



LINKGROUP

Our charter report card
2019/20



Managed
6,865
homes across
Scotland

Built
108
new homes for
social rent

Spent
£6.78 million
on improving
your homes

Gained
£2.66 million
for tenants using
Link's advice
services

valuing people, providing homes, building communities, working together

OUR PERFORMANCE

In this report we will let you know how we performed on the standards and outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) for the period 2019/20.

We report to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) each year and you can see the full report on the SHR's website www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/for-tenants. There's also a comparison tool you can use to find out how other landlords perform.

WHAT WE HAVE REPORTED ON

Each year, we ask our Tenant Scrutiny Panel for feedback on our previous Charter Report Cards. As a result, we have expanded the standards and outcomes we report on to include:

- Our relationship with you
- Housing quality and maintenance
- Neighbourhood and community
- Access to housing and support
- Value for money

We have also included the following information, so you are able to see where we are doing well and where we need to improve:

- How we compare with national averages
- Previous performance
- Actions we are taking to improve performance

STATEMENT FROM THE TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL

"2019 saw the completion of our asset management scrutiny which resulted in changes to stair and close cleaning and landscape maintenance. We will continue to keep an eye on those services and undertake a review in six months.

"Like everyone else, the scrutiny panel has been severely affected by Covid-19. We have moved to online meetings which have allowed us to discuss Link's activities during the pandemic. How was Link coping? What measures had they put in place to protect tenants and staff?"

"We were fortunate to have briefings from June Green, chief executive of Link Housing, who kept us up to date with events. Some outstanding work was done by Link's advice service to help tenants manage and housing officers worked from home, phoning residents to establish any help that may be required.

"The Panel felt it wanted to hear about gas servicing issues, as entry into homes could be difficult with restrictions imposed by Covid-19 measures. Fortunately, gas servicing is on track with Link's in-house service engineers coping with service requirements.

"The Panel has also reviewed our Terms of Reference and attended several webinars. We have been kept busy and anticipate carrying out our normal scrutiny process when the situation allows. We look forward to the year ahead and improving communication with tenants using technology."

Lindsay Anderson - Chair of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel



**OUR MISSION:
PROVIDING HOMES
BUILDING COMMUNITIES
VALUING PEOPLE
WORKING TOGETHER**



HOW WE MEASURE OUR PERFORMANCE

Our performance information comes from a range of sources. In March 2020, we commissioned an independent company, Research Resource, to complete a customer survey.

We felt it was important to continue gathering your views during the Covid-19 pandemic and, to ensure the survey could be completed safely, we changed the methodology from face-to-face (used in previous surveys) to telephone. The customer satisfaction information for 2019/20 is based on the 2020 customer survey.

To double-check the accuracy of the results we report, we asked Scotland's Housing Network to complete a desktop review of the data we sent to the SHR.

THE RATINGS



We are doing well



We are doing ok



We could do better

In most instances, we have compared ourselves against the SHR's Scottish average (which includes all councils and housing associations (HAs)). However, when it comes to comparing our rents, we have also included the HA average. Homelessness statistics have been obtained from analysis completed by Scotland's Housing Network.

TENANT SATISFACTION

Our overall satisfaction is based on the 2020 customer survey and we are pleased to see a slight improvement on past years, as well as continued performance above the Scottish average.

INDICATOR: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	89.4%	89.4%	89.5%	89.2%

Following the 2020 customer survey we have reviewed your feedback on key aspects of our services and prepared an action plan. We will focus on actions we can take at a local level by reviewing our Neighbourhood Commitments and the procurement of landscaping and stair cleaning services.

98%

of tenants satisfied with adaptations

94%

of tenants satisfied with Link's ability to keep them informed

96%

of tenants satisfied with repairs staff

97%

of customers satisfied with Link's advice service



OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU



We are pleased satisfaction with keeping you informed about services and outcomes continues to be high.

INDICATOR: Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about services and outcomes	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	97%	97%	94.3%	92%
INDICATOR: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision-making process	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	97.6%	97.6%	90%	87.2%

We are committed to barrier-free participation and offer a range of ways for you to take part, including local meetings, online surveys, tenant scrutiny and conferences. During 2019/20, we supported and funded over 100 tenant-led activities.

We have continued our commitment to a fair and equal culture for our customers. Following the 2020 customer survey, we have reviewed feedback on opportunities to participate. We have contacted those who expressed an interest in getting involved and established a consultative panel and will develop opportunities in different localities, alongside promoting increased involvement of younger tenants and those from minority groups.

HOUSING QUALITY

We have consistently performed well on the quality standards set for social housing – the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESHS).

INDICATOR: Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	99.6%	99.6%	99.5%	94.4%
INDICATOR: Percentage of properties meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESHS)	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	93.5%	95.7%	96.8%	87.3%

In our 2020 customer survey, you told us your top priorities for investment are windows, kitchens and bathrooms. Our planned maintenance programme reflects these priorities with ongoing annual investment in 400 window replacements, 100 boiler replacements, 250 kitchens and 250 bathrooms. We provide these as well as completing mandatory work relating to legislative safety requirements.

INDICATOR: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	92.9%	92.9%	88.3%	87.2%

It is important our homes are accessible and can be adapted for your changing needs. We have established an in-house inclusive design team which has supported us in achieving 98% satisfaction with adaptations and reducing the number of days it takes us to complete adaptations.

INDICATOR: The average time to complete adaptations	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	29 days	41.5 days

MAINTENANCE

Previously, customer satisfaction has been reported from surveys completed throughout the year. This year we used the 2020 customer survey, which took place during the Covid-19 lockdown when we could only complete emergency and urgent repairs.

Recent customer satisfaction surveys for repairs completed by our in-house contractor Link Property, show satisfaction has improved to 92%.

INDICATOR: Percentage of tenants (who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months) satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	98.9%	97.6%	87.3%	91.3%

INDICATOR: Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	2.7 hours	2.7 hours	3 hours	3.6 hours

INDICATOR: Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	6.5 days	6.4 days	7.1 days	6.4 days

We work hard to ensure we can evidence the performance we report. This year we identified we could improve supporting information for the completion of repairs right first time. As a result, we reported a lower performance for this indicator and this is an area we will continue to focus on during 2020/21.

INDICATOR: Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	86.2%	90%	79.9%	92.4%

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

This year the SHR updated the anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood management indicators, so we have not reported previous performance as we do not have comparable information.

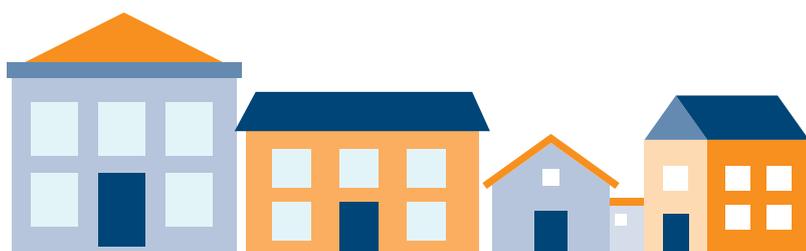
INDICATOR: Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	95.1%	94.1%

We want you to live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where you feel safe. We are pleased your satisfaction with our contribution to the management of neighbourhoods is higher than the Scottish average.

INDICATOR: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	88.9%	87.5%



During 2019, we completed a scrutiny of asset management, with a focus on landscape maintenance and stair and close cleaning. Following our report, we participated in interviews for landscaping contractors. Link has also introduced a close cleaning specification to ensure all customers receive the same high-quality service.



VALUE FOR MONEY

Our average rent is calculated for all properties of the same size across all areas. Some properties have services (such as stair and window cleaning, common grounds maintenance and electricity for lighting in car parks and common stairs) and some do not. The average includes all costs for all house types.

Our average rent across all property sizes is below the housing association average but we know this varies for each property size. We consider affordability of rents, together with investment requirements to maintain the quality of our homes, prior to setting rents. Our rent increase agreed in 2019/20 was the same as the Scottish average.

Total number of each property size and average rent for each						
Size	No. of Properties	Link 2017/8	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20	HA average 2019/20
Studio	238	£64.10	£65.39	£66.97	£73.46	£78.37
1 bedroom	2,735	£75.08	£77.46	£79.23	£78.02	£84.97
2 bedroom	2,700	£85.97	£88.43	£90.79	£80.04	£85.92
3 bedroom	1,073	£94.22	£96.86	£99.17	£86.99	£95.01
4 bedroom+	119	£102.62	£105.63	£108.22	£96.11	£104.38
All	6,865	£82.40	£84.85	£86.95	£81.40	£87.94

INDICATOR: Percentage average weekly rent increase to be applied	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	2.8%	2.35%	2.5%	2.5%

While rent arrears have increased, they remain below the Scottish average.

INDICATOR: Total rent arrears as a percentage of rent due	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20
	3.1%	3%	4.5%	5.8%

ACCESS TO HOUSING AND SUPPORT

During 2019 we implemented our new Lettings Policy and will further improve the services we offer to those applying for homes by implementing a new lettings system during 2021.

This year we worked with local authorities to increase the percentage of homes we let to homeless applicants.

INDICATOR: The percentage of lets to homeless applicants	Link 2017/18	Link 2018/19	Link 2019/20	Scottish average 2019/20	HA average 2019/20
	26.8%	22.5%	30.4%	36.2%	26.4%

1,257 new homes under construction across 11 sites to provide much-needed affordable homes in local communities

Since March 2020, we have funded and made referrals for over **200** crisis grants

Our advice service gained **£2.66 million** for our tenants during 2019/20



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

To help improve the information we provide on our performance in the future, we want to know what you think of this report.

If there is anything you would like to ask or discuss in more detail, please get in touch.

We also want to work with you to improve our services. Getting involved does not always mean attending meetings. It includes fun days, estate walkabouts and online surveys. It is up to you how much or how little you want to participate.

If you are interested, please contact the tenant engagement team on:

Tel **03451 400 100** Email getinvolved@linkhaltd.co.uk
Write to **tenant engagement team, Watling House, Callendar Business Park, Falkirk FK1 1XR**



If you need this information in Braille, Audio Tape, Large Print or Community Languages please call **0330 303 0124**.



MyLink

DAY OR NIGHT...

Manage your tenancy at a touch!

Our free app is a great way to manage your tenancy at any time. Report a repair, pay your rent and more with our tenant app. To download the app, search for **MyLink** in the App Store or Google Play.

Link Housing is part of the Link group of social enterprises.



LINKGROUP



Link Group Limited is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Registered Number: 1481 R(S), Registered Office: Link House, 2c New Mart Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1RL. It is a Charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number: SC001026 and a Registered Social Landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator, Registration Number: HAL 148. © Link Group Ltd 2020.