been reviewed and strengthened to provide support to tenants that need to see redress from their landlords. The Ombudsman has developed a new complaints handling code for all registered providers to adhere to and has entered into Memorandum of Understanding with the Regulator for Social Housing.
- **Building Safety Regulator:** a new building safety regulator has been established as part of the Health and Safety Executive to oversee the safety standards of buildings including the implementation of a new regulatory framework for high-rise buildings.

Both the Housing Ombudsman and the Building Safety Regulator work together with the Regulator for Social Housing to ensure the delivery of the White Paper's Charter commitments together with the general wellbeing of social housing tenants. With the Regulator for Social Housing taking the lead, the three bodies cooperate together ensuring that tenants are safe, listened to, that regulatory standards are met and landlords are held to account.

In Homes and Neighbourhoods, we are responding to the White Paper's challenges and our new regulatory environment by:

- Ensuring that your voice as tenants is at the heart of all we do. Our Housing Advisory Board (HAB) and Tenant Advisory and Grants Panels (TAGP) are at the centre of our governance arrangements and decision making (see section on membership). Both HAB and TAGP scrutinise our service delivery from a tenant's point of view and inform decisions about our service delivery.
- Implementing a new complaints policy and procedure to ensure tenants receive the prompt response to their complaints and redress where needed.

We are investing in our homes to ensure that you have safe homes that are of a good quality to live in.

Our performance is regularly reviewed and challenged by HAB and TAGP who direct us to focus on what most matters to you. We publish our performance on our website, so please visit www.kirklees.gov.uk/Council-housing

We will continually review these arrangements to ensure that you are informing and directing our service delivery. To help us further with this, we would like to work with more tenants to help shape and support our service delivery. Therefore, over the next year we wish to trial new ways of contacting tenants who have not previously been involved in our governance arrangements or service improvement groups. This may not be by formal face-to-face meetings but through virtual forums or text feedback, to work with a wider range of interested groups.

If you are interested in getting involved please get in touch with us on 01484 414886 or complete our online form at www.kirklees.gov.uk/Council-housing/contact-homes-and-neighbourhoods

Investing to improve service delivery – new housing management system

Over the next three years the Homes and Neighbourhood service is investing some £3m in new IT systems to streamline and improve our service delivery. Currently we have three core systems for housing management, asset management, and repairs that are 15+ years old and at the end of their usable life. These systems do not support our vision of ***striving to be an excellent landlord by putting tenants and communities first*** since they are not integrated to support our service delivery. The investment we are making will enable us to take a fresh look at our service delivery, and design end-to-end processes with our tenants' experience at the centre of the design.

Some of the key improvements we are seeking to achieve through this investment are:

- create more efficient tenant-centred processes, which are streamlined and automated where appropriate
- provide a wider range of options with which tenants can interact with us including the ability to self-serve online
- have mobile working for Housing Officers
- improved integration capability with systems across Homes and Neighbourhoods and the Council
- improve Data Quality
- management information capability increased
- improve the automation of tasks.



How to contact us:

Telephone: **01484 414886**

Twitter: **@HNKirklees**

Facebook: **@KirkleesHN**

Website: **www.kirklees.gov.uk/Council-housing**