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LANDLORD PERFORMANCE REPORT TO TENANTS 2013/14



East Lothian
Council



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✓ **IKE this**

FOREWORD

Welcome to East Lothian Council's first landlord report to our tenants. As part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, we must provide a report on our performance against the outcomes set down in the Charter each year. The outcomes in the Charter:

- describe the results that tenants and other customers expect social landlords to achieve
- only cover social landlords' housing activities
- can be monitored, assessed and reported upon by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The purpose of the Charter is to improve the quality and value of the services provided by social landlords like the council and housing associations. We will use the performance information in this report to help us identify areas of strength and weakness. By working in partnership with you, our tenants, we are confident that we can prioritise areas for improvement. We hope this report helps you to understand how we are performing and shows our commitment to meeting all the Charter outcomes.

We would like to thank East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel for their contribution in helping to put this report together. They were very involved in the writing, editing and design and we hope that you are pleased with the end result. We'd really like to hear from you about what you think about this report. You can find more information about how you can get involved at the end of this report.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Monica Patterson
Depute Chief Executive
Partnerships and Community Services

Councillor Norman Hampshire
Spokesperson for Housing & Environment
East Lothian Council

Welcome from Mark Ormiston

Hello and welcome to the first Landlord Report to Tenants. I am pleased to be able to report that the East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRP) continue to work very successfully in partnership with East Lothian Council.

Over the past year ELTRP have worked with the council to implement the Scottish Housing Charter requirements, develop scrutiny activities and produce this Landlord Report to tenants.

At the same time ELTRP have held a number of sessions to inform tenants about the Scottish Housing Charter and to get their views about what area of the housing service they would like to see scrutinised and how tenants should be involved in the process. The information gathered from tenants has been used to inform the discussions with the council and will assist in developing a scrutiny programme for the future.

I hope you find this report easy to read and informative, but if you have any comments or ways to improve it, please get in touch. The council will be producing this report on an annual basis and ELTRP would like your views and comments on what should be in the report and how it should be presented to tenants.

In closing may I say THANK YOU to all those who have attended the various events and meetings to put their views and opinions forward, it really is about tenants working in partnership with the council to achieve success.

Mark Ormiston
 Chairperson, East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel



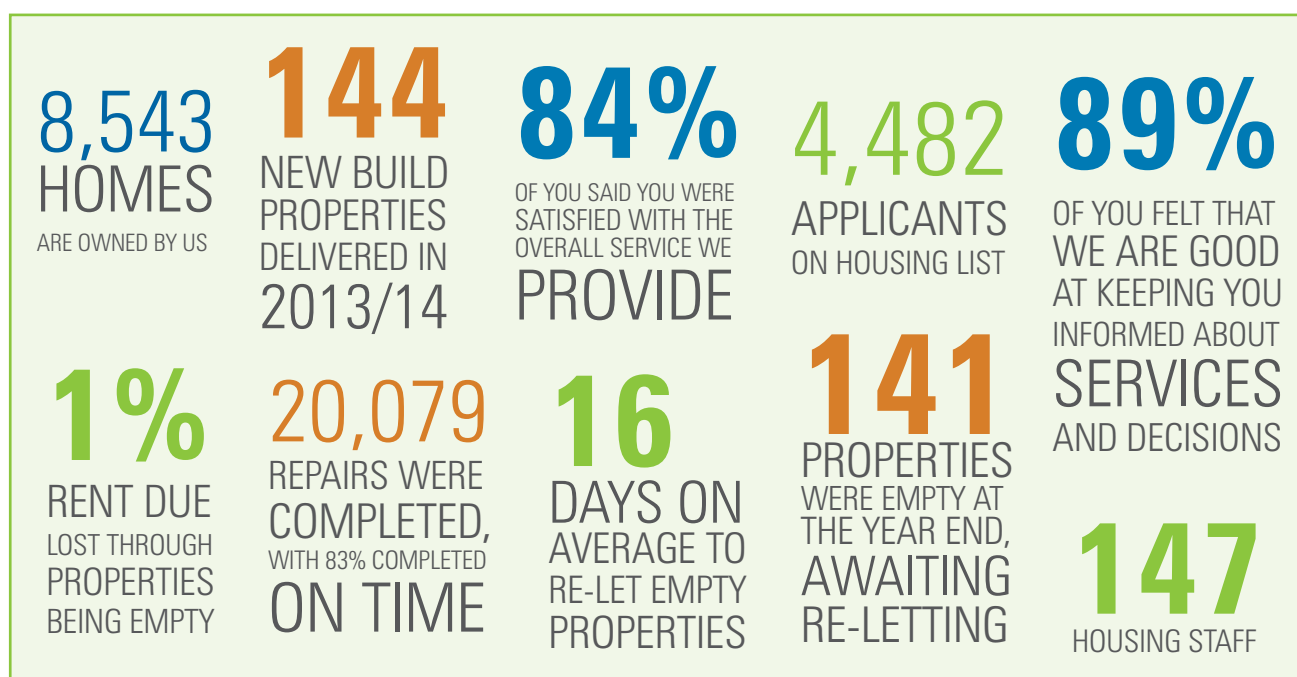
CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

As you will see from reading this report, East Lothian Council is delivering a good service in challenging times. There is, however, room for improvement and you have helped identify what needs to be prioritised. This report reflects on these and lets you know how we will deliver these improvements.

There are many challenges for the council as a landlord – an increasing and ageing population, homelessness, growing demand for affordable housing, difficulty in accessing mortgages, high house prices, welfare reform and social deprivation all continue to place heavy demands on the housing service.

We as your landlord are in a good place to respond to these challenges, but we need your help. We need you to pay your rent so that we have the money to deliver day-to-day services and investments. We need you to continue to be a good tenant who respects others and complies with your tenancy agreement. We would also like you to get involved in shaping the services that we deliver by engaging with us whether this is by reading this report, filling in a survey form or getting involved in other ways that suit you.

Some key facts about East Lothian Council Housing Service as at 31st March 2014



The table below shows our stock and average rents

	East Lothian Council		Midlothian Council		Scottish Housing Best Value Network *	
House size	Number of houses	Average weekly rent	Number of houses	Average weekly rent	Number of houses	Average Weekly rent
1 Apartment	44	£44.66	0	£ 0.00	271	£53.50
2 Apartment	1706	£48.09	813	£49.41	3287	£58.30
3 Apartment	4400	£50.35	3830	£55.16	6612	£63.40
4 Apartment	2173	£52.54	1891	£60.65	3186	£69.40
5 Apartment	220	£53.65	335	£64.36	374	£75.50
TOTAL	8543		6869		13,730	

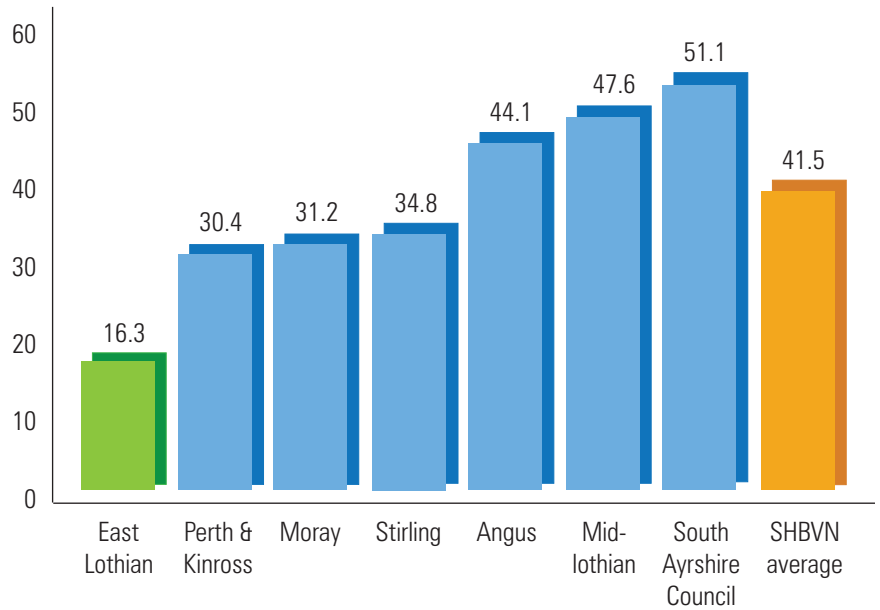
*This average is based on 25 councils plus Glasgow Housing Association

VALUE FOR MONEY, RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES

In your feedback to us **89%** of you stated that you view our rent as providing good value for money.

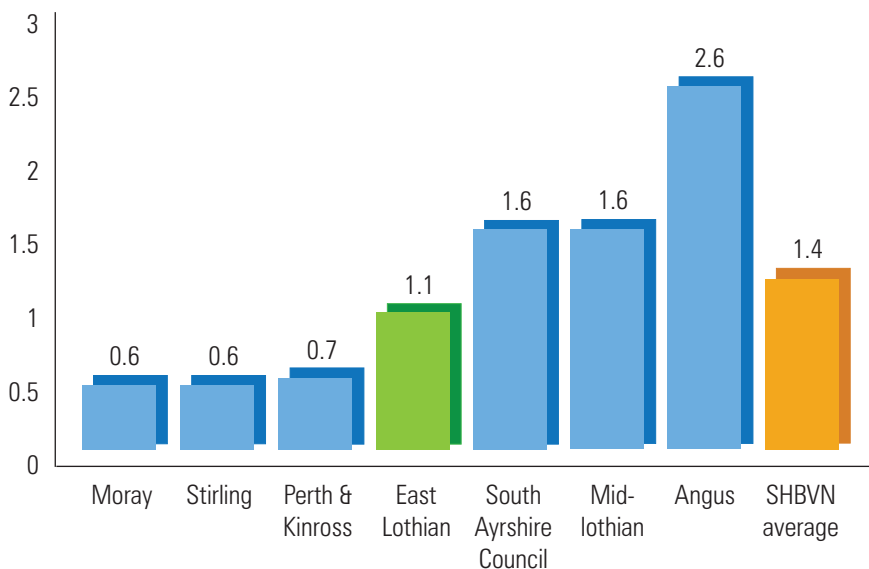
East Lothian Council is a member of the Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN) which allows us to benchmark and share best practice across Scotland. The information in the following graphs highlights how well we are performing against a peer group of local authorities of a similar size, as well as the SHBVN local authority average, against a number of measures which demonstrate whether we are providing value for money:

AVERAGE TIME TAKEN TO RELET PROPERTIES IN DAYS



From the graph above you can see that we are a strong performer in turning around vacant properties quickly. Re-letting our properties quickly has also helped to keep the amount of rent lost due to properties being empty fairly low, as the chart below shows.

% OF RENT LOST THROUGH PROPERTIES BEING EMPTY

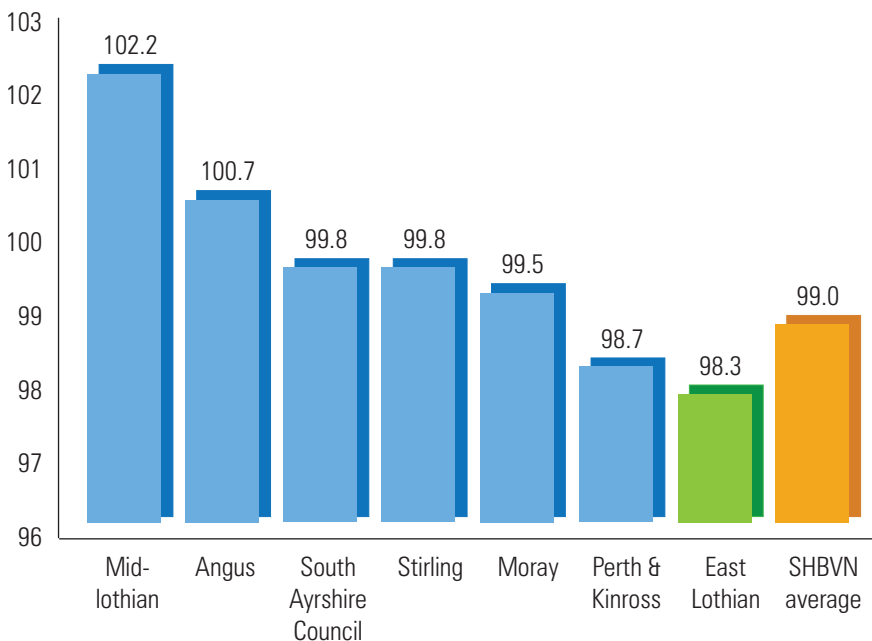


The amount of void rent loss will be dependent on the number of properties becoming empty during the year

RENT COLLECTION INFORMATION

The council aims to maximise rental income and manage rent arrears to ensure the council has the finances available to continue to deliver quality housing services to its tenants.

RENT COLLECTED AS % OF TOTAL RENT DUE IN THE YEAR



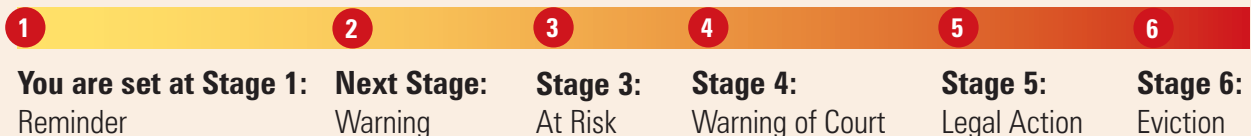
THE TOTAL RENT THAT WAS **DUE** FOR 2013/14 WAS **£22,156,041**

THE CURRENT TENANT RENT **OUTSTANDING** AT 31ST MARCH 2014 WAS **£1,475,010**

IN 2013/14, WE **COLLECTED 3.07% MORE** OF THE RENT DUE THAN WE COLLECTED IN 2012/13

Rent collection is an area of particular focus for the council in a time of economic downturn and welfare reform. To help us to improve in this area we have:

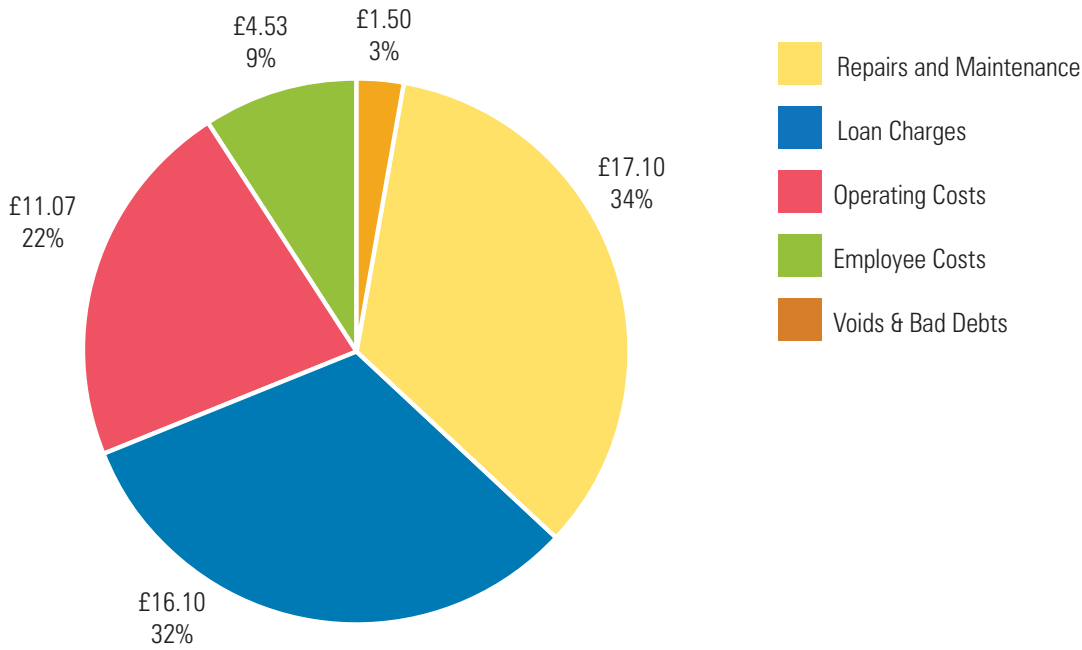
- recruited new members of staff which will allow us to increase early intervention to help prevent rent arrears
- redesigned and implemented new processes and procedures
- created new rent collection letters with a traffic light system and tracker bar (see below).



We have launched a "Pay to Stay" logo and campaign to highlight the importance of paying your rent and the help and support available for tenants who find themselves in financial difficulties and are struggling to pay.



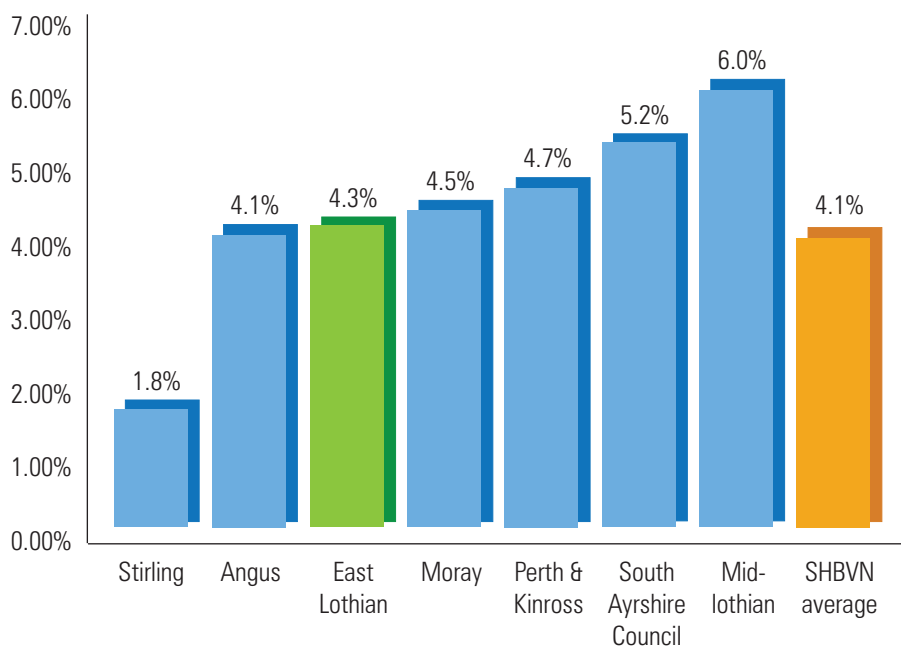
HOW THE AVERAGE RENT OF £50.30 PER WEEK IS SPENT



Over the last three years, the percentage rent increase applied by East Lothian Council has been 4.3%. We consult with our tenants every year on the proposal to increase rents and this is generally accepted by tenants as continuing to provide good value for money.

The graph below shows a comparison of rent increase amounts across our peer group of authorities:

WEEKLY RENT INCREASE IN 2014/15:





HOUSING QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE

You have told us that it is important to you that, as well as continuing to provide an excellent housing service, we invest both in improving our existing homes and continue to build new council houses to meet the high demand for social housing in East Lothian. We are fully committed to both and aim to do this in a way that does not put an undue burden on you as a rent payer.

To help pay for this investment, we borrow money, which we must then repay over a number of years. You can see what proportion of your rent money goes towards these loan charges on the pie chart on page 6.

MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

71% of our properties currently meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). The SHQS is a set of five broad housing criteria which must all be met if the property is to pass SHQS. We will be investing around **£10,000,000** in modernisation work in 2014/15 which will help to comply with the SHQS by the target date of 31st March 2015.

Over the last year we have delivered the following improvements:

- 462 kitchen replacements
- 257 bathroom replacements
- 314 rewires
- 1359 external paint work jobs.
- 39 full external house paints

94.6% of properties were found to be at or above the National Home Energy Rating (NHER).

ADAPTATIONS

We continue to invest in major adaptations to meet the needs of our tenants with mobility issues, thereby improving the overall accessibility of some of our housing stock. In the last financial year the cost of major adaptations was just over **£424,000**. Whilst a significant investment, this is a relatively low cost considering the impact of the service in terms of the difference adaptations make to improving people's quality of life.

This can be evidenced through our performance management framework. Our "Activities of Daily Living (ADL) Functional Indicator" measures how people manage daily living tasks before and after their adaptation is completed and confirms that **92%** of users have a significant increase in their functional ability which can mean increased safety and / or promote independence.

The responses to our satisfaction survey on adaptations confirm a satisfaction rate of **98.86%** across all the questions asked.

"No more struggling to get in and out and so easy to use and keep clean. Has also boosted my confidence knowing I won't slip and fall as compared to getting out of a bath."

HOUSING QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE

New tenant Justyna was delighted with her new home at Law View in North Berwick:

"I am so happy in my new home. I've got a new baby and it's wonderful to start a whole new family life in Law View. It has everything that me and my family need and I can't say how pleased and proud we all are of our new home."



The Law View site in North Berwick was completed in 2013/14 and provided 42 new homes built for the council by local firm Hart Builders.



NEW BUILD AND INVESTMENT PROGRAMME:



473

NEW COUNCIL
HOMES BUILT IN
THE LAST 5 YEARS

WITH APPROXIMATELY **117** FURTHER
NEW COUNCIL HOMES PLANNED
IN THE NEXT 2 – 3 YEARS, INCLUDING

56 HOMES IN
MUSSELBURGH

20 HOMES IN
HADDINGTON

16 HOMES IN
DUNBAR

Key headlines in relation to repairs and maintenance

82.5%

OF DAY TO DAY REPAIRS WERE COMPLETED RIGHT FIRST TIME

94.2%

OF REPAIRS APPOINTMENTS WERE KEPT



6.62 HOURS

WAS THE AVERAGE TIME THAT WE TOOK TO COMPLETE AN EMERGENCY REPAIR. OUR TARGET IS 24 HOURS

17.4 DAYS

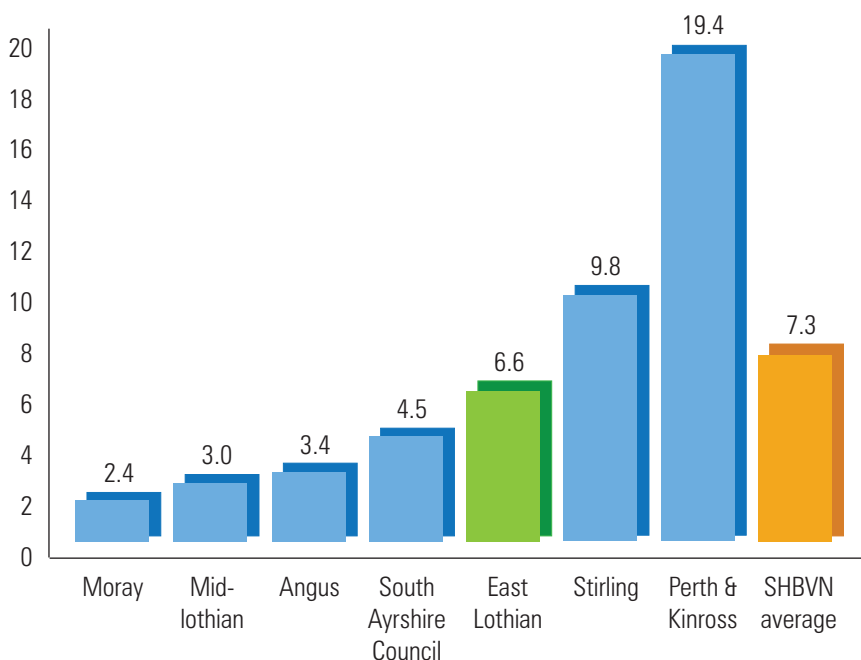
WAS THE AVERAGE TIME THAT WE TOOK TO COMPLETE A NON EMERGENCY REPAIR. OUR TARGET IS 23 DAYS

100%

OF GAS SAFETY INSPECTIONS THAT WERE CARRIED OUT WERE COMPLETED WITHIN 12 MONTHS OF THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

The graph below shows our performance against a peer group of local authorities of a similar size as well as the SHBVN average.

AVERAGE TIME TO COMPLETE EMERGENCY REPAIRS



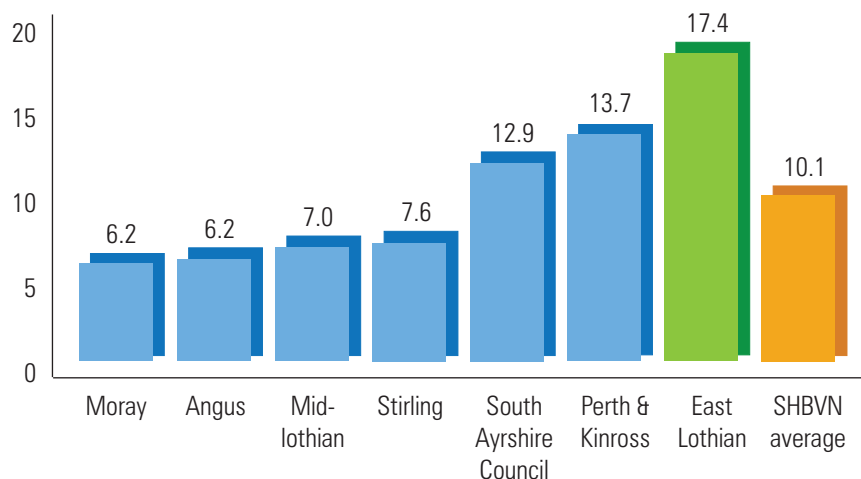
This is the first year in which we have measured our performance in this way and are pleased to be performing slightly better than the SHBVN average of 7.4 hours

Total number of emergency repairs completed in 2013/14

8079



AVERAGE TIME TO COMPLETE DAY TO DAY REPAIRS



Again, this is the first time we have measured our performance in this way, and although our average of 17.4 days is within our target time of 23 days, this is an area we are looking to improve upon this year.

85% of tenants who had repairs carried out in the last 12 months were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.

WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW:

We recognise that getting repairs done quickly and right first time is an area of high importance for our tenants and we have already started to look at the way we currently do things to see what changes we can make that will improve the service we deliver.

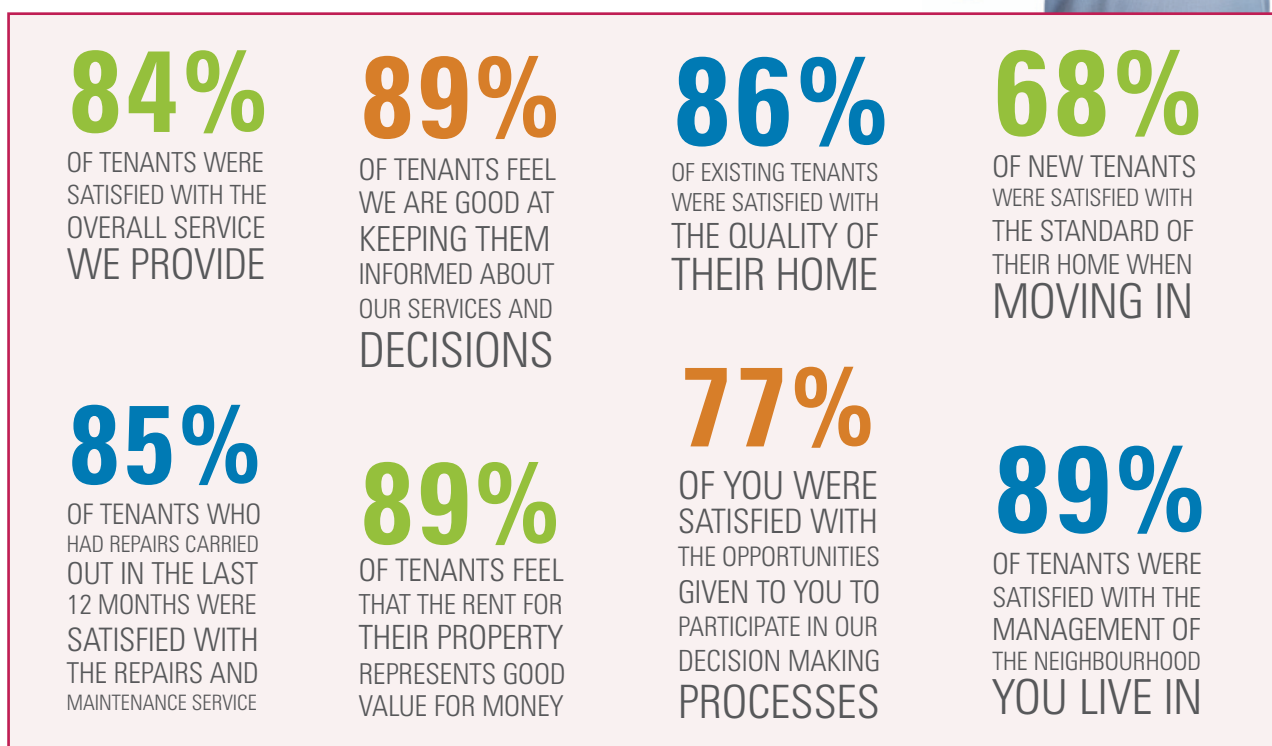
We want to **work smarter** and focus on our customer response time. Increasing the number of appointments and extending our mobile working arrangements will allow us to deploy our resources more **efficiently** and improve service delivery. Discussions are also ongoing exploring the possibility of offering evening (and maybe early morning) appointments for the convenience of people who are out at work during the day.

If you would like to get involved helping us to improve our repairs service, get in touch using the contact information on page 16 **“get involved and have your say”**.

TENANT SATISFACTION

In November 2013, we conducted our first comprehensive satisfaction survey to meet the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Over 1,700 tenants took part in the survey and the results were published in March 2014. This included questions over and above the eight indicators which we must report on for the Charter.

Your views are important to us and the survey highlighted areas of good performance as well as identifying areas where you would like us to do better. The results are given below.



You said	What we did/are doing
Some of you said you were not happy with the quality of your home when you moved in.	Setting up a focus group, involving customers, to look at our current processes and policies to see how we can improve the quality of our houses when you move in.
Some of you feel that it takes too long to get a repair completed.	Extending mobile working to other trades, and exploring the possibility of offering evening/early morning appointments. Setting up a focus group with tenants to look at this in more detail in September 2014.
You didn't like completing a full application form when we reviewed your housing application.	We have now produced a shorter version of the form which has been well received.

COMPLAINTS:

216 first stage complaints received in the year, **92** of which were upheld in favour of the complainant.

156 second stage complaints received in the year, **54** of which were upheld in favour of the complainant.

EQUALITIES, COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION



COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION

Our tenants have told us how importantly they value communication and our tenant satisfaction survey showed that 89% of tenants thought the council were very good or fairly good at keeping them informed.

One of the ways we communicate with our tenants is through the Homefront magazine. The council works in partnership with East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel to produce this on a quarterly basis.

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF OUR TENANT PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

We are trying a different approach to gathering information which will show the impact and the difference our tenant participation activities have on individuals, groups and communities. We recently held an evaluation session for members of ELTRP's Executive Committee and asked them a number of questions about being involved in tenant participation and what impact this has had on them and the difference it has made. Here's some of the feedback we received:

IMPACT:



DIFFERENCE:

"Have a greater understanding of problems"

"Learned about housing"

"Now have more knowledge"

"To make a difference to the community where I live"

This is just the first step and we are planning on carrying out some further work in this area. We want to work with local tenants groups and other tenants who are involved with us. This will help give us confidence that we are doing the right things, highlight any gaps and areas where we could be doing more and provide evidence on the difference our activities are having.

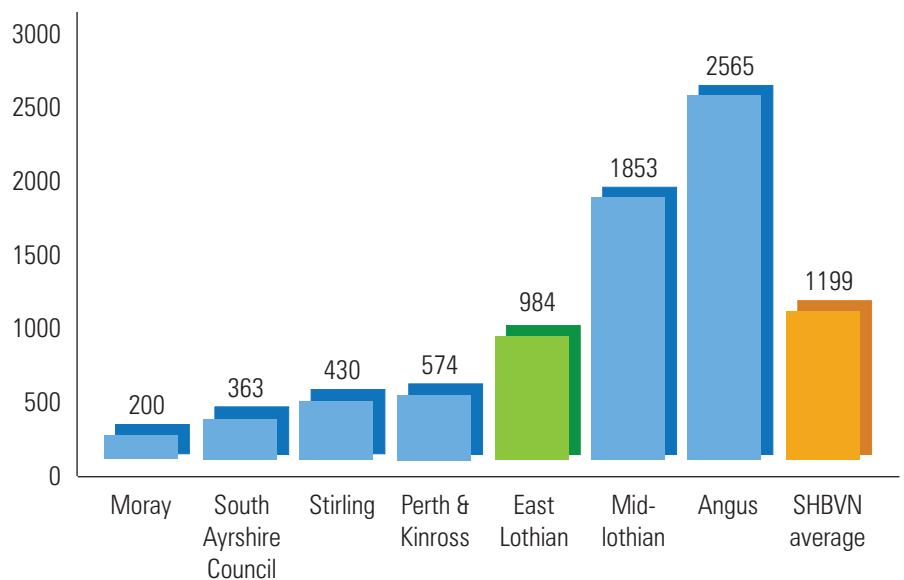
ESTATE MANAGEMENT, ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR & SUSTAINING TENANCIES



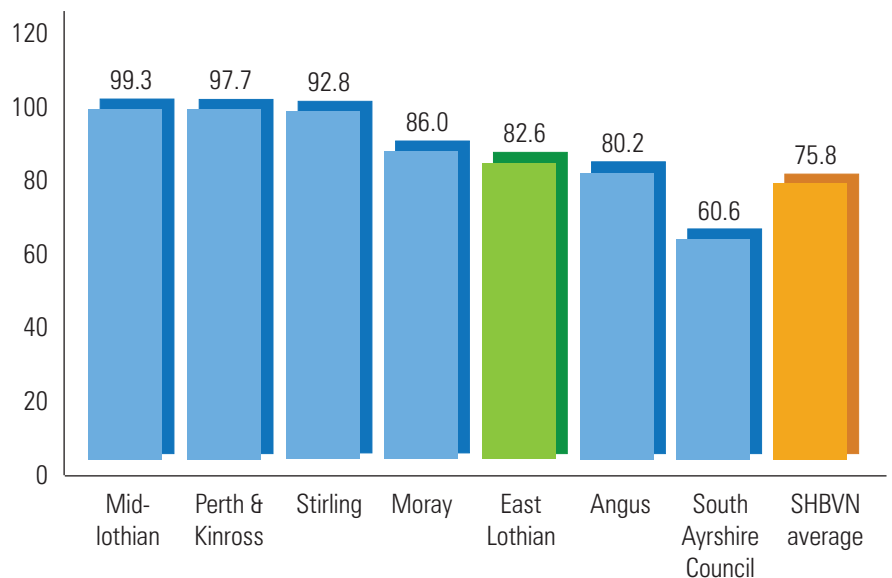
“Antisocial behaviour” (ASB) encompasses a whole range of behaviour from neighbour disputes over noise or parking to physical violence and drug dealing. The council has developed a very robust Antisocial Behaviour Policy in conjunction with its partners that applies to all residents of East Lothian. It is good to note that the number of reported incidents of antisocial behaviour is declining in East Lothian. The council has developed a preventative approach to dealing with antisocial behaviour and uses a range of interventions to deal with those who perpetrate such behaviour. Representatives from East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel are involved in the formulation of policy and strategy in this area.

The graphs opposite show a comparison of the number of antisocial behaviour cases reported and the % of these that were resolved within target times, across a comparative group of local authorities.

NUMBER OF CASES OF ASB REPORTED IN THE LAST YEAR



PERCENTAGE OF CASES RESOLVED WITHIN LOCALLY AGREED TARGETS



TENANCY SUSTAINMENT HEADLINES:

	East Lothian Council	SHBVN Average
% of new tenancies sustained for more than a year	93.4%	88.1%
Number of abandoned properties	26	106

TENANCY SUPPORT

The aim of the Tenancy Support Service is to prevent tenants losing their tenancy and help them to manage better.

Between April 2013 and March 2014, **195** referrals were made to the Tenancy Support Service. Referrals can be made for a number of reasons, for example:

- where a tenant has rent arrears
- due to the condition of the property the person is living in
- antisocial behaviour
- vulnerability of the tenant.

Tenancy support officers can work alongside tenants to make sure they are getting all the benefits to which they are entitled. They can also help with applying for benefits and grants, for example, Social Welfare Fund applications. Where appropriate, they can also refer tenants to other services and organisations which could provide additional services and /or support.

We know that if you are having difficulties it's very important that we try to support you and help you to sustain your tenancy. If you would like help, do speak to your local housing officer.

"I had very little when I moved into my house, but with the help of my tenancy support officer I got a social welfare grant which helped me to get carpets, a bed and some other essentials for my house which I couldn't afford to buy. It really made a difference and I feel better about myself and my house."



Allotments at Muirpark and Steading View, Tranent

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

An Estate Inspection involves inspection of the communal areas within a Community Housing Officer's patch. 'Communal' areas are the parts shared by everyone. This includes play areas, open parkland or shrubs. The term also refers to the common stairway or landing in a tenement or flat, as well as backcourts, refuse/bin areas and the landscaping in or around the properties. An estate inspection is carried out to ensure problems are identified as early as possible and reported, so that appropriate action can be taken and tenants are at the heart of the process and given an opportunity to identify issues of concern and get involved in the inspection.

Improvements to the local area can also be put forward and may be identified during an estate inspection. These improvements, known as local initiatives, can be improvements which may help meet a local need or resolve a local issue.

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

In 2011 East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRP) carried out an estate inspection survey in response to concerns raised by its membership about the estate inspection performance. The results of the survey were presented to East Lothian Council (ELC).

ESTATE INSPECTION WORKING GROUP

A joint working group was set up and consisted of:

- 4 ELTRP representatives
- 4 housing officers (1 from each area team)
- 1 service development officer
- 1 TIS development officer
- 1 ELC support services officer.

The group identified areas for improvement and made a number of recommendations to the council. All of the recommendations were accepted and the council have now put together an action plan to implement the proposals. The working group will continue to meet to implement the action plan and monitor progress.

THIS PERFORMANCE REPORT IS FOR YOU... ...GET INVOLVED AND HAVE YOUR SAY...

The Scottish Social Housing Charter, which sets the standards and outcomes that social landlords must achieve, also holds service user involvement at its heart. It encourages customer-led shaping of services, which means a much greater role for you!

This is our first report to our tenants which has been designed with representatives from East Lothian Tenant and Residents Panel. We would however, like to hear your views on the layout and content of the report. Is there anything else that you would like to see in the report in future? What do you think should be changed? What do you think worked well?

We also want to know how you would like to get involved in the work that we do.

Perhaps you would like to:

- join a local tenant's group?
- help now and again with focus groups in topics that interest you?
- join our tenant scrutiny group?
- take part in a mystery shopping exercise?

GET IN TOUCH:

East Lothian Council

Phone 01620 827747
 Email chsdt@eastlothian.gov.uk
 Write East Lothian Council,
 Community Housing,
 Service Development Team,
 Penston House,
 Macmerry,
 EH33 1EX

East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel

Phone 0131 665 9304
 Email tenantspanel@hotmail.com
 Write ELTRP,
 47 Bridge Street,
 Musselburgh,
 EH21 6AA

Versions of this leaflet are available on request on audiotape, in Braille or in your own language. Phone the Public Information Officer on 01620 827199

If you would like to view East Lothian Council's full return of the Charter or, compare our performance with other landlords in Scotland, visit the Scottish Housing Regulator's website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Gain skills
 Volunteers
 Experience
 Confidence
 Help
 Fulfilment
 Inspire
 Create opportunities
 Development
 Support
 Knowledge
 Give hope
 Rewarding