

**Annual Report
Housing Services**

September 2015

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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.

Sarah Hollingworth and I have been newly appointed to the Council's Cabinet with responsibility for housing.

As elected councillors, we are answerable and accountable to our tenants. Even at this early stage in our roles, we are deeply indebted to all of the professional housing officers for their expert help and advice in explaining the complexities of delivering a housing service to Chesterfield's present and future tenants.

We are committed to listening to and working with tenants to continue to maintain a professional, top class housing service. Our objective is to provide decent homes and neighbourhoods.

Please take time to read this in-depth and informative report which has been published in consultation with tenants.

Councillor Tom Murphy
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, making Chesterfield a thriving Borough, to improve the quality of life for local people and to provide value for money services.

As a Council we plan to increase the supply and quality of housing in Chesterfield Borough to meet current and future needs, increase the quality of public space for which the Council has responsibility, improve the health and wellbeing of people and reduce inequality and support the more vulnerable members of our communities.

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 Council Plan, and Chesterfield's Housing Strategy.

Our key objectives are to:

- Meet and maintain, as a minimum, the Decent Homes Standard
- Increase tenant satisfaction and opportunities for involvement in decision-making
- Ensure residents can enjoy their homes and communities without the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Provide 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 answerphone 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 9,500 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:

- Refreshed our tenant engagement opportunities
- Carried out local tenant engagement events to encourage tenants to give us their views
- Achieved the target of 100% of our housing stock meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- Reviewed our homelessness prevention services to ensure that we are providing the best service possible
- Improved support and feedback provided for victims of ASB
- Developed our tenancy management services to help tenants facing difficulty
- Progressed the development of a housing scheme for older people at Parkside
- Continued our plans to develop 40 new Council homes

In the year ahead we are planning to:

- Improve performance on complaint handling
- Produce an updated Tenant Handbook
- Carry out local tenant engagement events to encourage tenants to give us their views
- Complete the development of a housing scheme for older people at Parkside
- Improve our non-traditional housing stock at Hady, Grangewood and Boythorpe
- Commence an initial phase of new-build housing at Boythorpe and a programme of purchasing properties which meet a housing need
- Deliver a range of estate regeneration and environmental improvements starting at Barrow Hill and Holme Hall
- 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
- Improve and expand our Neighbourhood Ranger Service
- Work with Environmental Services to deal with dog fouling and raise awareness of the health risks of dog fouling
- Review our services so that we can help tenants to manage their tenancies and stay in their homes in light of welfare reform and the withdrawal of County council funded support services
- Improve our sheltered housing stock

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 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Number of homes we own and manage as at 31 March 2015 – 9517

Number of homes sold

2014/15	67
2013/14	51
2012/13	37

Income generated for the Borough Council from Right to Buy receipts will be used to develop new build social housing, acquire or convert existing properties for rent and to continue to improve the existing housing stock.

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.

Our Local Offers were developed during an 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 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 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 STAR survey

- Used mystery shoppers to test services received by customers and used the information obtained during the exercises to improve services

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 are disappointed that our performance in relation to responses to letters and complaints has dropped. This is primarily due to key Managers in our Operational Services Division being involved in other key projects both within the service, for example the implementation of the new ICT systems, and Council wide. This will be resolved this year by ensuring that adequate resources are identified and allocated to specific projects and tasks, we expect performance to return to its previous high levels and will introduce personal performance targets to ensure that it does.

Complaints responded to within 15 working days

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

We have set our target for 2015/16 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?
2014/15	84%	94%	x	x
2013/14	97.6%	94%	✓	✓
2012/13	92%	94%	x	x

We have set our target for 2015/16 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?
2014/15	98%	94%	✓	x
2013/14	100%	94%	✓	✓
2012/13	99.3%	94%	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 94%. This is the target set by the Council's Customer Charter.

Planned improvements for 2015/16 are:

- To produce an updated tenant handbook for all tenants
- To improve performance on complaint handling and responding to letters to meet the standards set out in the Council's Customer Charter
- To complete a STAR customer satisfaction survey to enable us to compare key satisfaction results on the services we provide
- To investigate the feasibility of an incentive scheme for young people getting involved in community projects

- To train mystery shoppers to enable them to assess estates using Keep Britain Tidy criteria
- To work with Tenant Challenge Panel to identify service improvements
- To promote ChAT to develop a database of tenants to participate in Service Review Groups and surveys

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.

At 31 March 2015 all of the Council's housing stock met this Standard, with over 3,000 properties receiving works in 2014/15 to either bring them up to the Decent Homes Standard or to prevent them from becoming non-decent.

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

- We have started work to externally insulate and render 544 non-traditional properties at Grangewood and Old Whittington and are drawing up plans to continue to insulate similar homes in Inkersall 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

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
- commence an initial phase of new-build housing at Rufford Close, Boythorpe, and a new programme of purchasing 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 £4.5m 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
- Consultation 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

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?
2014/15	100%	100%	✓	✓
2013/14	91.38%	90%	✓	✓
2012/13	85.3%	85%	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2015/16 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 and clicking on the 'Request It' link, by following the online instructions on the Homes section of our website at www.chesterfield.gov.uk, or by emailing repair.requests@chesterfield.gov.uk. You can also use the iHome smartphone app which is available free from iTunes or Google Play Shop by searching for 'Chesterfield Council'.

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 2014/15:

- Achieved the target of 100% 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% 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

Number of calls answered by the Repairs Hotline

2014/15	41,946
2013/14	44,269
2012/13	40,631

Number of responsive repairs

Apr 14	3433
May 14	3490
Jun 14	3431
Jul 14	3567
Aug 14	3304
Sep 14	3519
Oct 14	4046
Nov 14	3920
Dec 14	3460
Jan 15	3948
Feb 15	3727
Mar 15	3450

Repairs by Priority Category

	Number	%
Routine	25208	58
Out of hours	2520	6
Emergency	2303	5
Urgent	5679	13
Right to repair	7585	18

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

2014/15	2,502.52
2013/14	2,227.58
2012/13	2,528.41

The percentage of emergency repairs made safe within 24 hours

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	94.7%	100%	x	x
2013/14	96.22%	100%	x	x
2012/13	100%	100%	✓	Same

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

The percentage of urgent repairs completed within five working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	96.91%	98%	x	x
2013/14	98.97%	98%	✓	x
2012/13	99.63%	98%	✓	✓

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

The percentage of routine repairs completed within 20 working days

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	96.92%	98%	x	x
2013/14	99.31%	98%	✓	x
2012/13	99.67%	98%	✓	x

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

The recorded performance is below target. However, 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 repairs where an appointment was made and kept

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	91.44%	90%	✓	✓
2013/14	87.29%	90%	x	x
2012/13	90.69%	90%	✓	x

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

The percentage of hotline calls answered within 20 seconds

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	58.2%	90%	x	x
2013/14	59.24%	90%	x	x
2012/13	86.33%	90%	x	✓

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

Repairs Hotline calls are dealt with by the Council's Customer Contact Centre alongside all other calls to the Council.

We are disappointed to see that performance in the handling of repair reporting calls has not improved, these calls are dealt with by the Council's Customer Contact Centre; we recognise that this level of performance is unacceptable and are working together in carrying out a fundamental review in order to improve performance.

Gas servicing completed on schedule

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	100%	100%	✓	same
2013/14	100%	100%	✓	same
2012/13	100%	100%	✓	same

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

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%.

Planned improvements for 2015/16 are:

- To fully implement the Coins contractor management IT system
- To deliver an extended Capital Works Programme across the Borough
- To deliver an improved Lettable Standard
- To continue the Estate Regeneration Programme to improve communal areas on estates
- To replace the first phase of the district heating system at Lowgates in Staveley

Adaptations Service

The Housing Solutions Adaptations Team work closely with Derbyshire County Council Social Services who refer tenants who have a disability and require adaptations to their home. Referrals are made for minor adaptations such as grab rails, lever taps and additional stair rails and major adaptations such as stair lifts, shower over baths, level access showers and ramps. Adaptations enable tenants to remain in their own home for as long as it is safe and reasonable to do so.

The Adaptations Team will only consider adaptation requests for a tenant, or a permanent member of the tenant's household, who has a substantial disability which has a long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

All major adaptation requests are submitted and considered by the Joint Housing Services / Social Services Adaptations Panel. The Panel meet on a regular basis to consider all requests in depth and decide if the work is reasonable and practical.

If the requested adaptation cannot be carried out at a tenant's current property, the Adaptations Team will assist them to move to a more suitable property.

Key achievements in 2014/15:

- Promoted the Adaptations Services and the Adaptation Self-Referral Form through 'Adaptation 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 requests made for minor adaptations

2014/15	432
2013/14	525
2012/13	321

Number of requests made for major adaptations

2014/15	315
2013/14	262
2012/13	249

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 2014/15 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

2014/15	389
2013/14	449
2012/13	286

Number major adaptations completed

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

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	1	2	✓	✓
2013/14	1	2	✓	✓
2012/13	1.05	2	✓	✗

*From December 2014 this indicator target was removed due to a change in contractor. A new indicator will be included in 2015/16 Annual Report.

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?
2014/15	4.03	5	✓	✘
2013/14	3.92	5	✓	✓
2012/13	4.02	5	✓	✓

*From December 2014 this indicator target was removed due to a change in contractor. A new indicator will be included in 2015/16 Annual Report.

The adaptations contractor's performance showed consistently good performance during 2014/15. 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?
2014/15	99%	95%	✓	✓
2013/14	97.2%	95%	✓	✓
2012/13	96.7%	95%	✓	✓

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

Planned improvements for 2015/16 are:

- To review and improve how we offer advice and assistance to enable tenants to move to more suitable properties.
- To 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
- To review the adaptations policy to ensure it is easy to understand, gives clear information on eligibility and how to apply for adaptations.
- To review all adaptation information leaflets
- To work with our new contractor to improve and streamline the service

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 need for re-housing
- Transfer Band – CBC tenants with a need for rehousing
- General Band 1 – non CBC tenants living in the Borough with a need for rehousing
- General Band 2 – all other applicants with no specific housing need

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

Number of properties let

2014/15	956
2013/14	1,073
2012/13	966

Property types of ended tenancies

	Number	%
Bedsit	12	1
Bungalow	119	10
Flat	619	53
House	397	34
Maisonette	17	2

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	17.31	17.5	✓	✓
2013/14	17.92	17.5	✗	✗
2012/13	16.14	17.5	✓	✓

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

The percentage of rent lost through empty homes

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	1.57%	1.5%	✗	✗
2013/14	1.49%	2%	✓	✗
2012/13	1.2%	1%	✗	✗

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 1.5%.

Average number of days to relet an empty home

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	27.9	27	✗	✗
2013/14	27.89	27	✗	✓
2012/13	28.05	27	✗	✗

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 27 days.

It has again proven difficult to achieve the target of 27 days. We are therefore proposing changes to the way that we currently sign up new tenants and we will review of how we relet our empty homes to identify areas for improvement.

Who we rehoused

All adult household	16
Elderly	128
Joint applicants with no children	72
Joint applicants with 1 or more children	128
Single applicants with no children/access to children	445
Single applicants with 1 or more children	167

The number of days to register a housing application

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	6.38	7.5	✓	✓
2013/14	9.64	7.5	✗	✓
2012/13	10.96	5	✗	✗

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 6 days.

The way that we assess housing applications will change during 2015.

Applicants on the housing register at 31/3/15 and the property types they are eligible for

	Number of eligible households
Sheltered	683
Bedsit	1,058
1 bed flat	1,365
2 bed flat	406
3 bed flat	168
1 bed house	1365
2 bed house	289
3 bed house	157
4 bed house	48
5 bed house	10
6 bed house	1
2 bed maisonette	394
3 bed maisonette	166
1 bed bungalow	638
2 bed bungalow	86
3 bed bungalow	7

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.

HomeSwapper is of great help to those affected by welfare reform and households who are under occupying accommodation.

As of the 31 March 2015 there were 532 Chesterfield Borough Council tenants registered for a mutual exchange

Property Size Required	Number
Same property size	465
1 bedroom bigger	23
2 bedrooms bigger	5
1 bedroom smaller	26
2 bedrooms smaller	13

The total number of live applications (households wanting to move) on 31 March 2015 was 1999. On 31 March 2014 it was 2168 which shows a slight reduction in

the numbers on our waiting list. We anticipate that the numbers of live applications on our waiting list will reduce during 2015/16 as a result of changes to eligibility criteria and how we assess applications.

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	11
Bedsit	9
1 bed flat	990
2 bed flat	195
3 bed flat	17
1 bed house	8
2 bed house	168
3 bed house	237
4 bed house	15
2 bed maisonette	23
3 bed maisonette	1
1 bed bungalow	122
2 bed bungalow	54
3 bed bungalow	2

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

Priority Band	11
Transfer Band	19
General Band 1	27
General Band 2	26

Number of bids received for properties

2014/15	12,106
2013/14	13,160
2012/13	14,882

Percentage of bids made via the internet

2014/15	93.65%
2013/14	95.41%
2012/13	96.37%

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 2015/16 are:

- To 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
- To implement changes to the allocations policy to direct match applicants from some groups within the priority band
- To work with other housing providers to develop alternative housing options
- To introduce a tenancy training scheme
- To 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

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

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

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

2014/15	73
2013/14	83
2012/13	112

Number of households accepted a full homelessness duty for

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

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 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.

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
- 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
- Providing a Private Rented Access Scheme jointly with North East Derbyshire District Council, Bolsover District Council and Action Housing
- Trialling a tenancy training programme for young people aged between 18 and 24

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 2015/16 are:

- To 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
- To 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
- To 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, or around £500,000 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 and clicking on the Pay It link.
- Making payments online via the Council website at 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?
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 95.27 %.

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
1 bed bungalow	78.70
2 bed bungalow	82.40
3 bed bungalow	85.93

Bedsit flat	63.98
1 bed flat	76.48
2 bed flat	83.81
3 bed flat	84.43
4 bed flat	97.59
1 bed house	68.49
2 bed house	83.20
3 bed house	87.33
4 bed house	95.99
1 bed maisonette	76.43
2 bed maisonette	82.73
3 bed maisonette	89.71

Planned improvements for 2015/16 are:

- To monitor the impact of Universal Credit on the collection rate and take any action required to meet targets
- To train staff so that they are able to offer budgeting advice
- To actively consider the use of Discretionary Housing Payments in appropriate cases
- 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 ensure staff receive regular updates and appropriate training with regard to Welfare Reform
- To 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.

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 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

Below are the results of our 2014/15 ASB customer satisfaction surveys.

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?
2014/15	96%	90%	✓	✓
2013/14	92%	90%	✓	✓
2012/13	92%	90%	✓	✓

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 92%.

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%.

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%	x	x
2012/13	92%	87%	✓	✓

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

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

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	91%	87%	✓	✓
2013/14	84%	88%	x	x
2012/13	92%	88%	✓	✓

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

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%	x	x
2012/13	96%	90%	✓	✓

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

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%	x	x
2012/13	91%	87%	✓	same

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

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

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

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

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 address 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 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. 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, the improvements will be rolled out to other areas in future years.
- 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.

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

- Improving communal garden areas and providing raised planters to encourage tenants to work together on gardening projects
- New fencing and gates to improve security and reduce the fear of crime
- Re-modelled bin areas to improve the appearance of estates and prevent bin waste from being blown around the neighbourhood
- Providing benches and tables in open areas to encourage recreational use of green spaces
- Replaced worn out play equipment to divert children from causing ASB and to encourage them to use local parks
- Installed thermoplastic marking to prevent nuisance car parking

Planned improvements for 2015/16 are:

- To continue to improve the condition of our estates and shared areas of blocks of flats we will consider how we can improve and expand our Neighbourhood Ranger service
- To review and improve our grounds maintenance arrangements
- To work with Environmental Services on a well-publicised programme to deal with dog fouling on selected estates and open spaces
- To look at ways to measure our impact on dog fouling to help us to report how successful our activity is
- To 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.
- To improve customer satisfaction with the outcome of anti-social cases and how we deal with them
- To 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.

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

Percentage of calls answered within 60 seconds

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	98.57%	98.5%	✓	✗
2013/14	98.83%	98.5%	✓	✓
2012/13	98.53%	98.5%	✓	✗

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 98.5%.

Percentage of calls answered within 180 seconds

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	99.89%	99%	✓	same
2013/14	99.89%	99%	✓	✗
2012/13	99.93%	99%	✓	✗

We have set our target for 2015/16 at 99%.

Percentage of call outs attended within 45 minutes

	Performance	Target	Target met?	Improved?
2014/15	98.81%	95%	✓	✓
2013/14	98.19%	95%	✓	✓
2012/13	97.11%	90%	✓	✗

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

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

Planned improvements for 2015/16 are:

- To complete and re-open Parkside housing scheme for older people
- To begin a programme of improvements to sheltered housing schemes

- To 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	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 over the next 30 years we can manage the additional £118million 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 Tenant Incentive Scheme to give financial help to tenants freeing up needed accommodation, a revised allocations policy which will generate additional transfers of smaller housing and additional staff to help guide tenants through their housing options. We have also introduced an improved mutual exchange scheme to help match those tenants wanting larger properties with those needing smaller homes.

We would encourage anyone struggling to make rent payments to talk to us so that we can offer advice and alternatives, including payment arrangements. The telephone number to ring is 01246 345504.

We will also give particular support to tenants who are suffering from financial hardship where it is not possible for them to move. Ring 01246 345484 for an application form or call in to our Customer Service Centre for advice.

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

Tell us what you think about this Annual Report

We hope that you have found this annual report useful. It would be helpful if you could complete this short survey about the annual report and let us have your comments and any suggestions on how it could be improved.

Is the report useful? Yes No

Is the information clear and easy to understand? Yes No

Is there enough information about performance? Yes No

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

If no, please comment

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

What should Chesterfield Borough Council do better? Please comment

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

Please make any other comments or suggestions below

Name _____

Address _____

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