

## Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders 2022/2023



## Welcome to this year's Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders

Another financial year has come to an end, and I am delighted that we are seeing service improvements across the board that matter to our residents and their families. As Chairman of the Housing Board, I see the Key Performance Indicators on a regular basis. All Board members have been delighted to see new tenants' general satisfaction levels tick up. In the first quarter of 2022/23, we saw this percentage measure in the low eighties, and by the end of the year we've succeeded in pushing it back up into the mid-nineties.

This has been achieved through a combination of residents and officers working together. We call this partnership working and, at the Board level, co-regulation.

On the repairs side, we are continuing to focus our efforts to ensure we drive improvements for you. We have had some difficulties in this area and in some of our planned works. But going forward you should see some great improvements as the challenges we have had around contractor partners is brought under control.

As a supporter of delivering energy efficient properties to our customers, I and the Board are fully behind our Housing Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEP). This project is investing millions of pounds in your homes, over several years. It means that you and your families should benefit from the latest technologies – from better insulation to solar panels, and many other things too.

I am delighted to see the partnership working between residents and their families, and the council, which has benefitted everyone. And I am also pleased to see the volunteers that choose to engage with us and help deliver service improvements for everyone. Please look at the work of your Challenge and Change Group to see what they do for you too. Members are volunteer tenants and leaseholders who look at a narrow part of the service, compare it against what we say we will do, compare it against best practice, and then make recommendations for how we can make things even better.

Even more will be done for our residents and their families in the years ahead as I work closely with residents, the Housing Board, officers and my Portfolio Holder for Housing, Robert Yuill. I want to make sure that issues that are important to residents and their families are dealt with in a fair and balanced way and can be quickly fed back to the Cabinet. This direct line into the Cabinet will continue to make decision making even quicker. If you want to be involved in decision making, then you will be. Your voice is important to me. I want to make sure it is heard. If you want to let me know what is important to you, please feel free to contact me or even come over for a chat if you see me out and about.

I would like to thank all of you again for everything that you have done, as well as the officers. I know that we will all continue to work together as it is that spirit which created a terrific housing department in the first place. If you would like to come along (virtually using Microsoft Teams or we can let you know if we're holding one in-person) to a future Housing Board meeting, you would be very welcome. Your Resident Engagement Team can let you know about future dates for the Board, and they are also on our webpage ([wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-resident-involvement](http://wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-resident-involvement)).



**Phil Alford**  
**Wiltshire Councillor – Melksham Without North and Shurnhold**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets and Asset Transfer**



Some of our housing stock

## What have we achieved this year?



We have helped our tenants secure over **£816,844** in additional income



**46%** of households are registered to use iHousing

**17,971** new repairs reported



**99.5%** of properties have a valid gas safety certificate

**1,633** STAR surveys returned



**11** full estate inspections completed



**53** right to buy applications received



**5,800** of the copies of the annual Housing Matters magazine were sent out

We hold a valid email address for over **75%** of our properties



Continued investment in the Housing Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEP)



## Housing in Wiltshire

We currently manage 5,282 dwellings and 1,000 lettable garages in Wiltshire with the main concentration being in the south of the county. These dwellings are made up of various property types, flats, maisonettes, houses, and bungalows.

**34** properties were sold as part of the government's 'Right to Buy' scheme

## How we look after your property

Our housing stock is looked after in patches. We provided services to these patches including planned and cyclical maintenance, responsive repairs, void management, rent collection, rent arrears recovery, tenancy enforcement, anti-social behaviour investigation and resident engagement.

## How much we charge

The rent we receive is very important to us, as it pays for all the services we provide and for the upkeep, repair, and maintenance of all our properties, including your home.

We charge rent weekly, our average social weekly rent in 2022/2023 was **£94.06** and our average affordable weekly rent was **£132.46**.

## How we spend your rent

What we spent your rent on	
<b>Property repairs and maintenance</b> <i>Responsive repairs, refurbishment of properties before re-letting and cyclical maintenance.</i>	<b>£ 6.7 Million</b>
<b>Housing management and related costs</b> <i>Includes officer and administration costs, resident involvement activities, utility bills, legal fees and IT costs.</i>	<b>£ 3.7 Million</b>
<b>Capital contribution</b> <i>Payments made towards the cost of major works and improvements.</i>	<b>£ 0.6 Million</b> ESTIMATE (budget figures used)
<b>Capital depreciation</b> <i>An adjustment to account for the annual change in the useful economic life of the housing stock due to factors such as wear and tear.</i>	<b>£ 12.0 Million</b> ESTIMATE (budget figures used)
<b>Interest charged on loans</b> <i>The council took a loan to buy itself out of the previous subsidy system.</i>	<b>£ 3.1 Million</b>
<b>Provision for bad debts</b> <i>The amount put aside to cover bad debts owed to the council and unlikely to be repaid.</i>	<b>£ 0.3 Million</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£ 26.5 Million</b>

The slight difference in the totals is due to the rounded of figures.

## Income Recovery



We take money owed to us very seriously, as this money is needed to invest in our properties, your homes. The cost of living and energy prices has undoubtedly had an impact on arrears levels and has pushed the end of year performance above the 2.75% target. These increases are being felt across the sector. We are still dealing with the increased arrears caused by the Covid pandemic. High level arrears accrued during this time are slowly reducing but are still affecting the overall target performance, this is expected to reduce over time.

Collection of rent from tenants in receipt of Universal Credit continues to be a challenge, particularly in the 5-week assessment period where tenants effectively have no income.

We have been working hard to implement strategies to deal with the cost of living and energy price increases and continue to support the most vulnerable through our Tenancy Sustainment Team. We have also been working with others housing providers through the Wiltshire Money Forum, looking at ideas and best practices to help support those most vulnerable to fuel poverty.

The former tenant arrears continue to be well managed and has remained below the set target, however, it has slightly increased on last year, this is largely due to some large arrears' accounts moving from current to former tenants. It is difficult to recover debt and we are therefore in the process of implementing the use of debt agencies to further improve our collection rates.

The court system remains challenging with continuing delays affecting our ability to deal with serious non-payers.

We are about to introduce a new arrears management system, which rationalises the way arrears accounts are presented to Income Officers allowing them to focus on accounts which require urgent intervention. The system also provides analytics which will allow us to be more proactive in preventing arrears.

Key Performance Indicators	Achieved	Target	How did we do?
Rent arrears as percentage of rent due (Dwellings)	3.53%	2.75%	
Former tenant arrears as percentage of rent due (Dwellings)	0.85%	1.00%	
Rent arrears as percentage of rent due (Dwellings) - NON-UNIVERSAL CREDIT ONLY	1.66%	1.75%	
Rent arrears as percentage of rent due (dwellings) – UNIVERSAL CREDIT	7.00%	8.00%	

## Tenancy Sustainment and Mental Health Support



Our tenancy sustainment service has continued to be a huge success, by providing ongoing support to our tenants experiencing financial difficulties. Engaging with us and using this service has helped tenants increase their income, reduce rent arrears, and overall sustain their tenancies and facilitate their independence. We also offer a mental health support service; we are happy to tailor support to meet the needs of our tenants who do not need a formal diagnosis – we just ask that they are willing to engage and work with us.

As the demand for these valuable services increases, we have continued to grow the team, we now have a team of 9 consisting of 5 Tenancy Sustainment Officers (TSO), 1 Hoarding Specialist, 2 Mental Health Officers and an Admin Support Officer.

This has allowed us to extend our TSO drop-ins across the County, we now offer drop-in sessions in the following venues: -

- County Hall (Trowbridge)
- The Friary (Salisbury)
- Bemerton Heath (Salisbury)
- Evergreen Court (Amesbury)
- Needham House (Devizes)

These have allowed us to support more tenants more quickly and ensure financial and physical wellbeing which has ultimately improved tenants ability to pay rent and remain in their homes.

We are also working collaboratively with The Food Bank to provide advice and assistance at St Pauls Church in Salisbury.

<b>£816,844</b> additional income secured for tenants	<b>409</b> tenancy sustainment and mental health support cases were completed	<b>200%</b> increase in the number of cases completed
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## Repairs and Improvements



Another very challenging year for our Direct Labour Organisation - DLO team, with recruitment and retention of both our DLO and external contractors remaining a massive challenge and ultimately impacting on the percentage of repairs completed on

time, at the end of the year the DLO team remained under resourced with unfilled vacancies, although efforts to recruit continue and are proving more successful, we are hopeful that staff levels will increase gradually over the next year. We are continuing to review our framework of contractors and are hoping to have a number of new contacts in place during 2023/2024.

Our DLO 'Right First Time' percentage was **96.7%** which is an improvement on last year and we have exceeded the target set, which is impressive given the challenges that we have continued to face.

**17,971** new repairs were raised during the year of which **879** were 'out of hours' repairs. The average cost per repair was **£181.79**. These repairs were completed by both our own DLO and partnering contractors.

Our DLO performance:
<b>6,680</b> repairs were carried out
The average cost per repair was <b>£106.10</b>
<b>87%</b> of repairs were carried out on time by our DLO
<b>96.7%</b> of Tenants satisfied with the repair service provided by our DLO



We have a team of **20** DLO.

Our operatives cover a wide range of trades, which includes plumbing, carpentry, glazing and general maintenance. Specialist trades, including gas and electrical works are completed by our contractors.

## Repairs Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators	Achieved	Target	How did we do?
Percentage of <b>Contractor</b> routine repairs completed on time	82.11%	92.0%	
Percentage of <b>DLO</b> routine repairs completed on time	87.54%	92.0%	
Percentage of <b>ALL</b> repairs completed right first time	95.56%	95.0%	

## Planned and Cyclical Maintenance



As your landlord, we have a duty to keep your home in good order. This includes carrying out annual gas safety inspections, electrical inspections, and outside decoration.

The Home Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEP) continues to roll out across our housing stock. The HEEP's objective is to get all existing council housing properties up to EPC level B within ten years. We currently have **256** properties at level B or above and a further **1,559** at level C. Over 53% of our properties now have a valid banding.

We also carry out improvements such as new kitchens, bathrooms and windows as part of our planned maintenance programme to make sure that our properties and your homes are of a good standard.

Here is some of what we have done this year:

<b>101</b> Kitchens replaced	<b>28</b> Bathrooms replaced	<b>1,143</b> Electrical tests completed	<b>1,423</b> Smoke detector tests	<b>4,945</b> Boiler safety checks completed
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## Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Achieved	Target	How did we do?
Percentage of tenants satisfied with planned maintenance	90.9%	98.00%	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with cyclical maintenance	95.1%	95.00%	

Our overall satisfaction is based on our tenant experience with us and our Partnership Contractors.

## Neighbourhood and Tenancy Management



Our tenancy service team manages estates, sustaining tenancies, organising environmental improvements, signing up new tenancies and tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB). We aim to ensure that where you live

is safe, clean and tidy and that issues affecting you and your neighbourhoods are quickly identified and tackled.

**117** new tenant settling visits within the first 6 weeks of their tenancy were carried out

**171** reports of ASB were investigated




Vacant properties are an important issue to us, as empty properties result in a loss of rental income and mean that families are not being housed. We work hard to ensure properties are refurbished and ready for the next tenant as quickly as possible, however, our ability to do this during this year has been adversely affected by a shortage of staff both in house, our DLO and within our partnering contractors, this has led to delays in turning our properties around.

The average relet time in days hasn't been our sole focus as we have been concentrating on reducing the total number of empty properties rather than working on the oldest first.

Our performance is being closely monitored at every stage and we are working hard to ensure adequate resource is in place to reduce the

number of empty properties and ultimately reduce the amount of time a property is empty.

## Tenancy Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators	Achieved	Target	How did we do?
General Housing: Average re-let time in days (standard re-lets)	86	20	
Sheltered Housing: average re-let time in days (standard re-lets)	64	23	
Percentage satisfaction of new tenants following 6 months in a property	88.59%	95%	

Satisfaction surveys are reviewed and any with negative feedback are followed up to ensure any outstanding issues are resolved and reflected upon to identify areas where our procedures can be improved.

The data indicated that negativity centred around the condition of a property at sign up and consequent repairs - we have reviewed our processes to ensure all works are completed and the tenant is satisfied. Our performance during quarter 4 was within target.



## Resident Engagement



We are here to listen to and support our residents enabling them to make the most of their local communities and help with continual improvements to their neighbourhoods. Improvements not only in the services they receive, but in creating new opportunities to benefit all.

The team are delighted to announce our new team member Jasmine. Jasmine is very excited to get to know her communities and encourage customer involvement.



Your Resident Engagement Team, Kate, Jasmine, Caz and Rob

## Community Events



## Tenants enjoying the cookery courses.

The Resident Engagement (RE) team have been providing cookery courses for tenants as part of our Healthy Living Plan. We have worked alongside the Pantry Partnership, ABC Cook and Phunky Foods to provide courses and workshops across our estates. We are also providing regular on-line cookery sessions for those who are unable to get out and about. Learning how to cook healthy low-cost meals has come at just the right time with the cost-of-living crisis impacting our communities.

A fabulous time was had at our first Phunky Foods cookery course held at the Bemerton Heath Centre. Tenants were able to cook up a storm with cook Jaquie creating a main meal and pudding for themselves just in time for lunch.

This free 6-week course is perfect for all ages and covers healthy eating tips, not to mention a chance to make new friends!

## Digital Engagement

With our commitment to get customers connected digitally the team provide iHousing support along with one-to-one sessions to ensure that no one misses out. Hardware can be an issue and we work closely with partners to enable provision at no cost to our customers. Our weekly on-line quiz is a hit and has encouraged those who are isolated to make new connections and even venture out to meet their fellow quizzers in person!

## Housing Matters Newsletter and Magazine

Our Monthly Newsletter continues to be popular with up to 200 tenants entering our free monthly food hamper draw in each edition. The Newsletter goes out to 75% of our customers and contains important landlord messages. We provide the opportunity to enter competitions as

a way of encouraging engagement including our up-coming garden competition being judged by the Allotment Society.



The yearly bumper edition of our Housing Matters magazine has hit the doormats of over 5,800 households. We continue to produce this hard copy magazine to ensure that we are reaching all our customers especially those who are not digitally capable.

Some of the lucky winners of our hampers

## Estate Inspections

Our monthly estate inspections continue providing an opportunity for residents to join the walk about, helping officers to identify issues and ways to improve their communal areas.

## Social Groups

The team continue to support the creation of social groups and associations bringing local communities together to combat isolation. Success stories include men's groups and warm spaces.

## Small Improvement Bids (SIB's)

We continue to provide our Small Improvement Bid opportunity supporting our customers to apply for up to £10,000, to make specific

improvements to their local area. Improvements so far include, garden furniture, planters, green houses, pergolas, garden sheds, summer houses and play equipment.

The SIB scheme gives you more control over how money is spent and ensures it goes where you want.



A few of the communal garden improvements completed with funding from SIB's

We are looking forward to working with and meet more of our customers this summer at our event stands across the county. We continue to work with our tenants to encourage them to help us shape and improve our services whilst providing value for money.

If you would like to become involved or find out more about future events, please contact our Resident Engagement Team.

**The team contact details are:**

**Phone: 0300 456 0117 – option 5**

**Email: [tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk)**

## Challenge and Change Group

Volunteer tenants and leaseholders get together regularly to review what Housing Services do and how we do it. This is how the group scrutinises our work, as the Regulatory Standards empower them to, and they report to a sub-committee of the Housing Board or directly to the main Housing Board, whichever is best given the topic they have looked at. We get a great external customer focused view of our work, which helps us make them even better for our residents and their families.

Over the last year, the Group completed taking its Sheltered Housing paper through the Housing Board and looked at Decant and then Anti-Social Behaviour. As this was a quite a difficult topic which required going into a lot of detail, the Group decided to try to focus on less intense projects just in case this was putting other residents off from volunteering.

With a few new members having joined, everyone decided to look at Key Performance Indicators and consider, from a residents' perspective, what was important. A large list of possible measures was passed to the service for consideration and will be discussed with the Housing Board in the future.

Getting back to meeting in-person has helped the Group refocus and add members. Now everyone is looking forward to continuing to challenge the service in a positive way. It can really make a difference to residents and their families. After Key Performance Indicators, the Group intends to look at the Property Services Team, Voids, and Notices of Promise, and then it may look at the Grounds Maintenance Team which should give them a chance to express what residents want the service to develop into.

We are taking a fair and balanced look at these, and it is very interesting. If you would like to get involved, please contact the Resident Engagement Team.

Thank you to a great group of people for volunteering to be part of the group and all residents who help us out by speaking to us, filling out surveys and helping us understand more about how services can be improved.

We would like to thank Housing Services for taking on board so many of our recommendations and implementing them. This is really satisfying to see.

If you'd like to join in as a 'critical friend' of the service by taking an in-depth look at certain parts of the service and then make recommendations about how they could be even better than they already are, please get in touch with the Resident Engagement Team.

## The team contact details are:

**Phone: 0300 456 0117 – option 5**

**Email: [Tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk)**

More information can be found by visiting.

**[www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-hap](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-hap)**

## Moving to Digital



In line with Wiltshire Council’s drive towards a more Digital environment we are continuing to look for ways to move our interactions with our tenants to a digital platform. This not only saves time and improves the speed at which we can communicate it also saves money, which can be reinvested in your homes.

Again, this year we have continued to promote and encourage the usage of our digital services whether that be the use of our online portal ‘iHousing’, emailed rent statements or Resident Engagement updates, such as Housing Matters, wherever possible we have ‘gone digital!’

We now hold valid email addresses of over **75%** of our properties and will continue to work hard to improve this figure over the coming months and years. We also fully appreciate that not everyone will be able to or want to communicate with us digitally and we are continuing to support those tenants in the ways we always have, ensuring continuity for all our tenants.

### iHousing facts and figures

Over <b>46%</b> of our properties have registered
<b>1,800</b> average logins per month
<b>2,096</b> repairs reported online
<b>920</b> rent enquiries made
<b>446</b> client changes made

Our digitisation programme is ongoing, and we are continually working with colleagues to identify, improve and automate as many processes as

we possibly can. Using email and SMS text messaging is continuing to reduce our paper usage and postage costs.

## Complaints

We take all complaints raised with us very seriously and our aim is to deal with complaints and respond to the complainant with the outcome of our investigations within 10 working days from the date of the complaint.

<b>66.7%</b> of complaints completed on time <small>(Figures are based on our council complaints policy of responding within 10 working days)</small>
<b>66.6%</b> of complaints dealt with upheld
<b>6</b> new complaints received
<b>6</b> complaints dealt with
<b>4</b> of the complaints dealt with were upheld

## STAR Survey

In the summer of 2022, we commissioned our bi-annual STAR survey, the survey was sent out to all households, 1,633 tenants completed and returned the survey, representing a 31% response rate.

The survey consisted of series of questions that were grouped into categories, the results of which were analysed and benchmarked against a group of 13 separate Local Authorities and ALMO’s.

## Our results:

Bench mark	2020 result	change over time	2022 result	Question	Question source
78%	81%	↓	77%	satisfaction overall	STAR
23	22	↓	18	net promoter score	STAR
75%	77%	↓	75%	quality of home	STAR
81%	83%	↓	80%	safety and security of home	STAR
63%	N.A.	N/A	61%	communal areas well maintained and safe	STAR
81%	87%	↓	83%	rent value money	STAR
72%	73%	↓	69%	repairs and maintenance overall	STAR
79%	78%	↓	74%	last completed repair	STAR
79%	80%	↓	77%	easy to deal with	STAR
63%	60%	↓	58%	listens to views and acts on them	STAR
71%	75%	↓	66%	keeps tenants informed	STAR
56%	63%	↓	56%	approach to handling complaints	STAR
82%	84%	↓	83%	neighbourhood as a place to live	STAR
62%	N.A.	N/A	61%	makes a positive contribution to area	STAR
55%	56%	↓	55%	dealing with ASB	STAR

statistically significant improvement  
 no statistically significant change  
 statistically significant decline

The survey results were slightly down compared to our results in 2020, although disappointing, this was in keeping with the sector and believed to be partly connected to the current economic climate.

We are working on several initiatives which we hope will help to improve our figures in future surveys. From 2023 we will be conducting annual surveys, and these will be sent to 50% of our tenants each year, ensuring that every tenant has a chance to complete a survey bi-annually.

Information about Wiltshire Council services can be made available on request in other languages including BSL and formats such as large print and audio.

Please contact the council by telephone 0300 456 0100, by textphone 01225 712500, or email [customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk)

如果有需要我們可以使用其他形式（例如：大字體版本或者錄音帶）或其他語言版本向您提供有關威爾特郡政務會各項服務的資訊。敬請與政務會聯繫，電話：0300 456 0100，文本電話：(01225) 712500，或者發電子郵件至：[customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Na życzenie udostępniamy informacje na temat usług oferowanych przez władze samorządowe hrabstwa Wiltshire (Wiltshire Council) w innych formatach (takich jak dużym drukiem lub w wersji audio) i w innych językach. Prosimy skontaktować się z władzami samorządowymi pod numerem telefonu 0300 456 0100 lub telefonu tekstowego (01225) 712500 bądź za pośrednictwem poczty elektronicznej na adres: [customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk)

وہاں کے لوگوں (Wiltshire Council) کی سروس کے بارے میں دوسری زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے (جیسے کہ بڑی چھاپی یا آڈیو) اور دوسری زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔ براہ کرم کوئل سے 0300 456 0100 پر رابطہ کریں، ٹیکسٹ فون سے (01225) 712500 پر رابطہ کریں یا [customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk) پر ای میل بھیجیں۔

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