



LANGSTANE

HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

YOUR HOME MATTERS



ANNUAL REPORT
Our Performance in 2018 -19



Introduction

James Knowles, Chairperson



I'm very happy to present this year's annual performance report. It shows you some of the excellent work being done by our staff to improve our services and provides an insight to the wide variety of work that we do here at Langstane Housing Association.

A very important item for the Board in 2019 is making the first Statement of Assurance to the Scottish Housing Regulator. This is the first year that all Registered Social Landlords in Scotland have to provide this. Assurance is all about obtaining accurate and current information about the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations and whether we meet our regulatory and statutory obligations.

It is important that we are confident that everything is in place so the Association is the 'best that it can be'.

Helen Gauld, Chief Executive



2019 has certainly laid down some challenges for the Association. We are very focussed on making improvements to performance whilst operating as efficiently as possible to deliver value for money for our tenants.

This is not a simple thing to do, and at times it can be difficult to get the balance right. We have been doing a lot of work to make sure that we have the best quality information available to feed into our decision making. Good information is absolutely key to us having confidence moving forward, knowing we are heading in the right direction.

We got the results of our tenant satisfaction survey back early this year. A few of our results have dropped slightly, which was disappointing. However, staff are focussed on what needs to happen in areas where our tenants told us we need to improve. For example, it was clear from the feedback that we were not providing a great service when tenants needed a call back from the staff. We very quickly set up a new process that tracks when tenants need a call back from a member of the team, and this is

Next year, we plan to have tenants involved in this piece of work. After all, the Assurance Statement is all about us getting things right for our current and future tenants.

We were delighted to recruit some new faces to the Board of Management, with a range of skills ideally suited to looking after the business needs of the Association. A full list of the members of the Board and their experience is available on our website. We are always open to welcoming people with the dedication, the right skills, and the energy required to drive the Association forward to reach our strategic goals. Do get in touch with us if you want to find out more about becoming a Board member.

I want to thank all the people who work hard for Langstane Housing Association. The staff who provide the services to tenants every day, the more senior staff who manage operations, and of course the senior managers who report to us in the Board of Management. Most of all though, I want to thank the many tenants who give up their free time to work with our staff. This can be anything from responding to a survey about a policy change, or coming in to take part in a project to develop a new service.

proving to be effective. Sometimes a focus on something very simple is what makes a real difference to the service that we deliver every day. A comprehensive action plan is in place following the satisfaction survey, and we report our progress every month to our Board of Management. The Board want to make sure we are providing the best possible service to tenants, as well as looking after the long term future of the Association.

Every year we work with tenants to develop this report, and the core theme this time is about what we have done to improve services following the satisfaction survey. There is also more information this year about what things cost. For example, you will see on page 5 how much we spend on our empty properties to get them ready for new tenants, and page 9 has a feature on the cost of taking legal action.

Looking ahead to 2020, we have set ourselves some challenging goals for improvement. There has already been some progress. You can read more about this later in the report.

Finally, we are working with a group of tenants and staff to develop digital services. This will allow tenants to access a range of our services at any time of the day or night. I'm excited to see this get up and running. Watch your tenant newsletter and our website for updates.



Our involved tenants at our Annual Report consultation event in August 2019

Mission, Vision and Values

- **Mission**

Our mission is to provide homes and services that make a positive difference to people's lives.

- **Vision**

Our vision for the next five years is to be the best we can be.

- **Values**

The values that drive us forward and underpin all our activities and working practices are:



We value people

- We put people at the heart of our decision making
- We consult and listen to the views of those involved with the Langstane Group



We aim high

- We work hard to continually improve our services and deliver the services our customers want
- We have a 'can do' approach



We are proud of our roots

- We remember our origins, that Langstane Housing Association was set up to help and support single person households who were among the most vulnerable members of our society
- We provide homes not houses and support our tenants to live independently and be active members of our communities



We rely on teamwork

- We work together as one team and with one voice
- We work with our partners to achieve our goals, delivering more together



We are prudent financial managers

- We recognise the importance of maintaining financial strength and use effective financial management to underpin everything we do and help us grow
- We deliver value for money



We are open and accountable

- We provide relevant, accurate, user-friendly information about our performance that allows our tenants and others to hold us to account
- When we make mistakes we apologise and put things right as soon as possible

We move with the times

- We influence decision making to benefit our tenants and our organisation, responding to change with imagination and innovation
- We have a positive outlook regarding the housing industry and those we assist



Our performance at a glance

Key

-  Better than last year
-  The same as last year
-  We hit target
-  Not as good as last year

Indicators	LHA 2017	LHA 2018	LHA 2019	Scottish Average 2019	LHA Performance Target
 % of rent lost because properties were empty	1.2%	1.5%	2.2%	0.9%	1.3%
 Average number of days to re-let empty properties	32.6	38.4	49.7	31.9	25
 % who feel the rent represents good value for money	73.5%	73.5%	65.4%	83.2%	No target
 % of tenants satisfied with the overall service	84.2%	84.2%	79.2%	90.1%	90%
 % of anti-social complaints resolved on target	75.0%	72.4%	75.2%	87.9%	90%
 % satisfied with management of neighbourhood	78.1%	78.1%	73.1%	87.8%	No target
 Average number of hours to complete emergency repairs	3.0	2.6	3.0	3.7	3 hours
 Average number of days to complete non-emergency repairs	6.2	5.9	6.9	6.6	15 days
 % of homes that meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	94.4%	96.6%	97.3%	94.1%	97.3%
 % satisfied with quality of home	83%	83%	79.8%	88.1%	98%
 % of Stage 1 upheld	29.3%	37.4%	54.2%	55.6%	33%
 % of Stage 2 upheld	33.3%	33.3%	50%	51.3%	33%
 % of court actions resulting in eviction	37.3%	38.9%	31.2%	19.9%	No target
 % of new tenancies that lasted for more than one year	86.5%	86.3%	83.7%	88.8%	No target
 % of abandoned properties in the year	24	22	41	No average	No target

1361 (48%) of our tenants have been in their tenancy for 5 years or more

Less of our court actions result in eviction. We want to keep reducing eviction numbers, so we are reviewing our tenancy sustainment strategy this year.



Our repairs team continue to complete emergency and routine repairs within their target timescales

More than 1 of every 5 property offers was refused by housing applicants last year. This is almost double last year's figure, and impacts the time taken to let properties.

The number of abandoned properties nearly doubled this year.



We lost £260,559 in lost rent through having empty properties.

There were 581 anti social behaviour complaints. That's 60 more cases for staff to work through.

The bigger picture

'Keep it the same' is the message we received from our tenant readers this year. So, we have made only a small number of changes. We get feedback from the 'Rate the Report' survey 2018, the 'Annual Report Review' questionnaire 2019, and the regular office meeting with tenants.

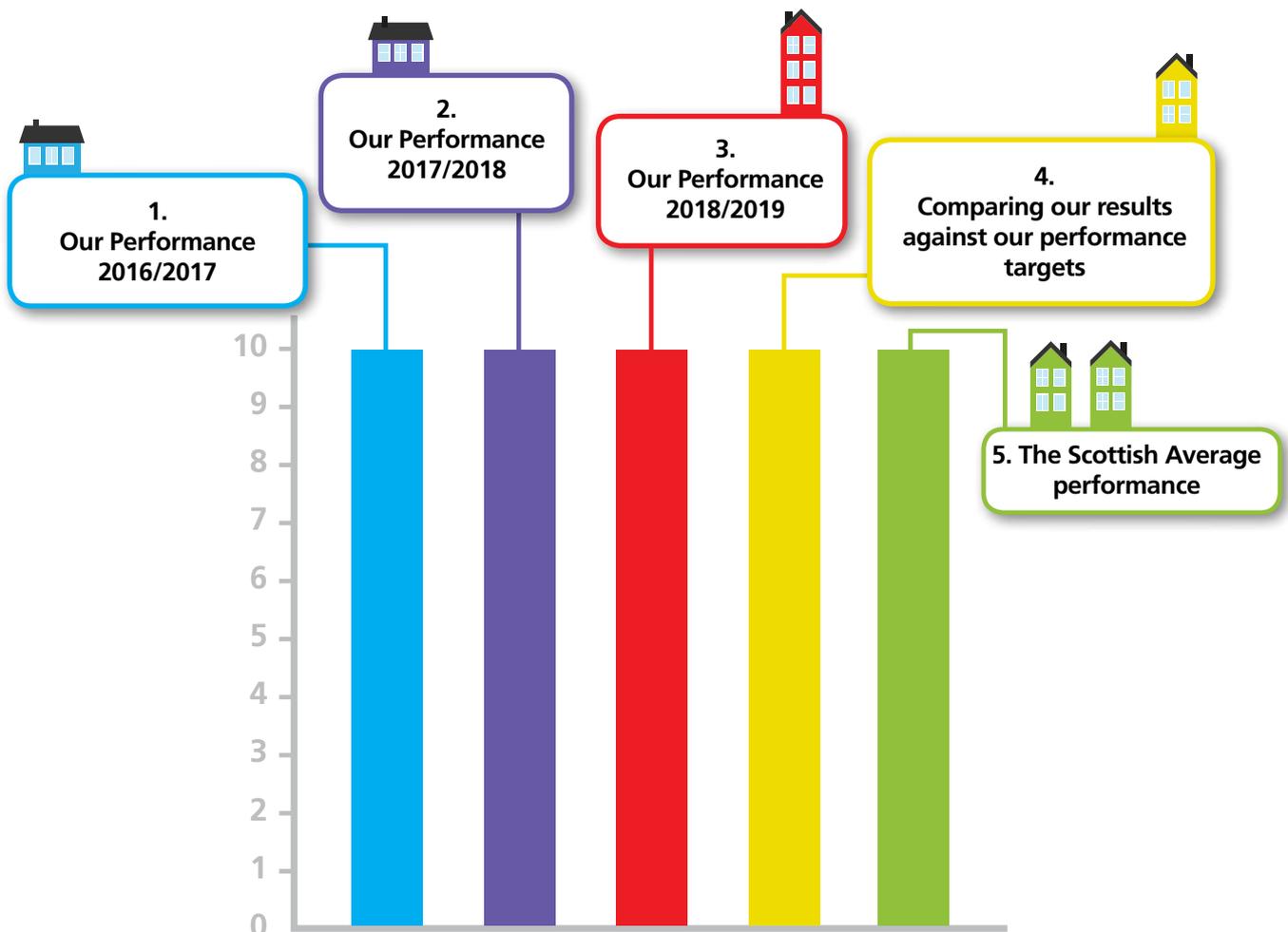
Changes we have made include:

- A refresh of pictures for the Mission, Vision and Values on page 1 so they stay up to date
- Moving the 'Reader Approved' logo. It is now at the top of the front page so that it's more easily seen. We have moved the strapline 'Serving our tenants for over 40 years' to the back page
- Adding our performance targets in to our charts where we have targets; and
- Publishing a summary version of the report which will be available in digital and hard copy

What has been kept the same includes:

- The overall design and colours of the report
- The Scottish average performance to compare with ours
- Shout-outs on page 2 to show what's better than last year and what is not
- Smiley/sad faces to illustrate how our performance has been
- Colouring-in competition house pictures with the quotes through the report
- Black text with the yellow heading, instead of white text; and
- Team photos of frontline staff on back cover, but adding Senior Management team

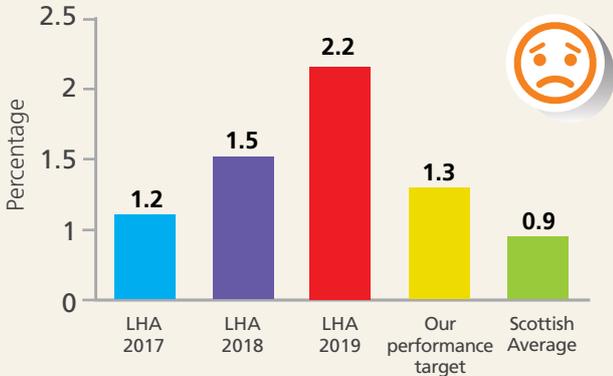
Tenant input into the report has been great once again. We welcome all comments so that we can continue to make the contents what you want to see. Please let us know your thoughts on the report so we can keep it as an important part of how we communicate our performance with you.





Getting good value for rents and service charges

Percentage of rent lost through properties being empty during the year



1. Our Performance 2016/2017
2. Our Performance 2017/2018
3. Our Performance 2018/2019

Managing our empty properties

This year we lost £260,559 in rental income because properties were empty. That's £87,756 more than we lost last year.

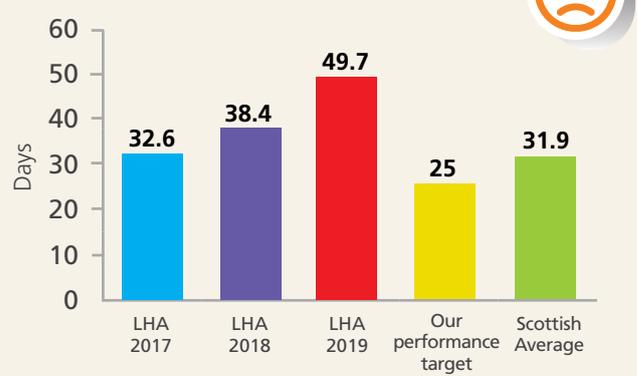
We had a big increase in new tenancies last year, welcoming 474 new households to Langstane compared to 343 new tenancies in 2017-18. 420 of these were re-lets (which means carrying out repairs to the property before we let it), up from 331 re-lets in 2017-18. This is an increase of 89 properties to repair to a lettable standard and find a new tenant for. Due to the large increase in work for our teams, our average re-let time increased from 38.4 to 49.7 days.

Up to the end of 2018, we relied on the local authorities for nominations from their lists for 75% of our empty properties (the other 25% go to tenant transfers). Now we are using our own housing list and are allocating 25% of properties to housing applicants who apply directly to the Association, and 50% to people who are coming to us as council nominations.

Most of our tenancies continue to be one bedroom flats. We have a high turnover of these and sometimes they can be a challenge to re-let. Many of our properties are returned to us in poor condition. This means extra time and money is spent getting them ready. See more about this on page 5.

We also introduced a lettings initiative for our two bedroom properties in Aberdeen City to help with the lack of demand for these flats. This means we now consider couples who would like a larger property and parents who have less than 50% access to children. The extra flexibility means that we have been letting our empty two bedroom flats more quickly. Our updated Allocations Policy allows us to react more effectively when we have problems letting a two bedroom property. We now advertise a vacant

Average number of days taken to re-let properties



4. Comparing our results against our performance targets
5. The Scottish Average performance

property when there is low demand and we haven't been able to find a tenant.

This year, we completed a review of the process from when a tenant gives us notice to leave through to when the property is re-let. We identified ways to be more efficient by changing which team carries out our pre-termination property inspections and tightening up target timescales at every stage.

Pre-termination inspections are valuable for both the tenant and the Association. We can be clear about what work is required from the tenant before they leave and the possible charges if the Association has to do the work. This means there are no unexpected charges for our tenants. The inspection also allows our team to see the property to help us answer any questions from potential new tenants and match the property to the right person as quickly as we can.

How do I apply for housing?

We have our own waiting list through Apply4Homes (A4H). The A4H system covers Langstane Housing Association, Aberdeenshire Council, The Moray Council, Osprey Housing Moray, Osprey Housing, Hanover Scotland and Blackwood. Current tenants can apply for transfer through A4H too.

To apply for housing or a transfer please complete an online form by visiting the website at www.apply4homes.org.uk.

A void is an empty property.

Management of empty properties

When a tenant decides to end their tenancy we spend time and money to make sure it is up to the 'lettable standard' for the next tenant. This involves our Property Services and Housing Services staff as well as external contractors for example Bancon, Heatcare, Allied, Core and Crest.

Here are some examples of the best and worst properties we see during the time we call the void period. The final costs you see include the cleaning and repairs, safety checks, and the lost rent while the property is empty.

1. Garthdee, Aberdeen – this property was left in perfect condition with only gas and electrical checks to complete.



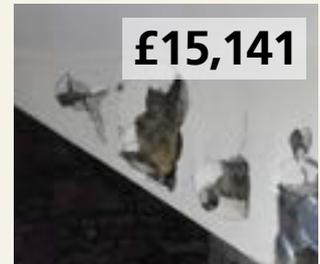
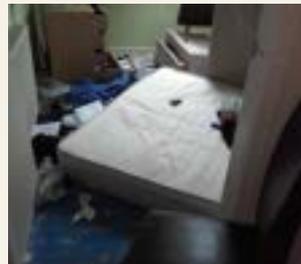
2. Peterhead, Aberdeenshire – This property needed a bit more work. Damage that needed repair included fixing holes in the walls, fixing the front door, and replacing the damaged door lock. The property also had to be cleared and cleaned.



3. City Centre, Aberdeen – this property was well cared for and clearly the tenant was very proud of her home. When it came time for her to move on the property needed very little work with only gas and electrical checks needed.



4. City Centre, Aberdeen – this property was abandoned and left in a very poor and vandalised state. It took a lot of time before we could re-let. The work included fixing the front door, repairing holes in the walls, replacing the smashed floor, as well as other minor repairs, clearing and cleaning the property.



Here are some of the challenges faced by staff when getting our empty properties ready for the next tenant:

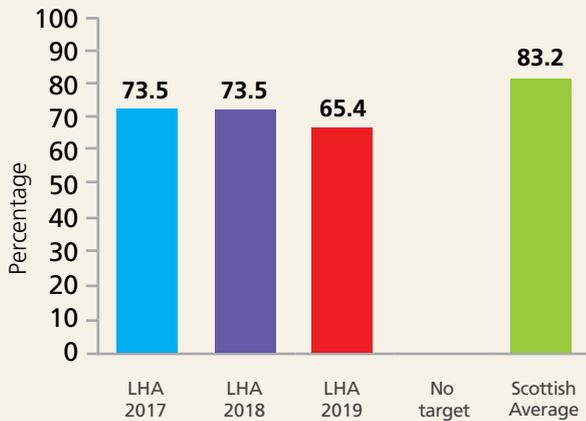
- Debt that builds up on the meters when the property stands empty for long periods of time. This is then an issue that affects the tenants when they take over the property
- Damaged property doors - a lot of our doors are expensive & have to be ordered (can take a month)
- Furnishings - If tenants leave a lot behind then a void could take an extra 5+ days to complete
- Paint on electrical fittings - this can damage the fitting & hide any defects
- Wallpaper - if the paper is torn or damaged we will remove it
- Waiting for gas RTI (see below)
- Scheduling the contractor once we have the RTI
- Contractor delays - we have to visit the property to top up the gas/electric supply and do more paperwork

RTI means Remote Token Issue. This is a code we get from the power company. Our team take this code with the gas card/key to a local shop, and then we can remove the debt from the power supply meter.

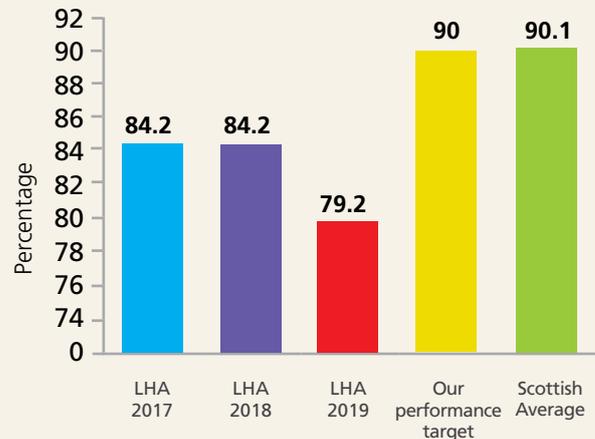


Value for money

Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service



1. Our Performance 2016/2017
2. Our Performance 2017/2018
3. Our Performance 2018/2019

4. Comparing our results against our performance targets
5. The Scottish Average performance

How we work to provide Value for Money

The results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2019 showed us that 35% of tenants who responded did not feel that the rent they paid offered value for money. We have been working hard to turn this around. Many of our contracts have been going out to tender. This means that we can review the quality and price of many aspects of our services and show savings where we can.

See the list below for tenders we have recently completed and those that are currently going through the process:

Recently completed:

- Legal services
- Internal and external audit services
- Information technology structure

Currently tendering for:

- Gutter cleaning
- Kitchen and bathroom replacements
- Smoke detectors

The smoke detector contract is for meeting our new legal obligations following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower in 2017.

Tendering is the process we use when choosing a contractor to provide goods or services

We have already identified savings. These mainly come from the new gas servicing contract. The amount saved is around £50,000. When we tender for larger contracts we ask the companies who are bidding for the work to include details of how their contract can bring 'added value' for the Association or wider tenant community.

Rent Structure update

We are continuing to work on our rent structure. Our tenants want the process we use for setting rents to be clear and easily understood. It is important that both your neighbours and your rent are in line and all are paying the same rent for the same property. This is based on property size, whether it's a house or flat, and the age of the property. This is a very important consideration for our Board of Management who are keen to make sure that rents stay affordable.

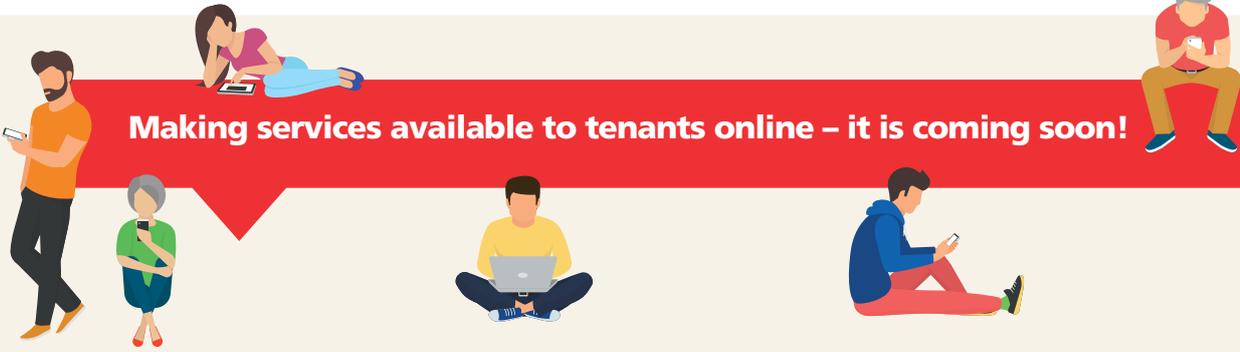
Later this year we will be consulting with our tenants on the rent review. When we do this we will be releasing more information on the process and what this will mean for individuals.

The new rent structure will be put in place in April 2020. The reason for this is to coincide with the new financial year.



Customer Feedback Quote from Mr K: "Langstane are always so open and transparent with their tenants".

Making services available to tenants online – it is coming soon!



We are working to develop some customer friendly digital services. These will be in the form of a mobile app or an online portal. Tenant self-services will be available 24/7 and could include the following functions:

- Checking a rent balance, and setting up payments
- Arranging re-payment plans for current or former debts & charges
- Access to a budget planner to help tenants look at their finances
- Reporting repairs, checking the status of a repairs request
- Provide alerts, for instance for gas boiler servicing
- Update of household details i.e. someone moving in or out of property or when a baby is born

The results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey (TSS) show that ‘improving online services’ is one of 18 priorities that were highlighted by tenants. We want to make sure we deliver services in a way that suits all our customers, and providing this kind of service is what many tenants want and expect.

We know that 76% (three quarters of those who responded to our big survey in 2018) use the internet in some way. Below are figures showing the way our tenants access the internet:



We already have tenants involved as part of the planning process for this new service. To have our tenants actively involved in the development of digital services is essential to success. Input from the group will make sure the service meets everyone’s needs and that the product is user friendly.

Please note: we are developing and promoting online services but other methods of contact are still available (phone calls, face-to-face meetings along with hard copy letters & publications)

In September we held meetings with tenants and staff to give demonstrations (demos) of what is available. The feedback is being used by our project group to develop the best product possible for Langstane.

How do these new services provide value for money?

A mobile app or portal provides a quick and easy way of accessing services whenever it suits our tenants. It also allows people to access and manage their own information. Long term these services will reduce costs and provide much needed value for money. For example, our Reception team handle, on average, 100 calls per day. Many of these involve doing things that our tenants can easily do for themselves using an app or portal, for example viewing a current rent balance or asking for a repair. When tenants use this service, our staff will be able to focus time on other work, such as helping tenants develop digital skills, spending time out in our communities making sure everything is running well, and working with tenants to assess and improve our services.

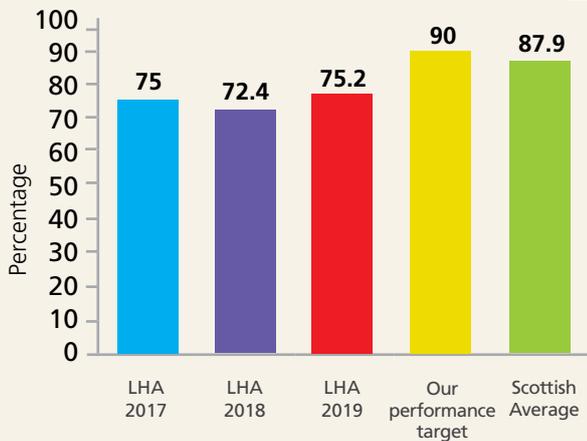


Support Services and I.T. staff with tenants at recent meetings to talk about digital services

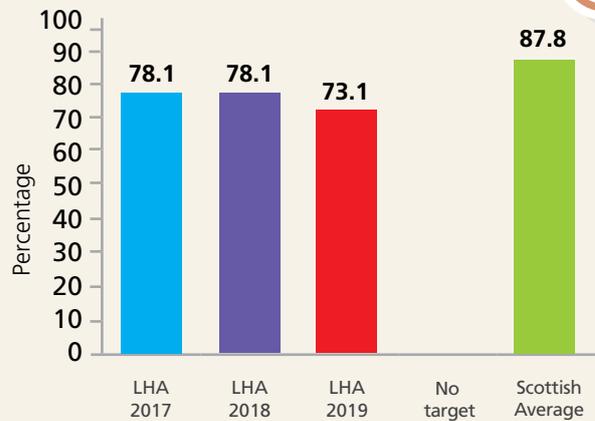


Neighbourhood and community

Percentage of anti-social behaviour complaints completed on target



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of their neighbourhood



1. Our Performance 2016/2017
2. Our Performance 2017/2018
3. Our Performance 2018/2019

4. Comparing our results against our performance targets
5. The Scottish Average performance

This year we received 581 complaints of anti-social behaviour. This increased from 521 received last year. We were able to resolve 94% of our anti-social complaints. 75% of these were resolved within target. This is an increase from the 72% last year. Staff work hard to achieve improvements in performance.

All of the complaints require investigation. Housing Officers need to get supporting evidence of complaints. Often this is not possible. Many complaints are disputed meaning that sometimes issues cannot be resolved to the complainer's satisfaction.

During the past year we evicted two tenants for anti social behaviour. This is a drop from the previous year's four evictions for anti social behaviour. We aim to resolve neighbour complaints by getting tenants to change behaviour and still keep everyone in their homes. We do this using a variety of approaches, tailoring our response to suit each individual case. This includes using tenancy warnings, mediation services, acceptable behaviour contracts, providing tenants with support through our Social Justice Team, or getting third parties involved that are qualified to offer specialist help.

We now have a mobile CCTV unit to help us detect and manage anti-social behaviour. This can be installed to monitor our communities for the purposes of public safety, crime prevention, or the detection and prosecution of offenders. The unit is portable and is a wire-free camera. It sends footage over the mobile phone network and it requires no connection to a power source or telephone line. It can be used in most locations. The new CCTV will be used by the Association, and agencies such as the Police can request information from the cameras to use for investigations into crime.

We had great success with the new CCTV system in one of our schemes in north Aberdeenshire. There were complaints of fly tipping and anti-social behaviour. Once the system went up, there were no further incidents. The Association will purchase more of these cameras in the near future so we can keep our communities safe and help our tenants with anti social behaviour in their areas.

We know there is work to do around increasing satisfaction with the management of our neighbourhoods. We have started a programme of Estate Walkabouts. The objectives of these walkabouts are to:

- Increase interaction between staff and tenants and build trust
- Allow tenants to tell us in person what they think of the service they receive
- Resolve issues as they arise and improve the quality of life in our communities
- Promote the role of the estates assistant/housing officer within communities and make sure it delivers what our tenants need



Customer feedback from Miss N:

"I want to state my appreciation for the constant efforts of Langstane to educate and encourage tenants about how to deal with their bins and

recycling in a responsible and correct manner. I am happy with the robust way the association is trying to deal with what is a common problem".

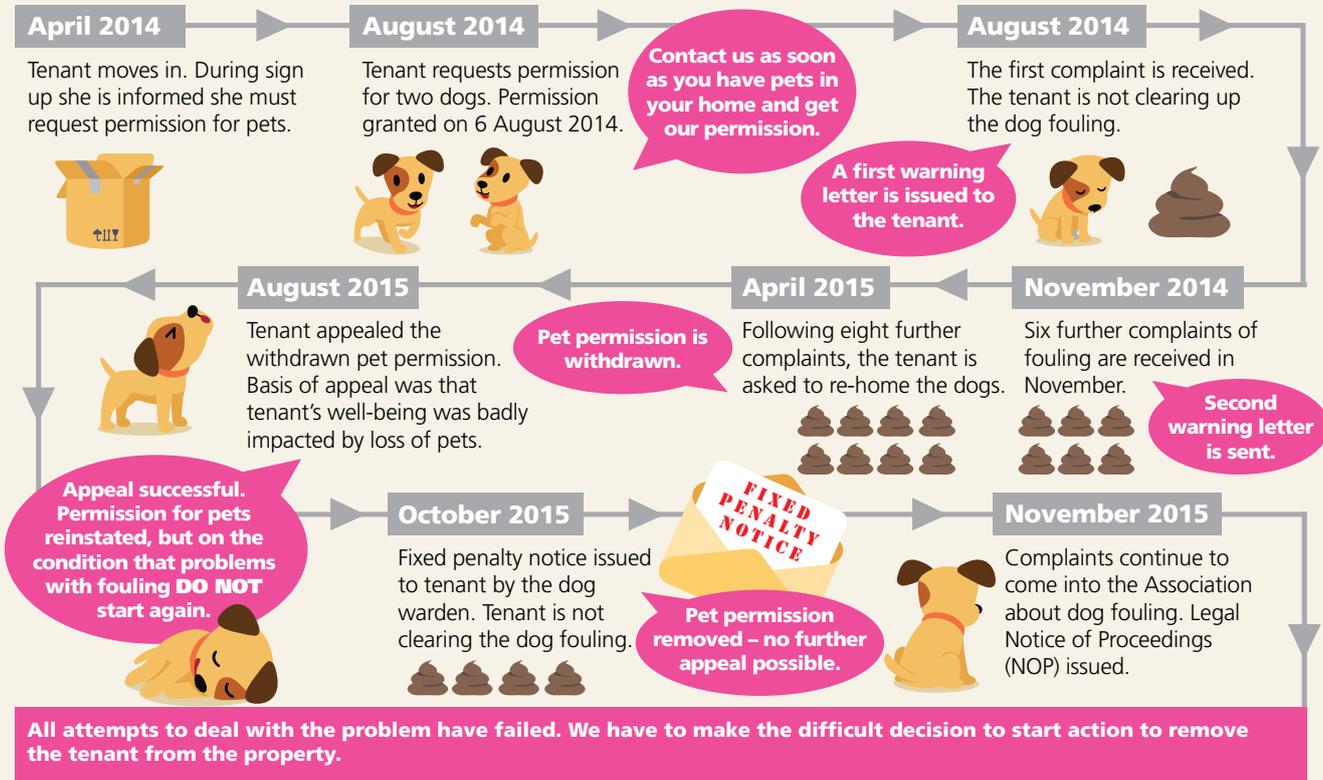
Dog Fouling - can you really be evicted?

We understand that dogs are important members of the family, but dog fouling can cause great frustration and problems for your neighbourhood.

A couple of years ago we had to evict a tenant in Aberdeenshire for constantly allowing her dogs to foul in communal areas and not pick it up. It is an absolute last resort for us to take

back someone's home for breaking their tenancy agreement. Unfortunately on rare occasions it does get to the stage when all other options to save the tenancy have failed.

See below for the history of our dog fouling case that ended in eviction. You can see how long it takes and the amount of work involved.



Court Case	The Association relies on a lot of evidence coming in from the neighbours and from staff visiting the property. There must be a very strong case before the Sheriff considers removing a person from their home. This takes time. We must clearly demonstrate the impact the tenant's behaviour has on the neighbours and the damage done to the property.	
29.03.16	Court paperwork sent to solicitor.	
03.06.16	Case called in court and Sherriff agrees to grant the court order for eviction plus legal expenses.	When we take a tenant to court and get a court order, the tenant is also charged an amount for legal expenses. This can be hundreds of pounds.
22.06.16	Association received decree paperwork. Eviction date set for 28 July 2017. Papers are served to the Association to stop the eviction – the case is recalled to the court system. Eviction is cancelled.	There is a delay of two weeks after the court date before any paperwork is released to us to evict someone. This gives a tenant time to decide if they are going to ask for the case to be heard by the Sheriff again.
29.06.16	Hearing at court, two further hearing dates for evidence. Case continued right through from July to the end of the year over several dates.	Tenants often take a long time to lodge extra defence information, causing frustrating delays. This happened here. We had to go back to court several times before the case was decided, once again, in our favour.
08.12.16	Decree and expenses granted.	This time, there was no way for the tenant to recall the case back to court.
09.02.17	Tenant evicted.	

As you can see, this case took over two years from the first complaints to the eviction.

What can you do to help speed up the process of us dealing with Anti Social behaviour? Here are some tips:

- Report any anti social issues to the Association via phone, email or come into the office.

- Submit evidence if appropriate such as, photos.
- Report issues to specialist services like the Dog Warden

If you need to talk to your Housing Officer or Estate Assistant about any issues in your neighbourhood please get in touch – we are here to help. Contact info@langstane-ha.co.uk or call 01224 423000.

Decree - an official order that has the force of law.

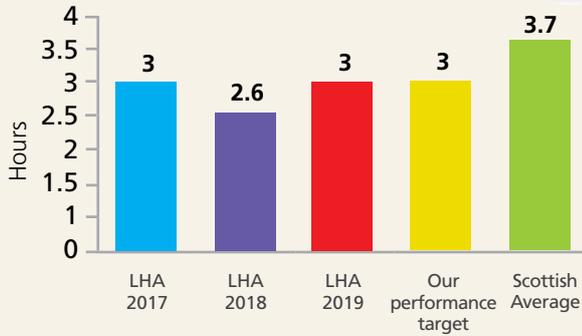
Recalled - this is an official court order for someone to return to a place.

Total cost of eviction was **£1,892.13**

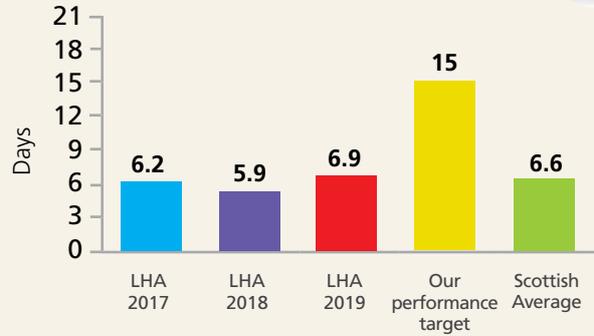


Housing quality and maintenance

Average number of hours taken to complete emergency repairs



Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs



1. Our Performance 2016/2017
2. Our Performance 2017/2018
3. Our Performance 2018/2019

4. Comparing our results against our performance targets
5. The Scottish Average performance

Our repairs performance

We have some new faces in the Property Services team since last year. However, our aim of delivering a high quality reactive repairs service has not changed.

The number of routine repairs completed over 2018/2019 was 5,516. This is less than last year's total of 5,757. The average number of repairs per property was 2.35. The number of emergency repairs completed in 2018/2019 was 954. This is up significantly compared to last year's number of 672.

We managed to get our repairs 'Right First Time' 93.5% of the time – that is on 5,128 occasions. We were unable to carry out the repair right first time on 357 occasions. Sometimes this is due to our needing to come back after arranging parts, and sometimes it is because we have had to re-visit to fix something again within a year of a previous repair.

We kept 2,317 repairs appointments. Of all our DLO jobs we had success with appointments 97.2% of the time.

If you are unable to keep your appointments please let us know in advance and we can rearrange the appointment for you



Repairs inspections explained

Our Property Services Officers completed 408 repair inspections before work was done by the Association's DLO or an external contractor. Inspection of repairs is an important part of our process. It helps us find underlying problems that may cause issues with getting a repair done properly. If we inspect first, we have an accurate description of the work we have to do. Inspections also help us control costs and get good value for money from the service. In the coming year we will be doing even more inspections – so keep an eye out for your area Property Officer if you have any repairs and maintenance issues.

What we spent

Response repairs –

£781,041

Repairs to empty homes –

£825,314

Environmental works (scheme clearances, fly tipping uplift)

£83,930

Rechargeable repairs cost the Association

£99,981



Keeping our homes safe

If we don't carry out annual gas safety checks on every property with a gas supply, the Association is breaking the law. Our process allows us to get in to properties with a master key when we are close to running out of time to complete the annual service. We prefer to have appointments agreed with the tenant. Using the master key is the last resort. When we have to use the master key, we send a bill out to the tenant.

Essential gas safety checks cost the Association **£46,640** for the year. We also do important quality checks of the gas maintenance contractor's work. This costs a further **£6,851** for the year.

We carried out safety tests in 100% of our properties with a gas supply. The quality of work is very consistent with a 97.5% pass rate.

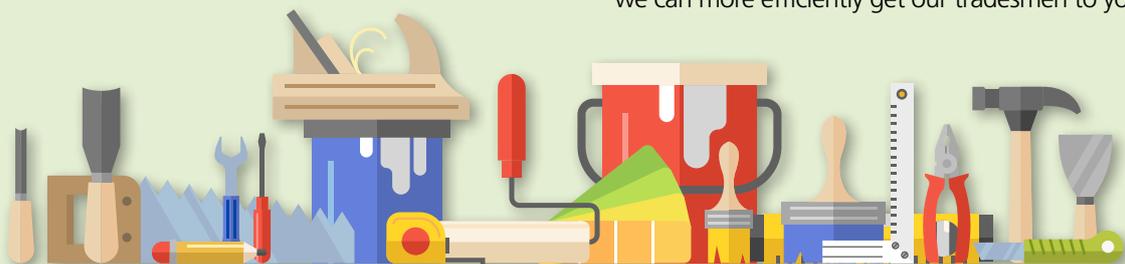


Last year we said – and we did!

- Invest in three new vehicles for our tradesmen
- An assessment of how we buy materials is currently underway
- Van stocks for all trades and areas have been set up, and this being rolled out right now. This will help us get our jobs right first time, a measure that we are improving on every year

This year we will:

- Recruit a new plumber to join our Direct Labour Operatives
- Complete a full assessment of the maintenance service
- Complete a review of the lettable standard for empty properties – we plan to do this with tenants
- Begin the tendering process for response repairs and out of hours emergencies. This will aim to deliver best value and service to our customers.
- Carry out a review of our works scheduling and how we can more efficiently get our tradesmen to you





Quality of housing

Percentage of homes that meet the SHQS at the end of the reporting year (31st March 2019)



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home



1. Our Performance 2016/2017
2. Our Performance 2017/2018
3. Our Performance 2018/2019

4. Comparing our results against our performance targets
5. The Scottish Average performance

Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)

Langstane are in a strong position in terms of meeting these standards. Only very few properties are failing due to having older heating systems. These properties will be picked up in time as the energy criteria of the two different sets of standards we work to are aligning.

There will be more focus in the coming years to meet the more recent EESSH standard.

Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) (electric or gas)

As our tenants are aware we actively work towards improving the energy efficiency of our homes and are now aiming for compliance with the EESSH standard. This standard sets out the requirements for social landlords to meet in terms of energy efficiency of the homes you live in.

Having been working on energy performance in our properties for a while now, we are looking for more intricate ways of improving property energy ratings. We have been fitting more advanced boiler controls and thermostats to properties to give tenants better control of their heating whilst also making them more efficient. These may seem like small changes but they are smart pieces of equipment that help make systems work at their best.

Smoke detection – new technology!

Fire safety is of the utmost importance to us. We are taking steps to upgrade the systems within our properties. The new technologies allow alarms to speak to each other without the need for wiring throughout the home, which is great! Tenants will have alarms installed in their main hall, at the top and bottom of any stairs, and in the main living spaces of their home.

We are also planning to install a system aid that will allow tenants to test their alarm every week, or in the event of a fire it will help them understand what is happening in their home. Weekly alarm testing is so important to make sure the alarm system is working the way it should. Smoke detectors are the main way of detecting a fire in the home, and give tenants a vital early warning should the worst happen.

If you are concerned about fire safety in your home, the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service offer free home visits – just call 0800 0731 999 to arrange one or visit their website for more information www.firescotland.gov.uk, or call our Asset Management team on 01224 423000.



Compliment from Mr D saying Laura from Asset Management was very helpful in response to his complaint and he was happy with how she got things done quickly. The service she provided was 10/10.



Improving how we communicate

Introduction of noticeboards for tenants in our buildings

In an effort to improve how we communicate with tenants the Association is in the process of installing noticeboards in the communal stairwells of flats. We started with buildings that have more complex layouts, or a high concentration of tenants living in them. The noticeboards provide information about how to evacuate the building safely, notes about staff visits to the area and action taken to sort any issues out. The boards can also be used for local notices that may be of interest.

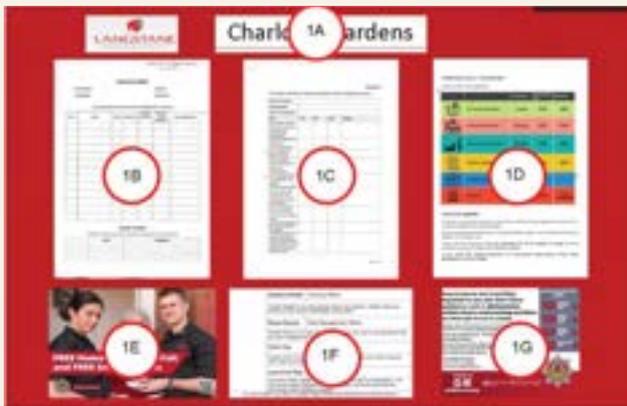
We have installed the boards in all our communal spaces in Moray, and we are working through our blocks in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. There is a wider plan to install these to all the remaining communal stairwells over the next two years.

The noticeboards will also contain information about the works in the area, usually welcome news! This can be things like our working relationship with City Fibre to

roll out high speed internet to our properties, or advice about timescales for planned upgrades of things like kitchens and bathrooms. These are questions we are asked a lot, so we are sure the information will be useful for our tenants to have on their doorsteps.

We were told in the tenant satisfaction survey that there was frustration about not knowing when upgrades were due to happen in our properties. The noticeboards are already helping us deliver this service better, providing extra information on top of the letters we send to tenants direct. For example, tenants of Fraser Court in Aberdeen had access to see and comment on the colour choices for the communal decoration – and now we can use noticeboards do that for other tenants.

These things help to improve the service in our areas in a way that is easy for tenants and cost-effective for the Association.



Tenancy board

- 1A** Scheme name - Charlotte Gardens used as an example
- 1B** Cleaners schedule - Currently Regent Samsic
- 1C** Staff inspection sheet - Staff sign sheet for insurance purposes
- 1D** Asset Management timescales - For improvement works like bathroom upgrades
- 1E** 3rd party safety notice - Fire home safety notice
- 1F** Who's who - List of officers and their roles
- 1G** Local advert/notices - Local community groups etc.



Safety board

- 2A** Fire action plan - If building is complex then this would go elsewhere
- 2B** Uplift register - To communicate items removed from site
- 2C** Uplift notice - To highlight the recent items to be uplifted or being reviewed
- 2D** No Smoking - Mandatory notice
- 2E** Recent risk flyer - Recent incident, action and outcomes
- 2F** Emergency numbers - Helpful numbers for Gas, Electricity and Water supplies
- 2G** Contact info - Out of Hours (OOH) contact info for the Association

New Development Update

In April 2019 we were delighted that CHAP Construction was ready to hand over our newest development at Froghall Road. All flats were fully occupied by May. Froghall Road is a block of six flats and we have had very positive feedback from the new residents.

One tenant was so pleased with her new home, particularly her kitchen that she showed her appreciation in the most delicious way she could. The team was very happy when she took in a batch of the most beautifully created cupcakes to our Aberdeen office.

She said "I'm very thankful for my house and very grateful to Langstane. I have a great kitchen now for my baking".

Hearing about making a positive impact on people's lives is fantastic. It's a reminder of why we do what we do.

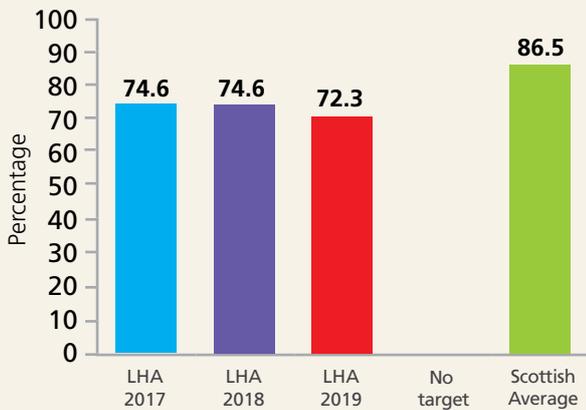


Froghall Road - Stephen Dobson Photography



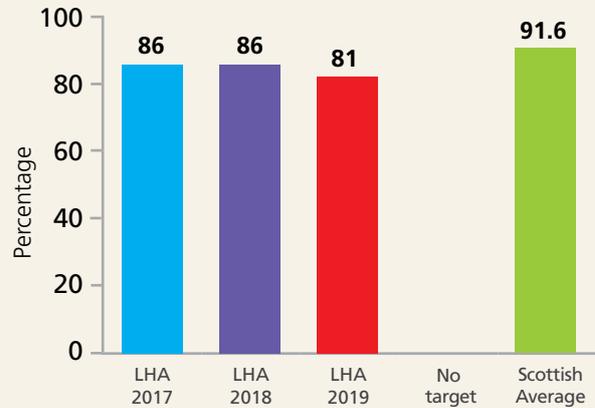
The customer - landlord relationship

Percentage satisfied with the opportunities to participate in decision making



1. Our Performance 2016/2017
2. Our Performance 2017/2018
3. Our Performance 2018/2019

Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed



4. Comparing our results against our performance targets
5. The Scottish Average performance

The tenant satisfaction survey results highlighted that 72% of tenants were satisfied with the opportunities to participate. This dropped very slightly on the 2018 result, so we are aiming to improve. We also found that 81% of people who responded thought that the Association is good at keeping tenants informed.

We have a plan to improve things so more tenants know exactly how they can be involved and what that means.

We will:

- Make sure we focus on 'You Said - We Did' actions that show us improving after hearing from our tenants.
- Work on how we promote and recruit tenants on to our 'Your Voice Counts' panels, which includes the Register of Interested Tenants, Tenant Panel and Reader Panel
- Include an item in each tenant newsletter about how to get involved, and the benefits of working together for improvements to services
- Regularly review the tenant sign up pack so we provide new tenants with up to date information
- Continually improve the way we provide information to tenants that shows there are real benefits to tenant involvement

We have completed a review of our Tenant Participation Strategy. It has been through the rigours of tenant and staff scrutiny, and is now approved by our Board of Management. Our tenants have decided that they will be involved in reviewing the effectiveness of the strategy every year, and have told us how they want us to monitor and report on the aims and objectives. The strategy document is available on our website.

You will see on page 8 that the Neighbourhood Walkabouts are taking place across our three local authority areas. Our aim is to work with communities to

improve the day-to-day quality of life. We want to increase tenant satisfaction with services and reduce the number of repeat complaints about things like gardening, cleaning and fly tipping. Our long-term goal is that tenants will want to take control of the neighbourhood walkabouts. This would mean that it is completed independent of staff, and so the focus is on what tenants find most important. Feedback would then be sent to a dedicated staff member within the Association for them to act on it.

We regularly update information about tenant involvement. Check the website to find out more about:

- How you can get involved
- Notes from our tenant meetings
- Walkabout action plans

During 2020 we will be developing tenant groups at our schemes, along with a special group for performance reviews, looking at how well we deliver services. This will include:

- A recruitment drive
- Training for the tenants involved
- Reimbursement of any reasonable expenses
- A regular meeting timetable
- Support from staff at the Association

In 2020, we will continue our work with North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT). This group works together to deliver tenant participation activities. In 2019, a Podcast was produced by tenants! We had input from Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and Langstane tenants. They discussed their reasons for getting involved and what benefit there is from being a member of a joint tenant and landlord group.

Hear about getting involved from Ronnie, our award winning tenant!



Annual report group 2018

How long have you been an involved tenant?

I got involved 4 years ago after being a tenant for 16 years.

What made you decide to get involved in the first place?

I was fed up leaving it to other people to work on my behalf so I decided to join in. My first task was to review the Annual Report before it was published. I wasn't sure if I had anything to offer, but it turns out I did! After my first review, I started to help with other projects and found that I was helping Langstane to find the best way to reach and communicate with tenants.

Has it taken up a lot of your time?

Over one year I volunteer about 6 hours, which I feel is not much to help give a voice to the tenants.

What do you do as an involved tenant?

I meet with other tenants and staff to discuss a publication, or a policy we are reviewing and enjoy a cup of tea and a cake! We go through the document and highlight areas where tenants may have difficulty reading or understanding it if they have additional needs. We work together to make it clearer. Staff make notes of my suggestions for further discussion within their team – and then I see them on the finished product, which is great!

Do you feel like you've made a difference, does it feel worthwhile?

Yes I do. I started out thinking I would have nothing to offer but I realised that just sitting talking with a cuppa and a cake, I had lots to offer. Everyone in the group does. We're all individuals with our own strengths and weaknesses. It's very worthwhile and it gives me a voice on things that matter to me and I know it's taken on-board by Langstane.

Have you received any recognition for getting involved?

Absolutely and a lot more than I ever imagined. I found out that having dyslexia means I can help make a process or experience better for others...and then I won an award! Here's what happened. I was part of a group to trial the



Tenant Satisfaction Survey in 2015. I was able to tell Langstane how to make it easier to read and complete from the perspective of someone with dyslexia. My comments were taken on board about the layout, content and display. The group included the company who carries out the survey on Langstane's behalf and the consultant was very interested in what I had to say. After that I was nominated for an award

by the Langstane Team. I was delighted to be chosen as Runner Up for 'Tenant Participation Champion'. Just for turning up to a meeting! I wasn't really sure about being chosen for an award at a National Conference, but it just shows that you have to be in it to win it! We all have skills that are useful to help others and we may not even know we have them, or what a difference they can make.

Is there any point to it? Are they really interested in what you have to say?

You can always find a point if you look hard enough and there is always a point when you have the opportunity to help others, even in the smallest way. Just helping others to understand a document, or getting an adjustment to the way things are done. It is my experience that Langstane do indeed take on board what we say and they do make the necessary changes where possible.

Does any good come from it? Langstane ask the tenants to get involved as it helps them improve services for tenants, do you see differences based on the suggestions you've made.

Of course. We're helping to make positive changes and good always comes from that. When I receive a copy of the Annual Report it is a document that is easy to read and the style is reader-friendly with colours that are easy on the eye. The team at Langstane take their role very seriously and are committed to working for the tenants.

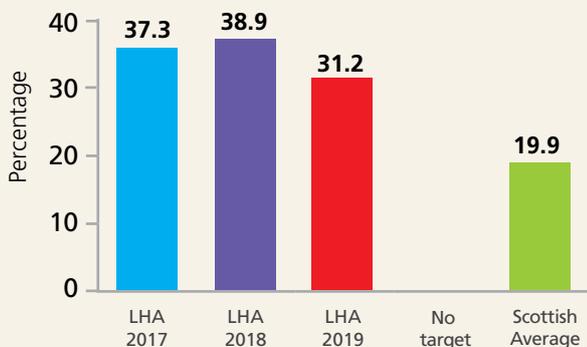


Ronnie at an early meeting with tea and cake



Tenancy sustainment

Percentage of court actions resulting in eviction



1. Our Performance 2016/2017
2. Our Performance 2017/2018
3. Our Performance 2018/2019

Tenancy Sustainment – helping people to stay in their homes when things get tough

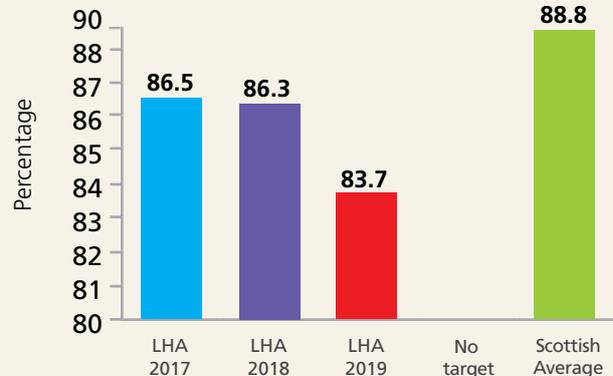
When a tenant breaks a condition of the tenancy agreement, our first goal is to sort out the problem before having to take any action against the tenant. For most, this means supporting a tenant to deal with the issue before we even start legal action. Eviction action is an absolute last resort for us. We want our tenants to stay in their homes. Sometimes however, there is no other option if a tenant does not want to work with us and a problem is not solved.

Unfortunately the number of legal actions this year has gone up from 72 to 93. The number of evictions increased by one from 28 to 29. Most were due to tenants not paying their rent. Three evictions were for other reasons, such as anti-social behaviour. We want to keep the number of evictions as low as possible.

How we work to keep rent arrears down

The key is to act as early as possible. On the day a new tenant signs the tenancy agreement we make sure we stress the importance of paying rent. Our team keep a close eye on the rent accounts and will contact tenants at an early stage if payments are missed. Some tenants need help with claiming benefits like Universal Credit. The housing element of Universal Credit is paid direct to claimants - it is important tenants know they are responsible for paying this to the Association for rent. We have a Welfare Benefits Advisor on our team to help people get through the process of claiming benefits. We also have access to a dedicated Smart Money Advisor for Langstane. They provide free, impartial and confidential money advice. This is really helpful for tenants in financial difficulties of any kind. The Money Advisor will help with managing money, debt counselling and budgeting advice.

Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year



4. Comparing our results against our performance targets
5. The Scottish Average performance

The continued rollout of Universal Credit keeps our Housing Officers and Social Justice Team busy supporting tenants with claims and any problems that come up. We work hard to make tenants aware of Universal Credit and the impact change of circumstances will have on any claim for benefit. Our team also helps tenants open bank accounts, access the internet, and source training to use a computer.

We can help

This year 288 out of 344 new tenants stayed in their home for more than 12 months – that is 83.72%. We aim to keep our tenants in their tenancy as long as possible. Our Social Justice Team contacts all new tenants with a welcome call. We can assist with practical help to set up a new home such as setting up energy accounts, furnishings, floorings and help with form filling.

The Social Justice Team also contact all tenants who ask us about ending their tenancy. We want to check if there is any help or advice we can offer that means that a tenant can stay in their home if they want to do that but are struggling with something. However, most of our tenants move for positive reasons such as:

- Transferring to another home with the Association or another landlord
- Finding another social housing tenant to exchange homes with
- Moving out of the area for work or to complete training/education
- Moving in with a partner or other family member
- Buying their own home



Customer feedback from Ms A Tenant wanted to say how pleased and grateful she was for the supply of white goods and carpets and for the excellent delivery guys who were very polite. She couldn't thank us enough.

We can help

The work of our Social Justice Team is very important as it is all about keeping people living settled lives in their homes, and working to help people achieve the best for themselves. We know that having a successful home is about so much more than the bricks and mortar. Our team are here to help out if things are feeling a bit tough. Here are some examples of how we do this



The Social Justice Team in action

The privacy of the tenants in these stories has been protected.

Tenant 1 – Mr A.

Some people use services from the Social Justice staff for a number of years...

Mr A was finding it hard to keep his flat clean and tidy. He struggled with substance misuse in the past, and has some mental health issues to deal with. When he made a decision that he needed help to 'sort his life out' he contacted the team.

Mr A felt that if his flat was more of a home he would be happier. He was sleeping on the sofa as he did not have a bed, and there was also no flooring in his flat. Mr A was also struggling with the flat being cluttered and very unclean.

Susan, a member of the team, sat down with Mr A and helped him to make a plan for what he wanted to happen. She encouraged the tenant to begin cleaning the flat. At the same time, Susan helped Mr A apply for a grant to ask for the basics he needed.

Within a few weeks the flat was cleaned to a standard Mr A was happy with. Next, the grant application for a bed and carpets was approved. Great news!

The bedroom posed a challenge as there were some large unused items which needed to go. With some help, Mr A contacted the council to arrange a large item uplift for the next week. Finally all the carpets were in, and the flat was looking much more like a home.

Mr A is very happy in his flat. He has been able to keep on top of keeping it nice and tidy. Susan continues to stay in touch now and again to provide a bit of support and encouragement.

Tenant 3 – Mr C

Some cases are all about getting started in a new home...

A young man of 18, Mr C just signed up for his first flat.

Mr C was not working at the time of signing and didn't have much to get started with due to it being his first independent home. The Officer that signed Mr C made a referral to our Social Justice team for a bit of help to get moved in.

Billy contacted Mr C and arranged to meet with him. Billy helped Mr C apply for a grant for some white goods. This was successful!

Some help was needed getting the flat furnished. Billy organised an appointment for the tenant with a local charity. Mr C was able to choose some furniture and this was delivered a few days later free of charge.

Next challenge was learning how to use the heating and hot water. Billy spent some time showing Mr C how things worked. During the visit they noticed a couple of repairs were needed. Billy helped Mr C arrange for repairs.

Due to Mr C being a young person and not working, Billy got him in touch with David, our Tenant Welfare Advisor. David helped with an application for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. Both of which were successful.

After settling in, Mr C decided he would like to look for work. Billy referred Mr C to our partners in youth employment, WorkingRite. Ewan from WorkingRite met with Mr C. A work placement was arranged. This allowed Mr C to get much needed experience without affecting his benefits. The work placement came to an end, and Mr C has been offered a permanent job. A great ending, we hope things continue to go well!

Tenant 2 – Ms B

Some just need a little bit of help when things are a struggle...

Ms B has not been able to work for many years due to mental health illness. She contacted the team as she felt she had become very isolated.

A SJT staff member visited to talk about what was available in the local area for making friends and becoming part of the community again. Ms B is very interested in gardening. With a bit of help, Ms B found a group of people who met in the local area to do some gardening projects. Ms B felt very nervous to go on her own. No problem, our Susan went along with Ms B to her first meeting. All went very well, and Ms B was welcomed to the group and felt at ease. Next time, Ms B went back to the group on her own. Ms B attends on a regular basis and feels the world has opened up again.





Finance

The Results of the Langstane Group for the year ended 31 March 2019 are detailed below.

The Langstane Group consists of Langstane Housing Association Limited and its subsidiary Stockethill Homes Limited.

The financial year shows a surplus of £1,379,595 which has been transferred to reserves.

Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 March

2019 **2018**
(We round all figures to the nearest thousand)

Turnover	15,931,000	14,918,000
Less: Operating Costs	(12,504,000)	(11,494,000)
Surplus on operating activities before interest	3,427,000	3,424,000
Interest receivable and similar income	2,000	3,000
Interest payable and similar charges	(2,049,000)	(1,991,000)
Surplus on ordinary activities	1,380,000	1,436,000
Surplus on operating activities before interest	21.51%	22.95%

During the year the Group made loan repayments totalling £1,669,142.

During the year the Group spent £1,701,000 on refurbishing existing properties. This expenditure covered replacement bathrooms, kitchens, heating systems, etc. and is part of the Group's on-going rolling programme of improving the condition of its properties including improving the energy efficiency of its accommodation.

Replacement and upgrades included in the above:

Kitchen replacement and upgrades	85 units	£779,192.00
Central heating upgrades	106 units	£452,416.00
Bathroom replacements and upgrades	52 units	£448,649.00

The Group is committed to achieving value for money in all areas of expenditure. This means making sure that each pound spent derives the maximum benefit on behalf of tenants. The Group has a robust tendering process by which they continue to seek out the best deals in terms of price, quality and performance to give the best possible service to tenants.

We are delighted to announce the appointment of our new Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Lynne Macfarlan. Here is what Lynne has to say about her role since starting in September 2019.

"I've been made very welcome by everyone at Langstane Housing Association in what is a busy time, particularly for the Finance team with new budgets to be prepared. It is an on-going challenge to keep rents affordable whilst costs increase. I look forward to making a positive contribution to the organisation through sound financial management and help us on our journey to "be the best we can be".

Please look out for more from Lynne in our Winter Newsletter 2019, which will be with you in December.



Staff profile

Our tenants tell us they want to know more about our frontline staff. This year we have doubled up and provided profiles of two staff members. They were both delighted to share their stories with you. First we have Zoe who came to work with Langstane in 2018 as a WorkingRite apprentice. Zoe was very quickly offered a permanent full

time position as a Corporate Services Assistant with our Reception team and has been with the Association for a year now. Across the page is Amber's journey throughout the Association, what she has achieved, and her hopes for the future. Here's Zoe's story in her own words...



When you started your apprenticeship with WorkingRite at the age of 16, where did you think it would lead?

When I started my apprenticeship I had no idea where it would lead. I hoped that if I worked to the best of my ability and showed what I was capable of, this opportunity could open doors. I'm glad I stuck at it because it has led to where I am today.

Having not worked in Housing before could you give me your first impression of finding yourself working in the sector?

In all honesty I didn't know what to expect. I knew it was the right step as I want to help people. I get to do this every day and have found my role amazing so far. My skills and experience are developing every day and has helped me to look at what I want for my future. I never realised there is so much involved in housing and what opportunities there are.

What do you like the most about your job and working for Langstane?

Helping people and gaining awareness would be what I have enjoyed mostly. I am more mindful of the importance of social housing and the variety of personal situations experienced by people. This includes those with general housing needs, people with disabilities, and more vulnerable members of society. I have also learned more about the consequences of being without suitable accommodation, and the negative impact of anti-social behaviour. I know that what I'm doing can make a difference and make someone happy, which is a good feeling.

What do you like least about working for Langstane?

Dealing with angry and abusive people. I can understand the feelings of anger. But when I am trying to help or get to the root of a problem, it can be very challenging at times.

Where do you see your career going with either Langstane or in the housing industry?

At the moment I am concentrating on building my experience and knowledge by seizing any training opportunity available. My hope is to become a Housing Services Officer. I find the work and responsibility of all the departments really fascinating but it is the work of the housing team that really interests me.

I am currently studying towards a Business Administration SCQF Level 5 course. Langstane are supporting me to achieve this. I will be forever grateful for the experience, qualifications and support Langstane are providing as it will be with me for life, whatever I do next.



Housing professional of the future



Amber has been with Langstane for 3 years and is one of two Housing Assistants in the Housing Services team dealing with letting our homes. See Amber's journey since being offered a temporary position in Reception to becoming a valuable member of Team Langstane.

September 2016

Recruited into the Reception team.

"I applied for a permanent position in Asset Management but had very little knowledge of housing so didn't get it. I was offered a temporary position in Reception instead. I saw this as a great way to get my foot in the door and thought it would stand me in good stead for getting to know the different areas of housing".

February 2017

Offered a full-time permanent position within the reception team.

"Working in the reception team provided me with introductory knowledge and experience of housing, I enjoyed getting compliments from tenants about how I dealt with their enquiry and feeling good knowing I'd helped someone. The role was demanding and stressful at times but very rewarding".

June 2017

Offered the opportunity to achieve a Diploma.

"I was asked if I wanted to study for a Diploma in Digital Application Support SCQF level 6, which was a great opportunity. It gave me extra knowledge all round as well as building my I.T. skills".

August 2018

Starts Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) level 3 qualification

"I would definitely like to progress my career in housing and feel like achieving my CIH level 3 housing qualification will give me a lot more to offer tenants and my employer".

October 2018

Amber passes her Digital Application qualification.

Three other members of staff completed this qualification alongside Amber. We issued a press release to acknowledge their hard work.



December 2018

Joins Housing Services as a temporary Estates Assistant (Maternity Cover)

"I was ready to try something new that gave me the opportunity to mix working out in the community with being in the office".



February 2019

Successful for permanent role of Housing Services Assistant dealing with Allocations & Lettings

"In my current role I feel like every day is a highlight. My focus is on offering homes and dealing with new tenants, but I still feel like I have a strong customer service role and have direct contact with tenants and customers like I did in the reception team".

July 2019

Passes CIH qualification

"I left school at 17 and wanted to go straight into work. Since then I have achieved qualifications and a secure role. I feel that you never stop learning and as I get older I am able to apply myself more to study. I have learned many different skills from each qualification and already - my CIH has helped me in my career".



August 2019

Amber is working on reviewing various Housing Services procedures and has recently become a 'module leader' for her team. The module leader is a role that includes extra responsibility for looking after the housing software for her team. This role includes producing quarterly reports to management and developing new ways to use the system to improve processes and services.

Our Housing Services Assistants deal with a variety of tenancy changes such as assignments, transfers, mutual exchanges and sublets. If you have any queries about any of these or wish to apply for housing with Langstane please either contact us directly on 01224 423000, visit our website at www.langstane-ha.co.uk or Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Langstane. Or, you can apply direct to Apply4Homes by visiting the website at www.apply4homes.org.uk.



Serving our tenants
for over 40 years

680 King Street
Aberdeen
AB24 1SL
T: 01224 423000

ALSO AT:
7 North Guildry Street
Elgin IV30 1JR
T: 01224 423000

E: info@langstane-ha.co.uk
www.langstane-ha.co.uk



Senior Management Team



Asset Management



Housing Services



IT



Finance



Social Justice



Elgin team



Corporate Services



Personal Assistants



Support Services



Property Services

Stephen Dobson Photography

Registered under The Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 No. 1916R(S)
Registered with The Scottish Housing Regulator No. HEP 145 AL
Registered Scottish Charity SCO11754
A member of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
Property Factor Number PF 000666