

Annual report Summary

October 2015



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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.chesterield.gov.uk

To request a printed version phone 01246 245142

The report provides an overview of how we have performed from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. It includes information for you to be able to compare our performance against previous years.

Who is this from?

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

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Phone: 01246 345142

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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 best placed to tell us about the services they want. Tenants give us their views through surveys, meetings, feedback and complaints.

Key achievements in 2014/15:

- Reviewed and refreshed our tenant engagement opportunities to improve how tenants get involved with all aspects of the housing service.
- Expanded our use of social media by introducing Twitter.
- Used the mobile office to increase local involvement of tenants and to ask tenants about how the estate improvement budget should be spent.
- Organised 14 tenant engagement events and attended events such as the Chesterfield Carnival and Party in the Park, as well as other local events, to ask tenants to give us their opinions on how we can improve our services.
- Implemented service improvements using the findings of the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR).
- Used mystery shoppers to test services received by customers and used the information obtained during the exercises to improve services.

- produce an updated tenant handbook for all tenants.
- improve performance on complaint handling and responding to letters to meet the standards set out in the council's customer charter.
- complete a STAR customer satisfaction survey to enable us to compare key satisfaction results on the services we provide.
- investigate the feasibility of an incentive scheme for young people getting involved in community projects.
- train mystery shoppers to enable them to assess estates using Keep Britain Tidy criteria.
- work with the tenant challenge panel to identify service improvements.
- promote Chesterfield Active Tenants (ChAT) to develop a database of tenants to participate in service review groups and surveys.

Complaints responded to within 15 working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	77.2%	94%	×	×
2013/14	94.8%	94%	~	~
2012/13	90%	94%	×	×

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 94 per cent. This is the target set by the council's customer charter.

Letters responded to within 20 working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	84%	94%	×	×
2013/14	97.6%	94%	~	~
2012/13	92%	94%	×	×

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 94 per cent. This is the target set by the council's customer charter.

Electronic enquiries responded to within 20 working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	98%	94%	✓	×
2013/14	100%	94%	✓	~
2012/13	99.3%	94%	~	~

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 94 per cent. This is the target set by the council's customer charter.

How well are we doing on maintaining your home?

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

Key achievements in 2014/15:

- achieved the target of 100 per cent of the council's housing stock meeting the **Decent Homes Standard**
- improved the application of safe systems of working and the enforcement of health and safety at all times to ensure our tenants' well being
- completed 100 per cent of annual gas servicing for the last three consecutive years
- reviewed the lettable standard for empty properties in consultation with tenants
- continued to work on the implementation of the Coins contractor management IT system



The percentage of emergency repairs made safe within 24 hours					
	Performance Target Target met? Improved?				
2014/15	94.7%	100%	×	×	
2013/14	96.22%	100%	×	×	
2012/13	100%	100%	✓	same	

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 100 per cent.

The percentage of urgent repairs completed within five working days				
	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	96.91%	98%	×	×
2013/14	98.97%	98%	~	×
2012/13	99.63%	98%	✓	~

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 98 per cent.

The percentage of routine repairs completed within 20 working days				
	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	96.92%	98%	×	×
2013/14	99.31%	98%	~	×
2012/13	99.67%	98%	✓	×

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 98 per cent.

The percentage of hotline calls answered within 20 seconds				
	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	58.2%	90%	×	×
2013/14	59.24%	90%	×	×
2012/13	86.33%	90%	×	~

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 90 per cent.

Customers receiving a repair who were satisfied overall				
	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	97%	95%	~	same
2013/14	97%	88%	~	~
2012/13	94%	88%	~	✓

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 95 per cent.

Planned improvements for 2015/16

In 2015/16 we will ensure that all of our housing stock continues to meet the Decent Homes 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
- start work on improving our non-traditional housing stock at Hady, Grangewood and Boythorpe to ensure that they are structurally sound and better insulated
- start an initial phase of new-build housing at Rufford Close, Boythorpe, and a new programme of buying properties which meet a housing need, including former right to buys

We will also start to deliver a range of estate regeneration and environmental improvements including:

- a £4.5million scheme of estate improvements at Barrow Hill, including new roadways through the estate, improved car parking provision, re-routing of footpaths and improvements to green spaces, shared courtyards and garden boundaries
- consult with the residents of Holme Hall to identify a range of estate improvements
- new car parking provision on estates and improvements to garage sites
- replacement door canopies
- boundary treatments to open plan aspects on estates

We will also:

- fully implement the Coins contractor management IT system
- deliver an extended capital works programme across the Borough
- deliver an improved lettable standard
- continue the estate regeneration programme to improve communal areas on estates
- replace the first phase of the district heating system at Lowgates in Staveley

Adaptations service

Key achievements in 2014/15:

- promoted the adaptations services and the adaptation self-referral form through information sessions at various locations in the Borough
- reduced the waiting time for major adaptations to be carried out
- improved customer satisfaction
- increased the number of tenants who required adaptations to move to more suitable properties using the Transfer Incentive Scheme

Number of minor adaptations completed

2014/15389 2013/14449 2012/13286

Number of major adaptations completed

2014/15 156 2013/14 208 2012/13 183

Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the Adaptations Service

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	99%	96.7%	/	~
2013/14	97.2%	95%	✓	~
2012/13	96.7%	95%	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 95 per cent.

- review and improve how we offer advice and assistance to enable tenants to move to more suitable properties
- increase the number of tenants using the Transfer Incentive Scheme to move to more suitable adapted properties which makes better use of the council's housing stock
- review the adaptations policy to ensure it is easy to understand, gives clear information on eligibility and how to apply for adaptations
- review all adaptation information leaflets
- · work with our new contractor to improve and streamline the service

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 2014/15:

- Analysed bidding activity to ensure that applicants understand the system and that they are choosing to place bids on properties on which they have the most chance of being successful
- Reviewed our allocations policy to comply with government guidance and to address the unacceptable number of tenancies which breakdown in less than 12 months
- Supported tenants affected by welfare reform to secure alternative accommodation
- Worked in partnership with South Yorkshire Housing Association to trial a tenancy training scheme

Number of properties let
2014/15956
2013/141,073
2012/13966

 Worked with several multi-agency partnerships to allocate and sustain appropriate accommodation

The property type with the highest turnover is flats. Of the properties available to let 2014/15, 53% were flats, 34% houses and 10% were bungalows.

The number of tenants evicted for non-payment of rent during 2014/15 has reduced from 112 in 2013/14 to 63 in 2014/15.

Although the number of applications for possession increased, a larger number of tenants applied to the court for possession action to be suspended and agreements to repay the debt owed to the council were put in place.

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 which includes some of the essential items needed when moving into a new home. Where appropriate the new tenant received a decoration allowance to assist with decoration.

The number of calendar days taken to complete repairs to an empty home Target Target met? Improved? Performance 2014/15 17.31 17.5 2013/14 17.92 17.5 X X 2012/13 16.14 17.5

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 17.5 calendar days.

	Applicants on the housing register at 31/3/15 and the property types they are eligible for	Number of properties advertised by the Housing Solutions Centre
Sheltered	683	11
Bedsit	1,058	9
One bed flat	1,365	990
Two bed flat	406	195
Three bed flat	168	17
One bed house	1365	8
Two bed house	289	168
Three bed house	157	237
Four bed house	48	15
Five bed house	10	0
Six bed house	1	0
Two bed maisonette	394	23
Three bed maisonette	166	1
One bed bungalow	638	122
Two bed bungalow	86	54
Three bed bungalow	7	2

Number of households who received face-to-face advice by the homelessness prevention service through appointments and the emergency 'drop-in' service

2014/15	937
2013/14	1134
2012/13	1158

Number of households accepted a full homelessness duty for

2014/15 1	113
2013/14	98
2012/13	80

Planned improvements for 2015/16 are:

- introduce a new way of assessing housing applications to ensure that people who are offered a tenancy are able to sustain their tenancy independently or with appropriate support
- implement changes to the allocations policy to direct match applicants from some groups within the priority band
- work with other housing providers to develop alternative housing options
- introduce a tenancy training scheme
- improve how we sign up customers for new tenancies

Homelessness

Key achievements in 2014/15:

- Reviewed our services to ensure that we are providing customers with the best service possible and to identify areas for future improvements.
- Increased the number of households who were prevented from becoming homeless.

- Continued 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, for example, tenancy training and developing alternative housing options.
- Applied for funding to provide additional basic cooking packs to single households under 25 years of age who have been identified as having limited income.
- Secured funding jointly with North East Derbyshire District Council and Bolsover District Council to provide housing advice workers for young people to work alongside the Sheffield City Region Ambition Project.
- Reviewed the council's Homelessness Statement.

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

2014/15	73
2013/14	83
2012/13 1	12

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

2014/15	624
2013/14	483
2012/13	201

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.

The number of homelessness preventions continues to rise due to the positive actions taken. The figure also reflects the increased use of Discretionary Housing Payments to prevent homelessness. The homelessness prevention team use a combination of homelessness prevention measures including negotiation with families and landlords, mortgage and debt advice, sanctuary measures for people at risk of violence from ex-partners, and the Tenancy Bond Guarantee Scheme.

- develop a joint homelessness strategy with North East District and Bolsover Councils which will ensure that we maximise opportunities, resources and access to funding for the north Derbyshire area
- use the single homelessness funding secured by the Derbyshire Homelessness Officers' Group to support projects relating to sanctions, No Second Night Out, Healthy Futures and Sheffield City Region Ambition **Project**
- ensure that all statutorily homelessness applicants are offered tenancy support in their new home

How well are we doing on rents?

Key achievements in 2014/15:

- Promoted direct debit uptake as the preferred method of payment.
- Encouraged tenants to consider having a water meter installed, where appropriate.
- Improved contact with tenants, particularly for lower level arrears cases.
- Improved self-service options.
- Provided regular updates and appropriate training for staff with regard to welfare reform.
- Reviewed procedures to ensure value for money and best practice.
- Used Discretionary Housing Payments in appropriate cases.

The refurbished Customer Service Centre opened in March 2013. Since then customer service staff have dealt with 3,600 face to face enquiries, on average, per month. The three automated cash machines (two in the Customer Service Centre and one in the Healthy Living Centre) are processing around 4,600 payments per month, amounting to £13million since the centre opened.

On average our rents increased by 6.31% (£4.91 per week on a 48 week basis) in line with Central Government guidelines. The lowest increase was £2.54 per week and the highest increase was £6.07 per week, exclusive of water rates.

Average weekly rents (on a 48 week basis, exclusive of water rates)			
Bedsit bungalow	£68.69		
One bed bungalow	£78.70		
Two bed bungalow	£82.40		
Three bed bungalow	£85.93		
Bedsit flat	£63.98		
One bed flat	£76.48		
Two bed flat	£83.81		
Three bed flat	£84.43		
Four bed flat	£97.59		
One bed house	£68.49		
Two bed house	£83.20		
Three bed house	£87.33		
Four bed house	£95.99		
One bed maisonette	£76.43		
Two bed maisonette	£82.73		
Three bed maisonette	£89.71		

The percentage of rent collected Performance Target met? Improved? **Target** 2014/15 95.49% 95.27% 2013/14 95.74% 95.27% 2012/13 95.56% 95.27%

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 95.37 per cent.

- monitor the impact of Universal Credit on the collection rate and take any action required to meet targets
- train staff so that they are able to offer budgeting advice
- actively consider the use of Discretionary Housing Payments in appropriate cases
- promote direct debit uptake as the preferred method of payment
- encourage tenants to consider having a water meter installed, where appropriate
- improve contact with tenants, particularly for lower level arrears cases
- ensure staff receive regular updates and appropriate training with regard to welfare reform
- · carry out a formal independent review of our procedures to ensure value for money and best practice



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

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

Key achievements in 2014/15:

- We focussed on dealing with dog fouling and dog control by using our mobile office in neighbourhoods to encourage people to report problems to us. We worked with environmental services to carry out home visits and patrols in hotspot areas, issue warnings and take legal action against individuals who allowed their dog to foul gardens and open spaces.
- · We regularly used our mobile office to ask tenants about how the estate improvement budget should be spent.
- We carried out 14 tenant engagement events and attended events such as the Chesterfield Carnival and Party in the Park, as well as other local events, to ask tenants to give us their opinions on how their neighbourhoods can be improved and how we can we can improve our services.

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	92%	88%	✓	~
2013/14	86%	90%	×	×
2012/13	96%	90%	~	~

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 90 per cent.

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	85%	85%	✓	~
2013/14	84%	87%	×	×
2012/13	91%	87%	✓	same

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 85 per cent.

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	90%	87%	~	~
2013/14	85%	87%	×	×
2012/13	92%	87%	~	~

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 88 per cent.

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	92%	90%	✓	~
2013/14	86%	90%	×	×
2012/13	96%	90%	~	~

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 90 per cent.

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	76%	80%	×	~
2013/14	73%	87%	×	×
2012/13	93%	87%	~	~

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 80 per cent.

We are pleased to be able to report an excellent set of customer satisfaction results. This year we have concentrated on supporting and updating people who reported anti-social behaviour and it is particularly pleasing that this is reflected in the results. As 92% of customers who have made a complaint of ASB said that they would be willing to report ASB again in the future, we feel that we must be getting things right.

The result for satisfaction with the outcome of the case has improved since 2013/14 but unfortunately we did not meet the challenging target we set ourselves. The result for satisfaction with the outcome of the case has increased slightly from the previous year. We will look at how we can improve these areas in 2015/16

To tackle ASB in neighbourhoods we have:

- Referred tenants to our tenancy support service for help to manage their tenancies responsibly. In addition, our estates and neighbourhoods officers have taken on more responsibility to provide lower level support.
- Worked with the police to take legal action against tenants involved in criminal antisocial 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.
- In particular, we developed new ways of identifying "higher risk" applicants so that we can make decisions before they become tenants about their support needs, or whether they are suitable to be our tenants.

To improve the cleanliness, appearance and safety of neighbourhoods we have:

- Completed a pilot project of improvements to the open areas and external shared areas of flats in Newbold Moor. Following the success of the pilot, we hope to roll out similar improvements to other areas in future.
- Increased our work to deal with dog fouling and failure to control dogs by identifying problem areas and dog owners. We worked with environmental services and used our mobile office at community engagement events as well as carrying out door knocks and leaflet drops to educate and help identify those responsible. Early morning and evening patrols were carried out in hotspot areas. At some events, we offered free dog micro-chipping and distributed poop scoops and dog waste bags. We took action, including issuing acceptable behaviour contracts, formal warnings and legal notices against irresponsible and anti-social dog owners and charged people for the costs of clean-ups. In many areas, we saw a significant increase in people willing to make reports and a reduction in dog fouling.

- continue to improve the condition of our estates and shared areas of blocks of flats and we will consider how we can improve and expand our Neighbourhood Ranger service
- review and improve our grounds maintenance arrangements
- work with environmental services on a well-publicised programme to deal with dog fouling on selected estates and open spaces

- look at ways to measure our impact on dog fouling to help us to report how successful our activity is review our services so that we can help tenants to manage their tenancies and stay in their homes. This is particularly important due to the impact of welfare reforms, the introduction of Universal Credit and the withdrawal of county council funded support services.
- improve customer satisfaction with the outcome of anti-social cases and how we deal with them
- work with the housing solutions team to improve how we identify people who present a higher risk of causing problems for their neighbours

Careline and Support Service

Careline is an alarm monitoring 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.

Our Careline operators will contact family or friends, the doctor or the emergency services and will liaise with our response officers who provide a 24-hour emergency response to calls for assistance via Careline.

Response officers have specialist equipment to safely lift anyone who has fallen at home. Careline operators also handle calls out of hours, this includes emergency repairs and tenants and residents seeking help and advice.

The support officers carry out visits at home and offer help and support to our older vulnerable and disabled residents based on individual needs. Visits are carried out at a frequency which is agreed through support planning and discussion with the customer.

The support officers ensure that appropriate support is being provided to enable independent living at home for as long as possible. This may include health and safety checks in the home, arranging benefits checks, wellbeing 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.

Chesterfield Borough Council is working with Derbyshire County Council to provide the Telecare Service to help tenants to live more safely in their homes. 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 2014/15:

- promoted the services provided by the support team, Careline and the response team
- increased our customer base through talking to groups for older or disabled people
- marketed our service throughout Chesterfield

In 2014/15 Careline handled 163,900 calls. This figure includes outgoing calls to customers, for example, making appointments for servicing or replacing equipment, calling Careline users on their birthday and contacting other services when required.

Percentage of calls answered within 45 seconds				
	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	98.81%	95%	✓	~
2013/14	99.19%	95%	~	~
2012/13	97.11%	90%	~	×

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 95 per cent.

Number of calls handled by Careline				
Required a response officer to visit out of hours	2298			
Calls where the customer had fallen	1049			
Required an ambulance	681			
Required a doctor	598			
Required the Fire Service	80			
Required the Police	84			

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

- · complete and re-open Parkside housing scheme for older people
- begin a programme of improvements to sheltered housing schemes
- carry out a customer satisfaction survey and act on any information received to further improve the service

How well are we doing on value for money?

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

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

- Value for money appears as a standard agenda item for meetings of the housing management team and the senior management team at operational services division
- · Team briefs include value for money as a standard item.
- A named lead officer within each of the three housing divisions champions and captures value for money data and produces a departmental efficiency statement.
- We are a key player in the council's corporate transformation project Great Place, Great Service where housing services is represented at all levels.
- The relocation of environmental services to the Stonegravels depot has provided the council with a "super depot" and efficiency savings for both operational services division and environmental services.
- When we are carrying out major improvement programmes of work at the same time as an external contractor, operational services division will match the price of the external contractor where that price is lower.

- · We re-tendered our contract for the garden assistance scheme and fully expect to achieve an even better service with better value for money.
- We awarded the contract for cleaning of the communal areas of blocks of flats to a high-performing council team. We are confident that the new contract will provide an improved service with better value for money with the bonus of providing secure jobs for local people.

Each £1 of rent was spent on:			
Major repairs	62p		
Responsive repairs	18p		
Housing management	6р		
Overheads	5.5p		
Supported housing	4p		
Estate services	2.5p		
Other	2р		

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

We remain confident that over the next 30 years we can manage the additional £118 million debt that we took on at the start of the self-financing system 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 to escalate our initial programme of new-build housing and the purchase of properties on the open market that meet housing needs, including former right to buys.

We have now achieved the decent homes standard across all of our homes, which is the minimum standard we expect our homes to meet, and indeed 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 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 transfer 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.



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