



Chesterfield Borough Council Housing Services

# Annual Report Summary

September 2013



# Welcome

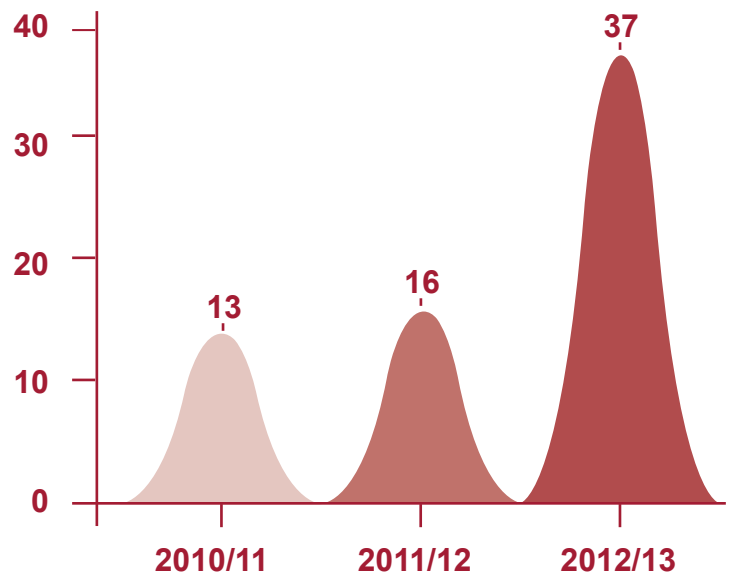
This is a summary version of our annual report to tenants. The full report is available in the Homes Section of our website at [www.chesterfield.gov.uk](http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk).

To request a printed version telephone 01246 345142.



The report provides an overview of how we have performed from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. It includes information for you to be able to compare our performance against previous years.

## Homes sold



# 9657

...is the number of homes we own and manage as at 31 March 2013

### 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

Telephone: 01246 345432

Email: [jayne.yates@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:jayne.yates@chesterfield.gov.uk)

# 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.**



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.

### Key achievements in 2012/13:

- Introduced iHome, a smartphone application for Chesterfield tenants
- Spent the Estate Improvement Budget in consultation with Area Panels
- Introduced the Tenant Challenge Panel to deliver tenant scrutiny
- Appointed an additional Tenant Participation Officer
- Increased the number of tenants who are actively involved in tenant participation activities
- Introduced a mobile office enabling more consultation to be done locally
- Established a Tenant Resource Centre

### Planned improvements for 2013/14 are:

- To improve our methods of tracking complaints
- To increase the effectiveness of Area Panels
- To establish a programme of regular mystery shopping exercises to test services
- To provide appropriate training for our tenant representatives
- To develop the role of tenant forums for minority groups
- To use the mobile office to increase local involvement of tenants
- To use Facebook to introduce social media to Housing Services
- To increase the number of tenants using iHome



## Local Offers

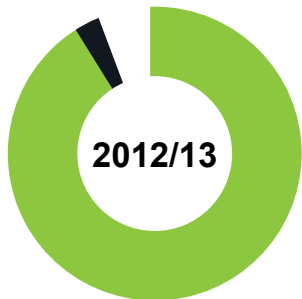
Local offers are service standards or targets for improvement. They help us to deliver services to address local issues and in a way that is more flexible to meet particular needs.

In February 2013 we held our Local Offers event at the Winding Wheel. Tenants took part in 'speed-dating' style workshops to tell us their views on services. Our Services for Vulnerable People team also held coffee mornings to consult tenants.

Tenants told us which Local Offers they would like us to introduce so that we can add something extra or improve our services in an efficient, cost effective manner.

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

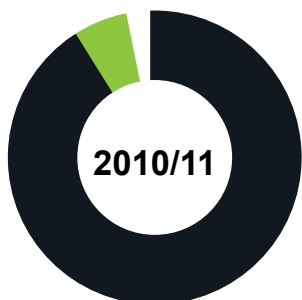
### Letters responded to within 20 working days



Performance	92%
Target	94%
Target met	✗
Improved	✗



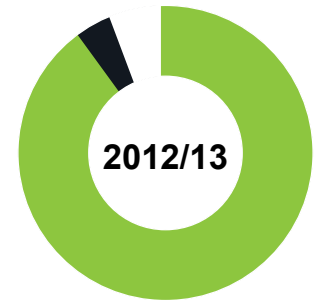
Performance	93%
Target	94%
Target met	✗
Improved	✗



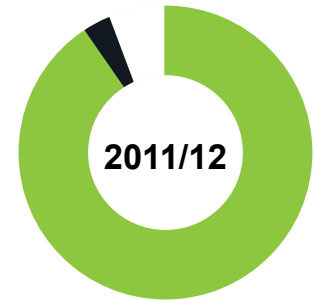
Performance	97.73%
Target	94%
Target met	✓
Improved	✗

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 94%.

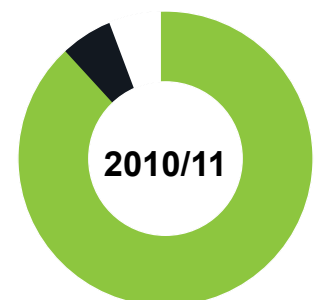
### Complaints responded to within 15 working days



Performance	90%
Target	94%
Target met	✗
Improved	✗



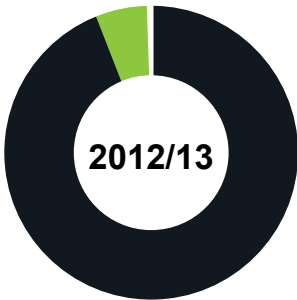
Performance	91%
Target	94%
Target met	✗
Improved	✓



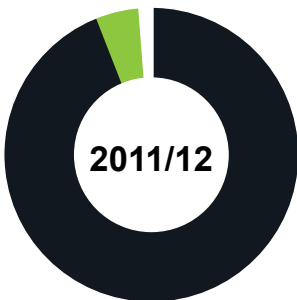
Performance	88.05%
Target	94%
Target met	✗
Improved	✗

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 94%. This is the target set by the Council's Customer Charter.

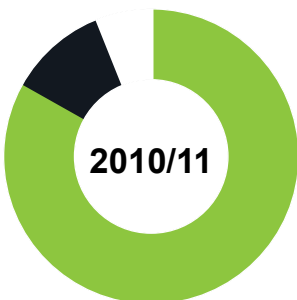
**Electronic enquiries responded to within 20 working days**



<b>Performance</b>	<b>99.3%</b>
<b>Target</b>	<b>94%</b>
Target met	✓
Improved	✓



<b>Performance</b>	<b>98.2%</b>
<b>Target</b>	<b>94%</b>
Target met	✓
Improved	✓



<b>Performance</b>	<b>88.33%</b>
<b>Target</b>	<b>94%</b>
Target met	✗
Improved	✗

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 94%. This is the target set by the Council's Customer Charter.

iHome is a smartphone application that gives you access to information and services via your mobile telephone. It is free to download and can be used to:

- report repairs and neighbourhood issues
- request a direct debit form
- set rent reminders
- calculate your living costs
- calculate if your home is under occupied
- keep up-to-date with our latest news and events
- access useful contacts

Customer feedback is used to improve the services that we provide to you. Our performance in dealing with electronic enquiries remains high. Our performance on responding to complaints is slightly below the target of 94%. To improve our methods of tracking complaints we are investigating the feasibility of using an IT system that is linked to the housing management system.



# How well are we doing on maintaining your home?



**To meet the Decent Homes Standard, homes must be warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities.**

We have installed solar panels on 383 Council housing roofs. Whilst the tenants of these particular properties are benefitting from cheaper electricity bills, they are also generating an income for the Council from the Government's 'Feed in Tariff'. We will use this income to provide other energy efficiency measures in the remainder of the housing stock.

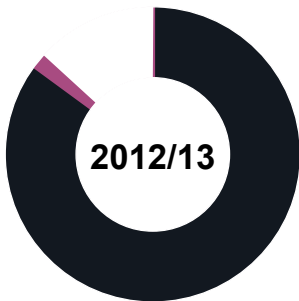
We have externally insulated and rendered 406 'non-traditional' properties at Grangewood to ensure that they are warmer. We plan to insulate a further 119 properties at Mastin Moor in the next 12 months and to draw up plans to continue to insulate similar homes in other areas.

## To report a repair

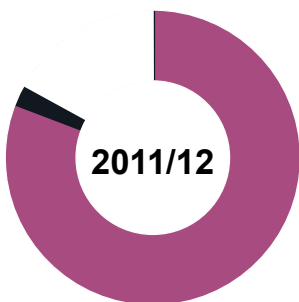
- Ring the Repair Hotline on freephone **0800 587 5659** during office hours
- Go to [www.chesterfield.gov.uk](http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk) and click on the 'Request It' link or follow the online instructions in the Homes section
- Email [repair.requests@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:repair.requests@chesterfield.gov.uk)
- Use the iHome smartphone app on your mobile

To report an emergency repair outside office hours ring **01246 345041**

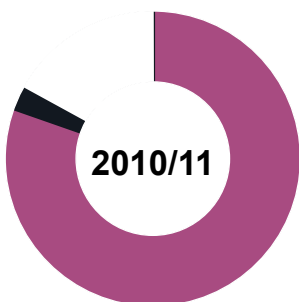
The number of homes that meet the Government's Decent Home Standard as a percentage of our total housing stock



<b>Performance</b>	<b>85.3%</b>
<b>Target</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Target met</b>	✓
<b>Improved</b>	✓



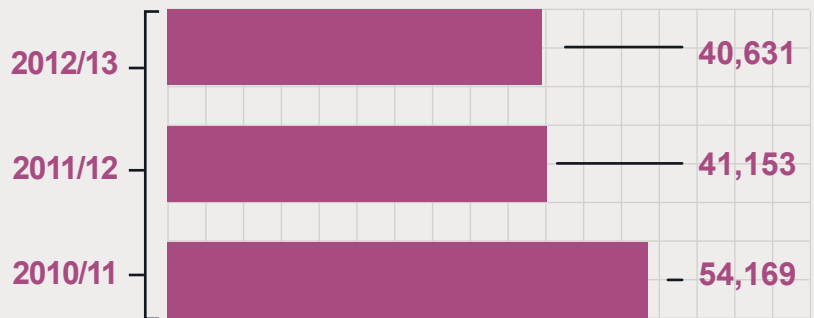
<b>Performance</b>	<b>80.8%</b>
<b>Target</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Target met</b>	✗
<b>Improved</b>	✓



<b>Performance</b>	<b>80.2%</b>
<b>Target</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Target met</b>	✗
<b>Improved</b>	✓

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 90%

Number of calls answered by the Repairs Hotline



The percentage of emergency repairs made safe within 24 hours

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
<b>Performance</b>	100%	100%	96.48%
<b>Target</b>	100%	99%	99%
<b>Target met</b>	✓	✓	✗
<b>Improved</b>	same	✓	✗

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 100%

The percentage of urgent repairs completed within 5 working days

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
<b>Performance</b>	99.63%	99.61%	95.61%
<b>Target</b>	98%	98%	98%
<b>Target met</b>	✓	✓	✗
<b>Improved</b>	✓	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 98%

The percentage of routine repairs completed within 20 working days

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
<b>Performance</b>	99.67%	99.86%	96.65%
<b>Target</b>	98%	98%	98%
<b>Target met</b>	✓	✓	✗
<b>Improved</b>	✗	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 98%

Customers receiving a repair who were satisfied overall

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
<b>Performance</b>	94%	92%	92%
<b>Target</b>	88%	88%	86%
<b>Target met</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Improved</b>	✓	same	✓

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 100%

### Key achievements in 2012/13:

- Procured a new IT system
- Increased the Capital Improvement Programme to £18.6m
- Met with the Repairs Focus Group to discuss topical repairs issues
- Tenant representatives have inspected a sample of empty properties before they are relet to assess them against our Lettable Standard
- Reviewed performance targets to link to a Best Value Review of value for money

### Planned improvements for 2013/14 are:

- To offer repair appointments on Saturday afternoons
- To introduce the Coins contractor management IT system
- To replace the district heating system at Barrow Hill
- To complete 100% of annual gas servicing on schedule

### Adaptations Service

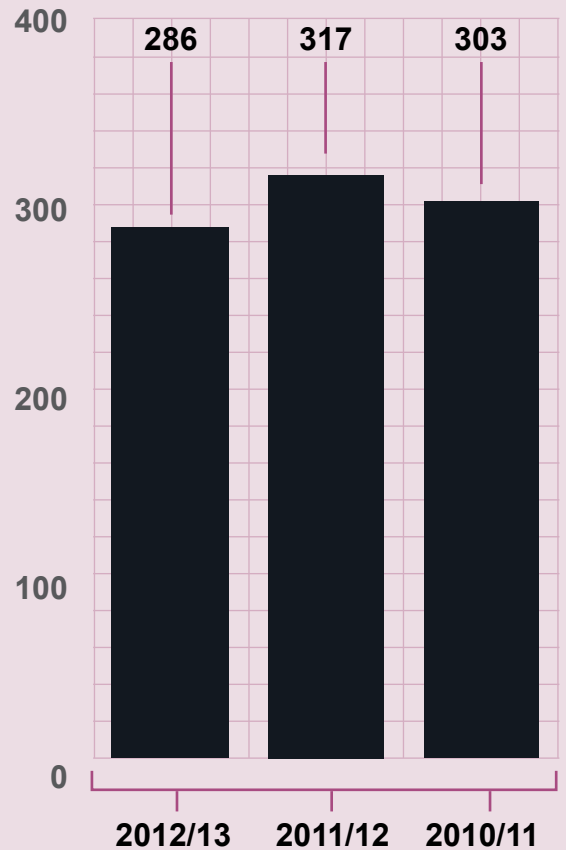
#### Key achievements in 2012/13:

- Updated the Adaptations Service section of the Council's website
- Reviewed the internal processes to improve service delivery
- Provided a responsive minor adaptations service in certain circumstances
- Assessed the feasibility of a self-referral system

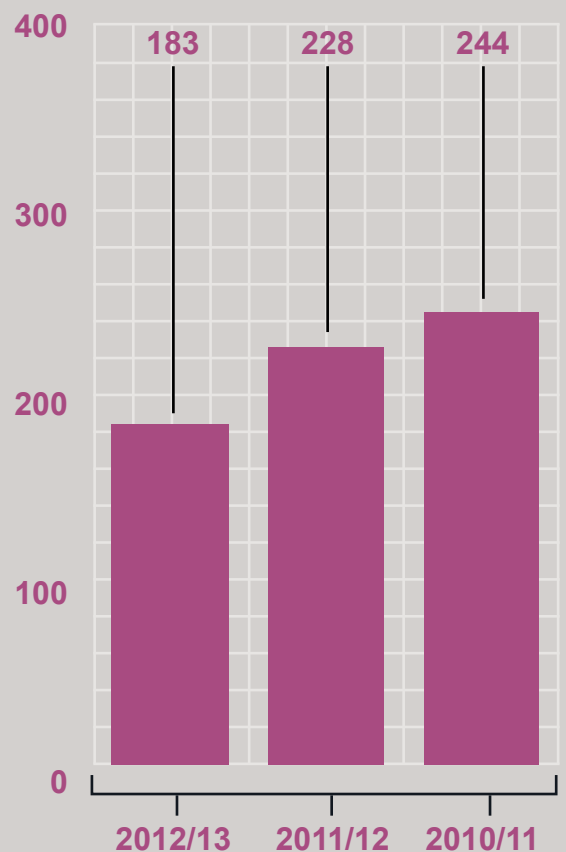
### Planned improvements for 2013/14 are:

- To introduce a self-referral process to enable some minor adaptations to be completed without the need for a referral to Social Services.
- To review our purpose-built housing stock to consider where improvements for current and future tenants could be made
- To audit properties where substantial adaptations have been carried out to enable us to consider improvements

### Number of minor adaptations completed

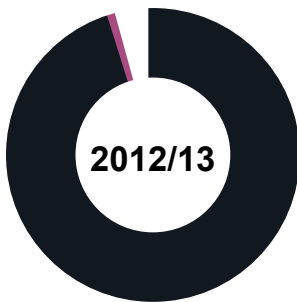


### Number of major adaptations completed





## Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the Adaptations Service

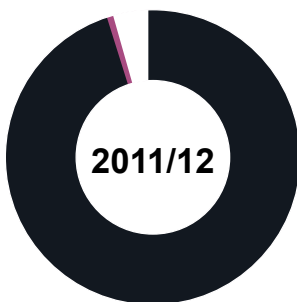


Performance 96.7%

Target 95%

Target met ✓

Improved ✓

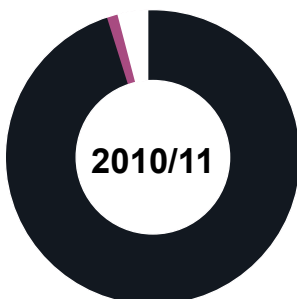


Performance 96.5%

Target 95%

Target met ✓

Improved ✗



Performance 96.9%

Target 95%

Target met ✓

Improved ✗

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 95%.

## How well are we doing on allocating homes?



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

### Key achievements in 2012/13:

- Changed the Allocation Policy to assist households affected by welfare reform
- Appointed two officers to work with tenants affected by welfare reform.
- Proactively assisted households to move to more suitable and affordable properties through the choice-based letting scheme or by mutual exchange
- Developed a Tenancy Strategy

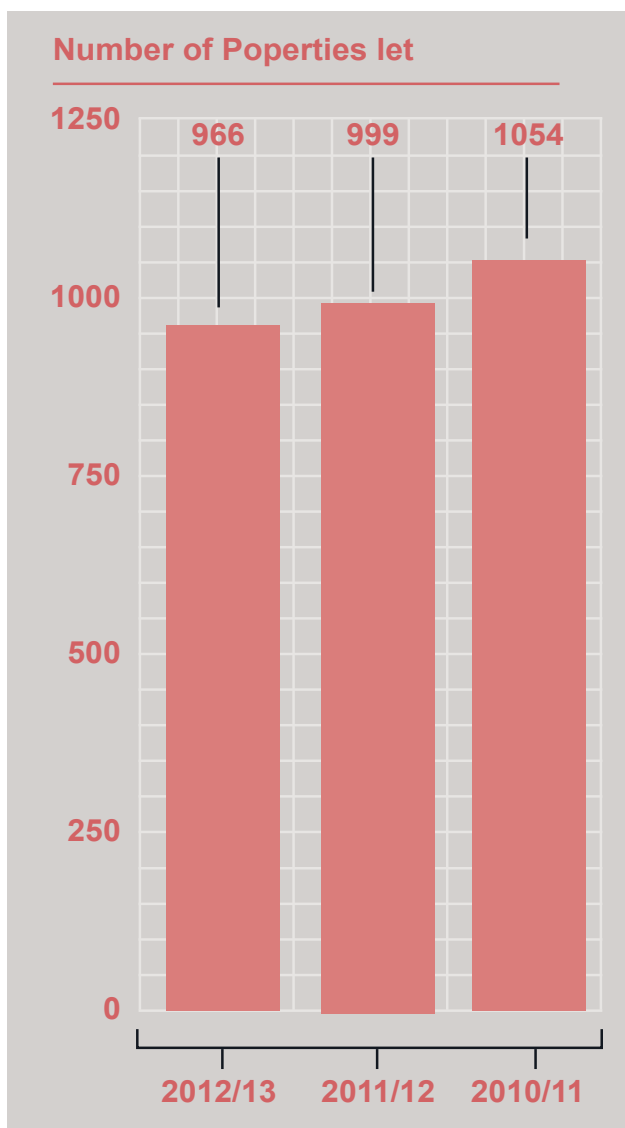
### Planned improvements for 2013/14 are:

- To make additional resources available via the Tenant Incentive Scheme to help households affected by under occupancy charges to complete mutual exchanges
- To help households who want to move who are affected by welfare reform
- To work in partnership with housing providers to maximise accommodation available across all sectors
- To develop a Tenancy Policy

Chesterfield Borough Council has subscribed to the HomeSwapper mutual exchange service. HomeSwapper holds details of people wanting to complete mutual exchanges within Chesterfield as well as details of those wishing to complete mutual exchanges from other areas.

Lower than expected demand for the sub-regional scheme and the requirement to complete pre-tenancy checks that identify any support needs and potential anti-social behaviour problems, have impacted on performance.

Based on demand, the Allocations Policy has been amended to reduce the number of properties that are advertised to the sub-regional scheme from 2013/14. Where possible, pre-tenancy checks are now completed at application registration.



### Average number of days to relet an empty home

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
<b>Performance</b>	28.05	27.83	24.45
<b>Target</b>	27	27	30
<b>Target met</b>	✗	✗	✓
<b>Improved</b>	✗	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 27 days

### Number of properties advertised by the Housing Solutions Centre

Sheltered	78
Bedsit	6
1 Bed Flat	615
2 Bed Flat	178
3 Bed Flat	3
1 Bed House	10
2 Bed House	132
3 Bed House	217
4 Bed House	14
2 Bed Maisonette	13
3 Bed Maisonette	1
1 Bed Bungalow	145
2 Bed Bungalow	50
3 Bed Bungalow	9

## Homelessness

### Key achievements in 2012/13:

- Changed the Allocations Policy to alleviate the impact of welfare reform and the Localism Act
- Recruited two Housing Solutions Officers to facilitate mutual exchanges
- Maintained low usage of bed and breakfast accommodation
- Continued to prevent homelessness by supporting key partner agencies
- Encouraged access to savings and cheaper lending by working with the Credit Union
- Provided face-to-face advice to an increasing number of households

### Planned improvements for 2013/14 are:

- To be actively involved with the No Second Night Out initiative. This gives a central

referral point for rough sleepers and will help identify the on-going need.

- To work in partnership to reduce the number of single people rough sleeping by increasing access to the private rented sector and providing initial support to maintain the tenancy.
- To provide basic cooking facilities (microwave, kettle and toaster) for households identified by the Homelessness Prevention Team or Tenancy Support

The main cause of homelessness in Chesterfield is now the ending of assured shorthold tenancies, this follows the national trend. Relationship breakdowns and evictions from friends and family are the next major reasons for homelessness. Homelessness arising from mortgage arrears remains low.

# How well are we doing on rents?



## Key achievements in 2012/13:

- Extended direct debits for weekly payers
- Changed card payments to add other services including Council Tax
- Made more payment options available
- Improved the information available on our website
- Opened the new Customer Service Centre

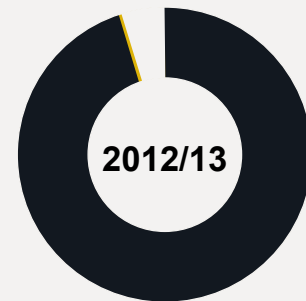
## Planned improvements for 2013/14 are:

- To employ and train more staff to assist tenants struggling to meet rental liabilities as a result of welfare reform
- To refine processes to ensure that tenants in difficulty receive effective advice and support
- To campaign to increase the take up of direct debit as this is the most cost-effective payment method for the Council and the most secure and convenient payment method for tenants

The Council's new Customer Service Centre opened in March 2013 following a £300,000 refurbishment of the Revenues Hall. The Centre has open-plan areas, with privacy screens and comfortable seating. As well as having an experienced team of trained advisors to deal with queries, we've also installed easy-to-use payment machines.

On average our rents increased by 8.83% (£5.99) in line with Central Government guidelines.

## The percentage of rent collected

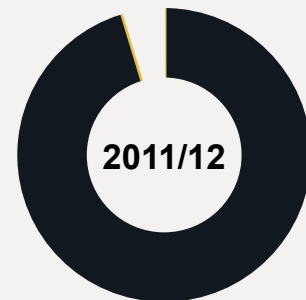


<b>Performance</b>	<b>95.56%</b>
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<b>Target</b>	<b>95.27%</b>
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<b>Target met</b>	✓
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<b>Improved</b>	✗
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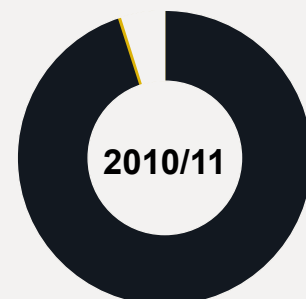


<b>Performance</b>	<b>95.83%</b>
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<b>Target</b>	<b>95.27%</b>
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<b>Target met</b>	✓
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<b>Improved</b>	✓
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<b>Performance</b>	<b>95.49%</b>
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<b>Target</b>	<b>95.27%</b>
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<b>Target met</b>	✓
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<b>Improved</b>	✓
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We have set our target for 2013/14 at 95.27%

# How well are we doing on looking after the neighbourhood and communal areas?



## Key achievements in 2012/13:

- Improved our customer satisfaction results
- Introduced a prize draw to increase the number of returned ASB questionnaires
- Introduced a customer contract
- Led a major project that enables organisations that deal with victims and perpetrators of ASB to share information to protect and support victims
- Piloted the display of contact details with photographs
- Been involved in education campaigns to highlight the problems caused by dog fouling
- Worked with the local community to make best use of land, improve estates and to create diversionary activities

## Planned improvements for 2013/14 are:

- To increase the number of people who return ASB questionnaires
- To reduce the number of days taken to resolve cases
- To introduce an ASB contract between ourselves and people who report ASB
- To increase the number of referrals we make to organisations that can provide specialist support for vulnerable perpetrators of ASB
- To seek opportunities to use Housing land for projects that improve the environment, provide educational opportunities, help inter-generational understanding, provide activities and enjoyment for older and disabled people and provide a focus for residents to engage with other residents
- To increase awareness of the health and environmental costs of dog fouling



## Addressing ASB in neighbourhoods

KickR is a project based around football training. It provides a supervised activity to keep youngsters occupied and helps them to respect themselves and people in authority. In 2012/13, we took a leading role working with the Police to extend KickR to the Newbold area. The Police and Community Safety Team consider that KickR has helped reduce crime and ASB substantially in the areas that it operates.

We continued to carry out regular estate walkabouts and joint door knocks with the Police in ASB 'hotspot' areas.

## Cleanliness, appearance and safety of 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 consult our Area Panels about how the Estates Improvements Budget should be spent. Each Area Panel has £20,000 to spend. Projects have included:

- Fencing to improve security
- Bollards to prevent vehicles driving onto grassed areas
- Tree planting
- Contributions to community gardens and the donation of Housing land
- Landscaping

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

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Performance	91%	91%	81%
Target	87%	85%	75%
Target met	✓	✓	✓
Improved	same	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 87%

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

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Performance	93%	85%	76%
Target	87%	80%	70%
Target met	✓	✓	✓
Improved	✓	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 87%

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

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Performance	92%	87%	80%
Target	87%	85%	75%
Target met	✓	✓	✓
Improved	✓	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 87%

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

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Performance	92%	88%	79%
Target	88%	85%	75%
Target met	✓	✓	✓
Improved	✓	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 88%

## 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 Floating Support Service can visit you in your home at a frequency to suit your needs. Officers 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.

### Key achievements in 2012/13:

- Retained the Derbyshire Support and Accommodation Team Contract for the Floating Support Service
- Restructured the service to provide an enhanced support and response service
- Reviewed Support Plans and Risk Assessments to include planning for working towards successful outcomes with our service users

### Planned improvements for 2013/14 are:

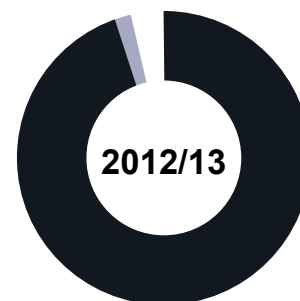
- To offer an enhanced accompanied viewing service for vulnerable people
- To retain the Derbyshire Accommodation and Support Team’s contract for Careline
- To provide an improved and enhanced support service
- To increase our customer base to allow more residents in Chesterfield to benefit from the Service

### Percentage of call outs attended within 60 minutes

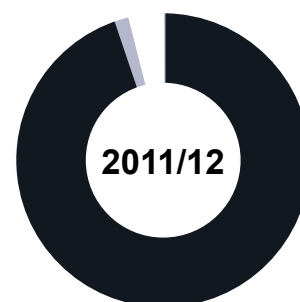
	2012/13	2011/12
Performance	99.96%	100%
Target	99.97%	100%
Target met	✘	✘
Improved	✘	new target

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 99%

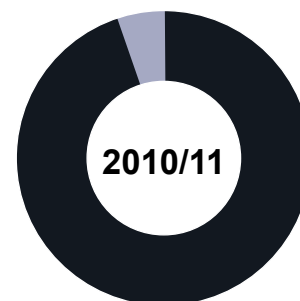
### Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the response when they used the Careline alarm



Performance	97.3%
Target	95%
Target met	✓
Improved	same



Performance	97.3%
Target	95%
Target met	✓
Improved	✘



Performance	100%
Target	95%
Target met	✓
Improved	same

We have set our target for 2013/14 at 95%

# 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
- 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 2012/13 the efficiency saving claimed amounts to £74,000



## How well are we doing on ensuring we are financially secure?

The new housing self-financing system came into being from April 2012. 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 remain 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. We may even be able to borrow a little more and do a few interesting projects that we could not otherwise have considered. For example, the imminent building of a replacement sheltered housing scheme at Parkside, off Whittington Moor. Plans are also in progress for 40 new Council homes with the prospect of more to follow.

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

From April 2013 the so called "bedroom tax" was implemented nationally. This is a reduction in Housing Benefit if you have more bedrooms than the Government's rules allow.

We recognise that many of our tenants are affected by these changes and have already introduced measures to help people seek smaller, more affordable accommodation.

We would encourage anyone struggling to make payments to talk to us now so that we can offer advice. The telephone number to ring is **01246 345504**. We will also give particular support to tenants who are suffering from financial hardship where it is not possible for them to move. Ring **01246 345484** for an application form or call in to our Customer Service Centre.

Tenants wanting advice or information about moving home can ring or visit On the Move on Low Pavement telephone **01246 345700**.

## Each £1 of rent was spent on:



**62p**  
Major Repairs



**18p**  
Responsive Repairs



**6p**  
Housing Management



**5.5p**  
Overheads



**4p**  
Supported Housing



**2.5p**  
Estate Services



**2.5p**  
Other

**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**