



ANNUAL REPORT

Housing Services

September 2011

www.chesterfield.gov.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Who is this from?

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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

The Communications Group reviewed last year's report against the 'First Year Annual Reports to Tenants: Tenant Perspectives – a good start, but could do better' which was written on behalf of the National Tenant Organisations and funded by the TSA Tenant Excellence Fund. We looked at other organisations' annual reports, including those who had been identified for their 'good practice'. We also considered the comments made by Chesterfield tenants who responded to the survey of tenants about last year's report. The information was used to decide on the contents and design of this year's report.

The report is divided into colour coded sections that reflect the Tenant Services Authority's (TSA) Standards.

We believe that tenant participation is essential to the Council providing a high quality service that meets our needs. We have enjoyed working with Housing Services in 2010/11 and are looking forward to continuing our work into the future to improve services. We would like to encourage you to get involved.

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 improve our services and the neighbourhoods in which we live. The Annual Report is a positive example of how tenants are working with us to improve Housing Services. I would like to thank the Communications Group for their hard work and dedication in producing this Report.

It is essential that we are accountable to you 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

Councillor McManus (on the right) with members of the Communications Group



CORE VALUES

The mission for the Chesterfield's Housing Service is:

'Creating Sustainable Communities - where people are proud to live now and aspire to live in the future'

Our vision is:

'We will work together with our customers and partners to create high quality, sustainable homes and communities, where people from all backgrounds will be proud to live'

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:

- Maximise the number of Council homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- 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 an excellent 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:

- Make safe all emergency repairs within 24 hours and complete a full repair within five working days, dependant on the type of repair required and availability of 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
- 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 anti-social behaviour or hate crime reports within one working day 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 approximately 10,000 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. Key concerns include:

- 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:

- Achieved high levels of customer satisfaction across the service
- Consulted over 1,000 tenants on our new Local Offers
- Improved value for money and efficiency savings
- Improved the information provided to tenants including a new tenant handbook and repairs guide
- Achieved European Standard Telecare Services Accreditation for answering of Careline calls, installation of alarms in homes and responding to calls for assistance
- Introduced direct debit as a payment method for tenants
- Successfully bid for a provisional allocation of £8.2 million in Government funding to meet the Decent homes Standard

In the year ahead we are planning to:

- Measure our performance against the Local Offers
- Review our responsive repair timescales
- Further improve the way that we deal with complaints of anti-social behaviour
- Sign up to achieve the revised Respect Charter for Housing
- Improve tenant involvement opportunities
- Improve how we spend our Estate Improvement Budget by working closer with tenants
- Introduce a mobile office

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 880 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 TSA's Standards. It tells you about what the Council has been doing and what it is going to do to make services better.

The report tells you how we have performed from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

Number of homes we own and manage as at 31 March 2011 – 9,772

The first new Council houses to be built in over 20 years were completed in December 2010. The new homes were funded in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency and Chesterfield Borough Council. Chesterfield was one of only 47 councils in the country to be successful with their bid for Government financial support for new building.

The four houses were built to high standards and have high levels of energy efficiency. They will be easily adaptable in the future to accommodate the needs of anyone with a disability

Number of homes sold

| | |
|---------|----|
| 2010/11 | 13 |
| 2009/10 | 12 |



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 applicable, we consult tenant representatives 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 will help us to deliver services to address local issues and in a way that is more flexible to meet particular needs.

A local offer may be for:

- the whole of Chesterfield
- an estate or neighbourhood
- an individual block
- a group of tenants, for example, disabled people, elderly people, residents of sheltered accommodation, single people young people or families.

During November and December 2010 we held consultation events and coffee mornings, we visited over 1,000 tenants in their homes, surveyed tenants by post, surveyed tenants who telephoned us. We also surveyed customers who came into the Housing Solutions Centre. The information was used to devise our Local Offers which were introduced in April 2011.

We will measure our performance against the Local Offers and tell you how we are doing in future Annual Reports. The Local Offers will show how well we are doing and where we need to improve.

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 2010/11:

- Updated the tenant handbook including a repairs guide
- Reviewed tenant involvement opportunities
- Progressed a framework for tenant scrutiny roles, in line with guidance from the Tenant Services Authority
- Improved the way that customer feedback and complaints are recorded, analysed and reported on
- Improved the information available on our website and in the newsletter

Customer feedback is used to improve the services that we provide to you. A centralised electronic system has been introduced to record complaints, letters and enquiries.



Our performance on responding to letters remains well above the Council's Customer Charter target of 94%. However, the new system has helped us to identify that we need to improve performance on dealing with complaints and electronic enquiries.

Complaints responded to within 15 working days

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 88.05% | 94% | ✗ | ✗ |
| 2009/10 | 94% | 94% | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 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? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 97.73% | 94% | ✓ | ✗ |
| 2009/10 | 98.19% | 94% | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 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? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 83.33% | 94% | ✗ | ✗ |
| 2009/10 | 95% | 94% | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 94%. This is the target set by the Council's Customer Charter.



Planned improvements for 2011/12 are:

- To improve tenant involvement opportunities
- To spend the Estate Improvement Budget in conjunction with Area Panels
- To implement tenant scrutiny roles, in line with guidance from the Tenant Services Authority
- To introduce a mobile office enabling more consultation to be done locally
- To establish a Tenant Resource Centre
- To continuously improve information provided through our website and newsletters



HOW WELL ARE WE DOING ON MAINTAINING YOUR HOME?

We aim to provide you with a good quality repairs service at all times and this is being achieved as evidenced in the performance levels and tenant satisfaction in this section.

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 been carrying out work on the worst properties first.

The Government expected that all Council homes would meet this standard by December 2010. Chesterfield was one of many that were unable to meet the Government's target. The Government recognised the financial difficulties and introduced a competitive bidding process in December 2010 in which councils could make a case for extra funding.

We made a successful bid and the Government have made a provisional allocation of £8.2 million to Chesterfield over two years from 2013/14. The Council is also hoping to invest an additional £15million of its Housing reserves over the next three years to increase the number of homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard.

With this level of investment the Decent Homes Standard should be achieved by 2015.

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? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 80.02% | 83% | X | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 79.34% | 81% | X | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 83%

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 2010/11:

- Introduced Repairs Finder to make it easier for tenants to report repairs
- Improved the reception area
- Increased the value of decoration allowances
- Established a Repairs Focus Group to review and improve the service
- Achieved efficiency savings by:
 - Reducing the cost of carrying out repairs by 5%
 - Reducing the cost of the kitchen installation contract by 5%
 - Negotiated reduced costs for electric fire suites
 - Restructuring Mechanical and Electrical Section, reducing the number of senior managers
 - Extension of the fleet vehicle lease saving £80k

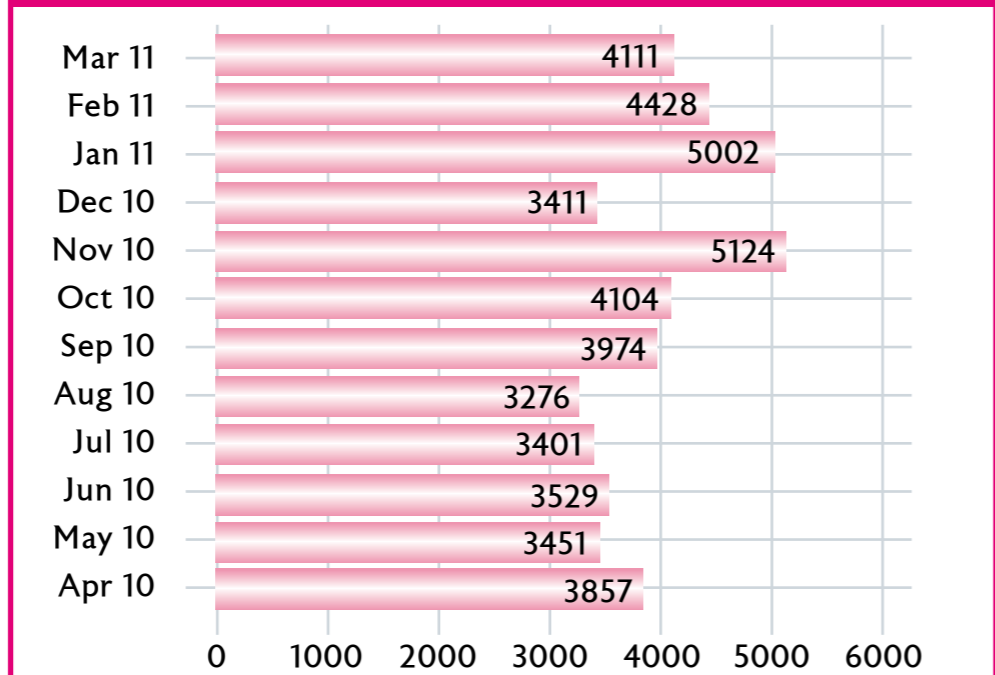


Number of calls answered by the Repairs Hotline

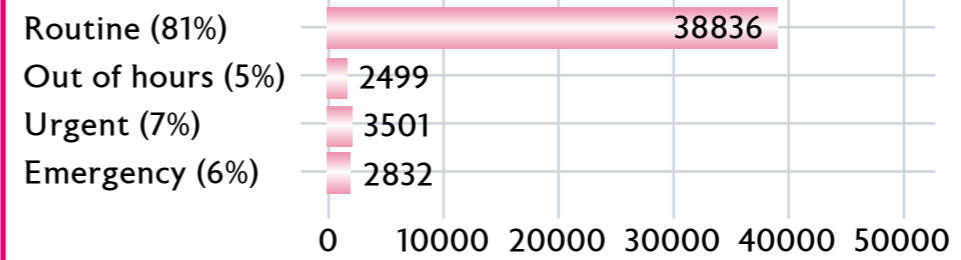
| | |
|---------|--------|
| 2010/11 | 54,169 |
| 2009/10 | 45,708 |

The severe weather throughout the winter period substantially increased the number of calls made to the Repairs Hotline.

Number of Responsive Repairs



Repairs by Priority Category



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

| | |
|---------|----------|
| 2010/11 | £2081.96 |
| 2009/10 | £1885.65 |

The increase in the average amount spent per property on responsive repairs and capital works is due to the substantial use of financial reserves to help deliver the Decent Homes Standard.



The percentage of emergency repairs made safe within 24 hours

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 96.48% | 99% | ✗ | ✗ |
| 2009/10 | 97.92% | 98% | ✗ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 99%



The percentage of urgent repairs completed within five working days

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 95.61% | 98% | ✗ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 93.66% | 98% | ✗ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 98%

The percentage of routine repairs completed within 20 working days

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 96.65% | 98% | ✗ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 95.23% | 98% | ✗ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 98%

We recognised that a very small number of jobs were disproportionately affecting performance on meeting repairs timescales. We therefore implemented a new tracking system to address the problem. However, extreme weather conditions affected performance in meeting repairs timescales for the winter period in 2010/11.





We are already seeing significant improvements in performance in the current year which will be reported on in next year's Annual Report.

The percentage of repairs where an appointment was made and kept

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 93.63% | 88% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 87.3% | 75% | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 90%

We have achieved continuous improvement in respect of appointments. Using text and voicemail messages to remind tenants about appointments has helped greatly in improving performance on the number of appointments made and kept.

The average time to answer hotline calls (seconds)

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 73 | 25 | ✗ | ✗ |
| 2009/10 | 60 | 25 | ✗ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 to answer 80% of calls within 20 seconds.

We recognise that this is an area where we need to improve performance but also that the current monitoring system needs replacement as it is not recording performance accurately. Repairs call handling is due to be transferred to Avarto in line with the Council's public and private partnership and more accurate performance information should be available in next year's annual report.

Gas servicing completed on schedule

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 98.71% | 100% | ✗ | ✗ |
| 2009/10 | 99.3% | 100% | ✗ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 100%

To improve performance on gas servicing, we have restructured the Gas Section and are already seeing significant improvements in performance which will be reported on in next year's Annual Report. This indicator of performance would always be 100% if all tenants let us in to complete the service.



Customers receiving a repair who were satisfied overall

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 92% | 86% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 85.15% | 82% | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 88%

We consider that the target of 88% is challenging and will help us to achieve continuous improvement.

Planned improvements for 2011/12 are:

- Introduce Right First Time key performance indicator
- Renewal of vehicle fleet
- Review of responsive repair target timescales
- Upgrade ICT to improve repairs reporting and communication 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 2010/11:

- Improved performance in dealing with major adaptations requests – from the referral being received to the order being completed
- Improved the proactive assistance provided by the Adaptations Service to the tenants when we are informed of the adaptation requested
- Increased the use of the Transfer Incentive Scheme to assist tenants having to move due to their home being unsuitable for adaptation
- Compiled a database of users who have expressed an interest in becoming involved in ways to improve the Adaptation Service
- Achieved consistently high levels of customer satisfaction following the completion of work
- Produced a new information leaflet for tenants, members of their families and prospective tenants on mobility scooters to explain all aspects of mobility scooter ownership
- Promoted the service by displaying leaflets and posters in doctors surgeries, hospitals, libraries and Social Services Offices

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

| | |
|---------|-----|
| 2010/11 | 355 |
| 2009/10 | 434 |

Number of requests made for major adaptations

| | |
|---------|-----|
| 2010/11 | 325 |
| 2009/10 | 290 |

Requests for adaptations are demand-led and our aim is to keep people in their homes for as long as practically possible. The increase in requests for major adaptations is due to a number of referrals which appeared to be a minor adaptations being reassessed as a major adaptations due to the extent of work involved.

Number of minor adaptations completed

| | |
|---------|-----|
| 2010/11 | 303 |
| 2009/10 | 436 |

Number of major adaptations completed

| | |
|---------|-----|
| 2010/11 | 244 |
| 2009/10 | 275 |

The number of major adaptations completed reduced in 2010/11. This was due to a combination of factors which included properties not being suitable for a stair lift or adaptations. There have also been a number of refusals due to the weight limits for the stair lift installations being exceeded.

A number of tenants took up the opportunity to move to more suitable properties, some of which may have already been adapted. This was achieved through the close working relationship of the Adaptations Team and the Housing Solutions Team.

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

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 1.05 | 2 | ✓ | same |
| 2009/10 | 1.05 | 2 | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 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 a 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)

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 5.03 | 5 | ✗ | ✗ |
| 2009/10 | 4.41 | 5 | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 5 days. This is the target specified in the current adaptations contract.

There were three main reasons why a number of adaptations were completed outside the target time; the complexity of the adaptation work required, delays due to other remedial repair work requiring completion by another contractor and adverse weather conditions.

Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the Adaptations Service

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 96.9% | 95% | ✓ | ✗ |
| 2009/10 | 98.1% | 95% | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 95%

Planned improvements for 2011/12 are:

- To consult the Adaptation Users Forum and implement service improvements
- To consult the Adaptation Users Forum regarding mobility scooters and implement findings
- To consult the Adaptation Users Forum and our partners regarding publicity material for the service and improve the way that the service is promoted
- To carry out the first annual review of the work that has been carried out. The results will be used to assess the long term benefits of the completed work.



HOW WELL ARE WE DOING ON ALLOCATING HOMES AND SETTING RENTS?

Allocating Homes

The Housing Solutions Centre offers advice on a wide range of issues related to rehousing.

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.

Due to the shortage of family houses, the Council has updated its Transfer Incentive Scheme to give up to £5,000 to existing tenants who are willing to move from a family house to sheltered accommodation or a flat. The scheme has three separate incentive packages which give tenants a choice of property type that they would prefer to move into.

Key achievements in 2010/11:

- Continued development of choice based lettings including advertising accredited private landlords' properties to increase housing options available to applicants
- Reviewed the Decoration Allowance Scheme
- We have worked with our partners, Bolsover District Council, A1 Housing/Bassetlaw District Council, Rykneld Homes/North East Derbyshire District Council, to develop the sub-regional choice based lettings scheme
- Reviewed the nomination agreements with registered social landlords to maximise housing options
- Introduced targeted customer satisfaction surveys
- Consulted on proposed changes to the Council's Allocations Policy to provide further assistance to households threatened with homelessness and help overcrowded households move to larger accommodation. These changes will maximise choice and make best use of the Council's housing stock.



During 2010/11 we let 1054 properties. This is a slight increase from 2009/10 when we let 1002 homes.

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 average number of days to relet an empty home

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 24.45 | 30 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 33.13 | 27 | ✗ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 27 calendar days

Significant improvements have been made in reducing the average number of days taken to relet an empty home since the introduction of choice based lettings and accompanied viewings.

The percentage of rent lost through empty homes

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 0.99% | 1.25% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 1.19% | 1.7% | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 1.1%

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

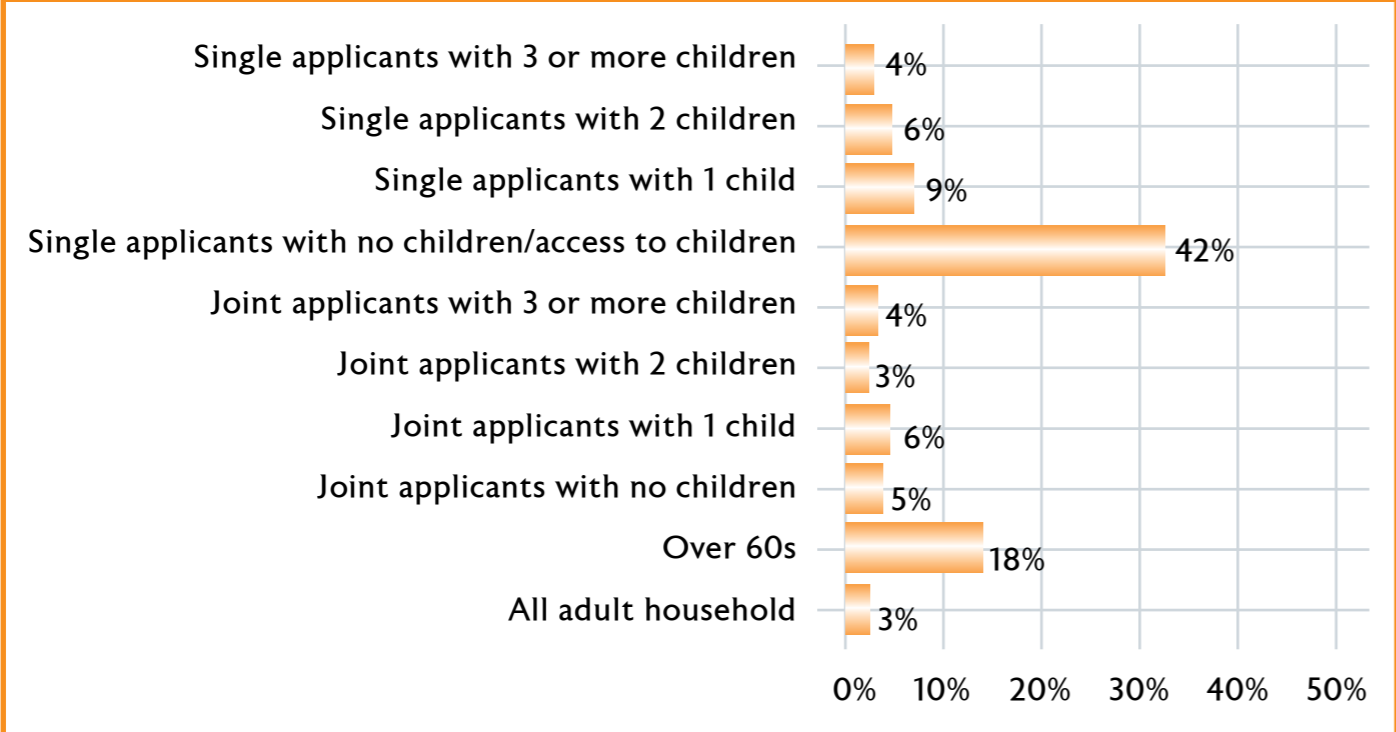
| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 17.45 | 19 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 18.94 | 19 | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 17.5 calendar days

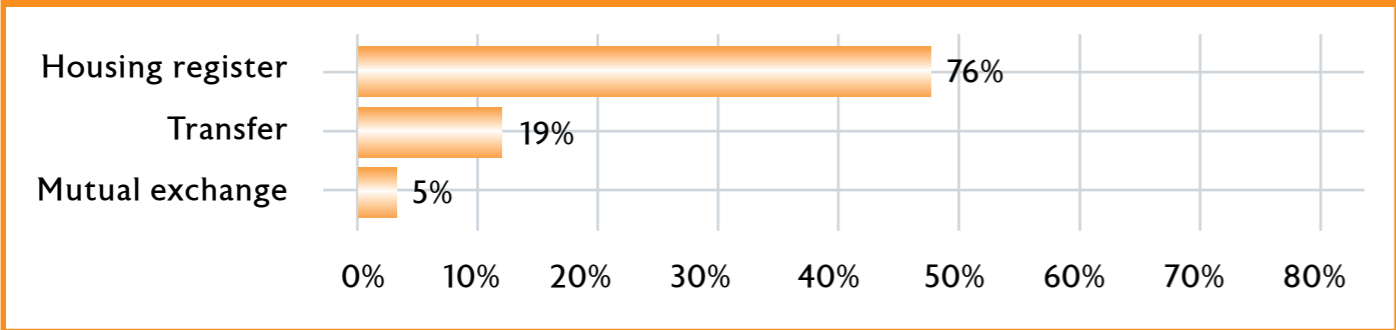
Reducing the time taken to complete repairs to an empty home has contributed towards the significant improvements that have been made in reducing the average number of days taken to relet an empty home.



Who we rehoused



Allocations



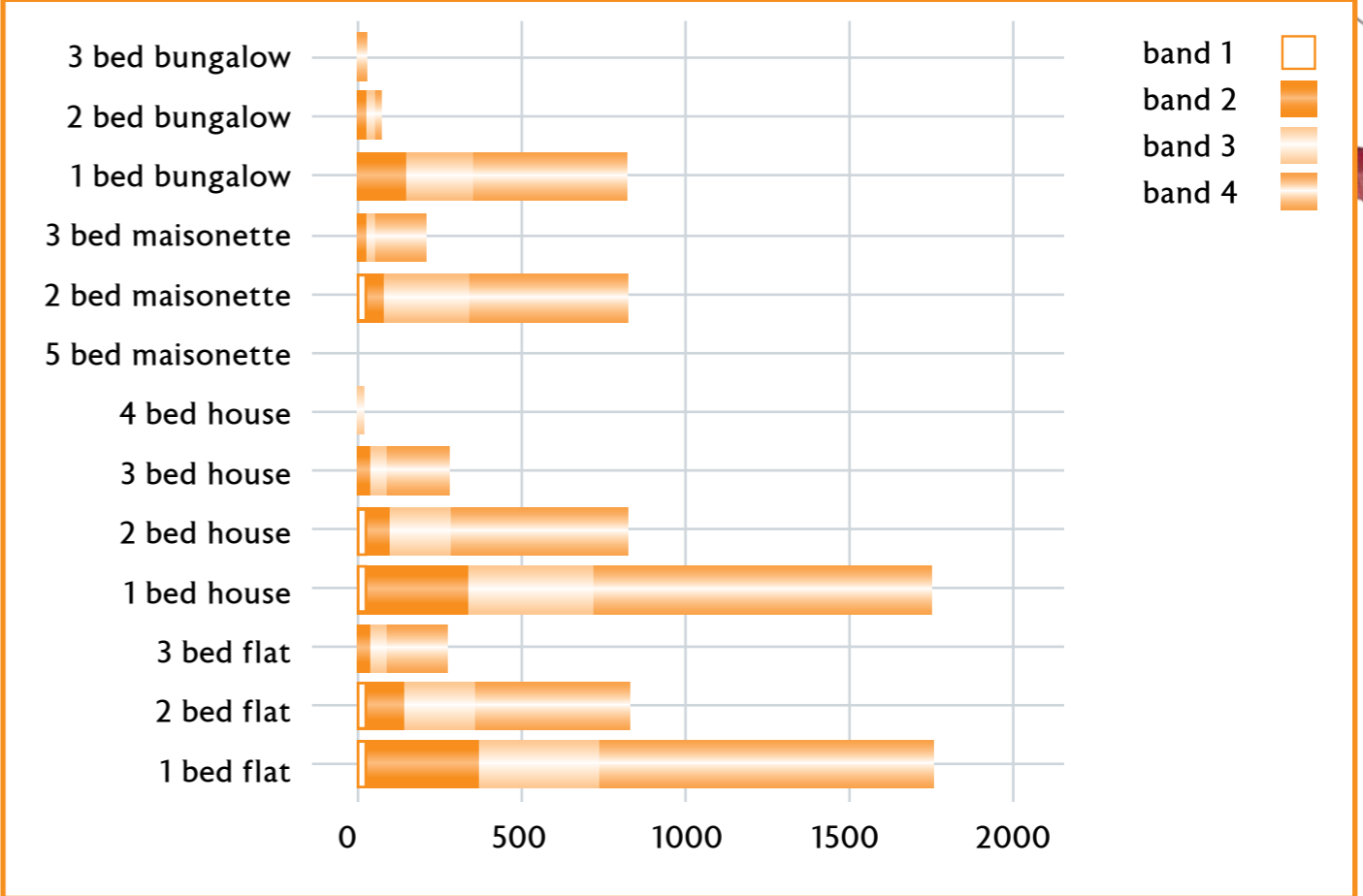
The number of days to register a housing application

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 6.08 | 10 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 10.83 | 10 | ✗ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 5 days

The Housing Solutions Team has greatly reduced the length of time to register an application and have set a challenging target for 2011/12.

Applicants on the Housing Register at 31/3/11 and the property types they are eligible for



There has been an increase in demand for social housing in Chesterfield across most property types. The waiting list has increased by 2669 people in 2010/11.

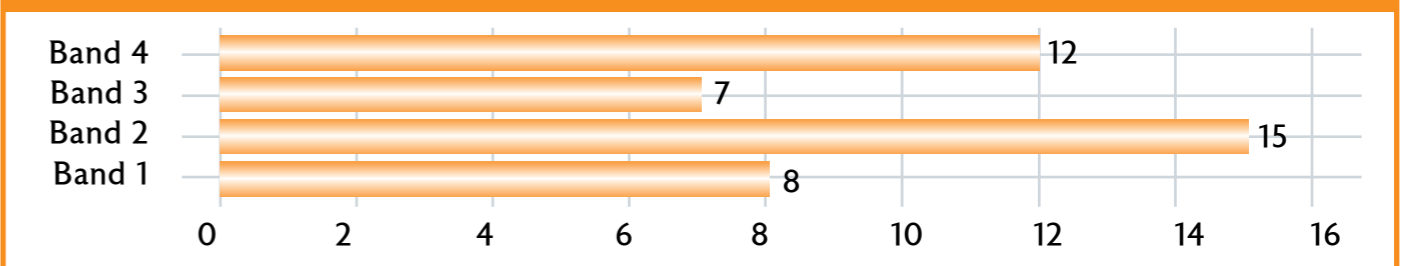
The number of applicants for two bedroom bungalows reduced through applicants choosing one bedroom properties which become available more frequently.

There have been large increases in the number of applicants for two and three bedroom maisonettes. These applicants have access to children or have an adult living with them.

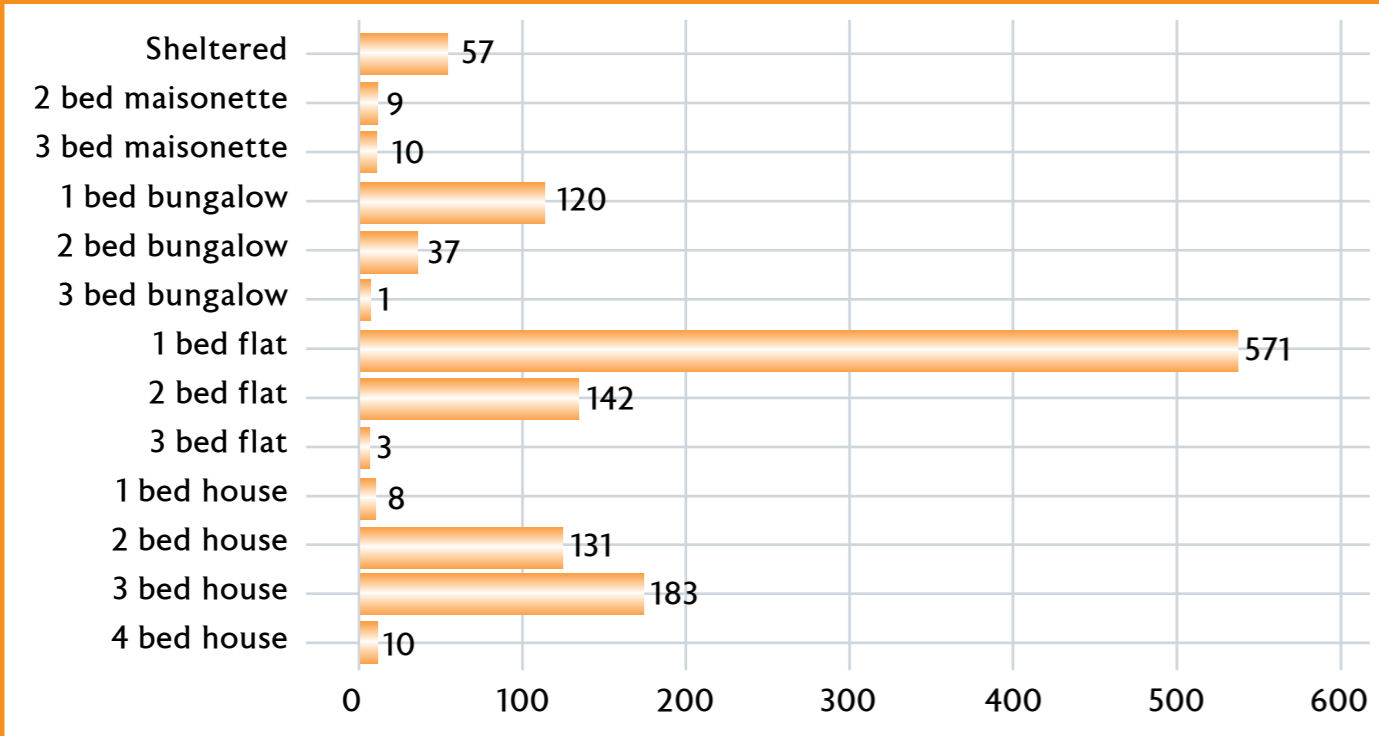
The number of families living in flats has increased the number of applicants for two and three bedroom houses.

The largest increase has been in applicants for one bedroom houses. However, as there are only 51 of this property type, vacancies are quite rare.

Number of nominations made to housing associations



Number of properties advertised by the Housing Solutions Centre



The number of two and three bedroom houses advertised in 2010/11 increased due to the Transfer Incentive Scheme offering an alternative to having adaptations carried out. Tenants were able to move to more suitable properties and free up homes suitable for families.

The number of one bedroom flats advertised in 2010/11 increased by 160 and one bedroom bungalows by 47 compared to 2009/10. This increase was partly due to tenants transferring into the houses that became available.

Number of visitors to the Housing Solutions Centre

| | |
|---------|--------|
| 2010/11 | 11,500 |
| 2009/10 | 17,005 |

2009/10 was the first year that the Housing Solutions Centre was opened and customers now have a better understanding of the system and how to bid for properties. As a consequence the number of visitors to the Housing Solutions Centre reduced in 2010/11. The number of bids made has however increased.

Number of bids received for properties

| | |
|---------|--------|
| 2010/11 | 23,688 |
| 2009/10 | 16,862 |



Percentage of bids made via the internet

| | |
|---------|--------|
| 2010/11 | 98.01% |
| 2009/10 | 96.72% |

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. Customers understand the system and are confident in placing bids.

Planned improvements for 2011/12 are:

- Implement changes to the Allocations Policy to make best use of housing stock, maximise customer choice and assist households in most need such as overcrowded households and those at risk of homelessness
- To launch the sub-regional choice based lettings scheme with Bolsover District Council, A1 Housing/Bassetlaw District Council, Rykeld Homes/North East Derbyshire District Council in September 2011.
- To review the relet process to ensure that it is efficient and effective.

Homelessness

The main causes of homelessness in Chesterfield are evictions from friends and family and relationship breakdowns. In 2010/11 the Homelessness Prevention Service advised 1,327 households through appointments and the emergency 'drop-in' service. We accepted a full homelessness duty for 94 households and the Service prevented or relieved homelessness for a further 159 households who were threatened with homelessness.

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
- A Pre-Tenancy Support Scheme helping single people to secure accommodation primarily in the private sector
- Stonham's Home Achievement Programme - a training programme that includes providing people with the skills to successfully manage a tenancy

There are fewer households in temporary accommodation and 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 Supporting People.

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

Planned improvements for 2011/12 are:

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



Rents

Key achievements in 2010/11:

- Improved rent collection rates
- Reviewed our arrears policies and procedures
- Introduced direct debit payments for 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? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 95.49% | 95.27% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 95.27% | 95.5% | ✗ | |

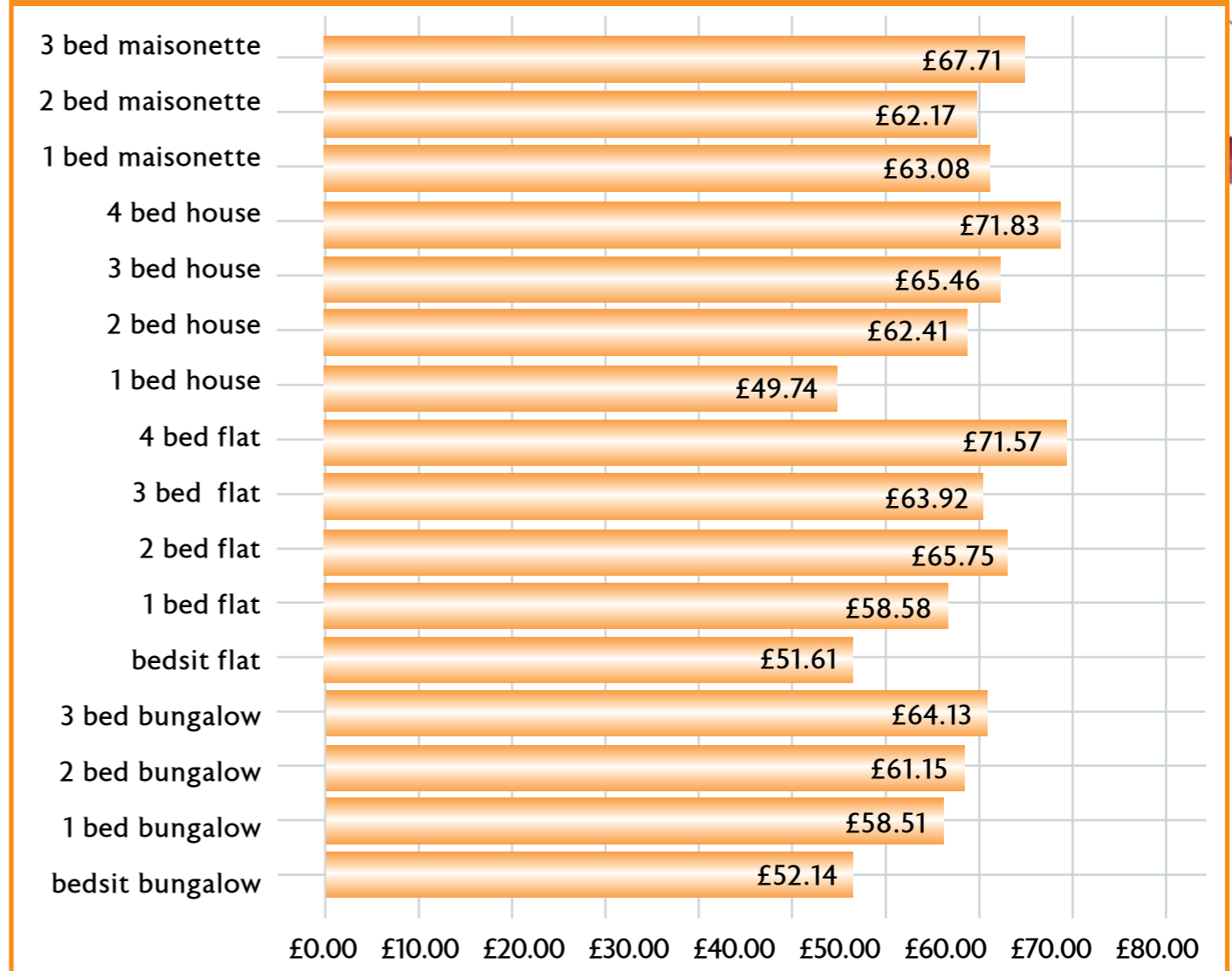
We have set our target for 2011/12 at 95.27%

Planned improvements for 2011/12 are:

- A publicity campaign to widely promote direct debit as a payment method
- Implement improvements identified in the review of our arrears policies and procedures
- Customer Services Centre to deal with telephone calls



Average Weekly Rents



On average our rents increased by 2.6%



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



Our definition of anti-social behaviour 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 anti-social behaviour, this breaches 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 2010/11:

- Improved the way that we deal with reports of anti-social behaviour
- Improved satisfaction with the outcome of reports of anti-social behaviour
- Improved the information provided to people who report anti-social behaviour 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
- We have worked with the Community Safety Partnership to develop the Anti-Social Behaviour Tasking Group. The Group now meets monthly to identify anti-social behaviour 'hotspots'. Joint action, particularly with the police, has been taken to resolve problems in these areas.
- Increased the percentage of closed cases that are confirmed as being resolved to 87%
- Worked with appropriate organisations and tenants to develop policies and standards for maintenance and improvement of neighbourhoods

In last year's Annual Report we said that we would increase the number of referrals made to Derbyshire County Council's Witness and Victim

Support Service. The Service no longer accepts referrals from organisations; it only accepts self-referrals from witnesses and victims. We have therefore worked with witnesses and victims to promote the benefits of the service and encouraged them to refer themselves for support.

In 2009/10 we undertook community engagement events to ask what concerned you. During 2010/11 we have continued to work on the issues you identified which were:

- Rubbish and litter
- Youths hanging around, drunken behaviour and speeding cars
- Uncontrolled dogs, dog fouling and noisy or other nuisance behaviour

To tackle littering and dog fouling

More of our Neighbourhood Rangers have been trained and authorised to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and dog fouling

To take swifter, earlier action on anti-social behaviour

80 formal written warnings were issued in 2010/11

This is an increase compared to 2009/10, when 61 were issued and 2008/9 when 38 were issued.

To prevent anti-social behaviour by means other than eviction

13 injunctions and undertakings were granted by the court in 2010/11. This is an increase compared to 2009/10, when 10 were granted and 2008/9 when 5 were granted.

In one case, the person breached the terms of his injunction by entering a restricted area in Old Whittington and was sentenced to 63 days in prison.

To use all appropriate legal measures available

We took the unusual step of obtaining an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) against a homeowner in Inkersall and, in an unconnected case in Inkersall, we varied an existing ASBO against another homeowner. This prevented anti-social behaviour against our tenants and other residents.

To address anti-social behaviour in particular neighbourhoods

The Flamsted Crescent Action Group was set up to coordinate a multi-agency response to anti-social behaviour in the area. The group meets regularly with the Police, Environmental Services and the Community Safety Partnership. Results include:

- Several 'door-knocks' to encourage residents to provide information
- £30,000 from our Estates Improvement Budget has been used to improve fencing, gates and landscaping
- The Community Safety Partnership attracted funding for the purchase and installation of a CCTV camera
- Four tenants who were using their homes for illegal activities were evicted





We have continued to play a lead role working with the St Augustine's and Grangewood Action Group (STAAG). Results include:

- Working with the Police to evict three tenants and issue two formal warnings
- Using an automatic number plate recognition system to provide intelligence on criminal activity and untaxed vehicles
- The Community Safety Partnership installed CCTV on Bacons Lane
- Joint patrols reduced truancy and associated nuisance
- Regular joint 'door knocks' to encourage residents to report problems
- Presentations by Neighbourhoods Rangers, Police and Environmental Services to schools about littering
- A 43% reduction in crime for 2010/11
- The Action Group won the Derbyshire Safer Neighbourhood's Team of the Year Award for its excellent partnership working.



In 2009/10, 35% of our closed cases were confirmed as having been resolved. We identified this as an area for improvement in 2010/11 and set a target of 60%. We achieved 87% of closed cases confirmed as having been resolved in 2010/11 and our target for 2011/12 is 95%.

In 2010/11, 20% of our ASB case closure questionnaires were returned. The information we receive from the questionnaires is important as it helps us to improve the service. We want to increase the number of questionnaires that are returned and have set a target for 2011/12 at 40%. To help achieve this, our Team Leaders will contact customers to encourage them to return the questionnaires. We will also enter customers who return their questionnaires into a draw each quarter. The winner will receive £25 worth of high street vouchers.



Below are the results of our 2010/11 anti-social behaviour customer satisfaction surveys.

Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the way their anti-social behaviour complaint was dealt with

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 81% | 75% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 61% | | | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 85%



Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the outcome of their anti-social behaviour complaint

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 76% | 70% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 57% | | | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 80%

Providing people with more detailed and realistic information about what we can reasonably do, and what we need our customers to do, has been key to improving satisfaction with the outcome of cases. During 2010/11 we gave further training to staff and placed extra emphasis to this in regular individual case supervision meetings.

Customers who found it easy or very easy to contact a member of staff to report a complaint about anti-social behaviour

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 83% | 80% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 75% | | | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 90%

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

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 90% | 75% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 68% | | | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 90%

Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied that they were kept informed about what was happening throughout their anti-social behaviour case

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 80% | 75% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 53% | | | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 85%





Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the support given to them during their anti-social behaviour case

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 79% | 75% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 52% | | | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 85%

Customers who have made a complaint of anti-social behaviour would be willing or very willing to report anti-social behaviour again in the future

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 88% | 85% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 82% | | | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 90%

We are pleased that we have been able to make significant improvements in key areas of the service. We believe that these improvements are a result of:

- Extra members of staff who were recruited in 2009 became more effective as their knowledge and experience increased
- A clear focus on key elements such as keeping people supported and updated and taking swift action once we have reasonable evidence of anti-social behaviour
- Improvements in how we monitor individual staff performance and challenging expectations for the performance of each member of staff, reinforced up by regular detailed case supervision meetings
- The ability to take swifter and more effective legal action as a result of the employment of a dedicated ASB Legal Officer

Planned improvements for 2010/11 are:

- To use comments and information from customer satisfaction questionnaires to further improve our ASB service, particularly:
 - how easy it is to contact us
 - overall satisfaction with the outcome of cases
 - overall satisfaction with the way in which the case was dealt with
 - overall satisfaction with how well we keep customers informed about the progress of their case
- To further improve the information provided to people who report anti-social behaviour 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
- To continue working with the Community Safety Partnership to develop an Anti-Social Behaviour Tasking Group to identify anti-social behaviour 'hotspots'
- To increase the percentage of closed cases that are confirmed as being resolved to 90%



- To increase the percentage of case closure questionnaires that are returned to 40%
- To revise our anti-social behaviour policies and procedures in consultation with tenants
- To issue Fixed Penalty Notices where dog fouling or littering is witnessed by an officer, where it is appropriate to do so
- In December 2006, we signed a commitment to achieve the Respect Standard for Housing Management, a challenging national programme of best practice for dealing with ASB. These standards have been revised and are known as The Respect Charter for Housing. We aim to sign up to achieve these revised standards.

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 2010/11:

- Achieved Telecare Services Accreditation for answering of Careline calls, installation of alarms in homes and responding to calls for assistance
- Increased our service calls to every six months
- Introduced improved risk assessments and support plans for all our Careline service users which are updated every six months
- Provided secure storage for mobility scooters at some of our sheltered housing schemes
- Completed a feasibility study on the relocation of the service to reduce costs and overheads and improve value for money

We are proud of our success at being the very first English Council to receive a prestigious new award for our Careline and Warden Services.

The European Standard Accreditation from the Telecare Services Association has been awarded following a rigorous inspection of Housing Service's Careline and Warden Services. The inspection

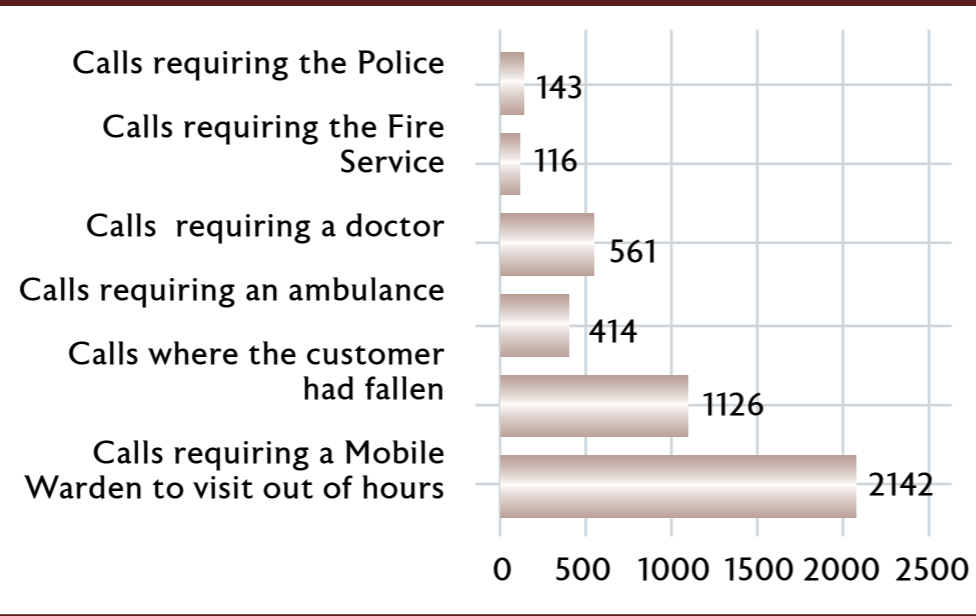




looked at the installation of alarms, customer service, monitoring and response to alarm calls.

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



The introduction of risk assessments that are reviewed every six months has helped us to update the information on service users and to take a more proactive approach to service users' needs. We have substantially reduced the number of calls requiring a doctor.

Careline calls answered within 30 seconds

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 94.91% | 90% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 91.78% | 90% | ✓ | |

To meet the requirements of the European Telecare Standard our target for 2011/12 will be to answer 98.5% of calls within 60 seconds and 99% within 180 seconds

Call outs attended within 20 minutes

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 89.23% | 85% | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2009/10 | 88.58% | 85% | ✓ | |

To meet the requirements of the European Telecare Standard our target for 2011/12 will be to attend 90% of call outs within 45 minutes and 100% within 60 minutes

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

| | Performance | Target | Target Met? | Improved? |
|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| 2010/11 | 100% | 95% | ✓ | same |
| 2009/10 | 100% | 95% | ✓ | |

We have set our target for 2011/12 at 95%

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

Planned improvements for 2010/11 are:

- To tender for and retain the Supporting People contract for Warden Services including Careline Service
- To review all aspects of service provision and costs to improve efficiencies and value for money to meet requirements of Supporting People
- To achieve Telecare Services Authority platinum member status
- To review and update procedures in conjunction with service users





HOW WELL ARE WE DOING ON VALUE FOR MONEY?

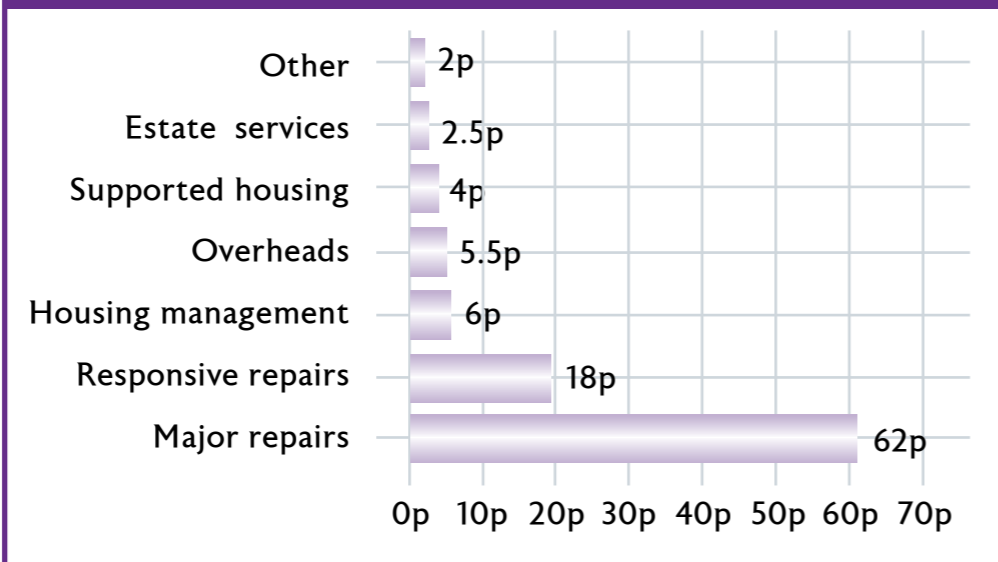
We constantly review the way that we approach value for money and efficiency savings and ensure that we have a process in place to obtain the best value for money throughout the Housing Service.

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
- Employee Performance and Development Reviews include value for money as a standard item
- 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 value for money training programme
- 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 2010/11 the efficiency saving claimed amounts to £763,000



Each £1 of rent was spent on



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

Since the decision of the Council in July 2005 to continue to own and maintain its stock of Council properties it has been a challenge to find the financial resources to carry out the work required to maintain the properties in good condition. Resources have continued to be less than ideally necessary and as a consequence some work has inevitably been deferred to future dates or cancelled completely. The Council is also continuing to use as much of the Housing reserves as possible to enable improvement to tenants' homes.

The Government has announced major changes to the way in which Council Housing will be financed from April 2012 under a scheme known as "self-financing".

Part of the changeover to the new system will be the requirement for Chesterfield to borrow £117 million and pay this to the Government at the end of March 2012. We will then have to repay this new debt from the rents we receive from tenants.

In exchange for this the Government will cease taking money away from Chesterfield as they do now in the form of "negative subsidy" (currently £6 million each year) and this will go a long way towards paying off the new debt.

In view of the above, the future balance sheet for spending on Council housing is having to be completely redrawn.

If it is not possible to find the financial resources that the Council requires then it will need to reconsider, in consultation with its tenants, the options available for managing and maintaining its homes in the future.



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 No

Is the information clear and easy to understand? Yes No

Is there enough information about performance? Yes No

Do you agree with what we have said in the report? Yes No

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:

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