



Welcome to DGHP's
Report Card
2013/14



What is the Scottish Social Housing Charter?

You may remember through the articles in your newsletter that in April 2012, the Scottish Government introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

The purpose of the Charter was to set out a number of standards that landlords like DGHP should be meeting in order to demonstrate that it provides good quality services to tenants and other service users. Specifically, there are 16 overall standards that have to be met. To measure our performance and to assess if we are meeting the standards set out in the Charter, the Scottish Housing Regulator asks us to provide a wide range of information about our services and they tell us how we compare with other Registered Social Landlords. You can find out more about the Charter by visiting <http://housingcharter.scotland.gov.uk/>

What does the Report Card mean for DGHP tenants?

As part of the requirements of the Charter, we need to share information about our performance with each of our tenants. We always did this in September of every year anyway but because of the Charter, we need to set this out in a different way. This is why we have developed our first Report Card.

Who decides what information goes into the Report Card?

As you can imagine it would not be possible to publish all the information we collect about our performance. So what we did was to work with a large group of tenants which included the Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Association, our District Management Committees and several focus groups made up of tenants to agree what performance information they considered to be the most relevant to publish in the Report Card.

What I've had to do is look at that information, plus all of the other data that we collect, and make an assessment on whether we meet the standards in the charter. In other words, it is not just the 19 indicators in this Report Card that I have considered, but I have looked at the broader picture in terms of our performance.

Why is it important?

This performance information had to demonstrate how we are meeting the standards expected of us in the Charter. Tenants wanted us to group the standards into the following 5 sections

- Tenant satisfaction and complaints
- Quality and maintenance of homes
- Neighbourhoods
- Our homes and rents, and
- Value for money

Under each of these sections, we have set out some performance information that tenants felt were important.

How do we know if DGHP's performance is good?

I have now reviewed our performance in all of these sections and compared how we did with the Scottish National Average. I have also set out my thoughts on all these areas and given my own star ratings on our performance. I have also set out how we are going to improve in certain areas.

Your views are important to us

You may find when reading the Report Card that you would like more information in the future. This is the first time that we have published performance in this way and would very much like you to give us some feedback. We would be grateful if you could complete the comments card enclosed with your Report Card and send it back to us. This is free and you will be entered into a prize draw as a thank you for completing the card.

I have great pleasure in presenting you with Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership's first ever Report Card.

As you know, every year we always gave you details of how we are performing on an annual basis. However, with the introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter we now have to report this information differently – by issuing a Report Card to our tenants.

Overall I am pleased that we are, in most sections, performing better than the average performance of other landlords in Scotland and we are meeting the standards set out in the Charter. However, we always want to provide the best quality homes and services for our tenants and we will be doing everything we can to become even more efficient and responsive in 2014/15.

I have set out below some more information for you about the Charter.

Yours

David McMillan
Chairman of DGHP

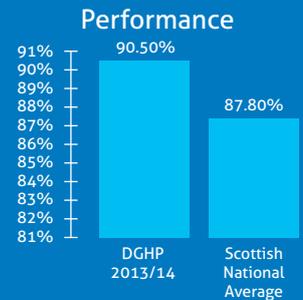


Tenant Satisfaction & Complaints

1 The percentage of tenants who are satisfied with the overall service provided by DGHP

Chairman's comments

This is probably one of the most important indicators for me and I'm delighted that our tenants have rated us higher than the Scottish national average. This was collected through a tenant satisfaction survey carried out by an independent company earlier this year. Although very pleased with the result, we know we can always make improvements and we'll be aiming to better this result next time this survey is carried out. In the meantime, we will be embarking on our customer care campaign which will focus on good communication with our tenants across the whole of the region.



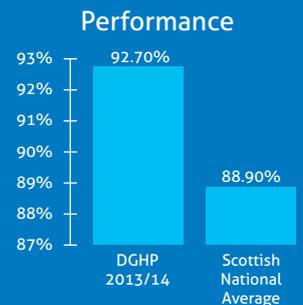
Chairman's Award



2 The percentage of tenants who feel that DGHP is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions

Chairman's comments

It is not a surprise to me that tenants have rated our communications so highly. Our success must be attributed to having a Tenants Editorial Panel for our Open Door newsletter and a dedicated communications team. Having tenants involved in drafting the content for our newsletter as well as a lot of our leaflets and information bulletins concerning Welfare Reform has allowed us to focus on what's important.



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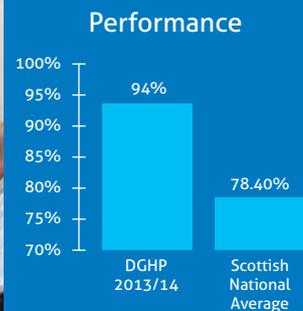
Tenant Satisfaction & Complaints

3 The percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them by DGHP to participate in decision making processes

Chairman's comments

DGHP prides itself on being a national leader in involving tenants in everything we do and this result reinforces the fact that we offer many different ways for tenants to be involved in the management of their homes.

We have tenants on our Board, we have the District Management Committees, focus groups, local conferences. We also support and respect the good work of the independent tenant movement through the Federation of Tenants and Residents Association and the local TARAs.



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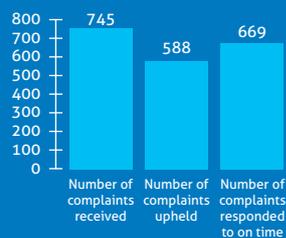
4 The percentage of 1st and 2nd stage complaints, including those related to equalities issues, responded to in full in the last year, that were resolved by DGHP and the % upheld

Chairman's comments

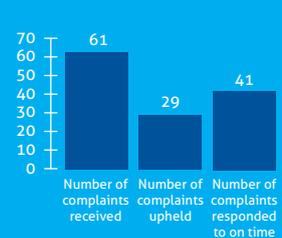
We recently introduced a new Complaints Handling Procedure that meets all the good practice guidelines recommended by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, e.g. having a two-stage approach. This is the first full year it has been in operation.

We actively encourage people to complain if they are not satisfied with any services received. In comparison with other organisations, we have received a similar number of complaints. We publish information in Open Door about the complaints that we receive but, most importantly, we tell you how we are using them to improve our services. We received no complaints relating to equality or diversity issues. Our focus for 2014/15 is to make sure we are collating the information quickly enough to improve our response times.

Stage 1 - Front Line Resolution



Stage 2 - Complaint investigations



Chairman's Award



Quality and Maintenance of Homes

5 The percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home

Chairman's comments

I am pleased that more tenants are satisfied with the quality of their homes than in other areas, however, we very much hope with all the investments works we have planned that this level of satisfaction will increase further. Other than for tenants who have refused works, we have now completed our massive kitchen, bathroom and door renewal programme. This allows us to concentrate on window replacements and roof and render renewals across the region aimed at making our homes much more energy efficient and cheaper to run.



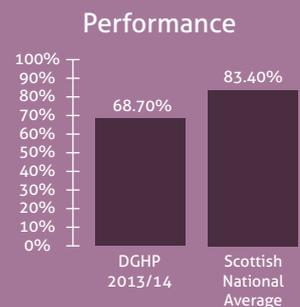
Chairman's Award



6 The percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in

Chairman's comments

We are disappointed with this result. As a rule, we ask for feedback from every new tenant about the standard of their home and previous results have always been better. We have, however, arranged to meet some tenants who have just moved into their home to find out how we can improve. Currently we spend around £1.9million every year bringing our properties up to DGHP's empty home standard. I am confident that this standard is being met, however, it may now be time to look at it again to see if our tenants expectations are greater and if there is a desire to carry out extra works, which would obviously need to be in line with budgets each year.



Chairman's Award

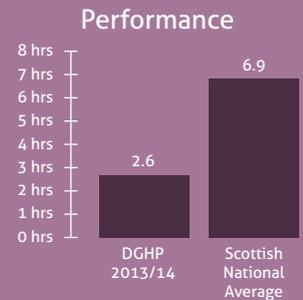


Quality and Maintenance of Homes (continued)

7 The average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs

Chairman's comments

I am really pleased with the performance of Lovell and Saltire in responding very quickly to urgent repairs. As you can see, DGHP's tenants receive a much faster service than tenants elsewhere in Scotland. On average it's taking 2.6 hours to complete emergency repairs, compared to 6.9 hours for the national average. Last year we carried out 14,297 emergency repairs across Dumfries and Galloway.



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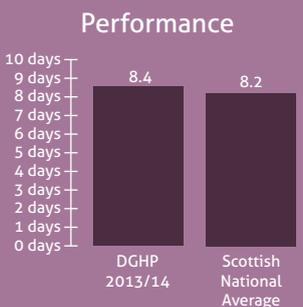
8 The average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs

Chairman's comments

DGHP's tenants get their non urgent repairs carried out in an average of 8.4 days. This, on average, is a few hours longer than tenants in other areas. We have already set up a scrutiny group with tenants to look at how we can improve this service. We will be reporting the findings of the scrutiny group in Open Door.

I realise this is probably one of the most important services tenants receive. Although the satisfaction with the work is high, one of the difficulties we have experienced with issuing around 29,000 non-emergency repairs is making it work right across the huge geographical area of Dumfries and Galloway.

Our focus for 2014/15 is to make our processes more streamlined and efficient so we can do more work, quicker.



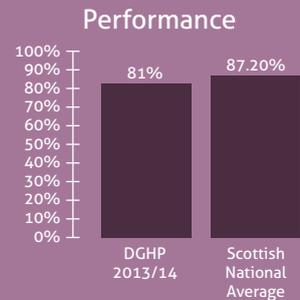
Chairman's Award



9 The percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right, first time

Chairman's comments

What we mean by this is that our contractors should be able to do all the work required to complete your repair in one visit. In general terms, we have always managed to do this in and around 80% of the time and we know that our contractors have well stocked vans. However, other organisations can obviously do more repairs in this way than we can and it is more cost effective if we can do all the work in one visit. We will be looking to see how we can improve on this.



Chairman's Award

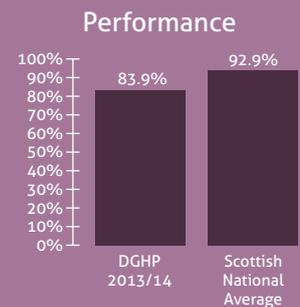


10 The percentage of repairs appointment kept

Chairman's comments

We can do much better. Very simply, if you make an appointment to get your repair done, it should be kept unless it changes by choice. I have asked for an improvement plan and will be monitoring performance in this regard very closely. Currently, our tenants on the scrutiny group are focusing on communication between DGHP and our tenants and between our contractor and our tenants.

We are working with our contractor to carry out a review of the appointments system to ensure it works more effectively in our area, where there are so many rural communities.



Chairman's Award

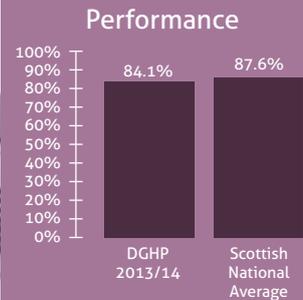


Quality and Maintenance of Homes (continued)

11 The percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months that are satisfied with the service

Chairman's comments

I am disappointed with this result. We have already contacted those tenants who expressed dissatisfaction to find out exactly why they were disappointed with the service. They told us it was a combination of the length of time it has taken to carry out some repairs and waiting on investment works. I am pleased to say that our contractors have improved their performance on non-urgent jobs and more than 90% of this type of work is now being done on time. I can provide an assurance that the Board of Management will be monitoring their performance and you will receive an improved service.



Chairman's Award

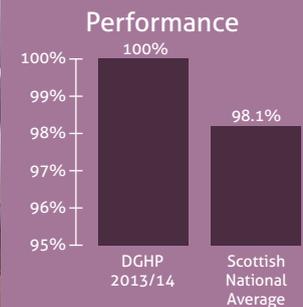


12 The percentage of properties that require a gas safety record which had a gas safety check and record completed by the anniversary date

Chairman's comments

I am very proud to report that for the fourth year running, DGHP has issued all its gas certificates on time. I would like to thank our dedicated heating team for their diligence and management of this service. Well done indeed.

It is extremely important for the health and well-being of our tenants that this service is delivered. Currently there are approximately 8000 of our homes that require a gas certificate and we would like to thank our tenants for co-operating with us to allow our contractor Saltire to carry this out.



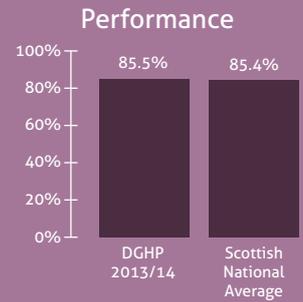
Chairman's Award



13 The percentage of properties at or above the appropriate NHER or SAP ratings specified in element 35 of the SHQS, as at 31 March each year

Chairman's comments

This is a very important indicator for us and it means that our homes are slightly above average in their energy efficiency ratings. Obviously the higher the rating, the cheaper it will be to heat your home. Although a good result, we fully expect through the work we are doing to install new heating systems and insulation that more homes will reach higher ratings in the future.



Chairman's Award

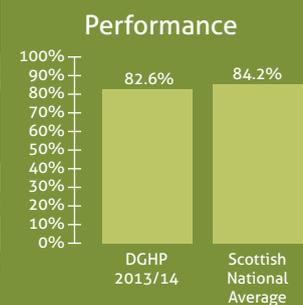


Neighbourhoods

14 The percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in

Chairman's comments

It appears that DGHP tenants are slightly less satisfied with the management of their neighbourhood than in other areas. However we need to carry out more research to understand why this is the case because without a lot of information, it is very difficult for tenants to properly know what DGHP is responsible for. For example, if tenants are not satisfied with the maintenance of open spaces, the land in question may not be owned by DGHP in the first place. However, we want tenants to be satisfied and will be doing a lot of work to understand what, if anything, we can do better.



Chairman's Award

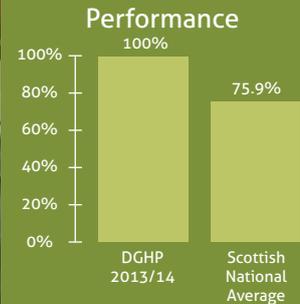


Neighbourhoods (continued)

15 The percentage of antisocial behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved within locally agreed targets

Chairman's comments

This is an indicator that we think does not mean a great deal to tenants because all it measures is if we respond to complaints of antisocial behaviour on time. We do, which is good, but the District Management Committees also look at the effectiveness and satisfaction with the service. We think this is more important and it may be that you will want us to change how we report on antisocial behaviour next year.



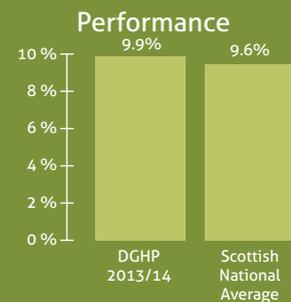
Chairman's Award



16 The percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year

Chairman's comments

We had a total of 964 properties that became vacant and were re-let during last year. This means that our turnover of housing stock is around 9.9%. This is slightly higher than other organisations. This is because we had a higher movement of tenants due to the completion of the regeneration areas in Stranraer and Dumfries. We aim to keep the turnover of houses as low as possible because it costs us money due to rent loss and empty house repairs. This is why the design of our new-build houses and the focus of our services is towards sustaining tenancies and ensuring tenants can stay in their homes for as long as possible.



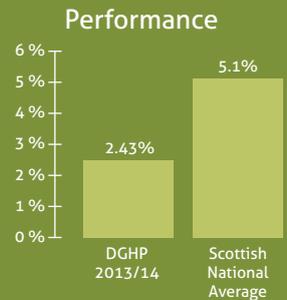
Chairman's Award



17 The gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year

Chairman's comments

This is a good result for DGHP in comparison to other organisations. This is the measurement of how much rent we could collect, but can't, because some tenants don't pay. Our performance in collecting rent monies due is very good indeed and much better than other organisations. The total rent owed by our current tenants at the end of March 2014 was approximately £675,000 - the rent money owed to other organisations is much higher as a percentage of their total rental income. We have a policy of making contact with tenants as soon as they get into arrears with their rent. Our service focuses on helping tenants to manage their income and to give expert advice and guidance when necessary.



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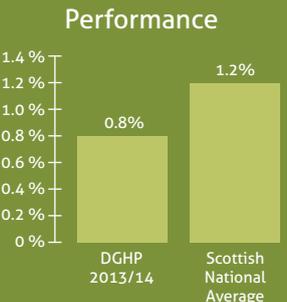


18 The percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year

Chairman's comments

This indicator measures how much rent we lose because of properties sitting empty. Over the past few years, we have become much better in managing our empty homes and the performance of our repairs contractor has been very good. We perform better than other organisations.

What stops us having much quicker average turnaround times is the number of properties that we have difficulty letting. Sometimes these properties are in particular areas, for example rural locations, or they can be a particular house types e.g. 3-bedroom flats. Sometimes these properties are taking up to a year to let, which affects the figures greatly.



Chairman's Award



Value for Money

19

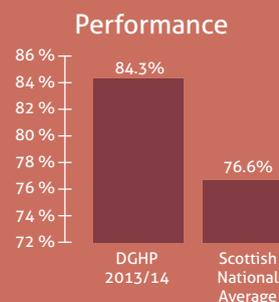
The percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money

Chairman's comments

This is a very important result for us and I am pleased to report that tenants feel the rent they pay represents good value for what they receive from DGHP – there is a much higher level of satisfaction than in other organisations.

On the whole, as I hope you've seen through this Report Card, we are performing better than other organisations across Scotland. But we believe there is always room for improvement.

The Board, the DMCs, tenant groups and staff are all absolutely committed to further improving our services to provide the best value for money for our tenants.



Chairman's Award



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External Auditors: Haines Watts

Internal Auditors: Beever and Struthers

Bankers: Royal Bank of Scotland

Funders: Dexia Public Finance Bank
The Housing Finance Corporation plc

Executive Management Team

Zoe Forster: Chief Executive
Jayne Moore: Director of Housing Services
James Shirazi: Director of Investment and Regeneration
Hugh Carr: Director of Finance

This publication is also available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages.

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