

ANNUAL REPORT FOR TENANTS



2020

Welcome to Richmondshire District Council's Annual Report to tenants. It gives you an update on what has been happening in the world of housing during 2019/20. We hope you find it informative.

Our aim is to provide you with honest information, allowing you to see how we have been performing across a range of housing services. It also gives details on actions we are taking to help improve safety in our homes, support we are giving tenants who need adaptations or lifeline services to help them live more independently, and how we are providing you with different ways to communicate and transact with us..

We have used information provided by you to assess what you think of services you have received, and internal statistical information to show you how we have managed our services. The information you provide via the quick tick surveys is very useful to us and helps us become aware of issues.

Going forward into 2020/21 – as a result of the Covid19 pandemic - we are more aware than ever of the need to be flexible in the way services are delivered to ensure priorities are met for our customers. This will be a key action across all services.

To help show comparisons year on year we have used weather symbols:



**we exceeded
our target**



**we met
our target**



**we need
to do
better**

Involving You :

customer services, choice and complaints; involvement and empowerment

Tenant Involvement

Our new Tenant Panel members attended in house training during 2019 with Susie Eales, our Housing Management Team Leader. Two sessions were held covering the different aspects and roles within Landlord Services.

We also arranged for Scrutiny Net to provide a full day of updates and awareness training to our Tenant Panel members, relating to regulatory changes - this was both informative and interesting.

Our Tenant Panel was consulted during the mini review of the North Yorkshire Home Choice Allocations Policy feeding their comments and suggestions into this.

Following a period of recruitment we now have five active panel members:



Eunice Robinson



Jeff Fullerton



Glory Battle



Michaela Brennan



Keith Horn



Jeff has continued as our Heating Service Tenant Champion and attended meetings held throughout 2019 to monitor the standards of our contractor and Eunice has continued working with both the Landlord Services team and the Improvements team, as Void Repair and Improvement Tenant Champion.

What have we done in 2019/20

- Training has been rolled out to Tenant Panel Members
- We have held bi-monthly meetings with our Tenant Panel members
- We now have 814 tenants paying rent by direct debit, an increase of 5%
- Our customer service team dealt with 50,223 calls, with 76% being dealt with at first of contact
- 94% of customers who have been seen in one of our offices told us they were satisfied with the service they received.
- 91% of customers who made telephone enquiries have advised us they were satisfied with the service they received
- The automated payment system in our council offices was used by customers to make 23,560 transactions, an increase of over 200% as compared with 2018/19.
- 19,037 transactions were made using our on line facility
- Sign Live has been used by four customers during 2019/20
- 93% of customers seen at one of our council offices were dealt with at first point of contact.
- One customer has used language line
- Customers were provided with a face to face service on 24,483 occasions.
- Following the launch of Browsaloud - a facility which can be used to translate council web pages into a wide variety of languages or allow the user to hear text read out loud - 5,748 customers have used the facility over a nine month period, an average of 639 per month.
- We have continued to utilise social media, making advisory information readily available, including using a variety of visual methods to portray the messages.
- We received 12 formal complaints from tenants, which were all responded to within target times, with two being dealt with at stage 2.
- Colleagues within the revenues team launched a new online system in March 2020, allowing residents to access their council tax account on line, with the facility to set up a direct debit, check balances and payments and update their details.
- We continue to review our corporate complaints so that we can learn lessons and address any service issues.

What's next?

- We will continue to encourage tenant participation across the district, looking at different ways for safe engagement using modern technology as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic
- We will continue to make improvements to our website and on line facilities working closely with our colleagues in the council's Digital Engagement team.
- We will upgrade Browsecloud, making improvements to the toolbar, and providing a more compact design with improved descriptive tooltips and advice to help the user.
- We will undertake a complaint handling self-assessment to ensure we are dealing with complaints properly and share our findings with the Housing Ombudsman
- We will move forward with plans to improve access for residents with mobility issues within our sheltered schemes
- We will continue to monitor the use of our website and online facilities, so they continually meet the needs of our customers.



Your Home:

Accommodation and Repairs and Maintenance

The Improvements and Reactive Repairs team has had a busy 12 months, developing a programme of major improvements as well as developing a new contract partnership to deliver void repairs to our empty properties.

We have also been able to make progress on some of our planned fire safety work, including additional emergency lighting to some of our blocks of flats and floor coverings. Work was undertaken to commission a compartmentation survey to a block of flats following conversations with North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and we are moving forward with work identified as a result of this.

Mobile working has become embedded within the Reactive Repairs team, with more flexible appointments now available.

What have we done in 2019/20

We have improved homes by:

- Installing 95 kitchens
- Installing 26 central heating systems
- Replacing 51 central heating boilers
- Installing 48 bathrooms
- Undertaking external improvements (render and new guttering systems) to 60 homes
- Completing 68 adaptations to homes to help people live more independently
- Issuing 94 Dulux paint packs to help tenants with the cost of decorating their new homes

We have responded to tenants day to day issues by:

- Offering 5045 reactive repair appointments to tenants
- Completing 96% of reactive repair work at first visit
- Undertaking quality checks on 20% of reactive repair work undertaken by the in house repair team
- Completing 100% of annual heating services to homes

We have improved the safety and well being of our tenants by:

- Completing annual Fire Safety Risk reviews to all communal areas in both our general needs flats and sheltered housing schemes
- Arranging for 10% of heating service audits to be undertaken to ensure our contractor is continually meeting the required standard
- Installing new floor coverings to communal stairways and entrances to prevent slipping and the spread of fire
- Improving emergency lighting to communal areas in some flats
- Undertaking regular inspections to all communal areas to address areas of concern

We have increased the number of homes available to our customers by:

- Providing an additional 55 homes across Richmondshire
- Working with developers to provide Discount Market Sales homes to local residents, allowing discounts of between 20-30% on the open market value
- Continuing to work with partner housing associations and developers to enable good quality housing within the district

We have worked to improve access to housing by:

- Working with our sub-regional partners to review our allocations policy for North Yorkshire Home Choice
- Upgrading the North Yorkshire Home Choice online facility enabling the customer to do more online to update and provide information to aid their application for housing
- Assisting veterans, in accordance with the Armed Forces Covenant, to access appropriate housing, with 5% of applicants accommodated being ex-forces personnel



“ I’ve found the work of the improvements team and their contractor very interesting. It’s always good to see the difference made by the team working to turn an empty property into a new home for someone. ”

Eunice Robinson
Tenant Panel Member and Tenant Champion for Improvements and New Tenancy Standard.

- We will implement our five year Home Improvement Plan, including kitchen and bathroom replacements, heating schemes and external work
- We will identify environmental work to try and improve parking on some of our estates for our tenants.
- We will appoint and monitor a new contractor to deliver void repair work
- We will create new areas for safe storage and charging of mobility scooters
- We will take forward the findings of our Fire Safety Reviews to improve the safety of our tenants
- We will continue to work with partners to develop housing schemes to meet the needs of our residents

How have we been doing?

Service	Performance 1/4/2019 - 31/3/2020	Targets 2019-2020	2020/21 Targets
Offer appointments for non urgent repairs	 92%	90% - we are pleased that we were able to exceed the target set in this area	90%
Undertake repair inspections within 14 days of report	 51%	60% - we were disappointed that we were not able to achieve this target, but recognised that staff shortages may have impacted this target	60%
Complete repairs at first visit	 96%	85% - we are pleased that we were able to exceed the target set in this area	85%
Inspect 30% of repairs undertaken by contractors	 19%	30% - we were disappointed that we were not able to achieve this target, but recognised that staff shortages may have impacted this target	30%

Did you know...

99% of customers who responded to surveys told us that they were pleased with the quality of workmanship from our Heating Service team

100% of heating services were undertaken in 2019/20

95% of customers who responded to surveys, told us that they found the allocations team helpful

100% of customers who responded to surveys, who had received help through the adaptation service, told us they were pleased with the overall service received

96% of customers who responded to surveys told us that they were pleased with the advice given by the Reactive Repair team

100% of tenants living in our sheltered housing schemes, who responded to surveys, told us they felt safe and secure in the scheme

“ Since joining the panel I’ve been able to learn more about how things work. Having been a part of the review of the North Yorkshire Home Choice, I am more aware of the work done by the Allocations team. ”

Michaela Brennan
Tenant Panel Member



Your Tenancy:

Allocations, Mutual Exchanges, Tenancies

We have used our quick ticks surveys for a number of years and find them useful in gauging how you view our services. The surveys help us to see where changes may be required or more information provided to help our customers.

Quick ticks are easy to fill in online following a service received – they are also sent out by the team following a service.

What have we done in 2019/20

- We have housed 114 new customers in council accommodation
- We have allocated 5% of council accommodation to households leaving HM Forces
- We have helped homeless people
- We have prevented 40 households becoming homeless
- We have accommodated 21 young homeless people in supported accommodation
- We provided advice and assistance to 54 young people facing homelessness
- We have spent £52,435.78 assisting tenants through Discretionary Housing Payments
- We have extended 17 Introductory Tenancies to provide additional time for the household to address issues of concern and avoid losing their home
- We have served seven Notice of Possession Proceedings on introductory tenants for breaches of tenancy
- We have reviewed North Yorkshire Home Choice and upgraded the service enabling tenants to do more online to aid their application for housing.



What's next?

- We will continue to work with Job Centre Plus and the Income Maximisation team at North Yorkshire County Council to help tenants who have been affected by the impact of Covid19
- We will continue to work with colleagues in the Housing Benefit team to help customers who may qualify for Discretionary Hardship Payments
- We will work to optimise online services for our customers to give easier access
- We will continue our North Yorkshire Home Choice Partnership, enabling customers to access accommodation across the sub region
- We will undertake a review of our lifeline service
- We will continue to implement Covid19 safe arrangements to help keep residents of our sheltered housing safe
- We will continue to work closely with colleagues on the development of affordable housing to help identify areas of need across the district.

How have we been doing?

Service	Performance 1/4/2019 - 31/3/2020	Targets 2019/20	2020/21 Targets
Helpfulness of staff who dealt with your tenancy	 <p>95% of customers who responded told us they found the staff who dealt with their tenancy helpful</p>	90% we are pleased that we were able to exceed the target set	90%
Standard of advice from the Housing Management Team	 <p>95% of customers who responded told us they were pleased with the advice given</p>	90% we are pleased that we were able to exceed the target set	90%
Overall satisfaction with the service provided	 <p>90% of customers who responded told us that they were satisfied with the service provided</p>	90% we are pleased that we were able to meet the target set.	90%
Standard of accommodation offered	 <p>100% of customers who responded told us that they were pleased with the standard of accommodation offered</p>	90% we are pleased that we were able to meet the target set.	90%

Did you know...

98% of all rent due was collected in 2019/20

39 Notice of Seeking Possession were issued to tenants for non-payment of rent

Nine tenants were served with court orders for non-payment of rent

Three tenants were evicted from their home for non-payment of rent – if you are struggling with rent payments please contact the housing management team, we don't want you to lose your home

814 tenants paid their rent using Direct Debit

13 properties were sold using the Right to Buy

The average time to re-let general needs home requiring minor work was **20** days

Seven introductory tenants were issued with a Notice of Possession Proceedings

Your Neighbourhood and Community

Our annual garden competition took place with some outstanding gardens presented by tenants. Our partnership with the Green Frog Garden Centre continued, with all winners receiving vouchers and some green fingered advice to use next time.

We undertook both Spring and Autumn Estate Walkabouts, involving members of the Tenant Panel, the Tenancy Relations team, Local Councillors and residents. A total of 2,198 inspections were undertaken with a total of 204 revisits identified as required.

What have we done in 2019/20?

- We have established positive working links with Darlington Mind and directly with their Young Person's Co-ordinator. This service offers information, support and guidance on issues facing young people.
- We have worked with our partner IDAS, to help provide services to young people affected by domestic support, making referrals as appropriate, to the RESPECT service which offers support to families where a young person is showing signs of abusive behaviour
- We have worked with partners to access available support from Anger Management and Mediation Services.
- We have worked with North Yorkshire Youth to raise awareness of issues affecting young people and share diversionary and support activities.
- Key delivery projects were held in secondary schools aimed at young people at risk of being radicalised, committing a hate crime or showing negative racial behaviour.
- We have established links with Alcohol Education Trust which has held workshops to promote alcohol awareness to young people.
- We have supported and promoted the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service LIFE courses for young people
- We have used Community Safety support grant to support a Youth Club outing and to buy Drug Scratch 'n' Sniff Cards for North Yorkshire Youth to raise awareness of dangers of drugs.
- We bought White Ribbon resources to highlight domestic abuse
- We have worked with partners in North Yorkshire Police and Youth Offending Team to address issues of anti-social behaviour, using Acceptable Behaviour Contracts on two occasions.
- We evicted one person from their home due to anti-social behaviour.
- We issued 12 Notice of Seeking Possessions to tenants due to anti-social behaviour
- 23 new cases of anti-social behaviour were opened
- The team worked on 43 active cases of anti-social behaviour
- 44 cases of anti-social behaviour were closed.
- We have continued to work with colleagues in Street Scene to address issues with stray dogs and litter
- Drop in sessions continued to be delivered to support refugee families.
- We have gone live with a Choose to Lose Health and Fitness service for residents of Richmondshire.

Did you know...

78% of anti-social behaviour cases were responded to within priority time

28 full property inspections were undertaken

- We will resume the Garden Competition in 2021/2022 - the implications of Covid19 affected this in 2020/2021.
- We will continue to work with partner agencies to address anti-social behaviour
- We will take forward actions found during the Sheltered Housing Fire Safety Risk Assessments
- We will move forward with designated storage and recharging arrangements at some of our Sheltered Housing schemes.
- We will continue to 'walk the patch' through our Estate Walkabout programme to help maintain our estates
- We will continue the work of our Community Safety team in partnership with other agencies to deliver diversionary activities for young people
- We will work with partners to help address issues of mental health
- We will support residents to adopt a healthy lifestyle through our Choose to Lose programme.
- We will provide support to the new Refugee Programme, in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council.



**Estate
Walkabouts**

**RICHMONDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Choose
to Lose**

5045 repair appointments made

75% of jobs completed
Right First Time

Three households
lost their home due
to eviction for non-
payment of rent

13 households
purchased their home
using Right to Buy

100% of
Heating Services
completed

68 Adaptations
carried out to
peoples home

2198 Estate Walkabout
visits were made

26 central heating
systems were installed

114 new
tenants housed
through North
Yorkshire Home
Choice



94 Dulux paint
packs were
issued to tenants

21 young people
were offered
accommodation
with support

814 tenants pay
their rent using Direct
Debit

19,037
online transactions
were made

We collected
98%
of rent

New kitchens installed
at **95** homes

5748 customers used the
Browsealoud facility

£1,500,000
spent through the
Major Improvement
Programme

£52,435 was spent assisting
tenants through the Discretionary
Hardship Payments scheme

55 new homes provided
across Richmondshire

39 tenants served
with a Notice of
Seeking Possession

54 young people
were offered advice
and assistance when
facing homelessness

New central heating boilers
installed at **51** homes

New bathrooms
installed in **48** homes

**This information is available in
alternative formats and languages**



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