

Annual Report

for Tenants

2019/20



Welcome to the 2019/20 Housing Services Annual Report to tenants. Here we share information about our performance in the last financial year.

This annual report covers the period between April 2019 and March 2020. Therefore the full implications of Covid-19 on our housing work will not be seen until next year's report. However, we would still like to acknowledge here the impressive way our Housing Services team have responded from the outset, from setting up new ways of supporting tenants to finding accommodation for rough sleepers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your understanding and patience whilst we reshaped our services to cope with the restrictions that Covid-19 imposed upon us all.



Cllr John Kraujalis

Portfolio Holder
for Housing



Nirmal Samrai

Head of Housing
and Partnerships



Priorities 2020-21



New Homes: We will continue working towards delivering further new council homes over the coming years using the new Housing Investment Fund. The Hawks Green Depot development is scheduled to complete towards the end of 2021-22 and two other sites are being progressed.



Quality Homes: We will continue to improve the quality of the Council's housing stock for the benefit of our tenants by ensuring that we continue to meet and also exceed the Decent Homes standard.



Support: We will make the best use of our stock, provide tenancy sustainment support, promote the provision of suitable accommodation, and provide information and advice to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Key facts

(as at 1 April 2020)



We provide 5,118 homes across the District



We lease 284 flats across the District on leasehold terms;



We have delivered 63 new homes in the last three years, with 9 new homes being let in 2019/20.



We sold 39 properties through Right To Buy in 2019/20, with 94 properties sold in the last three years.



We spent approximately £7.3m on planned maintenance works and responsive repairs & maintenance to the existing housing stock in 2019/20 to ensure your properties are well maintained.



91% of respondents to our monthly repairs satisfaction survey said that were satisfied with the repair services we provided.

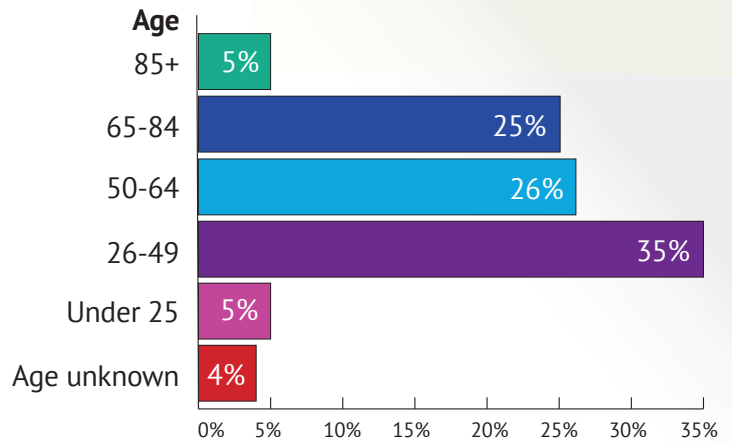
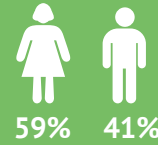
Understanding and responding to your needs

Tenant Profile
(from STAR survey 2019)

Tenants have on average held their tenancies for **12 years and 6 months**
According to our records the longest tenancy held is an incredible **66 years!**

Our Tenants

Gender



The Council has **5,118** properties for rent
As at 31/03/2020

2022 one bed properties;

1451 two bed properties

1527 three bed properties

61 four bed properties

1 five bed property

56 sheltered bedsits

Average time on housing register
12 Months



310 households requiring 1 bedroom accommodation

There were **816** households on the Housing Register as at 31/3/2020

households require 4+ bedroom accommodation

352 require 2 bedroom accommodation

123 require 3 bedroom accommodation

During 2019/20 we received **4082** visits to the Housing Bungalow.

There were also **109,744** views of the Council's Housing web pages.



Complaints and Compliments

16 Stage 1 complaints;
.....
2 Stage 2 complaints;
.....
1 Stage 3 complaints;
.....
87 MP enquiries;
.....
36 were recorded as informal (i.e. Councillor complaint on behalf of tenant, Anonymous or from another family member)



Of the 16 Stage 1 complaints

5 from Housing Options/Homelessness;
.....
4 from Allocations;
.....
3 from Housing Repairs;
.....
2 from Neighbourhoods;
.....
1 from Housing Property Services (Leasehold Services)
.....
1 from Income Management

Of the 2 Stage 2 complaints

1 from Housing Property Services (Leasehold Services);
.....
1 from Neighbourhoods.

Only 4 of the formal complaints were upheld.

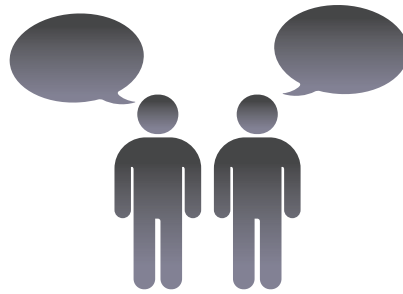
2 from Housing Repairs
.....
1 from Allocations (partially upheld)
.....
1 from Housing Options/Homelessness (partially upheld)

This is an increase on last year, where we received six Stage 1 complaints, of which two proceeded to Stage 2 and were resolved.

What we learned from the complaints received and what we did:

- A tenant complained about the condition of property on handover, with further informal complaints received about the condition of properties by other tenants. To complete all void repairs (where possible) before handover.
- A tenant complained about not being informed of the length of time it would take to complete a job. Better joint working was needed. teams now have liaison meetings and systems are better updated with information. To ensure better communication with customers in respect of job times.
- Another communication skills improvement was required following a tenant's complaint that they were not treated with much respect or giving sufficient information on their housing waiting list position. All Housing staff attended a customer services training course during Q1 2019/20 and the Allocations Team staff were trained in how to obtain the waiting list information from Northgate Housing Management System.

As well as complaints, we also record compliments from tenants



Mr M said:
“ I would just like to thank John, the drains man who has been out to me today, he did an excellent job. ”

Mrs B said:
“ I would like to say thank you to Craig for what you did for me in getting my fencing sorted and replaced, a great job, its now a pleasure to again look into my garden and feel safe and secure again. ”

Mr and Mrs H said:
“ A workman (David) came out to do work in our kitchen yesterday, what a lovely helpful man. He did not leave any mess, what a credit to the Council. ”

Mrs L said:
“ I would like to thank Paul & Josh for the excellent quality of the slabbing and step repair to my property. Well done. ”

Cllr B passed on a tenant's compliments:
“ I've received a huge amount of praise for one of our officers in Housing. I really feel that Tracy deserves some sort of recognition for going above and beyond, proving that we are a caring and compassionate Council who truly have the best interests of our constituents at heart. ”

Tenant Engagement

Hometalk

In 2019/20 we produced 2 editions of Hometalk, we hope you found these informative and interesting.



Housing Improvement Panel

Our customer-led Housing Improvement Panel (HIP) looks at the way our housing team works and gives you the opportunity to improve the services that you receive.

The Housing Improvement Panel was formed in 2019 and undertook it's first review on the Council's Gas Safety Procedures and their findings were presented to Nirmal Samrai, Head of Housing and Partnerships.

The primary recommendations of the Panel were:-

- A production of a new Gas Safety Booklet;
- More information to be provided by service engineers at home visits;
- Publicise Gas Safety.



Housing Improvement Panel at Arch Conference

Panel members (L-R) Sandra Lopez, Brian Murphy and Amanda Saxton attended the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) conference in Bridlington on 3 October 2019. Looks like they had great fun!



Whilst attending the conference the panel learned about 100 years of housing, fire safety within the home, gas and electric safety and the future of safety regulation. They attended workshops on the future of sheltered housing and complaint handling.

The panel said:
“ We found the conference and workshops thought-provoking and it was a great learning opportunity. ”

If you would like more information about the Panel or are interested in becoming a panel member please get in touch on 01543 462621 or serviceimprovements@cannockchasedc.gov.uk

Support for tenants during Covid

We know that this is a very worrying time when you have a home and family to look after. Many of our customers will be affected by a loss of income during this difficult period and will be concerned about making ends meet.

Ensuring you feel secure in your home is our absolute priority. We want to reassure you that no-one will lose their home as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

We will provide as much support as we can to help you through this uncertain time. If you have any concerns about your tenancy or keeping up with payments, please get in touch so we can help you explore all of the options available to you.

We are also updating our website with the latest advice on benefits and support, so you can find all the information you need online.

We are here for you.



Telephone **01543 462621**



Email **moneymanagementteam@cannockchasedc.gov.uk**



Online **www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing**

Housing Online



The Council has been working to improve the way its Housing Customers access Housing information online.

As part of a Housing IT upgrade programme we have replaced the current Housing Self Serve portal with a new improved Housing Online portal. With a few clicks of the mouse, tenants and non tenants can access information through a secure web service from their smart phone, tablet or a computer.

Full details will be available on the website for new and existing customers on how to register and login to Housing Online.

The Housing Department will continue to always look after tenants who don't have access to the internet. If you do not have a computer and require a help with a tenancy related problem or application please call us on **01543 462621**.

Repairs and improving your home

Repairs during 2019/20



12,671 repair jobs were completed in 2018/19

10,275 repairs appointments were made

10,254 repairs appointment were kept

We completed all repair jobs in 10.15 calendar days on average just over two weeks

Whilst all non-emergency repairs were completed in an average of 9.74 working days within two weeks.

100% of emergency repairs were completed within 24 hours

The total cost of maintenance and repairs during 2019/20 was £5.2m

During 2019/20 we started a monthly repairs satisfaction survey sent to a random selection of tenants who had required a repair job to be completed during the previous month. We have found that:



98% were satisfied with the quality of the work

94% were satisfied the repair was done right first time

94% were satisfied overall with the service they received

We know our performance in turning around void properties has worsened again since last year. We've made changes and are implementing our Improvement Plan that includes a number of actions that we know will speed up the process for repairing and re-letting our properties, but these are taking time to bed in.

*Unfortunately the Coronavirus pandemic will certainly impact further on our relet times for 2020/21 as we cannot repair and let properties as quickly as normal.

Average re-let time:
51.63 days
(43.38 days last year)

Despite the increase in re-let time, there was an improvement on the rent loss on last year, which was **£226k**



100% of our homes meet the decent homes standard (excluding where tenants have refused remedial work).

We lost **£147k** in rent whilst properties were being repaired and let during the year.

Improving our homes



512 properties received electric upgrading works (wired in smoke detectors and provision of additional sockets)



35 properties had external envelope improvements (chimney and roof repairs, repointing, rendering repairs)



457 properties benefitted from a central heating upgrade



37 properties had bathroom upgrades



150 properties benefitted from major disabled facilities work (safe WC and showering, alterations to rooms; heating and power improvements; safety related works)



4 properties had kitchen refits



These capital programme improvements cost £2.08m

Managing your tenancy

Your Rent

Following Government policy, we have been reducing your rent by 1% every year since 2015/16, which lasted until March 2020.

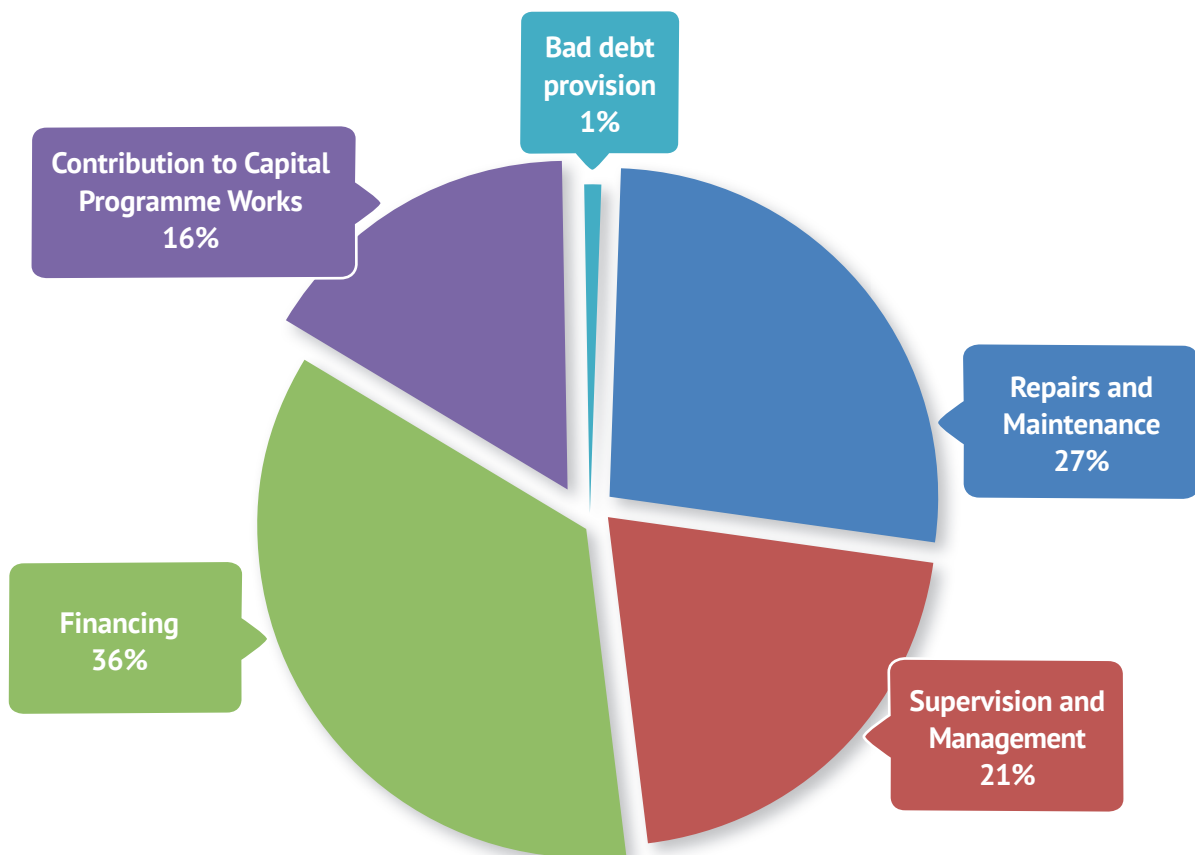


Your average rent in 2019-20 was £72.18 per week.



We received £19.743m in rent income during the year.

For every pound of your rent, it contributed towards:



Current tenants were in arrears to the amount of £285,420 at the end of the financial year. Those tenants in arrears were behind with their payments by an average £273, just under 4 weeks rent, which is a slight increase on last year. And unfortunately some tenants are behind by a lot more.

We evicted 9 households as a result of their rent arrears.

90% of tenants felt fairly or very satisfied with moving between Council properties. 8% responded 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' likely because they had not moved, only 2% of tenants indicated they were dissatisfied.



We recovered 19 abandoned properties



60 ASB cases were investigated, of which 51 were successfully resolved, 9 were closed due to disengagement or withdrawal.



We let 328 properties in total during 2019/20:



216 lettings were made to new tenants to social housing



98 lettings were to existing social housing tenants



16 mutual exchanges were completed

Lettings 2019/20



100% of new tenancies lasted more than 1 year. (However the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that fewer tenancies were ended than would normally be the case).



178 introductory tenancies were sustained for 12 months.



288 tenants received a new tenancy visit and 77 tenants were assisted by the tenancy sustainment service.

Building New Council Homes

During 2019/20 we let 9 brand new homes to tenants.

We spent approximately £174k on Council new build development during the year.



We completed the last three sites on the Garage Sites and Other Council Owned Land Redevelopment Scheme, completing the 11 sites and delivering 39 properties in total.



We completed the sites at:

George Brealey Close
2 x 2 bedroom houses

Cannock Wood Street
3 x 2 bedroom houses

Brunswick Road
4 x 2 bedroom houses



Looking forward to 2020/21

“We will continue to support independent living, with further provision to improve the undertaking of major adaptations to properties for people with mobility and other health issues, which make it difficult for them to access the facilities within their home. We are also progressing our plans to deliver the £12.9 million Housing Investment Fund for new Council house building over the next 5 years, with the Hawks Green depot development well on course and plans for two further sites positively progressing.”

Nirmal Samrai

Head of Housing and Partnerships

HRA Capital Programme 2020/21 Priorities

New Build	£2,980,000
Disabled Facilities Work	£1,020,000
External / Environmental Works	£983,000
Replacement of Central Heating	£883,000
Upgrading of Electrics	£851,000
Sheltered Schemes	£280,000
Other Costs Fire Alarms, Lift replacement, Double Glazing)	£194,000
Replacement of Housing Services vehicles	£162,000
Replacement of Bathrooms	£148,000
Provision of Proposed Kerbs and Driveway Resurfacing	£100,000
Replacement of Kitchens	£95,000
Total	£7,696,000

New Build 2020/21

No completions are due in 2020/21, however works continues on the Hawks Green depot site and 22 new Council properties will be delivered in late 2021/22.

Here is a sneak peak of what is to come...



In 2020/21 your rent has been increased by 2.7% in accordance with Government's rent policy, so average rents in 2020/21 will be:

1 bed = £ 67.43
2 bed = £76.56
3 bed = £80.94
4 bed = £87.61



Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020/21

£19.83m	£19.77m
HRA Income 2020/21	HRA Expenditure 2020/21



Keep in touch...

→  Search for 'Cannock Chase Life'

→  @CannockChaseDC

→  www.youtube.com/CannockChaseDC

Cannock Chase Council

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