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## **WELCOME**

We would like to welcome you to Chesterfield Borough Council's Annual Report which was prepared by Housing Services in partnership with tenants.

Chesterfield Borough Council is committed to customer involvement. Customers are at the heart of all services and integral to decision making. It is only through customers' input, views, challenge and support that we can continue to develop and improve services.

The report is divided into colour coded sections that reflect the social housing regulator's standards.

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.

I would like to thank the tenants for once again working with the Borough Council to improve our Housing Services and producing this Report.

It is vital that we are accountable to our tenants and we depend on your continued feedback to achieve this.

I would personally like to thank all our staff in Housing Services who have worked together as a team to deliver a first class housing service.

We will continue to work together with our tenants to improve your homes and neighbourhoods.

*Councillor McManus, Executive Member for Housing*

### **Who is this from?**

Your landlord, Chesterfield Borough Council, has produced this report. You can contact us at Housing Services, Town Hall, Rose Hill, Chesterfield, S40 1LP

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## **Core values**

The Council's vision is 'Putting Our Communities First' and underpinning this our key priorities include, to improve the quality of life for local people and to provide value for money services.

As a Council we aim to improve the quality of housing in the Borough and to reduce anti social behaviour.

As a Housing Service we are committed to working together with our residents and partners to create fair access to high quality, sustainable, decent and affordable homes and communities.'

Our aims and objectives have been shaped through consultation with our customers, through findings and recommendations provided by external inspections, and through identifying our contributions to the Council's Vision, and Priorities and Aims in the Corporate Plan, and Chesterfield's Housing Strategy.

Our key objectives are to:

- Achieve, as a minimum, the Decent Homes Standard for all Council properties by 2015
- 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 a high quality 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 to:

- Make safe all emergency repairs within 24 hours and complete a full repair within five days, dependant on the type of repair required and availability of specialist 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 (24 hours)
- 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 ASB or hate crime reports within one working day (24 hours) 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 9,600 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 you, our tenants, about what matters most to you and you said:

- 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:

- Completed a STAR customer satisfaction survey
- Used the mobile office to consult tenants locally
- Offered repair appointments on Saturday afternoons
- Externally rendered properties in Grangewood and Mastin Moor to make homes warmer
- Proactively assisted households to move to more affordable properties
- Worked with our partners to reduce rough sleeping and prevent homelessness
- Introduced an ASB contract that states clearly what people who report ASB can expect from us and how we will update them about the progress of their case
- Reduced the number of days taken to resolve ASB cases
- Raised awareness of the health risks of dog fouling
- Took enforcement action against people who did not clean up after their dog
- Provided an enhanced Support and Response Service for Older People
- Used the Estate Improvement Budget to improve play facilities in recreational areas within housing estates and improved the environment around some housing schemes for older people
- Replaced the district heating system at Barrow Hill
- Introduced a self-referral process for some minor adaptations

In the year ahead we are planning to:

- Implement service improvements using the results from the STAR customer satisfaction survey
- Refresh our tenant engagement opportunities
- Carry out local tenant engagement events to encourage tenants to give us their views
- Ensure that all of our housing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard
- Survey customers regarding their understanding of choice based lettings
- Review our homelessness prevention services to ensure that we are providing the best service possible
- Improve support and feedback provided for victims of ASB
- Develop our tenancy management services to help tenants facing difficulty
- Complete the development of a housing scheme for older people at Parkside
- Continue our plans to develop 40 new Council homes

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 970 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 social housing regulator's standards. It tells you about what the Council have been doing and what it is going to do to make services better.

The report tells you how we have performed from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

Number of homes we own and manage as at 31 March 2014 – 9581

Number of homes sold

2013/14	51
2012/13	37
2011/12	16

Income generated for the Borough Council from Right to Buy receipts will be used to develop new build social housing.

## **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 appropriate, we consult tenants 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 help us to deliver services to address local issues and in a way that is more flexible to meet particular needs.

In November 2013 we held our Local Offers event at the Winding Wheel. Tenants took part in 'speed-dating' style workshops to tell us their views on services. Our Careline and Support Service also held a coffee morning to consult tenants.

Our Local Offers in 2014/15 will continue to focus on service improvements.

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

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 2013/14:

- Used the mobile office to increase local involvement of tenants
- Improved our methods of tracking complaints which has helped us to achieve the targets within the Council's Customer Charter for responding to letters, complaints and electronic enquiries
- Provided a variety of training opportunities for our tenant representatives to help them to be more effective in their role
- Used Facebook to introduce social media to Housing Services
- Completed a STAR customer satisfaction survey. The results of the survey will be used to improve services

- Recruited mystery shoppers to test services received by customers. Information obtained during the exercises will be used to improve services.
- Increased the number of tenants using iHome

## STAR Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) was developed by HouseMark and has been endorsed by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and Tenants and Residents Organisations of England (TAROE). The survey enables social housing providers to compare key satisfaction results on the services we provide including repairs and maintenance, anti-social behaviour, estate management and tenant involvement.

During October 2013, a postal questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 3000 housing tenants in Chesterfield. The survey was completed by 731 residents. The results tell us that tenants are increasingly satisfied with the services we provide.

The table below shows the satisfaction of tenants now, and when we last did a comparable survey in 2008. The survey showed we have made improvements in many areas of the service.

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

The survey did reveal some areas where we still need to improve. Over 50% of tenants responding to the survey thought that car parking, dog fouling and litter were problems on our estates. The survey helps give us an idea of the issues we still need to target to keep improving our service to you.

We will be carrying out a tenant satisfaction survey every two years from now on, to help us identify any area where service improvements are required and understand more clearly how well you think we are performing.

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

Complaints responded to within 15 working days



	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	94.8%	94%	✓	✓
2012/13	90%	94%	✗	✗
2011/12	91%	94%	✗	✓

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

#### Letters responded to within 20 working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	97.6%	94%	✓	✓
2012/13	92%	94%	✗	✗
2011/12	93%	94%	✗	✗

We have set our target for 2014/15 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?
2013/14	100%	94%	✓	✓
2012/13	99.3%	94%	✓	✓
2011/12	98.2%	94%	✓	✓

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

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

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

## 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.

To ensure that as many homes as possible meet the standard in Chesterfield we have continued to carry out work to the worst properties first. Over 1920 properties received works in 2013/14 that either brought them up to the Decent Homes Standard or prevented them from becoming non-decent.

In addition, and to meet our commitment to improve the energy efficiency of our housing stock:

- We have externally insulated and rendered 119 non-traditional properties at Mastin Moor and are drawing up plans to continue to insulate similar homes in Grangewood and Old Whittington in the next 12 months
- Where we have carried out roof replacements across the Borough we have also included an upgrade in the loft insulation levels

We have carried out further surveys of our housing stock to ascertain:

- What work is required to ensure it meets and continues to meet the Decent Homes Standard
- What specific work may be required to our non-traditional housing stock in the future to ensure they remain structurally sound
- What work is required to the common parts of our blocks of flats to minimise the risk of fire

In 2014/15 we will ensure that all of our housing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard, will complete the re-development of a new housing scheme for older people on the site of the former Parkside Sheltered Housing Scheme and will also start to deliver a range of environmental improvements including:

- Car Parking provision on estates
- Replacement Door Canopies
- Boundary treatments to open plan aspects on estates
- The installation of pitched roofs on existing flat roofed blocks of flats

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?
2013/14	91.38%	90%	✓	✓
2012/13	85.3%	85%	✓	✓
2011/12	80.08%	83%	✗	✓

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

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

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 request a repair at any time using the Council's website at [www.chesterfield.gov.uk](http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk) and clicking on the 'Request It' link, by following the online instructions on the Homes section of our website at [www.chesterfield.gov.uk](http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk), or by emailing [repair.requests@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:repair.requests@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 2013/14:

- Offered repair appointments on Saturday afternoons which has increased the number of appointments for tenants by 288 over the year.
- We have continued to improve the application of safe systems of working and the enforcement of health and safety at all times to ensure our tenants well being
- We have replaced the district heating system at Barrow Hill
- We have achieved our target of completing 100% of annual gas servicing

Number of calls answered by the Repairs Hotline

2013/14	44,269
2012/13	40,631
2011/12	41,153

Number of responsive repairs

Apr 13	3224
May 13	2783
Jun 13	2263
Jul 13	3254
Aug 13	2579
Sep 13	2683
Oct 13	3899
Nov 13	2902
Dec 13	3315
Jan 14	3921
Feb 14	3647
Mar 14	2788

Repairs by Priority Category

	Number	%
Routine	26902	72
Out of hours	2288	6
Urgent	5595	15
Emergency	2743	7

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

2013/14	2,227.58
2012/13	2,528.41
2011/12	2,143.20

The percentage of emergency repairs made safe within 24 hours

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	96.22%	100%	✘	✘
2012/13	100%	100%	✓	same
2011/12	100%	99%	✓	✓

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

The recorded performance is below target. However, we believe this is due to a problem with the IT system incorrectly recording some jobs as being completed out of time. This issue will be rectified when the new COINs IT system goes live.

The percentage of urgent repairs completed within five working days

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

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

The percentage of routine repairs completed within 20 working days

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

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

The percentage of repairs where an appointment was made and kept

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	87.29%	90%	✗	✗
2012/13	90.69%	90%	✓	✗
2011/12	92.35%	90%	✓	✗

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 90%.

The recorded performance is slightly below target. However, we believe this is due to a problem with the IT system regarding how jobs that require an appointment are recorded. This issue will be rectified when the new COINs IT system goes live.

The percentage of hotline calls answered within 20 seconds

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	59.24%	90%	✗	✗
2012/13	86.33%	90%	✗	✓
2011/12	78.74%	80%	✗	New target

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 90%.

Repairs Hotline calls are dealt with by the Council's Customer Contact Centre(CCC) alongside all other calls to the Council. During 2013/14 the CCC experienced a significant increase in the number of calls to the Council as a result of welfare reforms, and changes to some operational services. Although there was an increase in temporary staffing to try to combat this, the increase in the number of calls has resulted in an increase in the time taken to answer them.

Gas servicing completed on schedule

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	100%	100%	✓	same
2012/13	100%	100%	✓	same
2011/12	100%	100%	✓	✓

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

Customers receiving a repair who were satisfied overall

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	97%	88%	✓	✓
2012/13	94%	88%	✓	✓
2011/12	92%	88%	✓	same

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

Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

- To further improve the application of safe systems of working and the enforcement of health and safety at all times to ensure our tenants well being
- To fully implement the Coins contractor management IT system
- To replace the first phase of the district heating system at Lowgates in Staveley
- To complete 100% of annual gas servicing
- To achieve the target of 100% of the Council's housing stock meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- To review the Lettable Standard for empty properties

### **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 2013/14:

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

We will continue to consult tenants about the Adaptations Service through our Adaptation Users Forum. The aim of the Forum is to use tenants' own experiences of the using the service to drive service improvements.

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

2013/14	525
2012/13	321
2011/12	327

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

#### Number of requests made for major adaptations

2013/14	262
2012/13	249
2011/12	252

The number of referrals made to the Service is ultimately determined by Social Services' referral criteria. Social Services use strict criteria for all adaptation requests due to consistently high demand for adaptations.

Our aim is to keep people in their homes for as long as practically possible, where it is safe to do so. We also seek to make the best use of the Council's Housing stock rather than adapt properties which are not suitable. We actively work with tenants who require adaptations to be carried out to their home to assess which option is right for them. This may involve assisting the tenant to move to a more suitable property or a property which is more adaptable for their long-term needs.

We were unable to carry out a number of disabled adaptations that were requested during 2013/14 due to the property being unsuitable. These tenants took the opportunity to move to more suitable properties, some of which had already been adapted. This was achieved through the close working relationship between the Adaptations Team and the Housing Solutions Team.

#### Number of minor adaptations completed

2013/14	449
2012/13	286
2011/12	317

#### Number major adaptations completed

2013/14	208
2012/13	183
2011/12	228

The average number of days taken to complete minor works from the start date to completion

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	1.00	2	✓	✓
2012/13	1.05	2	✓	✗
2011/12	1.02	2	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 2. 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 another 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 start date to completion

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	3.92	5	✓	✓
2012/13	4.02	5	✓	✓
2011/12	4.46	5	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 5. This is the target specified in the current adaptations contract.

The adaptations contractor's performance has continued to improve in 2013/14. This has contributed to our improved performance in completing major works as well as the continued high level of customer satisfaction with the Adaptations Service.

Customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the Adaptations Service

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	97.2%	95%	✓	✓
2012/13	96.7%	95%	✓	✓
2011/12	96.5%	95%	✓	x

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

Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

- To further promote the Adaptations Services and the Adaptation Self Referral Form through 'Adaptation Information Sessions' at various locations in the Borough.
- To reduce the waiting time for major adaptations to be carried out.



## How well are we doing on allocating homes?

### Allocating Homes

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

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:

- Priority Band – applicants with severe/urgent needs for re-housing
- Transfer Band – CBC tenants with a need for rehousing
- General Band 1 – non CBC tenants with a connection to the Borough and a need for rehousing
- General Band 2 – all other applicants with no particular housing need and out of Borough applicants

Key achievements in 2013/14:

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

Number of properties let

2013/14	1073
2012/13	966
2011/12	999

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

Property types of ended tenancies

	Number	%
Bedsit	9	0.75
Bungalow	128	10.64
Flat	673	55.95
House	379	31.50
Maisonette	14	1.16

The property type with the highest turnover is flats. Of the properties available to let 2013/14, almost 56% were flats, 31% houses and 10% were bungalows.

112 tenants were evicted for non-payment of rent despite being offered advice and assistance to prevent this from happening. This is 39 more than in 2012/13 which is an increase of 34%.

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	17.92	17.5	x	x
2012/13	16.14	17.5	✓	✓
2011/12	18.97	17.5	x	x

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 17.5 calendar days.

The number of abandoned properties and evictions in addition to the need to carry out more extensive major works to achieve a higher Lettable Standard, has resulted in performance being slightly over the target. A review of the current Lettable Standard is currently in progress.

The percentage of rent lost through empty homes

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	1.49%	2%	✓	x
2012/13	1.2%	1%	x	x
2011/12	1.08%	1.1%	✓	x

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 1.5%.

Average number of days to relet an empty home

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	27.89	27	x	✓
2012/13	28.05	27	x	x
2011/12	27.83	27	x	✓

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

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

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

Who we rehoused

All adult household	46
Elderly	135
Joint applicants with no children	64
Joint applicants with 1 or more	135

children	
Single applicants with no children/access to children	481
Single applicants with 1 or more children	212

#### Allocations

	Number	percentage
Housing register	751	65.08%
Transfer	384	33.27%
Sub-regional	19	1.65%

The sub-regional allocations are where the applicant has come from either Bolsover Council, North East Derbyshire Council or A1 Housing (Bassetlaw).

#### The number of days to register a housing application

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	9.64	7.5	x	✓
2012/13	10.96	5	x	x
2011/12	5.31	5	x	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 7.5 days.

The target of registering housing applications within an average of 7.5 days was not achieved due to the increasing number of people approaching us for advice. During 2013/14 we registered an average of 214 applications a month.

We anticipate that the number of housing applications made over the next 12 months will possibly increase and kept our target to register applications within an average of 7.5 days.

Applicants on the housing register at 31/3/14 and the property types they are eligible for

	Number of eligible households
Sheltered	667
Bedsit	1107
1 bed flat	1441
2 bed flat	443
3 bed flat	184
1 bed house	1441
2 bed house	321
3 bed house	173
4 bed house	44
5 bed house	7
2 bed maisonette	433
3 bed maisonette	183
1 bed bungalow	635
2 bed bungalow	75

3 bed bungalow	7
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Chesterfield Borough Council has subscribed to the HomeSwapper mutual exchange service. HomeSwapper holds details of people wanting to complete mutual exchanges within Chesterfield as well as details of those wishing to complete mutual exchanges from other areas.

We anticipate that HomeSwapper will be of great help to those affected by welfare reform and that more households who are under occupying accommodation will register for a mutual exchange.

As of the 31 March 2014 there were 469 Chesterfield Borough Council tenants registered for a mutual exchange

Property Size Required	Number
Same property size	234
1 bedroom bigger	163
2 bedrooms bigger	5
1 bedroom smaller	60
2 bedrooms smaller	7

The total number of live applications (households wanting to move) on 31 March 2014 was 2168. On 31 March 2013 it was 2321 which shows a slight reduction in the numbers on our waiting list, however, this is largely due to the additional properties that we let last year.

We review all applications annually to ensure that our waiting lists are up to date

The highest numbers of applications are for households wanting to move due to:

- Mortgage/rent too high
- Home unsuitable for medical reasons
- Move to independent living
- Overcrowded/under occupying
- Relationship breakdown
- Move near family/friends/school

Number of properties advertised by the Housing Solutions Centre

Sheltered	15
Bedsit	10
1 bed flat	760
2 bed flat	214
3 bed flat	14
1 bed house	5
2 bed house	178
3 bed house	300
4 bed house	15
2 bed maisonette	13
3 bed maisonette	1
1 bed bungalow	140
2 bed bungalow	70

3 bed bungalow	4
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Accommodation accepted by applicants from housing associations and private landlords following a nomination from On the Move

Priority Band	4
Transfer Band	23
General Band 1	22
General Band 2	17

Number of bids received for properties

2013/14	13,160
2012/13	14,882
2011/12	20,783

Percentage of bids made via the internet

2013/14	95.41%
2012/13	96.37%
2011/12	97.73%

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. Free access to the internet is also available in libraries.

Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

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

## Homelessness

Key achievements in 2013/14:

- We participated in the Derbyshire and Derby City 'No Second Night Out' initiative (NSNODD). 444 clients signed up for the service, with 41 of these referred from Chesterfield.
- Action Housing delivered a Private Rented Access Scheme (PRAS) for Chesterfield Borough Council, North East Derbyshire, and Bolsover. The aim is to reduce rough sleeping and homelessness amongst single, often non-priority households, by increasing access to the private rented sector and providing initial support to maintain the tenancy. This is funded directly by the Government and 71 clients have been assisted to date.
- Funded the Chesterfield Law Centre Court Desk
- Continued to work in partnership with the Credit Union to encourage saving and planned expenditure and provided funding
- Continued to offer the Tenancy Deposit Guarantee via the Homelessness Prevention Team.
- Provided basic cooking facilities (microwave, kettle and toaster) for households identified by the Homelessness Prevention Team or Tenancy Support

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.

Number of households who received face-to-face advice by the Homelessness Prevention Service through appointments and the emergency 'drop-in' service

2013/14	1134
2012/13	1158
2011/12	994

Number of Households advised following contact via email, Council website and referrals from other agencies

2013/14	83
2012/13	112
2011/12	158

Number of households accepted a full homelessness duty for

2013/14	98
2012/13	80
2011/12	95

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

2013/14	483
2012/13	201
2011/12	240

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.

We have continued to provide 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
- North Derbyshire Furniture Project
- Chesterfield Law Centre – assistance for households who are at risk of losing their home
- Working in partnership with the Credit Union to offer saving accounts
- Working in partnership with South Yorkshire Housing Association to provide interim accommodation for single people and families who are homeless.

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

Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

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

## How well are we doing on Rents?

Key achievements in 2013/14:

- Employed and trained more staff to assist tenants who are struggling to meet rental liabilities as a result of welfare reform
- Refined processes to ensure that tenants in difficulty receive effective advice and support
- Campaigned to increase the take up of direct debit as this is the most cost-effective payment method for the Council and the most secure and convenient payment method for tenants

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

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

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

The percentage of rent collected is a key performance indicator for the Council's partnership with Arvato.

The percentage of rent collected

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	95.74%	95.27%	✓	✓
2012/13	95.56%	95.27%	✓	✗
2011/12	95.83%	95.27%	✓	✓

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

On average our rents increased by 5.41% (£3.99) in line with Central Government guidelines. The lowest increase was £2.09 per week and the highest increase was £5.16 per week.

Average weekly rents

Bedsit bungalow	£64.25
1 bed bungalow	£73.81
2 bed bungalow	£77.36
3 bed bungalow	£80.77
Bedsit flat	£61.15
1 bed flat	£71.88
2 bed flat	£79.49



3 bed flat	£80.68
4 bed flat	£92.02
1 bed house	£63.95
2 bed house	£78.19
3 bed house	£82.14
4 bed house	£90.49
1 bed maisonette	£72.74
2 bed maisonette	£77.68
3 bed maisonette	£84.59

Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

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

## **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.

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 ASB, this breaks 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 and where we have done everything that is reasonably and practically appropriate to support a tenant to maintain their tenancy.

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 2013/14:**

- Increased the number of returned ASB questionnaires by introducing a new performance measure for our Team Leaders
- Reduced the number of days taken to resolve cases by 5 days
- Introduced an ASB contract between ourselves and people who report ASB. This states clearly what people can expect of us, including the frequency that we will keep them updated about the progress of their case and how we expect the person to help us to resolve the problem.
- Increased the number of referrals made to organisations that provide specialist support for vulnerable perpetrators of ASB to help them change their behaviour. We attended at Multi-Agency Team meetings and made referrals to specialist support agencies such as Rethink, Framework and Community Mental Health Services. This increased opportunities for partnership working with support providers.
- Improved play facilities in recreational areas within housing estates and improved the environment around some housing schemes for older people.
- Contributed to the development of a community garden, in partnership with a school and community organisation, and enriched open grassed areas by planting trees and creating wild flower areas.
- Undertook educational and publicity work to raise tenants' awareness of the health risks of dog fouling and to create a feeling amongst the community that it is unacceptable to not pick up after dogs.
- Took enforcement action against people who did not clean up after their dog. This included recharging tenants for the cost of cleaning up dog faeces and taking legal action against tenants for breaking the terms of their tenancy agreement.

Below are the results of our 2013/14 ASB customer satisfaction surveys.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Customers who found it easy or very easy to contact a member of staff to report a complaint about ASB

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	92%	90%	✓	✓
2012/13	92%	90%	✓	✓
2011/12	90%	90%	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 90%.

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	86%	90%	x	x
2012/13	96%	90%	✓	✓
2011/12	94%	90%	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 90%.

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?
2013/14	85%	87%	x	x
2012/13	92%	87%	✓	✓
2011/12	87%	85%	✓	✓

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

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

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

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

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?
2013/14	86%	90%	✘	✘
2012/13	96%	90%	✓	✓
2011/12	92%	90%	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 88%.

We are disappointed that the results from 2013/14 are slightly lower than those of the previous year. However, comparing our performance against other housing providers across England and Wales using HouseMark, we are pleased that our performance ranks in the first or second quartile for most of our performance indicators. Satisfaction with the outcome and willingness to report ASB again are in the third quartile.

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

### **Addressing ASB in neighbourhoods**

To address ASB in neighbourhoods we have:

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

### **Cleanliness, appearance and safety of neighbourhoods**

We carried out several projects in areas that were highlighted as suffering from dog fouling. For instance, we have a number of flats in Dunston which had become difficult to let because the existing tenants were not looking after their flats and shared gardens.

We dealt with this by carrying out weekly inspections of the gardens and shared areas of the flats and internal inspections. If we found that tenants were allowing their dogs to foul in the gardens or flats, or were causing a nuisance to other people, we took action against them for breaking their tenancy agreements, including agreeing Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and taking possession proceedings to end tenancies. We charged tenants for the cost of clearing up dog fouling.

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

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

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

Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

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

### **Careline and Support 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.

Our Careline Operators will contact family or friends, the doctor, 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 lift anyone safely 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, wellbeing, arranging benefits checks, and involvement in social activities. They also provide a vital link in accessing services offered by other agencies, working together for the benefit of the customer.

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 2013/14:

- Offered an enhanced accompanied viewing service for vulnerable people. The Sheltered Scheme Manager is present at viewings to provide support information to potential new tenants.
- Provided an improved and enhanced Support Service for Older People
- Increased our customer base to allow more residents in Chesterfield to benefit from the Service

In 2013/14 Careline handled 149,371 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.

Calls handled by Careline included

Calls requiring a response officer to visit out of hours	2769
Calls where the customer had fallen	1608
Calls requiring an ambulance	411
Calls requiring a doctor	556
Calls requiring the Fire Service	96
Calls requiring the Police	22

Percentage of calls answered within 60 seconds

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	98.83%	98.5%	✓	✓
2012/13	98.53%	98.5%	✓	✗
2011/12	98.57%	98.5%	✓	New target

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 98.5%.

Percentage of calls answered within 180 seconds

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	99.89%	99%	✓	✗
2012/13	99.93%	99%	✓	✗
2011/12	99.95%	99%	✓	New target

We have set our target for 2014/15 at 99%.

Percentage of call outs attended within 45 minutes

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

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

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2013/14	99.89%	95%	✓	✓
2012/13	97.3%	95%	✓	same
2011/12	97.3%	95%	✓	x

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

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

Planned improvements for 2014/15 are:

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

## 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 will provide the Council with the super depot and provide efficiency savings for both Operational Services Division and Environmental Services.
- A review of the Council's corporate fleet management has resulted in the Operation Services Division of Housing Services taking the lead in managing the corporate fleet on a single site at Stonegravels

Each £1 of rent was spent on:

Major repairs	62p
Responsive repairs	18p
Housing management	6p
Overheads	5.5p
Supported housing	4p
Estate services	2.5p
Other	2p



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

We remain confident that we can manage the additional £118million debt that we took on at the start of the self-financing system over the next 30 years and still have money left over to spend on our homes and on services for tenants. We may even be able to borrow a little more and do a few interesting projects that we could not otherwise have considered. For example, the imminent building of a housing scheme for older people at Parkside, off Whittington Moor. Plans are also in progress for 40 new Council homes with the prospect of more to follow.

We will soon achieve the minimum standard, the Decent Homes Standard, across all of our homes and many of our homes already exceed this standard.

One of the next challenges is to agree with tenants the appropriate “Chesterfield Standard” for the next 10 to 20 years and balance the costs of this, and other essential expenditure, against rent levels.

## **Changes to Housing Benefit**

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

Amongst the measures is a Tenant Incentive Scheme to give financial help to tenants freeing up the 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).

## 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

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Is there any information that you think should be added to the report? Please comment

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What should Chesterfield Borough Council do better? Please comment

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Have you any suggestions for how Chesterfield Borough Council can save more money? Please comment

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Please make any other comments or suggestions below

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please hand in at the Town Hall or Stonegravels reception or post to Tenant Engagement Team, Stonegravels Depot, Old Brickworks Lane, Chesterfield, S41 7JD

Your comments will help us to improve the services that we provide to our customers

Are we accessible statement