



ANNUAL REPORT

Housing Services

September 2012

www.chesterfield.gov.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Who is this from?

Your landlord, Chesterfield Borough Council, has produced this report. You can contact us at:

Housing Services
Town Hall
Rose Hill
Chesterfield
S40 1LP

Email: jayne.yates@chesterfield.gov.uk
Telephone: 01246 345432



WELCOME FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

The Communications Group is a group of tenants who contribute to and comment on all Housing Services' publications. We would like to welcome you to Chesterfield Borough Council's Annual Report which was prepared by Housing Services in partnership with tenants.

Last year's report was independently reviewed by a focus group of tenants who were not involved in the production of the report. We used their comments to decide on the contents and design of this year's report.

The report is divided into colour coded sections that reflect the social housing regulator's standards.

Tenant participation is key to the Council delivering excellent services to all of its customers. We are looking forward to continuing our partnership working with Housing Services to improve services and develop customer involvement. We would like to encourage tenants to get involved in making Housing Services better.

We hope that you find the Report useful and interesting. Please complete the short survey at the end of the report to let us have your comments and any suggestions on how it could be improved.

The Communications Group



It is important that we continue to work together to improve our services and the neighbourhoods in which we live. The Annual Report is a positive example of how tenants are working together with us to improve Housing Services. I would like to thank the Communications Group for their hard work on behalf of Chesterfield's tenants in producing this Report.

It is essential that we are accountable to our tenants and for this we depend on your continued feedback.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all our staff who deliver the Housing Service on our behalf, and go that extra mile to improve and deliver a better Housing Service.

Councillor McManus, Executive Member for Housing

CORE VALUES

The mission for the Chesterfield's Housing Service is:

'Creating sustainable and accessible communities – where people are proud to live now and aspire to live in the future.'

Our vision is:

'We will work together with our residents and partners to create fair access to high quality, sustainable, decent and affordable homes and communities.'

Our objectives have been shaped through consultation with our customers, through findings and recommendations provided by external inspections and through identifying key priorities for contributing to the Community Strategy and Chesterfield's Housing Strategy.

Our key objectives are to:

- Achieve, as a minimum, the Decent Homes Standard for all Council properties by 2015
- Increase tenant satisfaction and opportunities for involvement in decision-making
- Ensure residents can enjoy their homes and communities without the fear of crime and anti social behaviour
- Provide a high quality housing management service, in terms of cost, efficiency and service delivery
- Provide a high performing, cost effective repairs and maintenance service
- Deliver services fairly and recognise equality of opportunity and choice





KEY SERVICE STANDARDS

We are committed to delivering excellent services to all of our customers and aim to continuously improve.

Our Key Service Standards are to:

- Make safe all emergency repairs within 24 hours and complete a full repair within five days, dependant on the type of repair required and availability of specialist parts
- Complete all urgent repairs within five working days
- Complete all routine responsive repairs within 20 working days
- Attend all appointments made for responsive repairs where access into your home is required
- Answer all telephone calls within 20 seconds
- Respond to all answer phone messages within one working day (24 hours)
- Reply to all letters within 20 working days (full response)
- Respond to complaints within 15 working days (full response)
- Acknowledge all emails within one working day and give a full response within 15 working days
- Ensure all properties let meet Chesterfield's Lettable Standard
- Respond to all serious ASB or hate crime reports within one working day (24 hours) and all other cases of anti social behaviour within five working days
- Always wear identification badges and show them to customers when we meet them.



INTRODUCTION

Chesterfield Borough Council's Housing Service is responsible for the day-to-day management and repair of over 9,600 houses, flats, maisonettes and bungalows across 24 estates. It is also responsible for planned maintenance and improvement and modernisation programmes to meet targets set by the Government under the Decent Homes Standard.

We have asked our tenants about what matters most to them and they said:

- Repairs and maintenance and the overall quality of your home
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour and your neighbourhood as a place to live
- Value for money for your rent
- Keeping tenants informed and taking tenants' views into account

We are already tackling these issues. This year we have:

- Reviewed tenant involvement opportunities and updated our Customer Involvement Agreement
- Renewed the vehicle fleet to be greener and more fuel efficient
- Launched the sub-regional choice-based lettings scheme
- Improved the way that we deal with complaints of anti-social behaviour and achieved results that place us among the top performers in the country
- Spent our Estate Improvement Budget by working with tenants at Area Panels
- Achieved high levels of customer satisfaction across the service
- Improved value for money and efficiency savings
- Maintained European Standard Telecare Services Accreditation for Careline

In the year ahead we are planning to:

- Fully meet the requirements of the revised Respect ASB Charter for Housing
- Increase the scope and value of the Housing Capital Improvement Programme
- Review services and implement changes required following the enactment of the Localism Act 2011 and the welfare reform changes
- Proactively assist households who are facing difficulty to move to alternative accommodation through the choice-based letting scheme or by mutual exchange
- Retain the Derbyshire Support and Accommodation Team contract for Warden Services including Careline Service
- Retain the Telecare Services Association accreditation
- Identify sites for new council housing

You will find more details of these plans inside this report.



HOW WELL ARE WE DOING?

To ensure that the services we deliver are efficient, effective and meet the needs and demands of our tenants, we constantly monitor how we are doing in all our service areas.

We monitor our performance through performance indicators which cover a range of housing services. We also measure customer satisfaction performance as this tells us which service areas are most important to you. We use this feedback, along with further consultation, to make improvements.

We 'benchmark' performance information which means that we compare ourselves to other organisations. Benchmarking helps us to understand performance and costs so that we can improve the quality and value for money of the services that we deliver to you.

HouseMark is a subsidiary of the Chartered Institute of Housing and the National Housing Federation. We use HouseMark to compare ourselves with over 950 other members including local authorities, ALMOs, housing associations and housing co-operatives.

This report is a true picture of how Housing Services are performing against the social housing regulator's standards. It tells you about what the Council have been doing and what it is going to do to make services better.

The report tells you how we have performed from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

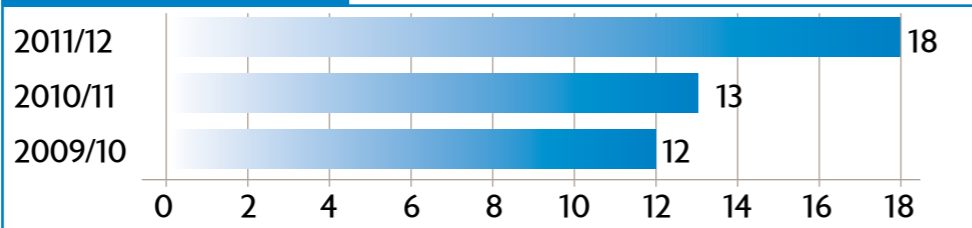
Number of homes we own and manage as at 31 March 2012 – 9682

Finances have been approved to look at the development of some new Council houses. Over the next twelve months suitable sites and designs will be identified.

After talking to tenants about the future of our community rooms, the rooms at Blandford Drive, Glossops Croft and Chantry Avenue were converted into two bedroomed bungalows. Each has a spacious design with high levels of energy efficiency, ramped access and wide doors for tenants who may require mobility aids.

Work is planned to convert a further three rooms in the next 12 months.

Number of homes sold



HOW WELL ARE WE DOING ON TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND CUSTOMER CARE?

We are committed to delivering excellent services to all of our customers and aim to continuously improve. Tenant involvement is at the heart of all that we do.

Where appropriate, we consult tenants on:

- Any decision we make which will affect your home or neighbourhood
- How we monitor services and improvement plans
- How our services can be improved
- Estate improvement projects

Tenants are the people best placed to tell us about the services that they want to receive. Tenants give us their views through surveys, meetings, focus groups, service review groups, feedback and complaints.

We encourage all tenants to tell us how they want to be involved and what they want to be included in. We have structures in place to enable you to participate at whatever level you choose.

Local Offers

Local offers are service standards or targets for improvement. They help us to deliver services to address local issues and in a way that is more flexible to meet particular needs.

During January 2012 we held a local offers consultation event at the Winding Wheel which was attended by 65 tenants. There were six workshops including repairs, anti-social behaviour, estate services, tenant participation, adaptations and On the Move. The workshops gave tenants an opportunity to comment and tell us how we can improve the services we provide. Tenants considered each service area in detail and told us what should be included in the local offers.

We will measure our performance against the local offers and tell you how we are doing in future Annual Reports.

Our local offers to date have focused on service standards across the service. We will be consulting tenants again in January 2013 about 2013/14's local offers. These are likely to focus more on service improvements.





We are normally available from 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday. The phone lines are open at these times with an out-of-hours emergency service for repairs. You can email us at any time. (Please note some offices are closed until 10.00am on Wednesdays for training.)

Key achievements in 2011/12:

- Reviewed our tenant participation opportunities
- Produced a Customer Involvement Agreement
- Consulted tenants on the Estate Improvement Budget at Area Panels
- Improved information provided through our website and newsletters



Due to the extensive consultation required, implementation of tenant scrutiny roles, introduction of a mobile office and a Tenant Resource Centre which were planned for 2011/12 have been delayed. Work on these projects is well underway and they are priorities for 2012/13.

Customer feedback is used to improve the services that we provide to you. A centralised electronic system is used to record complaints, letters and enquiries. Our performance in dealing with electronic enquiries remains high, well above the Council's Customer Charter target. Our performance on responding to complaints has improved but is slightly below the Council's Customer Charter target of 94%. We have reviewed our procedures for tracking letters and complaints to improve performance.



Complaints responded to within 15 working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	91%	94%	x	✓
2010/11	88.05%	94%	x	x
2009/10	94%	94%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 94%. This is the target set by the Council's Customer Charter.

Letters responded to within 20 working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	93%	94%	x	x
2010/11	97.73%	94%	✓	x
2009/10	98.19%	94%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 94%. This is the target set by the Council's Customer Charter.



Electronic enquiries responded to within 20 working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	98.2%	94%	✓	✓
2010/11	83.33%	94%	x	x
2009/10	95%	94%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 94%. This is the target set by the Council's Customer Charter.

Planned improvements for 2012/13 are:

- To implement tenant scrutiny in line with guidance from the social housing regulator
- To appoint an additional Tenant Participation Officer to support tenant scrutiny
- To increase the number of tenants who are actively involved in tenant participation activities through Area Panels, Tenant Executive, tenant scrutiny, mystery shopping and customer forums
- To provide appropriate training opportunities to assist tenant representatives to be effective in their roles
- To introduce a mobile office enabling more consultation to be done locally
- To establish a Tenant Resource Centre





HOW WELL ARE WE DOING ON MAINTAINING YOUR HOME?

It is a Government requirement that all our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard. This means that homes must be warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities.

To ensure that as many homes as possible meet the standard in Chesterfield we have continued to carry out work to the worst properties first.



We have introduced a new computer system to hold all of our stock condition information. This provides more accurate details about which properties are decent, when they will require work and what kind of work is needed to make them decent.

We have externally insulated and re-rendered 71 'non traditional' properties at Mastin Moor to ensure that they are warmer and better insulated. We plan to insulate many more properties in both this area and Grangewood in the next 12 months.



The number of homes that meet the Government's Decent Home Standard as a percentage of our total housing stock

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	80.08%	83%	✗	✓
2010/11	80.02%	83%	✗	✓
2009/10	79.34%	81%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 85%

We aim to provide you with a good quality repairs service at all times. This is being achieved as evidenced in the performance levels and tenant satisfaction in this section. 2011/12 has seen a number of challenging key performance indicators being met for the first time. We have reviewed our performance targets to help us to maintain this high level of performance.



The Council is responsible for the majority of repairs to your home. We aim to keep your home structurally sound, in a decent condition and containing suitable systems to keep it adequately heated. We ask that you take care of your home and repair any damage caused by you, your household or visitors. We also ask that you carry out certain small repairs such as filling minor decorative cracks.

If you need to report a repair, you can do so by contacting the Repair Hotline on freephone 0800 587 5659 during office hours. You can report repairs at any time by emailing repair.requests@chesterfield.gov.uk or by following the online instructions on the Homes section of our website at www.chesterfield.gov.uk



To help tenants who work irregular hours or who are normally out during the day to plan for their repairs to be carried out, we offer an appointment for most repairs. The appointment will be for either the morning or afternoon on the day of your choice. Evening and Saturday appointments are available. Your appointment will be confirmed by a repair receipt, which will be sent to you through the post. We will also send a text message to your mobile, or a voicemail message to your landline, to remind you.



Making appointments reduces the number of occasions where tenants do not know when we will call. It will also avoid us having to make a second visit if you are out when we call.

We give every repair a category and target timescale.

Priority	Target	Repair examples
Emergency	Attend within one hour Make safe within 24 hours Complete within five working days	Burst pipes, gas leaks, blocked toilets or drains, dangerous electrical wiring, no heating, no hot water, no lights
Urgent	Complete within five working days	Overflow running, toilet leaks, faulty light switches, sockets, repairs to heating, door locks
Priority	Complete within 15 working days	Repairs which are not classed as urgent but are considered to be more immediate than routine
Routine	Complete within 20 working days	Things that we must put right that do not cause a risk to your health and safety
Programmed	Some non-urgent repairs are best carried out by doing the same type of work to several properties	UPVC windows, fencing, paths





The Council operates an out-of-hours emergency system to deal with genuine emergencies that might arise outside normal working hours. To report an emergency repair, outside office hours or at the weekend, ring our emergency number 01246 345041.

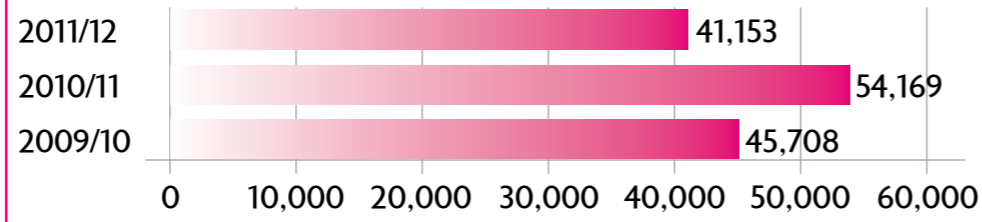
It is a legal requirement for the Council to carry out yearly checks on gas systems. If access is not given to us, we must take legal action to allow us to do so.

Key achievements in 2011/12:

- Renewed the vehicle fleet to be greener and more fuel-efficient. Our vehicles are now more identifiable for tenants as we have incorporated Destination Chesterfield logos into the livery design
- Introduced a 'right first time' key performance indicator
- Used the Repairs Focus Group to consult tenants about the review of responsive repairs target timescales
- Established a project group to review and recommend a new IT system to improve repairs reporting and communication with tenants. We hope to introduce the new system in 2013

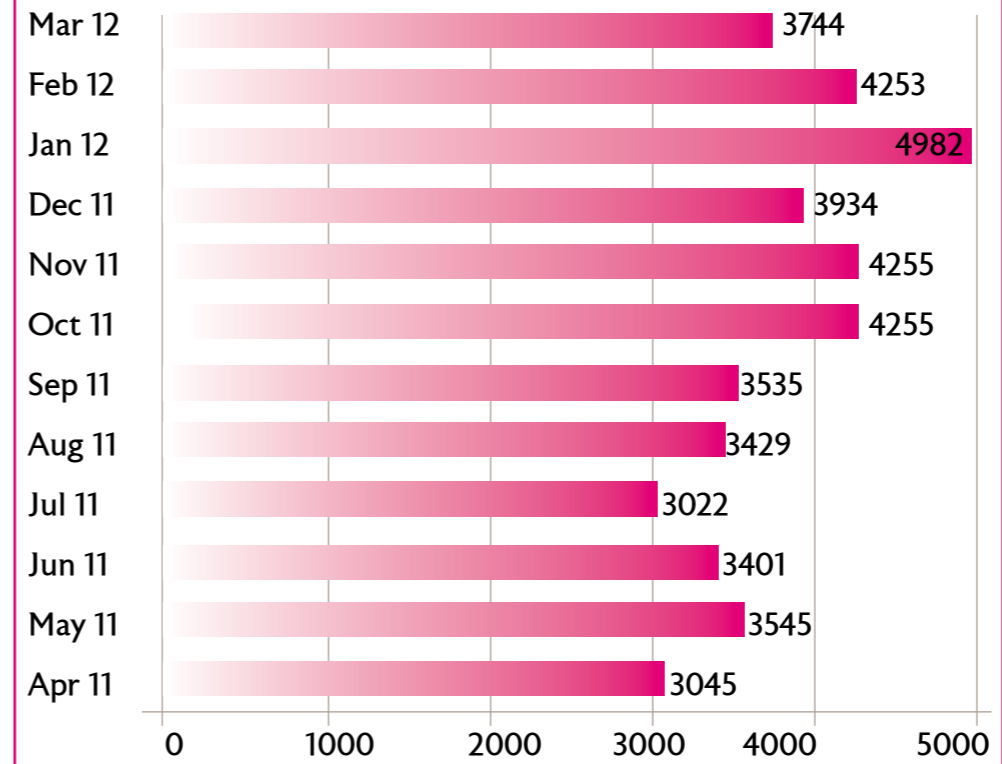


Number of calls answered by the Repairs Hotline



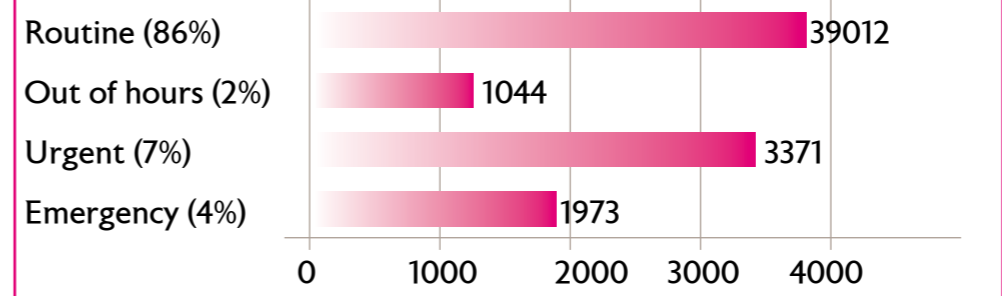
The number of calls answered in 2011/12 has reduced to a level similar to 2009/10. 2010/11 had higher levels due to the severe weather throughout the winter period.

Number of Responsive Repairs

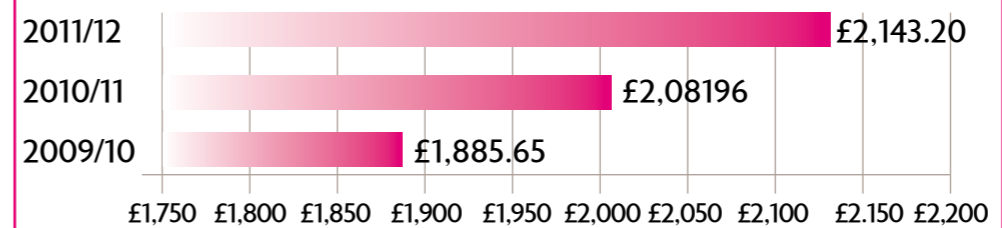


There is a seasonal variation with Autumn and Winter usually commanding a higher number of repairs due to adverse weather and heating systems being operational.

Repairs by Priority Category



Average spent per property on responsive repairs and capital works (improvements)





The average amount spent per property on responsive repairs and capital works has increased due to the increased investment on the capital programme to help deliver the Decent Homes Standard.

The percentage of emergency repairs made safe within 24 hours

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	100%	99%	✓	✓
2010/11	96.48%	99%	✗	✗
2009/10	97.92%	98%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 100%



The percentage of urgent repairs completed within five working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	99.61%	98%	✓	✓
2010/11	95.61%	98%	✗	✓
2009/10	93.66%	98		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 98%



The percentage of routine repairs completed within 20 working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	99.86%	98%	✓	✓
2010/11	96.65%	98%	✗	✓
2009/10	95.23%	98%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 98%

The percentage of repairs where an appointment was made and kept

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	92.35%	90%	✓	✗
2010/11	93.63%	88%	✓	✓
2009/10	87.3%	75%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 90%



The percentage of hotline calls answered within 20 seconds

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	78.74%	80%		✗

New target

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 90%

Repairs calls are now handled by arvato, the Council's public/private partnership. Call handling performance in the latter half of the year improved considerably and our targets for 2012/13 reflect this.

Gas servicing completed on schedule

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	100%	100%	✓	✓
2010/11	98.71%	100%	✗	✗
2009/10		99.3%	100%	

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 100%

Customers receiving a repair who were satisfied overall

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	92%	88%	✓	same
2010/11	92%	86%	✓	✓
2009/10	85.15%	82%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 88%

Planned improvements for 2012/13 are:

- To implement new IT system to improve working methods and improve how we communicate with tenants
- To increase the Capital Improvement Programme
- Continued in depth consultation with the Repairs Focus Group
- Review performance targets in consultation with tenants

Adaptations Service

The Housing Solutions Adaptations Team at Chesterfield Borough Council work with Social Services to look at ways of adapting properties to meet tenants' needs both now and in the future. Housing adaptations can enable tenants to remain in their own home for as long as it is safe and reasonable to do so.

Key achievements in 2011/12:

- Continuous improvement in performance in dealing with major adaptation requests – from the referral being received to the order being completed
- Achieved consistently high levels of customer satisfaction throughout the adaptation process
- Produced new information leaflets for tenants and their families about the Adaptation Service

We will continue to consult tenants about the Adaptations Service through our Adaptation Users Forum. The aim of the Forum is to use tenants' own experiences of the using the service to drive service improvements.



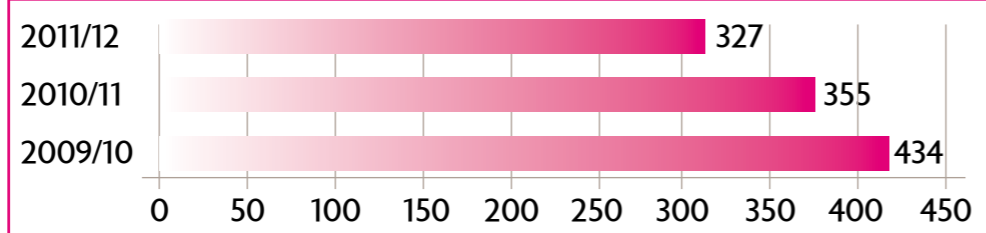


Examples of minor adaptations include internal or external grab rails, fitting of lever taps to sinks or baths, providing additional stair rails, providing hand rails and installing door entry systems.

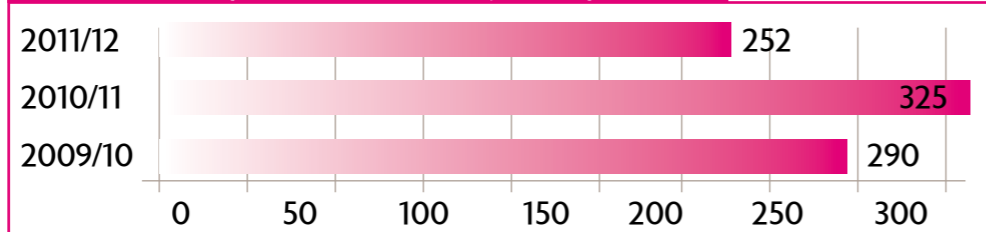
Examples of major adaptations include level access showers, providing ramped access, installing stair lifts and providing wheelchair accessible kitchens.



Number of requests made for minor adaptations



Number of requests made for major adaptations

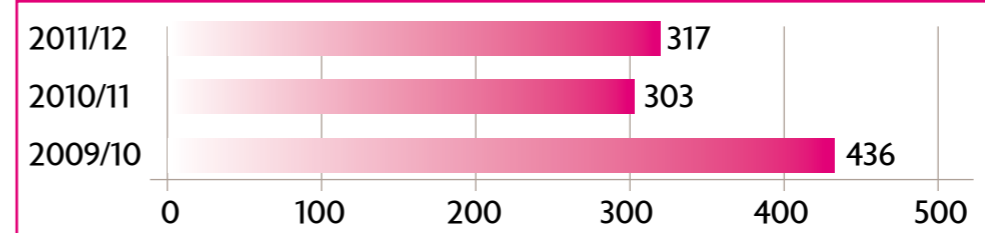


There appears to be a fall in demand for major and minor adaptations. However, the number of referrals made to the service is ultimately determined by Social Services' referral criteria. Social Services use strict criteria for all adaptation requests due to consistently high demand for adaptations.

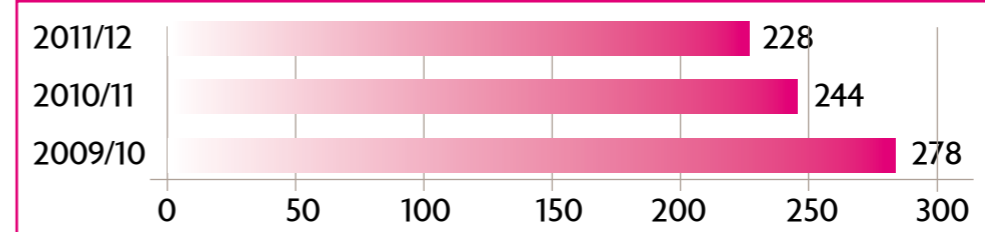
Our aim is to keep people in their homes for as long as practically possible. We also seek to make the best use of the Council's Housing stock rather than adapt properties which are not suitable. We actively work with tenants who require adaptations to be carried out to their home to assess which option is right for them. This may involve assisting the tenant to move to a more suitable property or a property which is more adaptable for their long-term needs.

We were unable to carry out a number of disabled adaptations that were requested during 2011/12 due to the property being unsuitable. These tenants took the opportunity to move to more suitable properties, some of which had already been adapted. This was achieved through the close working relationship between the Adaptations Team and the Housing Solutions Team.

Number of minor adaptations completed



Number of major adaptations completed



The average number of days taken to complete minor works (from the order being placed)

Year	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	1.02	2	✓	✓
2010/11	1.05	2	✓	same
2009/10	1.05	2		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 2 days. This is the target specified in the current adaptations contract.

The majority of minor works are completed on the same day. However, there are exceptions where another contractor needs to carry out part of the work. Our excellent performance has been maintained through partnership working with our contractors.

The average number of days taken to complete major works (from the order being placed)

Year	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	4.46	5	✓	✓
2010/11	5.03	5	x	x
2009/10	4.41	5		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 5 days. This is the target specified in the current adaptations contract.

The adaptations contractor's performance has improved in 2011/12. This has contributed to our improved performance in completing major works as well as the continued high level of customer satisfaction with the Adaptations Service.



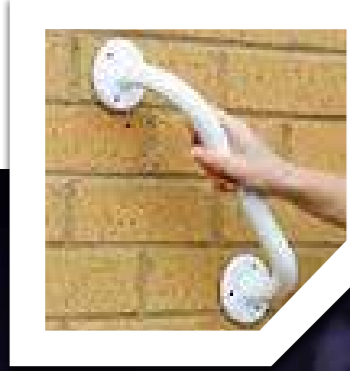
Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the Adaptations Service

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	96.5%	95%	✓	✗
2010/11	96.9%	95%	✓	✗
2009/10	98.1%	95%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 95%

Planned improvements for 2012/13 are:

- To update the Adaptations Service section of the Council's website to provide additional information and links to new publicity information
- To carry out a review of the internal processes involved following acceptance of a major adaptation to improve service delivery
- To provide a responsive minor adaptations service in certain circumstances



HOW WELL ARE WE DOING ON ALLOCATING HOMES?

Allocating Homes

The Housing Solutions Centre offers advice on a wide range of issues related to finding and allocating properties.

Chesterfield Borough Council operates a choice based lettings scheme. Eligible applicants are entitled to bid on vacant properties that are advertised through 'On the Move'.

The Council's Allocations and Transfer Policy works by applicants being placed in the following bands:

- **BAND 1** – applicants with severe/urgent needs for re-housing
- **BAND 2** – applicants with high housing needs
- **BAND 3** – applicants with low housing needs
- **BAND 4** – applicants with no housing needs

We can provide help and assistance if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness. We will be able to advise you in person, by phone or by email.

We may arrange temporary accommodation if you have nowhere you can safely stay and if you have a 'Priority Need for Accommodation'. For example, you may have a child living with you.

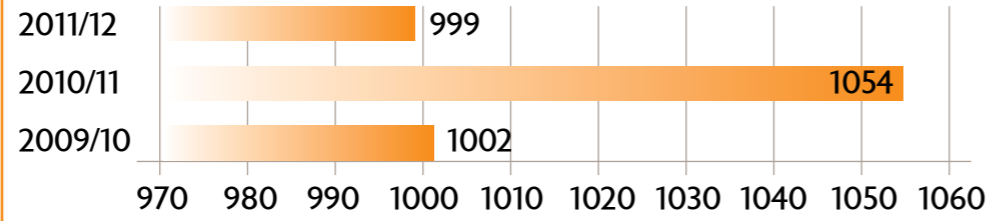
Key achievements in 2011/12:

- Changes to the Allocations Policy have been made to make best use of housing stock, maximising customer choice and assisting households in most need such as overcrowded households and those at risk of homelessness
- The sub-regional choice based lettings scheme was launched in September with Bolsover District Council, A1 Housing/Bassetlaw District Council, Rykneild Homes/North East Derbyshire District Council.
- Reviewed and updated the Housing Register Application Form to include more information
- Reviewed and updated the Medical Disability Assessment Form
- Reviewed and updated the Tenancy Termination Form to provide more detailed reasons for ending tenancies to enable us to identify areas where changes to our service may be required
- Reviewed and updated the Pre-allocation Enquiry Form to include more detailed information that will identify any assistance required with regard to disabilities, Housing Benefit and Tenancy Support





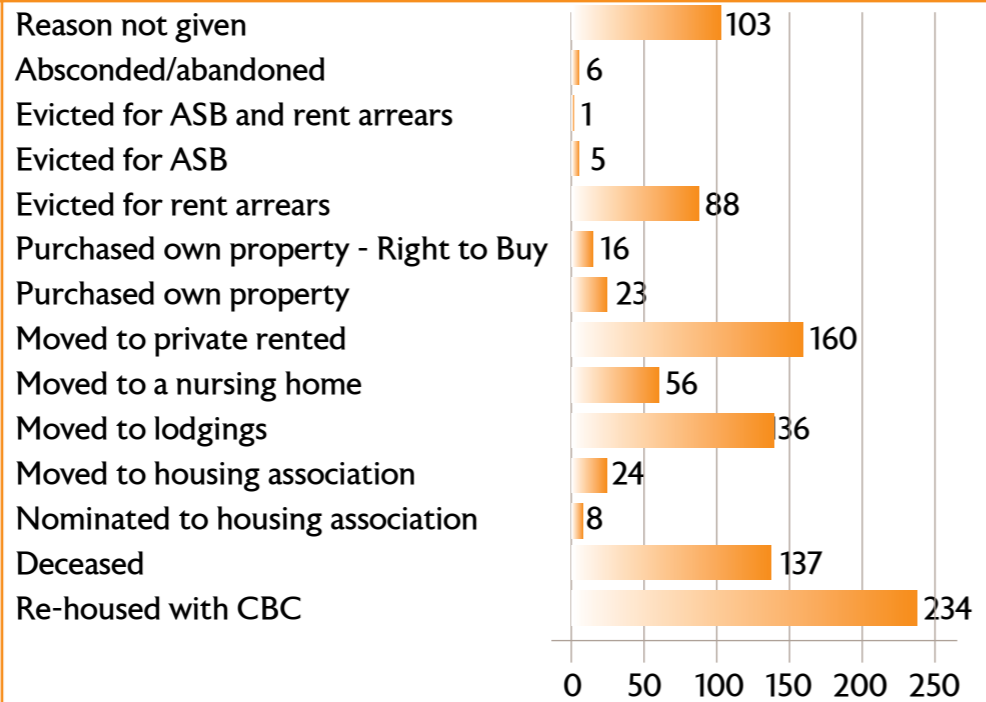
Number of properties let



The number of properties available to let each year remains constant at around 1000 properties per year.



Tenancies terminated



88 tenants were evicted for non-payment of rent despite being offered advice and assistance to prevent this from happening.

Five tenants were evicted for anti-social behaviour despite being given the opportunity to remedy their behaviour.

To meet our Lettable Standard, each home had all of the repairs completed before the new tenant moved in and had been thoroughly cleaned. Every new tenant received a 'Welcome Pack' which is a starter pack that includes some of the essential items needed when moving into a new home. Where appropriate the new tenant received a decoration allowance to assist with decoration.



The number of calendar days taken to complete repairs to an empty home

Year	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	18.97	17.5	x	x
2010/11	17.45	19	✓	x
2009/10	18.94	19		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 17.5 calendar days

Good performance has been maintained overall in respect of repairs to empty homes. However, there was a high number of properties that required more substantial major works before they could be relet and this has slightly inflated the average turnaround time for the year. Excluding major works the performance would have been 16.75 days.

A number of teams within the service impact on the performance of this key indicator and we are committed to working together to meet this target in 2012/13.

The percentage of rent lost through empty homes

Year	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	1.08%	1.1%	✓	x
2010/11	0.99%	1.25%	✓	✓
2009/10	1.19%	1.7%		

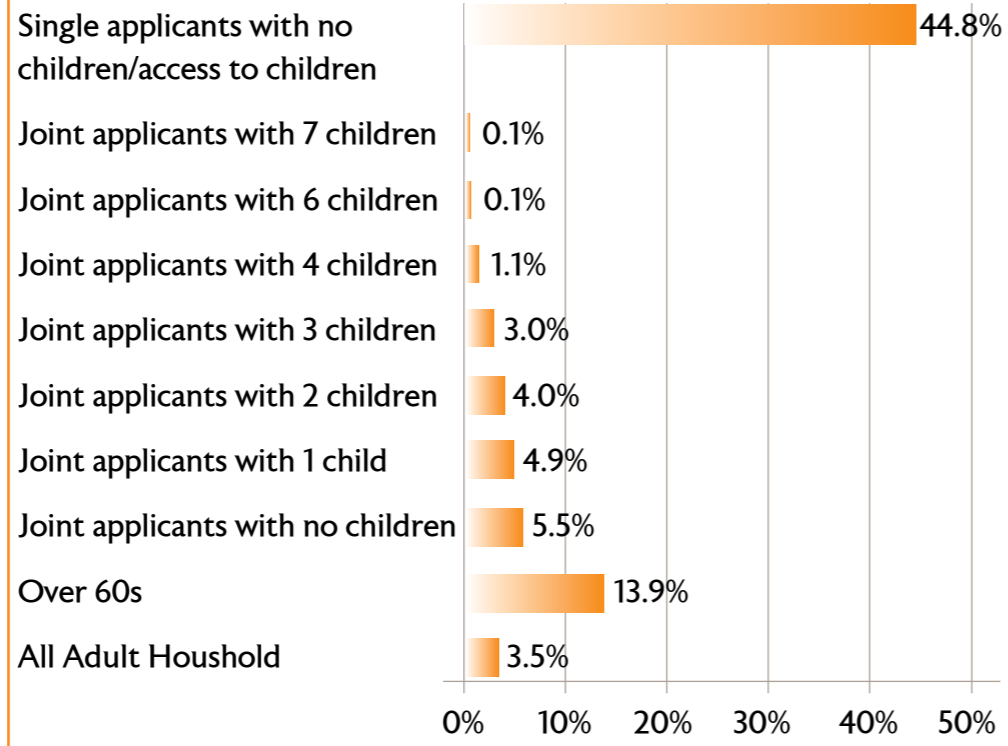
We have set our target for 2012/13 at 1%

The 2011/12 target of 1.1% was extremely challenging and demonstrates the effectiveness of the procedures we have in place to relet empty properties.

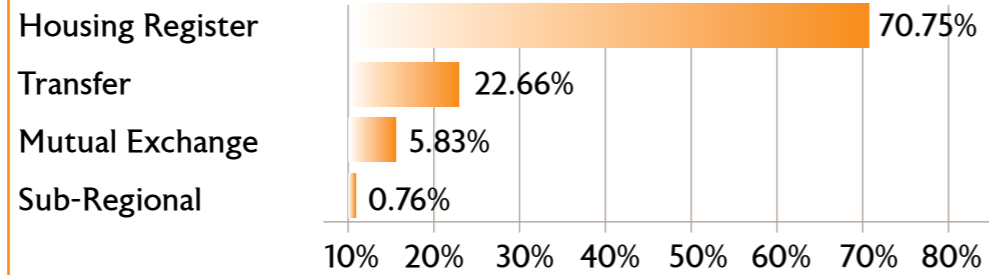




Who we rehoused



Allocations



The sub-regional allocations are where the applicant has come from either Bolsover Council, North East Derbyshire Council or A1 Housing (Bassetlaw).

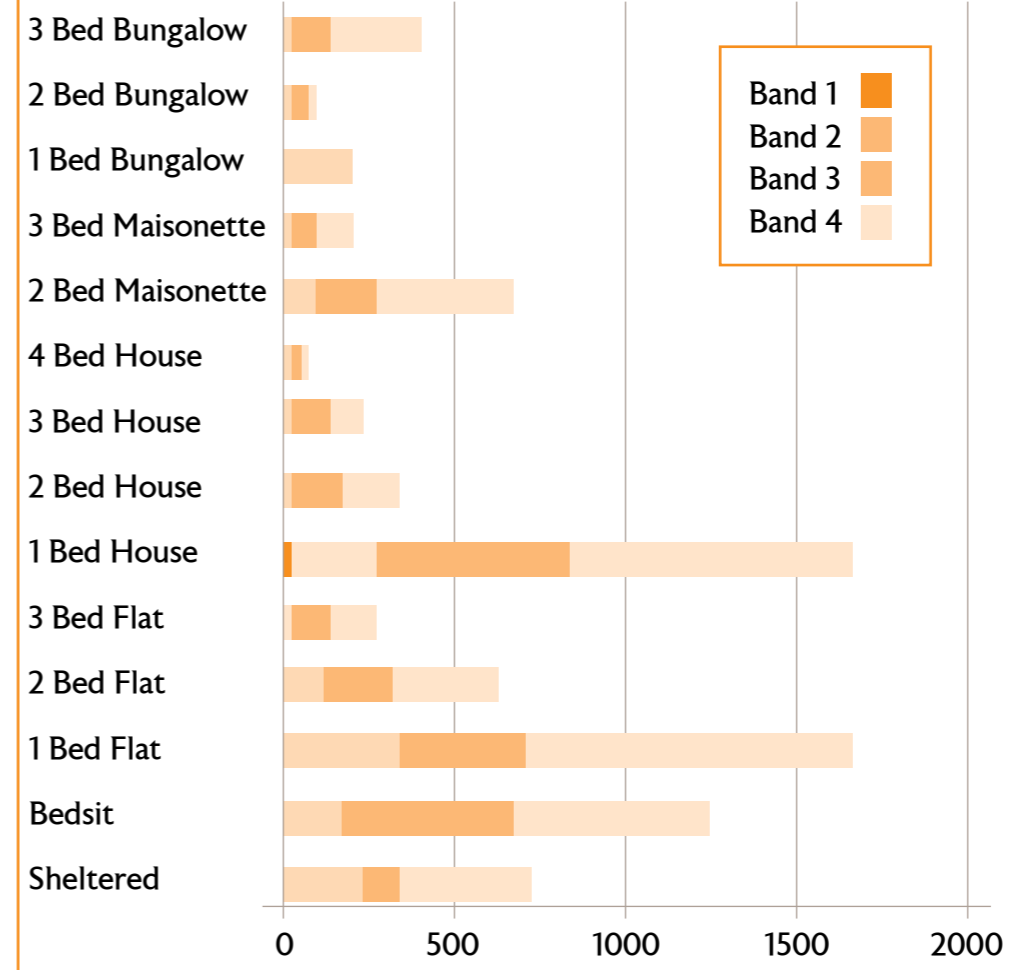
The number of days to register a housing application

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	5.31	5	✗	✓
2010/11	6.08	10	✓	✓
2009/10	10.83	10		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 5 days

An extremely challenging target of 5 days, reduced from 10 days, was set for 2011/2012. We were very close to meeting this target, despite a large increase in the number of applications received, and we are confident that we will meet this target in 2012/13.

Applicants on the Housing Register at 31/3/12 and the property types they are eligible for



The total number of live applications i.e. households wanting to move, on 31st March 2012 was 2630. On 31st March 2011 it was 1853 which represents an increase in applications of 27.46%.

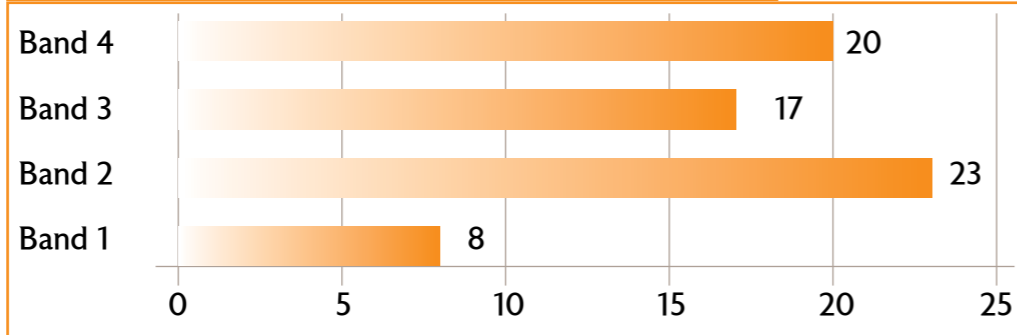
The highest numbers of applications are for households wanting to move due to:

- Mortgage/rent too high
- Home unsuitable for medical reasons
- Move to independent living
- Overcrowded/underoccupying
- Relationship breakdown
- Move near family/friends/school

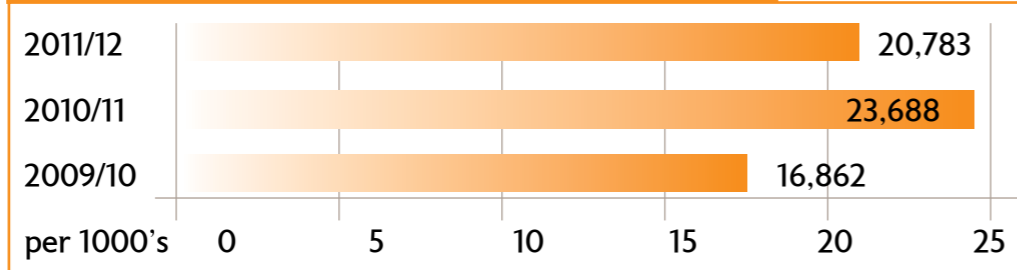




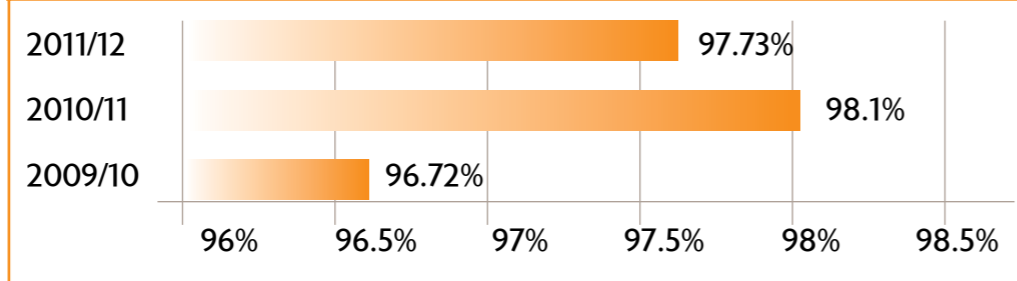
Number of nominations made to housing associations



Number of bids received for properties



Percentage of bids made via the internet



Bidding for properties using the internet remains the most popular method. Internet bids can be made using the computer points in the Housing Solutions Centre. Free access to the internet is also available in libraries.

Planned improvements for 2012/13 are:

- Review the Allocation Policy in accordance with the recently published Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England (2013)
- Implement changes to the Allocation Policy, required following the enactment of the Localism Act 2011 and the welfare reform changes. We will proactively assist households wishing to move to alternative accommodation through the choice-based letting scheme or by mutual exchange
- Appointing an officer to work with tenants who are facing difficulty as a result of welfare reform. The officer will assist tenants to find more suitable, affordable property

Homelessness

Key achievements in 2011/12:

- Maximised resources by using the Homelessness Prevention Grant to assist partner agencies to prevent homelessness
- Assisted and supported people who are attending court facing repossession without legal representation by funding provision of a Court Desk by Chesterfield Law Centre
- Funded Action Housing to provide a Pre-Tenancy Scheme which helps single people to find accommodation
- Assisted people to sustain tenancies by funding Action Housing to administer the Deposit Guarantee Scheme and support tenants
- Increased the number of households obtaining private rented accommodation and deposit guarantees
- Encouraged people who have been homeless or at risk of homelessness to start saving and given them access to safe borrowing by working with Chesterfield Credit Union

The main causes of homelessness in Chesterfield are relationship breakdowns, the ending of assured shorthold tenancies and evictions from friends and family. The increase in the number of assured shorthold tenancies that have ended could be a response to the changes to the Local Housing Allowance. Homelessness arising from mortgage arrears remains low.

Number of households who received face to face advice by the Homelessness Prevention Service through appointments and the emergency 'drop-in' service

2011/12	994
2010/11	1134

Number of Households advised following contact via email, council website and referrals from other agencies

2011/12	158
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Number of households accepted a full homelessness duty for

2011/12	95
2010/11	94

The number of 17-18 year olds that were accepted as homeless reduced due to Social Care having primary duty for accommodating this age group. The total number of households that we accepted a full homeless duty for has remained around the same number due to the increase in acceptances from other causes.





Number of households who were threatened with homelessness where service prevented or relieved homelessness

2011/12	240
2010/11	159

There has been an improvement in the monitoring of the number of preventions recorded by partners funded by the Homelessness Prevention Service and an increase in the number of successful prevention cases.

The Homelessness Prevention Team use a combination of homelessness prevention measures including negotiation with families and landlords, mortgage and debt advice, including the mortgage rescue scheme, sanctuary measures for people at risk of violence from ex-partners and the Tenancy Bond Guarantee Scheme.

We provided financial assistance via our Homelessness Prevention Grant to a number of agencies to assist us with our homelessness prevention activities. This included:

- Pathways Day centre - a drop in centre for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- North Derbyshire Furniture Project
- The Pre-tenancy Support Scheme helping single people to secure accommodation primarily in the private sector, though successful has now ended. Partners were invited to add funding to allow the post to become permanent but have declined.
- Stonham's Home Achievement Programme - a training programme that includes providing people with the skills to successfully manage a tenancy has also ended.

We have maintained last year's reduction of households in temporary accommodation and again no families or 16/17 year olds have been placed in bed and breakfast by the team for longer than six weeks.

There is continued partnership working with supported accommodation and floating support providers to provide housing support for vulnerable households within the Borough, with funding mainly from Derbyshire Support and Accommodation Team.

The Homelessness Prevention Team continues working with Derbyshire County Council to ensure safe housing outcomes for 16 and 17 year olds who are threatened with homelessness.

2012/13 will be a challenging year. Welfare Reform, reduction in housing benefit rates, under occupancy of working age tenants (the 'bedroom tax'), increased non-dependant deductions and the impact of extending the shared room rate to under 35 year olds are all likely to increase demand for the Homelessness Prevention Service.

Planned improvements for 2012/13 are:

- To evaluate the impact of Welfare Reform and the Localism Act on homelessness in the Borough and review services
- To maintain low usage of bed and breakfast accommodation by utilising other interim accommodation wherever possible
- Appointing an additional officer to maximise the availability of private sector accommodation
- To work closely with the private sector to prevent homelessness including increasing use of deposit guarantees





HOW WELL ARE WE DOING ON RENTS?

Key achievements in 2011/12:

- Direct debits implemented as a payment method
- Improvements implemented following the review of our arrears policies and procedures, including better communication and closer co-operation of staff assisting vulnerable tenants

The percentage of rent collected is a key performance indicator for the Council's partnership with Avarto.

The percentage of rent collected

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	95.83%	95.27%	✓	✓
2010/11	95.49%	95.27%	✓	✓
2009/10	95.27%	95.50%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 95.27%

Planned improvements for 2012/13 are:

- Extension of direct debits for weekly payers
- Changes to card payments to add other services including Council Tax
- More options for making payments, including internet, telephone and face-to-face improvements
- More information available for tenants on the Council's website

On average our rents increased by 8.75% in line with Central Government guidelines.



HOW WELL ARE WE DOING ON LOOKING AFTER THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNAL AREAS?

Our definition of anti-social behaviour (ASB) is unreasonable conduct which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person and interferes with that person's right to quiet enjoyment of their home.

All our tenants sign a tenancy agreement. If a tenant or a member of a tenant's household or any visitor to a tenant's home is involved in ASB, this breaks the tenancy agreement.

When the tenancy agreement is broken, we can take legal action. This may include a number of actions, including eviction. However, eviction must be used as a last resort, where other actions have failed.

We give our new tenants introductory tenancies (also known as "probationary" tenancies). The purpose of an introductory tenancy is to allow us a year to find out whether a new tenant behaves reasonably. When a tenant's behaviour has been acceptable for a year, the tenant then becomes a secure tenant.

Key achievements in 2011/12:

- Used comments and information from customer satisfaction questionnaires to further improve our ASB service. We achieved all of our customer satisfaction targets and achieved several results that placed us in the top quartile for all social housing providers in England and Wales.
- Improved the information provided to people who report ASB so that it is clear to them what we can and cannot do, and what we need people to do to work with us to resolve the problem
- Worked closely with the Community Safety Partnership's ASB Coordinator to improve the information available, improve the joint response to ASB and identify ASB 'hotspots'
- Increased the percentage of closed cases that are confirmed as being resolved to 95%
- We increased the percentage of case closure questionnaires that are returned to 23% by our Team Leaders attempting to contact everyone whose ASB case was closed. We will continue to work with our customers to look at how we can increase the number of questionnaires received.
- Revised our ASB policies and procedures in consultation with tenants. At a consultation day held in November 2011 tenants





told us that they did not want us to rehouse people who present a high risk of engaging in ASB. The law gives us only a limited ability to refuse to rehouse people and we have limited scope to carry out in depth investigations into an individual's background. Nonetheless, we have improved our procedures for identifying people who have a history of unacceptable behaviour or who may require support to help them conduct their tenancies properly. We have also improved our links with support providers to ensure that support is available to prevent tenants from engaging in ASB.



- Trained our Neighbourhood Rangers to be able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices where dog fouling or littering is witnessed. We issued 3 Notices for littering and 4 for dog fouling. Concern about littering and dog fouling is one of our customers' biggest concerns and issuing Notices is just one of the ways that we try to address this problem.
- We have achieved the majority of the revised Respect ASB Charter for Housing Standards. We will continue to work towards meeting the full requirements in 2012/13 by our Neighbourhood Rangers working with relevant services to play an active role in 'diversionary' projects which are aimed at preventing people from engaging in ASB by providing a better alternative.



In 2011/12 we dealt with 584 ASB cases. This is an increase of 55 cases, just over 10% more than the previous year.

Below are the results of our 2011/12 ASB customer satisfaction surveys. We compared our results to other organisations using HouseMark.

We are pleased that we exceeded all of our targets and achieved results that placed us in the top quartile for all social housing providers in England and Wales for:

- Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the way their ASB complaint was dealt with
- Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the outcome of their ASB complaint
- Customers who rated the time taken for them to be interviewed as good or fair
- Customers who felt that we were always responsive to ASB



Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the way their ASB complaint was dealt with

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	91%	85%	✓	✓
2010/11	81%	75%	✓	✓
2009/10	61%			

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 87%

Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the outcome of their ASB complaint

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	85%	80%	✓	✓
2010/11	76%	70%	✓	✓
2009/10	57%			

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 87%

Customers who found it easy or very easy to contact a member of staff to report a complaint about ASB

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	90%	90%	✓	✓
2010/11	83%	80%	✓	✓
2009/10	75%			

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 90%

Customers who rated the time taken for them to be interviewed as good or fair

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	94%	90%	✓	✓
2010/11	90%	75%	✓	✓
2009/10	68%			

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 90%

In general, the quicker we can respond to a report of ASB, the more likely we are to be able to resolve the problem. We therefore felt that it was important that we should try to improve upon an already good performance by setting a challenging target.

Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied that they were kept informed about what was happening throughout their ASB case

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	87%	85%	✓	✓
2010/11	80%	75%	✓	✓
2009/10	53%			

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 87%





Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the support given to them during their ASB case

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	88%	85%	✓	✓
2010/11	79%	75%	✓	✓
2009/10	52%			

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 88%

We have improved the written information provided to people who report ASB so that it is clear to them what we can and cannot do and what we need people to do to work with us to resolve the problem.



Customers who have made a complaint of ASB would be willing or very willing to report ASB again in the future

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	92%	90%	✓	✓
2010/11	88%	85%	✓	✓
2009/10	82%			

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 90%

The favourable comparisons with other social housing providers in England and Wales, and particularly with those in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire, gives us confidence that we are providing a high quality service that meets the expectations of our customers. We believe that we have achieved these results by taking feedback from our customers very seriously and acting upon our customers' expectations.



For instance, our customers wanted us to support them better and providing better feedback about the progress of their cases was particularly important. Over the past two years, we have therefore stressed to staff the importance of support and feedback so that it becomes integrated into the way we work.



We have been keen participants in a successful nationwide pilot to identify and provide support for victims of ASB who are at particular risk of harm. Along with the Police, Environmental Services and other members of the Community Safety Partnership, we are at the forefront of developing this initiative so that it can be used across the country.

Addressing ASB in neighbourhoods

In 2011/12 we continued to improve our partnership working with the Police Safer Neighbourhoods Teams. The Police provided us with an office at the Birchwood Crescent Police Station which has improved information sharing and our ability to act swiftly to community problems.

We helped set up Kickr SNT, a new diversionary project in the south of the Borough. The football team for local children gives them a supervised activity to keep them occupied and helps them to respect themselves and people in authority. It has been a great success with some of the participants being youngsters who were known to both us and the Police for causing low level ASB.

We felt that in some ASB 'hotspot' areas people were often nervous about approaching our team. We introduced regular estate walkabouts and joint door knocks with the Police.



Cleanliness, appearance and safety of neighbourhoods

Our customers have told us that they want their neighbourhoods to be cleaner and greener. We have an important role to play with this, in partnership with people who live in our neighbourhoods. The main activity of our Neighbourhood Rangers is to inspect land and property to ensure that it remains free of waste, litter and graffiti. They also check that gardens are kept to an acceptable standard and that fire risks in blocks of flats are minimised.

We started various projects in sheltered schemes and blocks of flats in the Staveley area aimed at providing residents with flower beds for tenants to grow garden plants, vegetables and herbs and providing attractive seating areas to encourage neighbours to meet. We want to encourage residents to take ownership of these projects and were helped by local schools and organisations such as Groundwork Creswell, which provides training for people with a variety of special needs.

We have noticed that many of the residents are now more willing to challenge people who allow their dog to foul, or who drop litter or fly-tip, or to let us know so that we can take action against those responsible.





On one estate there had been a long-running problem between several households and their youngsters. Problems included a high amount of littering and damage to fences. We tried a different approach and worked with the Police and the families to help bring about a reduction in tensions between the households by means of a community litter pick. The youngsters who had been involved worked together to improve their own area.

We are now looking forward to the challenge of maintaining and, where possible, improving on our performance in 2012/13.



Planned improvements for 2012/13 are:

- To research good practice to help us to increase the number of returned ASB questionnaires so that we can achieve our target of 40%
- To continue to work at improving our customer satisfaction results and remain amongst the best performing social housing providers in the country
- To reduce the average number of days taken to resolve ASB cases to 55 days. In 2011/12, it took an average of 75 days to resolve ASB cases. A significant reason for this was the closure of cases that had been continuing for a year or more while we were working to resolve the problem. Although this was a considerable improvement on the previous year (average 111 days, therefore an improvement of 32%), we still feel that improvements should be made and we have set a very challenging target for 2012/13.
- To continue working towards meeting all the requirements of the Respect ASB Charter for Housing by becoming involved in diversionary schemes that are aimed at preventing ASB. These schemes may include sports and other recreational activities, improving neighbourhoods with planting and looking after trees and plants and helping people into work and education. Our Neighbourhood Rangers will be at the forefront of this work
- To be a leader in Derbyshire in the continuing development of the ASB Victims First Project aimed at improving the way that we and our community safety partners identify and support ASB victims, particularly those who are at risk of harm
- To be a leader in Derbyshire in a project to evaluate the response of the Community Safety Partnership to the Government's Community ASB Triggers (where victims of ASB can trigger action by the Community Safety Partnership if they have reported ASB repeatedly, but no action has been taken)



- To continue working closely with the Police Safer Neighbourhoods Teams with individual cases and where we have identified ASB 'hotspots', particularly in larger area-based initiatives.
- To make it easier for people to contact us we will produce information to be displayed in communal areas and notice boards to explain what our team does. This will include photos of the team and contact details. This will be piloted in the south of the Borough and may be introduced Borough-wide
- To be involved in developing projects that improve the cleanliness and appearance of our neighbourhoods, particularly where local residents and schools are willing to become involved. This will be through Keep Britain Tidy's Love Where You Live Campaign, working with Spirepride and others. Projects may include residents using suitable land for community gardens and allotments, wildflower planting and litter picking. We will be particularly supportive of projects that encourage co-operation and understanding between the generations.
- To target littering and dog fouling hotspots by carrying out patrols early in the morning and during the evening where necessary. Where appropriate, we will issue Fixed Penalty Notices and publish details of prosecutions. Spirepride helps us with advice, technical support and joint patrols where needed.
- To be involved with the development of the community-based Garden Buds Project in the Holmebrook and Rother wards in the south of the Borough. This aims to put people who cannot maintain their gardens in touch with volunteers who may not have a suitable space, but who want to grow vegetables. The project also aims to encourage groups from the community and local schools to adopt under-used land for planting trees, wildflowers and vegetables. We will identify this type of land and where feasible, provide the land for the project. This should have the additional benefits of putting to use land that would otherwise cost rent-payers to manage, encouraging local people to take a pride in their neighbourhood and provide valuable education for youngsters about growing, cooking and community activism
- To consider community requests for alternative use of land, for example the creation of garden areas accessible by disabled people.



Careline and Wardens Service

Careline is a service available to anyone living within Chesterfield who may consider themselves vulnerable and in need of reassurance and security. At the touch of a button you can speak to our trained operators whenever you need assistance day or night, seven days a week.

The Mobile Warden Service can visit you in your home daily (Monday to Friday) or weekly depending on your need. Mobile Wardens provide a 24-hour emergency response to calls for Telecare assistance via Careline and have specialist equipment to lift anyone who has fallen at home.

Chesterfield Borough Council is working with Derbyshire County Council to provide the Telecare Service to help tenants to live more safely in their home. We can provide discreet sensors which can be tailored to meet personal needs. These could include sensors that detect if you have had a fall, carbon monoxide or gas emissions and flooding.

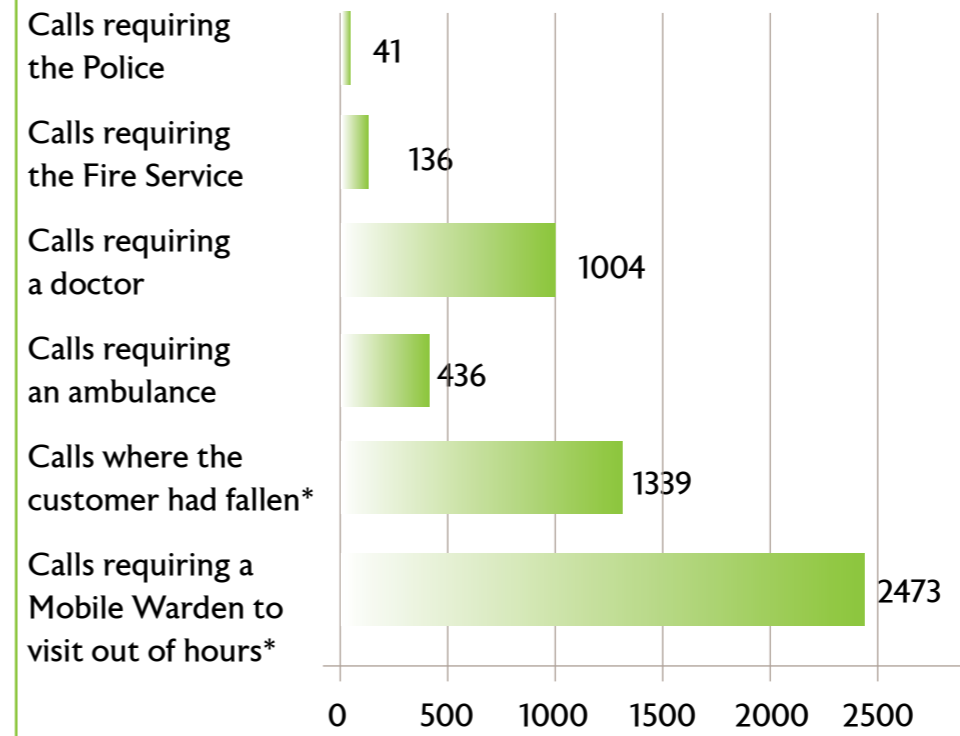
Key achievements in 2011/12:

- Tendered for the Derbyshire Support and Accommodation Team contract for Warden Services including Careline Service (the tendering process is still ongoing)
- Reviewed all aspects of service provision and value for money to identify savings that can be made in line with the Derbyshire Accommodation and Support Team requirements
- Achieved Telecare Services Association platinum member status. We also achieved a further five modules including Service User Profiling, Referral, Telecare Plan, Service Tailoring and Re-evaluation in line with the standards set by the Telecare Services Association
- Reviewed and updated procedures in conjunction with service users to meet Telecare Services Association standards

We are pleased with our high performance and customer satisfaction ratings and strive to continue to provide an excellent service to our customers.



Number of calls handled by Careline



*867 of the calls requiring a mobile warden to visit out of hours related to falls and these are also included in the calls where the customer had fallen figure

To meet the requirements of the European Telecare Standard new targets were introduced for 2011/12.

Percentage of calls answered within 60 seconds

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	98.57	98.5%	✓	New target

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 98.5%

Percentage of calls answered within 180 seconds

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	99.95%	99%	✓	New target

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 99%

Percentage of call outs attended within 45 minutes

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	97.71%	90%	✓	New target

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 90%





Percentage of call outs attended within 60 minutes

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	99.97%	100%	x	New target

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 100%

Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the response when they used the Careline alarm

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2011/12	97.3%	95%	✓	x
2010/11	100%	95%	✓	same
2009/10	100%	95%		

We have set our target for 2012/13 at 95%

We are pleased that we have been able to maintain our consistently high customer satisfaction performance.

Planned improvements for 2012/13 are:

- To retain the Derbyshire Support and Accommodation Team Contract for Warden Services
- To retain the Derbyshire Support and Accommodation Team Contract for Careline
- To continuously review and improve the service
- To maintain service standards to retain the Telecare Services Association accreditation
- To review and improve Support Plans and Risk Assessments for all service users



HOW WELL ARE WE DOING ON VALUE FOR MONEY?

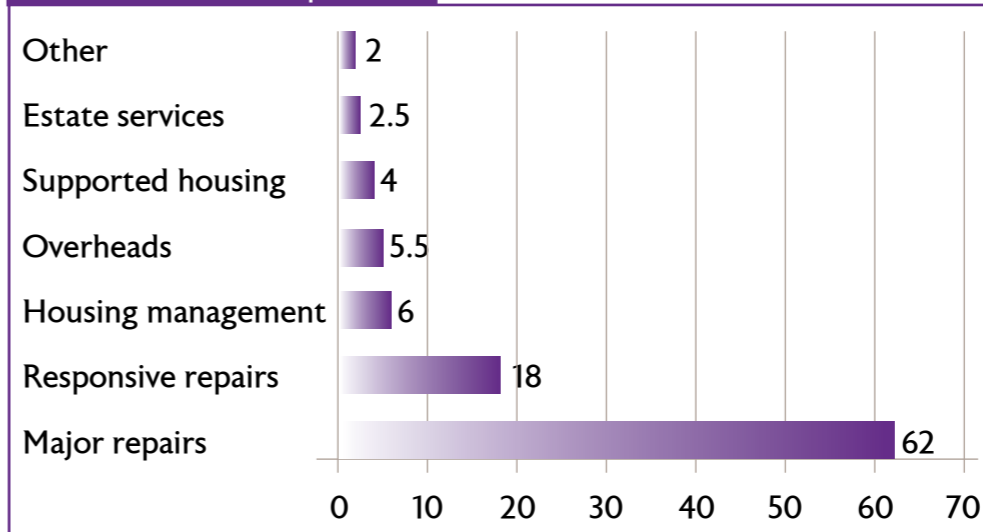
We constantly review the way that we approach value for money and efficiency savings and ensure that we have a process in place to obtain the best value for money throughout the Housing Service.

We have implemented the following measures to ensure that value for money remains part of the culture within Housing Services:

- Value for money appears as a standard agenda item for meetings of the Housing Management Team and the Senior Management Team at Operational Services Division
- Team Briefs include value for money as a standard item
- The Quality Improvement Team, which is a group of operatives and managers, has value for money as a standard agenda item
- A named lead officer within each of the three Housing Divisions champions and captures value for money data and produces a departmental Efficiency Statement
- An Efficiency Register for Housing Services to ensure that all efficiencies are captured and recorded. This will enable us to demonstrate how we have thought about and applied value for money within Housing Services in the future. The efficiency savings set out in this Register are scrutinised and validated by the Council's Finance Section. In 2011/12 the efficiency saving claimed amounts to £556,448



Each £1 of rent was spent on



HOW WELL ARE WE DOING ON ENSURING WE ARE FINANCIALLY SECURE?



In last year's Annual Report we were looking ahead to the introduction of the new Housing Self-Financing system. This came into being from April 2012 and, as a part of the arrangement with Government, we had to effectively buy ourselves out of the old system by taking on a new debt from the Government of approximately £118million.



We are confident that we can manage this debt over the next 30 years and still have money left over to spend on our homes and on services for tenants. In fact, as a result of other flexibilities in the new system, we can borrow a little more and do a few interesting projects we could not otherwise have considered.

For example, in addition to good improvement programmes for the next few years, we are also planning to build a modest number of new Council properties, probably about 40, which is more than has been built in a generation.



We have already approved the recruitment of an extra four young apprentices and announced the improvement or possibly even re-building of Parkside Sheltered Housing Scheme.

Some tenants have already had solar panels fixed to their roofs. Unfortunately not everyone can have these for a variety of reasons. The roofs must face south and the National Grid must agree to accept the power into their grid and the local electricity sub-station. This is why sometimes it looks odd why one roof is not done when others are. Those tenants with the panels will get cheaper daytime electricity but all tenants will benefit from improvements funded by the money we receive from the Government in what they call a "Feed-in Tariff" which we will receive over the next 20 to 25 years.



On balance self-financing looks to be of benefit to Chesterfield's tenants and we look forward to improving homes more quickly or to higher standards than might have been possible before.

Changes to Housing Benefit

Financial pressures are never far away and the changes coming about next April as a result of National Welfare Reform will be an issue for the Council and for some tenants personally.

More advice and information will be made available shortly but one key issue is the new requirement on us to offer less than full Housing Benefit to tenants if you have spare bedrooms. A single tenant in a two-bedroom flat could lose 14% of their Housing benefit. This may cause changes to our waiting lists and add people to the transfer list all wanting smaller properties. Some tenants may struggle to find the extra rent which will be a problem for them and us.

When you know how you will be affected, if you feel you will be in hardship and might not be able to afford to pay say £10 per week, please talk to us so that we can try to assist you as soon as possible.



NOTES

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THIS ANNUAL REPORT

We hope that you have found this annual report useful. It would be helpful if you could complete this short survey about the annual report and let us have your comments and any suggestions on how it could be improved.

Is the report useful?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the information clear and easy to understand?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is there enough information about performance?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you agree with what we have said in the report?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If no, please comment

Is there any information that you think should be added to the report? Please comment

What should Chesterfield Borough Council do better? Please comment

Have you any suggestions for how Chesterfield Borough Council can save more money?
Please comment

Please make any other comments or suggestions below

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____


PLEASE HAND IN TO YOUR HOUSING OFFICE OR POST TO:
Consultation and Improvements Team, Staveley Office, High Street, Staveley, Chesterfield, S43 3UX

**Your comments will help us to improve the services
that we provide to our customers**





**ARE WE
ACCESSIBLE
TO YOU?**



**IF NOT
- ASK US!**

- We want everyone to be able to understand us.
- We want everyone to be able to read our written materials.
- We aim to provide what you need for you to read, talk and write to us.

On request we will provide free

- Language interpreters, including for sign language.
- Translations of written materials into other languages.
- Materials in Braille, large print, on tape or Easy Read.

Please contact us:

Voice Telephone: 01246 345345

Fax: 01246 345252

Mobile Text Phone SMS: 07960 910264

Email: eoinfo@chesterfield.gov.uk