

# Annual Report Summary

September 2014

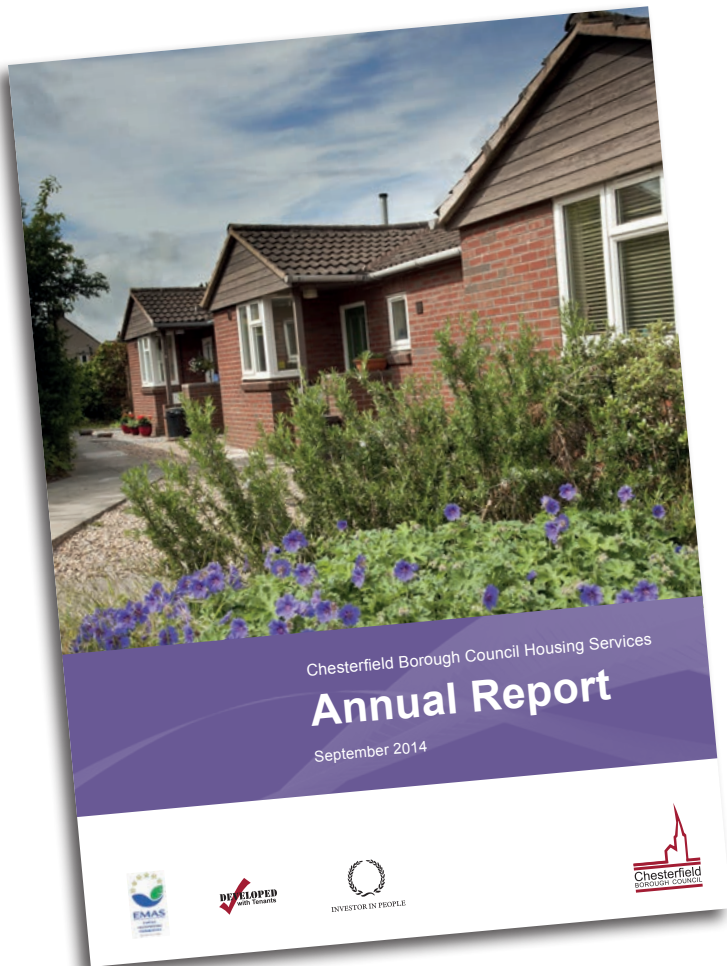
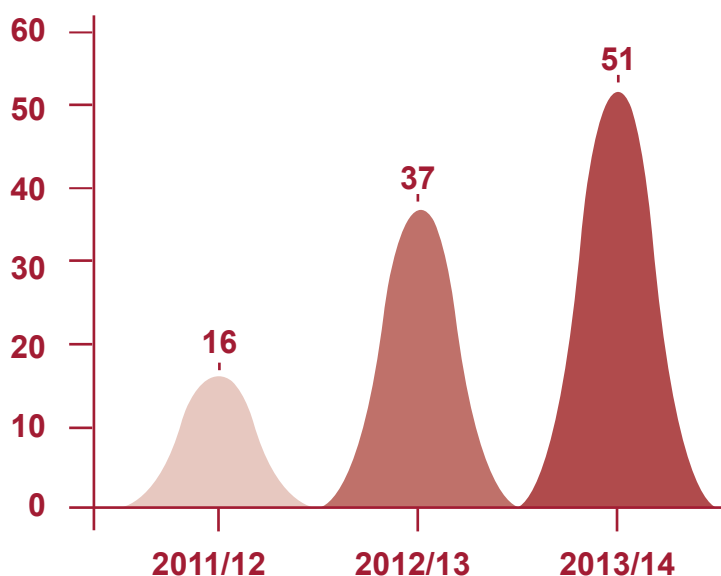
**This is a summary version of our annual report to tenants.**

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 **01243 345142**.

The report provides an overview of how we have performed from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. It includes information for you to be able to compare our performance against previous years.

## Homes sold



### 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 encourage all tenants to tell us how they want to be involved and what they want to be included in.**



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, feedback and complaints.

## Key achievements in 2013/14:

- Used the mobile office to increase local involvement of tenants
- Improved our methods of tracking complaints to achieve the targets within the Council's Customer Charter
- Provided a variety of training opportunities for our tenant representatives to help them to be more effective
- Used Facebook to introduce social media to Housing Services
- Completed a STAR customer satisfaction survey
- Recruited mystery shoppers to test services received by customers.
- Increased the number of tenants using the iHome smartphone app

## 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 November 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 Careline and Support Service also held a coffee morning to consult tenants.

Our Local Offers in 2014/15 will continue to focus on service improvements. We will measure our performance against the local offers and tell you how we are doing in future Annual Reports.

## Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

- To refresh our tenant engagement opportunities to improve how tenants get involved
- To expand our use of social media by introducing Twitter
- To use the mobile office for tenant engagement events to encourage tenants to give us their opinions on how their neighbourhoods can be improved, how the Estate Improvement Budget should be spent and how we can we can improve our services
- To implement service improvements using the findings of the STAR survey
- To use mystery shoppers to test services received by customers and use the information obtained during the exercises to improve services
- To continue to meet the customer service standards set out in the Council's Customer Charter

### STAR Customer Satisfaction Survey

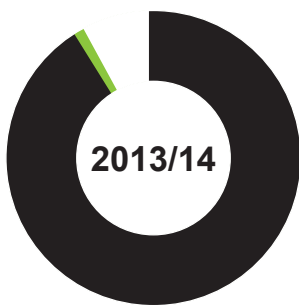
The Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) enables social housing providers to compare key satisfaction results. During October 2013, a postal questionnaire was completed by 731 residents.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with:	2013	2008	Increase
Housing Services overall	88%	78%	10%
The quality of your home	83%	77%	6%
Your neighbourhood as a place to live	83%	72%	11%
Value for money of your rent	77%	69%	8%
The repairs and maintenance service	80%	76%	4%
Our listening to your views and acting on them	67%	59%	8%

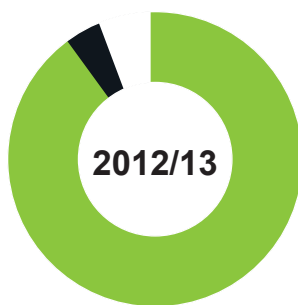
The results tell us that tenants are increasingly satisfied with the services we provide and helps give us an idea of the issues we still need to target.

Customer feedback is used to improve the services that we provide to you. Our performance in dealing with electronic enquiries remains high, well above the Council's Customer Charter target. We have improved our methods of tracking complaints and are pleased that we have achieved the Council's target.

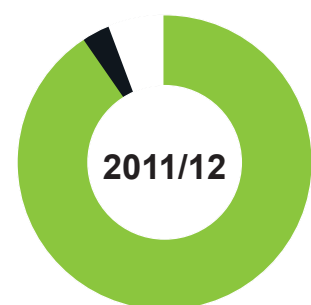
### Complaints responded to within 15 working days



Performance	94.8%
Target	94%
Target met	✓
Improved	✓



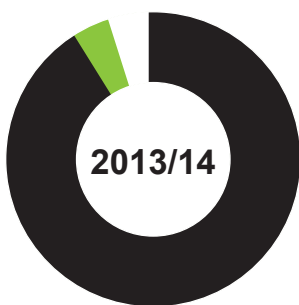
Performance	90%
Target	94%
Target met	✗
Improved	✗



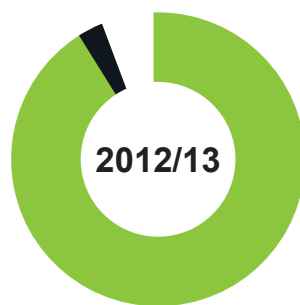
Performance	91%
Target	94%
Target met	✗
Improved	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 94%. This is the target set by the Council's Customer Charter.

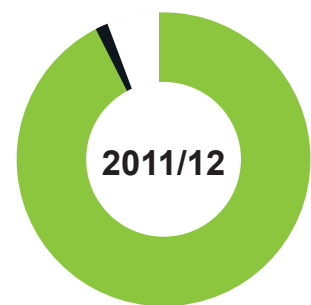
### Letters responded to within 20 working days



Performance	97.6%
Target	94%
Target met	✓
Improved	✓



Performance	92%
Target	94%
Target met	✗
Improved	✗

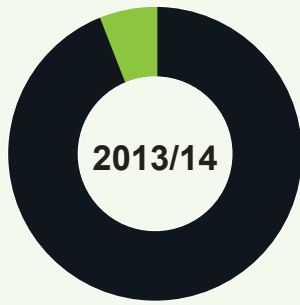


Performance	93%
Target	94%
Target met	✗
Improved	✗

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 94%.

# How well are we doing on maintaining your home?

Electronic enquiries responded to within 20 working days

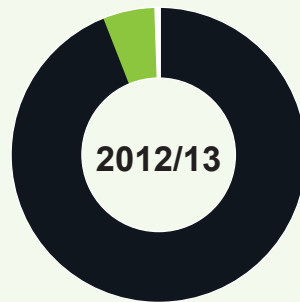


Performance 100%

Target 94%

Target met ✓

Improved ✓



Performance 99.3%

Target 94%

Target met ✓

Improved ✓



Performance 98.2%

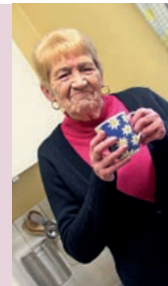
Target 94%

Target met ✓

Improved ✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 94%. This is the target set by the Council's Customer Charter.

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



Over 1,920 properties received works in 2013/14 to meet the Decent Homes Standard. In addition, and to meet our commitment to improve the energy efficiency of our homes, we externally insulated and rendered 119 non-traditional properties at Mastin Moor and are drawing up plans to insulate similar homes in Grangewood and Old Whittington. Where we carried out roof replacements we also upgraded the loft insulation.

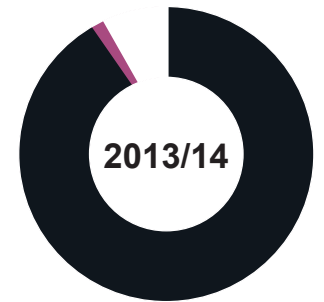
In 2014/15 we will ensure that all of our housing stock meets the Decent Home Standard and will complete the re-development of a new housing scheme for older people on the site of the former Parkside Sheltered Housing Scheme. We will also start to deliver a range of environmental improvements including car parking on estates, replacement door canopies, boundary treatments to open plan aspects on estates and the installation of pitched roofs on existing flat-roofed blocks of flats.

### 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

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

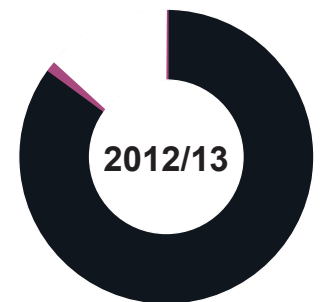


Performance 91.38%

Target 90%

Target met ✓

Improved ✓

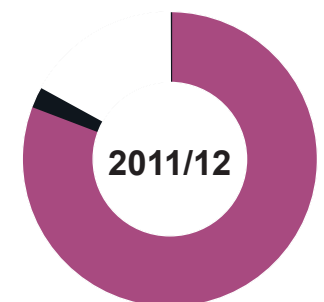


Performance 85.3%

Target 85%

Target met ✓

Improved ✓



Performance 80.8%

Target 83%

Target met ✗

Improved ✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 100%



**Key achievements in 2013/14:**

- Offered repair appointments on Saturday afternoons
- Improved safe systems of working and health and safety
- Replaced the district heating system at Barrow Hill
- Achieved our target of completing 100% of annual gas servicing

**Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:**

- To fully implement the Coins contractor management IT system
- To replace the first phase of the district heating system at Lowgates
- To complete 100% of annual gas servicing
- To achieve the target of 100% of the Council's housing stock meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- To review the Lettable Standard
- To further improve safe systems of working and the enforcement of health and safety



**Calls answered by the Repairs Hotline**



**The percentage of emergency repairs made safe within 24 hours**

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
<b>Performance</b>	96.22%	100%	100%
<b>Target</b>	100%	100%	99%
<b>Target met</b>	✗	✓	✓
<b>Improved</b>	✗	same	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 100%

**The percentage of urgent repairs completed within five working days**

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
<b>Performance</b>	98.97%	99.63%	99.61%
<b>Target</b>	98%	98%	98%
<b>Target met</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Improved</b>	✗	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 98%

**The percentage of routine repairs completed within 20 working days**

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
<b>Performance</b>	99.31%	99.67%	99.86%
<b>Target</b>	98%	98%	98%
<b>Target met</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Improved</b>	✗	✗	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 98%

## Adaptations Service

### Key Achievements in 2013/14:

- Introduced a self-referral process to enable some minor adaptations to be completed without the need for a referral to Social Services
- Reviewed our purpose-built housing stock to consider improvements for current and future tenants
- Started an audit of properties where substantial adaptations have been carried out to enable us to consider further improvements

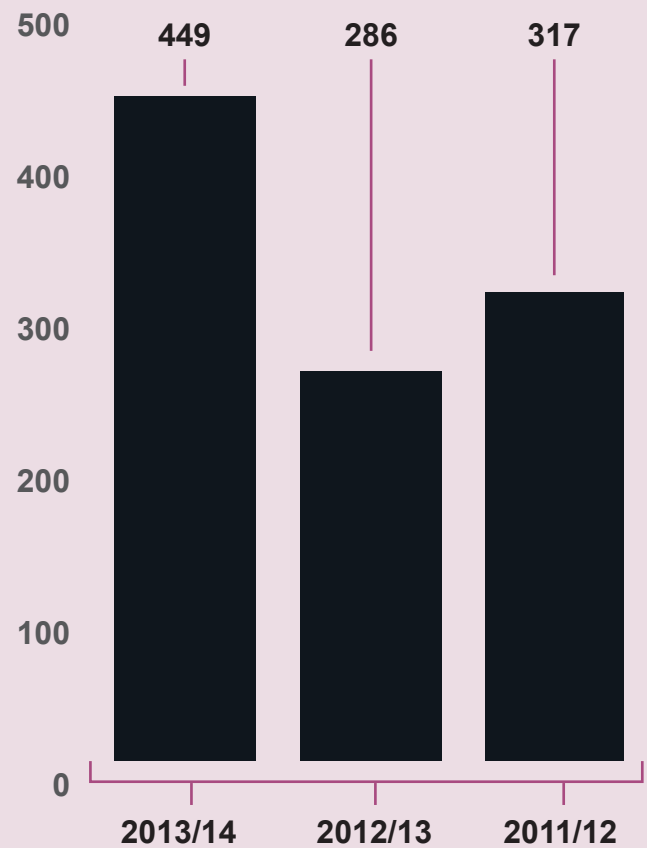
### Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

- To further promote the Adaptations Services and the Adaptation Self Referral Form through 'Adaptation Information Sessions' at various locations
- To reduce the waiting time for major adaptations

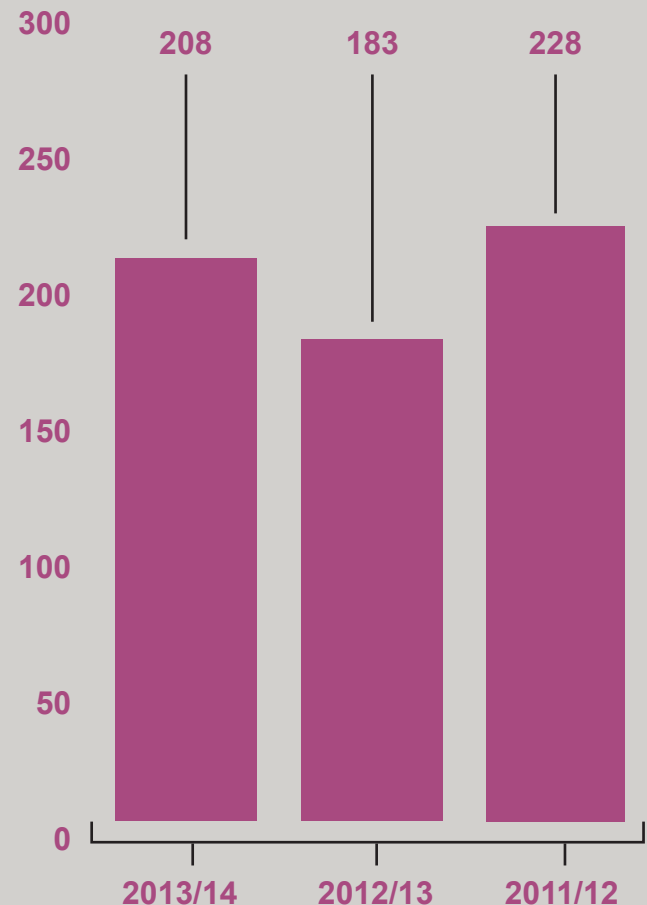
Following improvements to the Careline and Support Service we have experienced an increase in the number of requests for minor adaptations to enable our tenants to live independently.



Number of minor adaptations completed



Number of major adaptations completed



# 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.

### Key achievements in 2013/14:

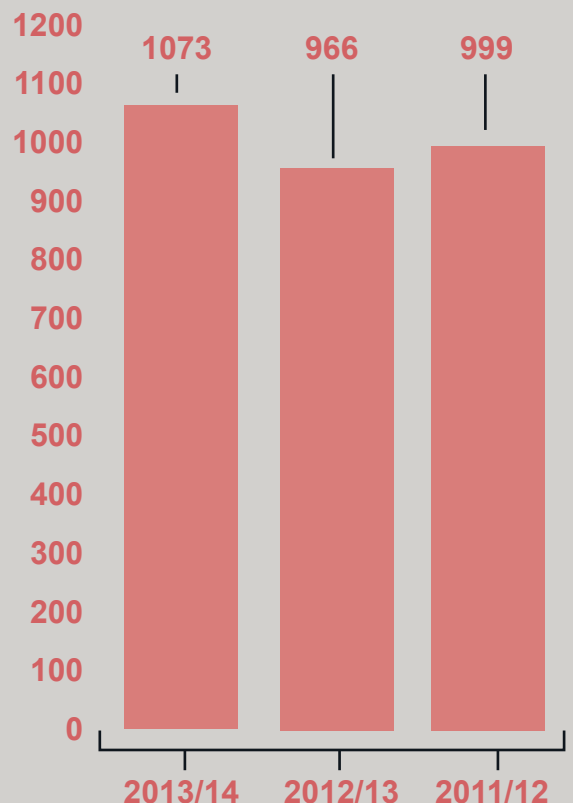
- Made additional resources available via the Tenant Incentive Scheme to help households affected by under occupancy charges to complete mutual exchanges
- Helped households who are affected by welfare reform to move by increasing the number of transfers
- Worked in partnership with other housing providers to maximise accommodation available across all sectors
- Developed a Tenancy Policy

### Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

- To analyse applicants' bidding preferences to understand why the number of bids has fallen
- To carry out a customer survey regarding people's understanding of choice based lettings

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.

## Number of Properties let



This is an increase of 11% from 2012/13. The primary reasons for this increase are the changes made to the Allocation Policy and the impact of the Government's Welfare Reform.



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

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
<b>Performance</b>	27.89	28.05	27.83
<b>Target</b>	27	27	27
<b>Target met</b>	✗	✗	✗
<b>Improved</b>	✓	✗	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 27 days

Chesterfield Borough Council subscribes 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. The service is a great help to those affected by welfare reform and households who are under occupying accommodation.

## Homelessness

### Key achievements in 2013/14:

- Participated in the Derbyshire and Derby City 'No Second Night Out' initiative
- Action Housing delivered a Private Rented Access Scheme to reduce rough sleeping and homelessness amongst single, often non-priority households.
- Funded the Chesterfield Law Centre Court Desk
















- Worked in partnership with the Credit Union to encourage saving and planned expenditure
- Continued to offer the Tenancy Deposit Guarantee via the Homelessness Prevention Team
- Provided basic cooking facilities (microwave, kettle and toaster) for households identified by the Homelessness Prevention Team or Tenancy Support

### Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

- To review the services we provide to ensure that we are providing the best service possible
- To continue to work in partnership with South Yorkshire Housing Association to provide interim accommodation at Newbold Court and to look at options to further support young people to prevent homelessness
- To explore funding opportunities to provide basic cooking packs to single households under 25 years of age who have a limited income

The main cause of homelessness in Chesterfield is 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.

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

 3 Bed Bungalow <b>4</b>	 2 Bed Bungalow <b>70</b>	 1 Bed Bungalow <b>140</b>	 3 Bed Maisonette <b>1</b>	 2 Bed Maisonette <b>13</b>
 5 Bed House <b>0</b>	 4 Bed House <b>15</b>	 3 Bed House <b>300</b>	 2 Bed House <b>178</b>	 1 Bed House <b>5</b>
 3 Bed Flat <b>14</b>	 2 Bed Flat <b>214</b>	 1 Bed Flat <b>760</b>	 Bedsit <b>10</b>	 Sheltered <b>15</b>



# How well are we doing on rents?



## Key achievements in 2013/14:

- Employed and trained more staff to assist tenants who are struggling to meet rental liabilities as a result of welfare reform
- Refined processes to ensure that tenants in difficulty receive effective advice and support
- Campaigned 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

## Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

- To encourage tenants to consider having a water meter installed, where appropriate
- To improve contact with tenants, particularly for lower level arrears cases
- To improve self-service options
- To ensure staff receive regular updates and appropriate training with regard to Welfare Reform
- To carry out a review of our procedures to ensure value for money and best practice

The refurbished Customer Service Centre opened in March 2013. Since then customer service staff have dealt with 3,400 face to face enquiries, on average, per month. The two automated cash machines are processing around 4,000 payments per month, amounting to £5.5 million since the Centre opened, or around £375,000 per month.

In addition to the Customer Service Centre, there are many other methods for people to contact the council or pay bills and rent, including:

- Using Direct Debit. This can be set up by ringing **01246 345510** or by downloading a form at [www.chesterfield.gov.uk](http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk) and clicking on the Pay It link
- Making payments online via the Council website at [www.chesterfield.gov.uk](http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk) by clicking on the Pay It link and following the instructions.
- Making payments over the phone by calling the automated 24-hour helpline **0845 602 0214**.
- Making payments at any of the 70 Post Office or PayPoint locations in the borough.

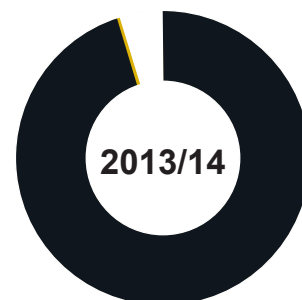
### Average weekly rents

Type of accomodation	Cost of rent p/w
3 Bed Maisonette	£84.59
2 Bed Maisonette	£77.68
1 Bed Maisonette	£72.74
4 Bed House	£90.49
3 Bed House	£82.14
2 Bed House	£78.19
1 Bed House	£63.95
4 Bed Flat	£92.02
3 Bed Flat	£80.68
2 Bed Flat	£79.49
1 Bed Flat	£71.88
Bedsit Flat	£61.15
3 Bed Bungalow	£80.77
2 Bed Bungalow	£77.36
1 Bed Bungalow	£73.81
Bedsit Bugalow	£64.25

On average our rents increased by 5.41% (£3.99) in line with Central Government guidelines.

The lowest increase was £2.09 per week and the highest increase was £5.16 per week.

### The percentage of rent collected

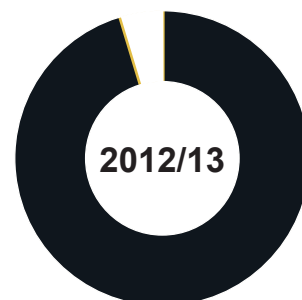


**Performance** 95.74%

**Target** 95.27%

Target met ✓

Improved ✓

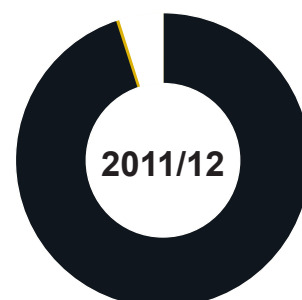


**Performance** 95.56%

**Target** 95.27%

Target met ✓

Improved ✗



**Performance** 95.83%

**Target** 95.27%

Target met ✓

Improved ✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 95.27%



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



## Key achievements in 2013/14:

- Increased the number of returned ASB questionnaires
- Reduced the time taken to resolve cases by 5 days
- Introduced an ASB contract between ourselves and people who report ASB
- Increased the number of referrals made to organisations that provide specialist support for vulnerable perpetrators of ASB to help them change their behaviour
- Improved play facilities in recreational areas within housing estates and improved the environment around some housing schemes for older people
- Contributed to the development of a community garden, in partnership with a school and community organisation, and enriched open grassed areas by planting trees and creating wild flower areas
- Undertook educational and publicity work to raise tenants' awareness of the health risks of dog fouling
- Took enforcement action against people who did not clean up after their dog. This included recharging tenants for the cost of cleaning up dog faeces and taking legal action against tenants for breaking the terms of their tenancy agreement

### Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

- To review arrangements for consulting tenants about the Estate Improvement Budget
- To carry out a minimum of 12 local tenant engagement events to encourage tenants to give us their opinions on how their neighbourhoods and our services can be improved
- To develop our tenancy management services to give a greater focus on helping tenants facing difficulty, particularly as a result of welfare reform, to manage their tenancies
- To continue to focus on dealing with dog fouling and dog control
- To improve support and feedback provided for victims of anti-social behaviour



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

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Performance	84%	91%	91%
Target	87%	87%	85%
Target met	✘	✓	✓
Improved	✘	same	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 85%

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

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Performance	85%	92%	87%
Target	87%	87%	85%
Target met	✘	✓	✓
Improved	✘	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 87%

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

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Performance	73%	93%	85%
Target	87%	87%	80%
Target met	✘	✓	✓
Improved	✘	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 80%

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

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Performance	84%	92%	88%
Target	88%	88%	85%
Target met	✘	✓	✓
Improved	✘	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 87%



We are disappointed that the results from 2013/14 are slightly lower than those of the previous year. However, comparing our performance using HouseMark, we are pleased that our performance ranks in the top or second quartile for most of our performance indicators.

The results for 2013/14 provide us with a good indication about where to concentrate our efforts in 2014/15. We will learn from comments on customer satisfaction forms and follow-up interviews which make it clear that we need to make greater efforts to keep people updated about the progress of their case and to provide more support to them. We believe that this will have a positive affect on how people view the outcome of the case and their willingness to report ASB again.

## Addressing ASB in neighbourhoods

To address ASB in neighbourhoods we have:

- Referred tenants to our Tenancy Support Service for help in being able to manage their tenancies responsibly
- Worked with the Police to take legal action against tenants involved in criminal anti-social behaviour, particularly where their homes were being used for drugs activities
- Worked with the Housing Solutions Team to reduce the number of tenants who have a history of nuisance or high risk criminal behaviour being offered tenancies, or to ensure that appropriate support was provided

## Cleanliness, appearance and safety of neighbourhoods

Where we found that tenants were allowing their dogs to foul in the gardens or flats, or were causing a nuisance to other people, we took action against them. This included agreeing Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, taking

possession proceedings to end tenancies and charging tenants for the cost of clearing up dog fouling.

We also worked with the Police and Environmental Services at a park to highlight the problems caused by dog fouling and littering.

In consultation with Area Panels, we used the Estates Improvement Budget for projects, including:

- New fencing and gates to prevent rubbish being dumped
- Re-modelled bin areas and provided new bins to prevent waste from being blown around the neighbourhood
- Providing benches and tables in open areas to encourage recreational use of green spaces



## Careline and Wardens Service

Careline is 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.

Our Support Officers carry out visits at home and offer help and support to our older, vulnerable and disabled residents based on individual needs. They ensure that appropriate support is provided to enable independent living at home for as long as possible. This may include health and safety checks, wellbeing, benefits checks and involvement in social activities. They also provide a vital link in accessing services offered by other agencies, working together for the benefit of the customer.

### Key achievements in 2013/14:

- Offered an enhanced accompanied viewing service for vulnerable people
- Provided an improved and enhanced Support Service for Older People
- Increased our customer base to allow more residents in Chesterfield to benefit from the Service

### Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

- To equip the Support Team with mobile devices to improve efficiencies and enable the team to provide support to a wider customer base

### Percentage of call outs attended within 45 minutes

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
<b>Performance</b>	98.19%	97.11%	97.71%
<b>Target</b>	95%	90%	90%
<b>Target met</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Improved</b>	✓	✗	New Target

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 95%



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

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
<b>Performance</b>	99.89%	97.3%	97.3%
<b>Target</b>	95%	95%	95%
<b>Target met</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Improved</b>	✓	same	✗

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 99.5%



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



We remain confident that we can manage the additional £118million debt that we took on at the start of the self-financing system over the next 30 years and still have money left over to spend on our homes and 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 housing scheme for older people at Parkside, off Whittington Moor. Plans are also in progress for 40 new Council homes with the prospect of more to follow.

We will soon achieve the Decent Homes Standard across all of our homes. Many of our homes already exceed this standard. One of the next challenges is to agree with tenants the appropriate “Chesterfield Standard” for the next 10 to 20 years and balance the costs of this, and other essential expenditure, against rent levels.

### Changes to Housing Benefit

As a landlord and Housing Benefit administrator, the Council has a legal duty to implement the new welfare reform rules. However, we recognise that many of our tenants are affected by these changes and have already introduced new or improved measures to help people seek smaller, more affordable accommodation.

Amongst the measures is a Tenant Incentive Scheme to give financial help to tenants freeing up needed accommodation, a revised Allocations Policy which will generate additional transfers of smaller housing and additional staff to help guide tenants through their housing options. We have also introduced an improved mutual exchange scheme to help match those tenants wanting larger properties with those needing smaller homes.

We would encourage anyone struggling to make rent payments to talk to us so that we can offer advice and alternatives, including payment arrangements. 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 for advice.

Tenants wanting advice or information on moving home are asked to ring or visit “On the Move”, the Council’s shop front for allocations and advice on Low Pavement (telephone **01246 345700**).

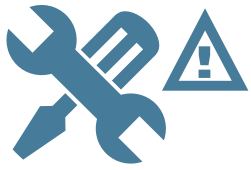
## How well are we doing on value for money?

**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:

- We are a key player in the Council’s corporate transformation project Great Place, Great Service
- The relocation of Environmental Services to the Stonegravels depot will provide efficiency savings for both Operational Services Division and Environmental Services
- A review of the Council’s corporate fleet management has resulted in the Operation Services Division taking the lead in managing the corporate fleet

## 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



**2p**  
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 Phone / SMS:**  
**07960 910264**

**Email:**  
**[eoinfo@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:eoinfo@chesterfield.gov.uk)**