



South Tyneside Council

South
Tyneside *Homes*

South Tyneside Council's
Housing Company

TENANTS' ANNUAL REPORT

2016





The view of the Annual Report Working Group:

"Each year tenants from across the Borough join together to help write the Annual Report by examining performance information and assessing how South Tyneside Homes performs against the standards set out in the Regulatory Framework. Through our role as tenants we are independent and are able to provide you with a balanced report on how South Tyneside Homes is performing and more importantly where there is room for improvement going forward.

This is why it is important that the Annual Report is written by tenants for tenants."

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Why do we need a Tenants' Annual Report?

THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL HOUSING 2015

The Homes and Communities Agency is the regulatory body responsible for social housing. The Regulatory Framework sets out what the Homes and Communities Agency expects of registered housing providers by setting out 'standards' for service delivery.

South Tyneside Council, in partnership with South Tyneside Homes, is responsible for ensuring these standards are being met in a clear and accountable way. They must demonstrate that they have worked with customers to develop and agree standards that set out how services will be delivered. The Annual Report sets out the standards and shows how South Tyneside Council and South Tyneside Homes work with tenants to ensure that the standards are being met.



THE VIEW FROM THE BOARD:

"The last year has seen major diversification for South Tyneside Homes as we try to continue to develop our services in an environment of cuts and austerity.

We have seen major steps in improving our stock with £34m of investment making a further 3,404 properties decent, we have improved our housing offer for older people with £8.16m invested in our Housing Plus schemes, we have integrated our Housing and Area Management services to provide tenure blind estate based services and we have integrated our Welfare Rights service into a new Welfare Support service to ensure that people across the Borough still receive the support they require, and have an outreach worker to assist returned armed service personnel.

The coming years will be challenging, but I am sure that through innovative approaches we will continue to deliver good services to our customers."

Councillor Ed Malcolm, Chair of South Tyneside Homes' Board



THE VIEW FROM THE COUNCIL:

"Now in its seventh year, I am pleased to introduce the Tenants' Annual Report for 2015/16. Once again it provides a friendly and honest account about how housing services have been delivered in South Tyneside as well as setting robust challenges for the year ahead. Tenant and resident involvement continues to be at the forefront of developing efficient and effective services."

Councillor Allan West, Lead Member for Housing and Transport



THE VIEW FROM THE ORGANISATION:

"At South Tyneside Homes we aim to put our customers at the heart of what we do and this year's Annual Report sets out a full and frank appraisal of our performance during 2015/16. I would like to thank our customers for the time they dedicate not only to producing the Annual Report, but also the key role they play, working with us to challenge and develop the way we deliver services. Their support will be essential over the coming years which will see significant financial pressures and challenges to service delivery, linked with austerity measures and new government legislation."

Paul Mains, Managing Director of South Tyneside Homes

The Borough of South Tyneside

South Tyneside Council has 5 area meetings which are called Community Area Forums (CAFs). The forum areas are:

- Hebburn
- Jarrow and Boldon
- West Shields, Cleadon and East Boldon
- Riverside
- East Shields and Whitburn

Each of the CAFs cover a particular area of the Borough made up of the electoral wards that lie within their boundaries. The role of the CAFs is to discuss matters that are important to local people to provide a proactive service within local areas. As a result, Housing and Area Management teams mirror the CAF areas, enabling South Tyneside Council and South Tyneside Homes to focus on the issues that matter most to people such as clean streets, fly-tipping, dog-fouling and anti-social behaviour, along with all tenancy related issues.

Members of the public are actively encouraged to attend CAF meetings which are held roughly every 6 weeks. To find out details of when the next CAF meeting is in your area, please contact 0300 123 66 33.



HEBBURN
Area Manager:
Eric Crammon



JARROW AND BOLDON
Area Manager:
Julie Molyneaux



WEST SHIELDS, CLEADON AND EAST BOLDON
Area Manager:
Esther Windass



EAST SHIELDS AND WHITBURN
Area Manager:
Nicola MacDougall



RIVERSIDE
Area Manager:
Tracey Richardson



Involvement and Empowerment

THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Facilitate tenants' ability to scrutinise their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations about how performance might be improved
- Provide support to tenants to build their capacity to be involved
- Demonstrate how they respond to tenants needs in the way they provide services



"As an involved tenant, I've come to understand how my landlord operates and the lengths they go to in order to keep us happy in our properties as well as keeping stock updated. Involvement has kept me active in mind and spirit and I have had the privilege of meeting some wonderful staff as well as other involved tenants. Every part of involvement is an eye opener and it expands my mind - being an involved tenant is an absolute privilege".

Anne Surtees, Customer Forum Member



INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Support the Scrutiny Panel and Tenant Inspectors to review at least three of our services each year
- Hold quarterly Customer Forum meetings
- Provide a minimum of 4 training courses per year to enable tenants to take an active part in involvement activities

WAYS IN WHICH CUSTOMERS CAN GET INVOLVED:

The Involvement team support a range of volunteer groups, who give up their time to help South Tyneside Homes monitor performance and make improvements to services which will benefit all customers. The Involvement Network is made up of:

- **Scrutiny Panel**, carries out in-depth reviews of services and recommends improvements using methods including performance analysis, focus groups and surveys;
- **Tenant Inspectors**, inspect South Tyneside Homes' service standards to see whether they are being met and make recommendations on how services can be improved. As with the Scrutiny Panel, the Inspectors use a wide range of methods including mystery shopping, surveys and focus groups;

- **Customer Forums**, are consultative workshops that discuss ways in which South Tyneside Homes can improve the way services are delivered. Forums also monitor progress of agreed improvements following Scrutiny reviews and Tenant Inspections;
- **Resident Groups**, are independent groups who focus on improving their local area. Groups are supported by the Involvement team and Delivery Officers to operate effectively and proactively deal with issues discussed.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE INVOLVEMENT GROUPS LAST YEAR:

- The Scrutiny Panel and Tenant Inspectors carried out a piece of work which aimed to improve the use of new facilities in Housing Plus schemes. In the coming year, Housing Plus staff will be working hard to implement the suggested improvements, which included improving the use of the internet and the social wellbeing of Housing Plus residents;
- The Tenant Inspectors reviewed the Homefinder service, with suggested improvements including providing waiting times for customers and additional staff training to provide a more consistent experience for customers;
- The Scrutiny Panel has worked with managers on improving the content and accuracy of the website to ensure customers can access the information they need;



The Customer Forums:

- Developed a pictorial leaflet to improve understanding of the gas service....watch this space for the new leaflet coming soon;
- Helped to develop a new repairs inspection service which is more effective and customer-focused;
- Helped to shape the new Area Management service which launched last year;
- Improved the sign-up pack for new tenants which now provides new customers with better information which is easier to read;
- Contributed to the development of new Tenancy Support Visits to ensure customers are able to manage their tenancy effectively and are supported where this is needed;
- Improved the way in which customer satisfaction information is collected and used to make improvements to service areas.



DID YOU KNOW?

There are **57** customers involved across the core Involvement Network, with many more involved in local resident groups across the Borough

The Involvement team has directly supported **4** Residents Groups in the past year giving guidance on governance and the formal requirements needed to operate within their constitutions

There are a number of ways in which **you can get involved** in shaping how your services are delivered. Contact the Involvement team on 0300 123 66 33 for further information



Involvement and Empowerment



APPRENTICESHIP SUCCESS STORY:

"Going into a full time job from my Business Administration Apprenticeship has been an excellent opportunity for me to take the skills and knowledge I gained during my apprenticeship and expand on them. I have learnt so much whilst working independently in a full time support officer role within the many departments I have worked in. As a result of this I have been able to carry on with further education and achieve a level 3 in a management qualification which I know will help me in with my future goals."

Chloe Berston, Support Officer (Previous Business Administration Apprentice)



TRAINING PROGRAMME:

The Involvement training programme continues to progress. The programme is designed to ensure that volunteers are able to develop their skills and knowledge to continue to be actively involved in the development of services provided by South Tyneside Homes. During 2015/16 the Involvement team:

- Held 12 training courses across 22 sessions with 136 attendees;
- Offered courses including basic computing, advanced ICT, presentation skills, equality and diversity and paediatric first aid;
- Continued to develop the programme in response to demand from involvement groups;
- Utilised the training programme to encourage a diverse range of tenants from across the Borough to get involved with groups and with shaping the service provided by South Tyneside Homes.



SOUTH TYNESIDE HOMES' APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

South Tyneside Homes is committed to supporting young people and developing employability skills in local people, recruiting a number of local young people every year. There are a wide range of apprenticeship programmes covering plasterers, electricians, painters, gas and plumbing, general maintenance, customer services, housing and business administration.

In September 2015, the latest 10 apprentices started in their relevant skill area and are all making excellent progress. Many apprentices move on to have very successful careers within the organisation. In total, there are 30 apprentices across the organisation.

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- Activities carried out by involved tenants need to be better integrated with wider service improvements which are in development;
- A review of equality and diversity across the organisation was started but needs to continue during 2016/17. This is hugely important to ensure that South Tyneside Homes are able to meet the different needs of customers.

MEETING CUSTOMERS' NEEDS

South Tyneside Homes understands that not everyone is the same. Some of the initiatives that have been introduced to help meet tenants' individual needs are:

- Teams hold drop in sessions at Apna Ghar for members of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities;
- Compulsory training is delivered to all staff and involved tenants on equality and diversity;
- The Homefinder team provide help with bidding for a home if a customer is unable to do this themselves - this is known as assisted bidding;
- Area teams complete "Getting to Know You" questionnaires and Tenancy Support Visits to make sure services are tailored to meet customers' needs.



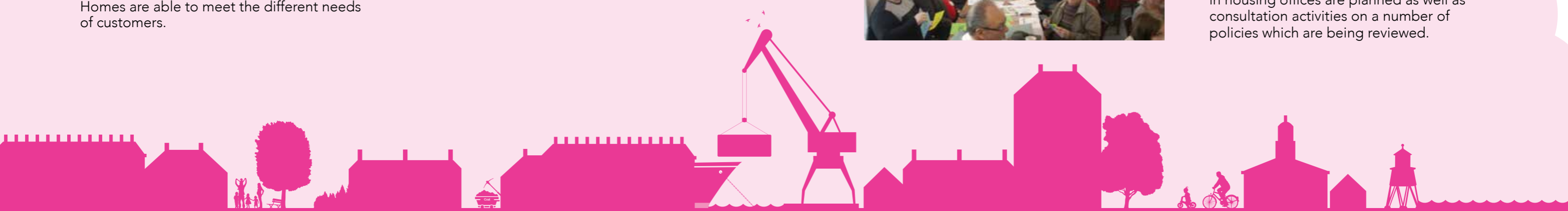
DURING 2016/17, THE INVOLVEMENT TEAM WILL WORK WITH GROUPS TO:

- Design and publish new posters and information to show how services are performing against their service standards;
- Ensure that the organisation continues to remain fully committed to equality and diversity and this is recognised in all service delivery;
- Improve working with Delivery Officers to ensure that local involvement activities are supported and that these contribute towards improving the delivery of services.



WATCH THIS SPACE...

- During 2016/17 the involvement groups will be working on more projects to help improve services that tenants receive. Reviews of Empty Homes and communication materials in housing offices are planned as well as consultation activities on a number of policies which are being reviewed.



Customer Services and Feedback

THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Provide customers with accessible, relevant and timely information about the services available to them
- Have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly
- Inform customers how their complaints are used to improve services



CUSTOMER SERVICES AND FEEDBACK SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Acknowledge complaints within 3 working days
- Respond to complaints within allotted timescales
- Resolve 80% of enquiries at first point of contact
- Respond to 85% of Councillor and MP enquiries within 5 working days
- Handle all calls on average within 300 seconds



THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- A new telephone system was introduced which provides significantly better call quality compared to the previous system. More importantly, the system is much more reliable and is hoped that it will prevent loss of service which used to happen frequently;
- Complaints handling performance was high, meaning a timely response for customers, with 93.15% of complaints responded to within timescale;
- Refresher customer service training was rolled out to all staff to enable them to deal with complaints efficiently and appropriately;
- The South Tyneside Homes Facebook page was successfully launched to provide information to customers - follow [f /stynesidehomes](https://www.facebook.com/stynesidehomes).

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Team	Total Complaints Logged	Total Percentage (%)	Total Compliments Logged	Total Percentage (%)
Area Management	129	13.38%	89	18.20%
Repairs and Maintenance	332	34.44%	135	27.61%
Handy Estates	150	15.56%	83	16.97%
Empty Homes	75	7.78%	7	1.43%
Homefinder	40	4.15%	58	11.86%
Decent Homes	135	14.00%	50	10.23%
Housing Plus	11	1.14%	17	3.48%
Tenancy Enforcement	12	1.25%	7	1.43%
Income	29	3.01%	1	0.20%
Customer Service	36	3.73%	32	6.55%
Welfare Support	0	0.00%	7	1.43%
Other (including Corporate Services)	15	1.56%	3	0.61%
Total	964	100%	489	100%

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- Following the transfer of repairs logging to the in-house Customer Services team in April 2015, the additional workload combined with unanticipated staff shortages led to call handling times initially increasing which had a negative impact on service delivery. The team has recognised this and has been working hard to significantly improve call handling;
- It was hoped that new process mapping tools would be implemented to improve the handling and consistency of customer enquiries, however this was delayed due to technical issues.

DURING 2016/17, THE CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM WILL:

- Introduce new process mapping tools to provide better consistency and handling of enquiries;
- Undertake customer journey mapping to better understand the customer experience and identify areas for further improvement in order to provide a better service;
- Further expand the use of social media across the organisation to improve communication with customers.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Customer Services team handled **199,935** calls last year, an increase from 172, 259 the previous year

78.4% of customer enquiries were handled at the first point of contact

Since the installation of the new telephone system, reliability has been **100%**



DID YOU KNOW?

- **851** complaints were handled at stage 1
- **53** complaints were handled at stage 2
- **28** complaints were handled at stage 3
- **2** complaints were dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman
- **4** complaints were dealt with by the Housing Ombudsman Service

Homefinder

THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Allocate properties in a fair, transparent and efficient way
- Enable tenants to gain access to opportunities to mutually exchange



Empty Homes

THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Minimise the time that properties are empty between each letting
- Take into account the circumstances of the customers who have been offered the properties



HOMEFINDER SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Register your application within 5 working days of receiving it
- Register your Homeless Application and assess it within 28 working days
- Make offers over the phone within 2 working days of the close of bidding

THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- The administration of mutual exchanges has been transferred from area teams to Homefinder, meaning applicants can now be proactively matched to properties;
- The Tenant Inspectors reviewed the service and a number of recommendations which were made are now being implemented by the team to improve the customer experience when visiting the office;
- An Armed Forces Outreach Worker and Young Persons Co-ordinator have continued to work with the team to ensure that young people and armed forces veterans are supported.



THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- The Housing Allocations Policy, developed by South Tyneside Council in partnership with South Tyneside Homes, requires updating to ensure that this remains fit for purpose. This is now overdue and planned for the coming year;
- Mutual exchanges are not as widely promoted as possible, meaning that customers are not as aware of this option to move properties which is often considerably quicker than other options available. The overall number of applications has reduced as inactive applications have been removed.

DURING 2016/17, THE HOMEFINDER TEAM WILL:

- Begin working towards achieving the Gold Standard for Homelessness following the Tenant Inspection. This standard is a national recognition of service excellence;
- Improve the advertising and promotion of mutual exchanges as a housing option for customers, in particular the use of the Tyne and Wear Homes website for exchanges.

EMPTY HOMES SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Complete a Lettable Standards checklist during your viewing and provide you with a signed copy
- Complete health and safety checks before you move into your property

THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- Empty properties lead to lost income so re-letting properties quickly and effectively is very important. Rent lost through this process reduced for the 5th year in a row, this was just 1.52% of income last year;
- On average, there were 194 properties empty. At the end of the financial year, there were 166 properties empty, which represents just 0.96% of housing stock which is a historic low;
- The team has continued to remain flexible and adaptable to suit customers' individual requirements where this is needed, including carrying out viewings whilst repair works are being completed, subject to health and safety requirements.

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- The team continue to face major challenges associated with letting properties which are becoming more difficult to let due to the impact of welfare reforms;
- There is still a very high number of customers transferring from one property to another (currently 43% of properties are transfers) - this creates a strain on resource which could be better used elsewhere;
- The use of social media and email to contact customers is still being investigated - this will improve the timeliness of the process.

DURING 2016/17, THE EMPTY HOMES TEAM WILL:

- Continue working to reduce re-let times and the money lost through the process;
- Work to reduce the number of transfers through better promotion of mutual exchanges with the Homefinder team;
- Work to improve customer satisfaction with the service, including better communication via email and social media;
- Look to maintain the lettable standard of properties, which is becoming increasingly difficult due to financial constraints.

DID YOU KNOW?

There were **5,055** new housing applications made last year, with 1,426 of these coming from existing customers

There were **389** homeless cases made last year, with 343 homeless prevention bandings being awarded

The Homefinder office received over **6,534** visits

There are **702** applicants registered for a mutual exchange

DID YOU KNOW?

1,760 tenancies were ended during the year

The average re-let time for properties was **28.44 days**, which is a 22% reduction on the 36.21 days last year

Transfers (where an existing customer moves to another property) account for **43%** of all property turnover

Tenancy and Welfare Support

THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Develop and provide services that will support customers to maintain their tenancy and prevent unnecessary evictions
- Publish clear and accessible policies which outline their approach



Rent Collection

THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Support customers to maintain their tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions



TENANCY AND WELFARE SUPPORT SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAMS WILL:

- Carry out a Tenancy Support Visit within 1 month of your tenancy starting
- Carry out a Tenancy Support Visit 8 months after the start of your tenancy
- Provide an outreach session once every week in each of the five CAF areas
- Make contact with you to arrange an appointment within 10 working days of you being referred to the Welfare Support team

THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- The Welfare Rights and Welfare Reform teams merged to create a new streamlined Welfare Support service, providing a "one-stop shop" for advice and support;
- The new Welfare Support team work closely with Delivery Officers and Income Officers to support customers to sustain their tenancies and maximise their income;

- There has been increased focus on property condition thanks to better partnership working Delivery Officers and Community Safety teams, ensuring that properties are maintained and customers are supported where needed.

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- Due to high demand, the waiting time for appointments with the Welfare Support team has been lengthy, although telephone advice has now been introduced to help reduce waiting times;
- Tenancy sustainment targets (tenancies lasting less than 6 months) are not being met. Over the rolling 12 month period, 1.79% or 19 tenancies lasted less than 6 months - staff training is being developed to tackle this.

DURING 2016/17, THE TEAMS WILL:

- Increase partnership working with advice agencies and partners including Citizens Advice Bureau and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support customers as quickly and effectively as possible;
- Introduce a new approach to sign-ups with a focus on improved information for new customers, developed by working with involvement groups.

INCOME SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Write to you before the end of the financial year to let you know of any changes to your rent
- Contact you if you fall into rent arrears
- Refer you to the Welfare Support team for debt and benefit advice if you are having difficulties paying your rent
- Advise you in writing if you will be taken to court for rent arrears

THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- The team has delivered improvements around the management of rent arrears by enabling customers to create regular payment patterns and offering referrals to the Welfare Support team and other partners offering debt help and advice;
- The number of evictions has decreased to 83 during 2015/16 from 125 the previous year. This has been possible through improved partnership working between the Income team, Welfare Support team and Delivery Officers around supporting customers to manage arrears cases better.

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- The level of rent arrears and number of customers in arrears are increasing as more customers are affected by reduced income and high levels of debt;
- It is becoming more difficult to get customers in rent arrears onto affordable payment arrangements, although teams will be working to tailor their approach to suit individual customer's needs.

DURING 2016/17, THE INCOME TEAM WILL:

- Introduce a new payment culture where the first week's rent is due at sign-up and direct debit is promoted as a preferred payment method;
- Improve the collection of former arrears (debt from previous customers);
- Improve the payment options available to customers who pay by direct debit.



DID YOU KNOW?

£321,358 was distributed to South Tyneside Homes' customers in Discretionary Housing Payments during 2015/16 to help keep customers in their homes

The Welfare Support team booked **443** appointments with customers, with 36 of these not being attended. Non-attendance has a negative knock-on effect for customers waiting for help and advice

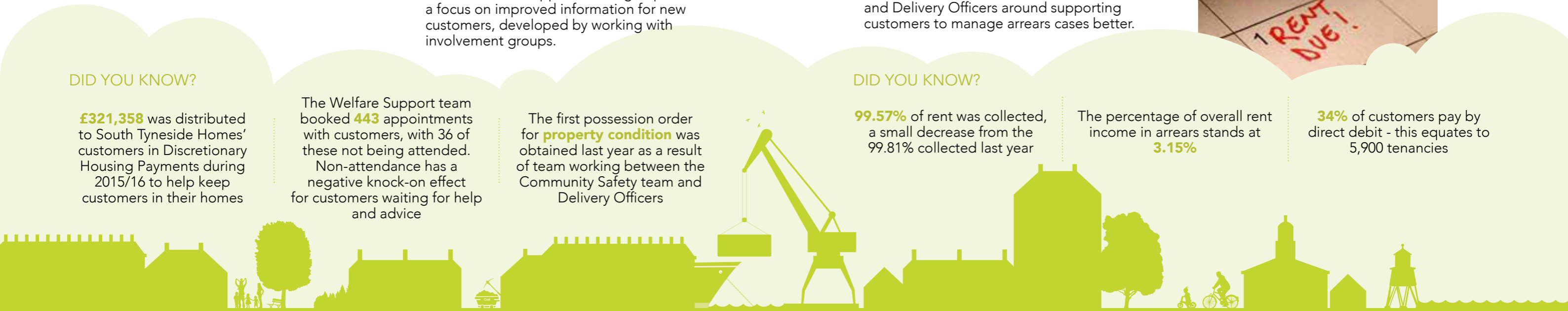
The first possession order for **property condition** was obtained last year as a result of team working between the Community Safety team and Delivery Officers

DID YOU KNOW?

99.57% of rent was collected, a small decrease from the 99.81% collected last year

The percentage of overall rent income in arrears stands at **3.15%**

34% of customers pay by direct debit - this equates to 5,900 tenancies



Repairs and Maintenance

THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas
- Provide a repairs service which has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time



Gas Servicing

THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes



REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Inspect requested repairs within 15 working days
- Attend to a repair classified as an emergency within 4 hours
- Attend to a repair classified as urgent within 3 working days
- Attend to a repair classified as routine within 20 working days

THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- Performance has continued to be at a high level with customer satisfaction at 97.75% for 2015/16, an increase from 97.44% for the previous year;
- The team has continued to offer a variety of ways to report a repair 24 hours a day. Repairs can be raised via telephone, in person at area offices, email, text, writing or typetalk;
- The team has continued to deliver repairs at agreed appointment times with customers, including evenings and weekends where requested. Last year 99.49% of repairs were carried out within timescale.

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- The number of repairs completed right first time requires further improvement and has been highlighted by customers as a concern;
- Further training is required for staff to ensure consistency and efficiency of the service following the transfer of new repair logging to the in-house customer services team.

DURING 2016/17, THE REPAIRS TEAM WILL:

- Upgrade all computer systems to ensure the service continues to be delivered to a high standard. Upgrades will allow for improved functionality including the possibility of raising "follow-on repairs" at a customer's property for convenience;
- Streamline the service to continue delivering to a high standard and reduce the overall number of repairs carried out.



The "Looking after your home" clips are available on the website to help customers maintain and manage their homes

GAS SERVICING SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Carry out a safety check on all gas and solid fuel appliances annually
- Provide customers with a copy of the completed Landlord Safety Certificate once the gas safety check is completed

THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- The team completed an annual gas service at every single property for the 5th year in a row. The annual service is vitally important to ensure that gas appliances are safe to use and prevents unwanted breakdowns;
- The team worked with Tyne and Wear Fire Service to provide safety information and risk assessments to vulnerable customers;
- A wide variety of appointment times have been offered to carry out services at tenants' convenience, including evenings and weekends.

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- It was planned that the team would receive mobile equipment to allow them to deliver a more effective and efficient service to customers, however this was delayed due to functionality concerns. Alternative options need to be explored before this is implemented;
- The main computer system is currently unable to flag overdue services where a general repair has been raised which could save time and reduce unnecessary visits.

DURING 2016/17, THE GAS SERVICING TEAM WILL:

- Look to introduce electronic Landlord Safety Certificates for customers rather than providing paper copies which will save money and be more convenient for customers;
- Introduce a pictorial checklist to let customers know what should happen as part of their gas service;
- Strive to maintain and further improve levels of customer satisfaction, which was 99.69% for last year.

DID YOU KNOW?

There were **102,340** repairs raised by customers last year

99.55% of routine repairs were completed within timescale

99.36% of emergency repairs were carried out within timescale

DID YOU KNOW?

If legal action is required to gain access to a property to carry out a service, this can incur costs of up to **£200** for the affected customer

729 gas service appointments were completed outside of normal working hours

161 abatement notices were served to properties which could not be accessed to carry out the annual service, from which 11 warrants were served and 8 forced entries were required to ensure compliance

Asset Management and Programmed Works



THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Ensure that homes meet the standard set out in the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain properties to this standard
- Ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas
- Provide an adaptations service that meets tenants' needs



ASSET MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAMMED WORKS SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAMS WILL:

- Let you know when we intend to carry out planned improvements to your home
- Publish a planned improvements programme annually

THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- A further 3,404 properties were made decent, which exceeded the target of 3,339;
- The majority of work is now being delivered by the in-house Programmed Works team. This has led to improvements in customer satisfaction when compared to work carried out by some of the previous contractors;
- Complaints relating to Decent Homes work reduced by 10% during 2015/16 as a result of improved monitoring of contractors delivering the programme;

- 538 properties received solar panels and 20 properties received hybrid heating systems to help reduce environmental impact and save money for the organisation and customers;
- Some trade operatives from the Programmed Works team have undergone additional training to allow them to be multi-skilled and therefore offer a more consistent service for customers who are receiving adaptations and one-off installations. This has led to efficiency savings for the team whilst being able to better cater to customers' needs;
- A new computer programme has been successfully trialled which enables information on electrical safety of housing stock to be monitored. This is essential to meet electrical regulations.



THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- Performance with Decent Homes contractors has continued to be inconsistent but is now being monitored much more closely;
- 1,300 properties have refused Decent Homes work during the programme - this requires a mop-up programme which is due to start in 2017;
- The number of adaptations completed within timescale narrowly missed its target (98.95% against target of 99%) due to supplier issues. These have since been rectified;
- Sometimes, it has been difficult to plan programmed works schemes efficiently due to emergency situations and unforeseen issues beyond the team's control - this has affected the smooth running of programmes.



DURING 2016/17, THE TEAMS WILL:

- Complete the Decent Homes programme by December 2016 and commence post Decent Homes programme to ensure residents living in properties that missed the original programme are offered the chance to be included;
- Introduce a strategy to ensure properties continue to be maintained to the Government's Decent Homes standard - a new computer system will help to highlight projects across the Borough;
- Develop a strategy to tackle fuel poverty across South Tyneside to ensure that customers are able to heat their home at an affordable cost;
- Look to work more efficiently to save money while maintaining a customer-focussed service delivered by the Programmed Works team.



DID YOU KNOW?

£34 million was spent on Decent Homes last year

A total of **1,234 properties** have had renewable technology fitted to date, saving an estimated £58,000 per year on fuel bills for customers

3,404 properties were made decent last year

DID YOU KNOW?

1,674 properties received external painting works

The Programmed Works team carried out **0.5 miles** of garden wall pointing

382 adaptations were installed, including 84 wet rooms and 83 ramps which helped customers remain in their homes



Area Management



THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe
- Co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties



AREA MANAGEMENT SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Use an area management approach to deliver schemes and projects to improve your neighbourhoods
- Inspect your neighbourhood every week
- Carry out an area walkabout in your community at least 4 times per year

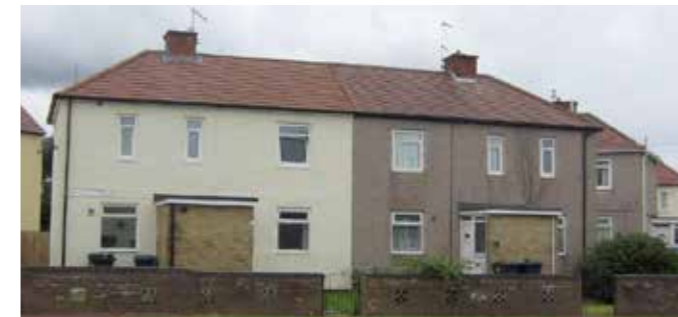
THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR FOR THE AREA MANAGEMENT TEAM:

- Developed partnerships with Safer Neighbourhood teams and tasking groups to address issues in geographic areas;
- Launched new area walkabouts following a review by involvement groups - the new process ensures that residents are provided with feedback when they attend a walkabout.

In addition, a number of local schemes have been taking place over the past year to improve areas across the Borough in response to feedback from residents. Area Management teams have worked with partners including South Tyneside Council, local Councillors and Community Area Forums to secure funding for local projects.

WEST SHIELDS, CLEADON AND EAST BOLDON:

- Gates were installed in the West Harton area following consultation with residents around how to make the estate safer;
- Improvement works were carried out to mid-rise flats in Biddick Hall, including installation of new entrance doors to improve security for residents;
- Delivery Officers and Income Officers are operating a pilot scheme to engage and support residents to manage their tenancies and tackle debt issues.



JARROW AND BOLDON:

- An improvement programme in Boldon Colliery is underway, which includes an external painting programme and working with residents to report issues such as fly-tipping;
- The team worked with The Big Local and Groundwork South Tyneside and Newcastle to make a number of improvements in the Jarrow Central area. This included tidy ups, bulb planting, creating art work in the basketball courts and setting up a new youth club. A new gateway feature has also been funded by The Big Local providing a welcome to the Jarrow area;
- A closed Multi Use Games Area has been repaired and painted bringing it back into use for the local community and ownership returned to South Tyneside Council. Local Councillors have supported the area with funding for a football scheme which has been well attended by a mix of age groups.



EAST SHIELDS AND WHITBURN:

- The team co-ordinated work which was carried out on Horsley Hill estate to encourage residents to look after their gardens and take pride in their area, including fencing programmes and the running of the Horsley Hill in Bloom competition with Groundwork South Tyneside and Newcastle;
- Environmental improvement works were carried out in the Harton area, including a wall and fence renewal programme in the East Close area and a shrub reduction programme;
- The team worked with the Whitburn Festival Committee and partners from the Council to deliver successful Whitburn Summer and Winter Festivals;
- The team co-ordinated a wall and fencing programme in the Cleadon Park ward, which has made a significant difference to the appearance of the area.



Area Management



Handy Estates and Environmental Protection



THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe
- Work in partnership with tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so

HEBBURN:



- Problematic outhouses which were in disrepair in Cuthbert Street and surrounding areas have been demolished and replaced with concrete based garden sheds;
- The team worked with local residents and Councillors to improve open spaces in the Bedeswell area with tree pruning, lighting and additional bins to reduce the amount of litter;
- The team worked with local residents in Monkton Village to enhance the whole area. Works included rubbish and graffiti removal, the refurbishment of tired street signs and the addition of new planters across the village to enhance overall appearance.

- The team worked with local restaurants and businesses to discourage seagulls and stop windblown litter on nearby estates;
- Chichester Metro station has undergone an improvements scheme which has involved the team working with Nexus to address fencing issues adjacent to the metro line and pruning and planting trees to improve CCTV visibility.

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- Support for local resident/community groups has not always been consistent across all the area teams;
- A new Neighbourhood Management Policy is in development but is yet to be completed.

DURING 2016/17, THE AREA MANAGEMENT TEAM WILL:

- Equip Delivery Officers with mobile devices to enable more time to be spent on estates proactively dealing with local issues;
- Finalise plans for Community Area Forums to address local priorities;
- Revisit area walkabouts with involvement groups and make further improvements where required.

RIVERSIDE:

- A number of small areas and parks have been transformed in order to tackle noise and anti-social behaviour issues. This included the creation of Gompertz Park near Western Approach. The area has been opened up by clearing shrubs and installing lighting, which has seen a reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area;

HANDY ESTATES SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Carry out an investigatory process that will lead to the removal of fly-tipped rubbish within 5 days of receiving a report
- Remove discarded needles and syringes within 1 working day of receiving a report
- Paint out or remove graffiti within 1 working day of receiving a report

THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- Hundreds of tonnes of waste were uplifted from across the Borough. The team are now actively looking to identify fly-tipping offenders;
- Operatives have received additional training to enable them to be multi-skilled. This means that they can operate a wide range of equipment to keep areas clean and tidy;
- The team has worked with local businesses to reduce litter meaning that operatives' time can be spent tackling other priorities and keeping areas clean and tidy.

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- Contaminated recycling continues to be an issue, with non-recyclable materials and food waste being put into recycling bins;
- Not all fly-tipping, graffiti and dog fouling is reported - this causes delays in providing the service and can lead to unnecessary complaints.

DURING 2016/17, THE HANDY ESTATES TEAM WILL:

- Work with South Tyneside Council to become more proactive in dealing with dog fouling and littering following staff training so that they can issue fixed penalty notices;
- Introduce weed treatment services into the team which will lead to a more responsive service which is better value for money.



DID YOU KNOW?

A total of **210** area walkabouts were carried out across the Borough

1,561 untidy gardens were resolved (either by residents or enforcement action)

Your **Delivery Officer** is your first point of contact to deal with any issues in your local area

DID YOU KNOW?

The Handy Estates team collected **557** tonnes of rubbish from across the Borough between January and March 2016

96.09% of fly tipping waste was removed within timescale

The team collected over **228,000** bottles of water during the Great North Run in September 2015 with over 100 staff involved in the post-run clean up

38% of rubbish is currently recycled, which means we still have some way to go to reach the national 2020 target of 50%.

Housing Plus

THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe
- Promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing



Community Safety and Tenancy Enforcement

THE FRAMEWORK SAYS YOUR LANDLORD SHOULD:

- Publish a policy on how they work with relevant partners to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in areas where they own properties
- Demonstrate strong leadership, commitment and accountability on preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour which reflects a shared understanding of responsibilities with other local agencies



HOUSING PLUS SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Develop a support plan for all Housing Plus residents to maximise their independence
- Review all support plans at least once per year

THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- A resident-led health and wellbeing budget was delivered which aims to reduce social isolation of Housing Plus residents. With the help of additional fundraising in individual schemes, a wide range of activities were supported including social events and arts and crafts activities;
- Individual resident support plans were improved so that they are now more outcome-focused with residents working towards goals that will promote their independence;
- Tenancy agreements for Housing Plus have been changed to explain all charges relating to schemes to better inform new customers;
- The improvement work in schemes funded by the Homes and Communities Agency has been completed. The University of Sunderland are currently carrying out research to examine the impact of the improvements on residents' health and wellbeing.

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- Service charges continue to be an issue and a concern for customers. The Housing Plus team are continuing to work with residents and South Tyneside Council to scope possible options for change to ensure that services charges accurately reflect the costs of the service;
- Since completion of the improvement works in internal schemes funded by the Homes and Communities Agency, some facilities have not been used to their full potential including new sensory rooms.

DURING 2016/17, THE HOUSING PLUS TEAM WILL:

- Work on implementing recommendations from the involvement groups following their review of the service;
- Look for new sources of funding and grants to continue to promote social wellbeing for Housing Plus residents.



The total occupancy of Housing Plus stood at **99.08%** at the end of the financial year

COMMUNITY SAFETY SERVICE STANDARDS, THE TEAM WILL:

- Respond to "Category A" incidents, which include race or other hate crime, threats or actual violence or domestic violence within 1 working day and interview within 3 working days
- Respond to "Category B" incidents, which include neighbour disputes, criminal behaviour and youth disorder within 2 working days and interview or visit within 5 working days
- Respond to "Category C" incidents, which include low-level neighbour disputes, noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour within 3 working days and interview or visit within 6 working days

THINGS THAT HAVE GONE WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- Partnership links with Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire Service and Environmental Health continue to be used to tackle issues across South Tyneside;
- The team have attended resident meetings and Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings held by local policing teams to help address local concerns;

- A team of 5 Victim Support volunteers have been recruited to provide emotional support and a point of contact to support victims of anti-social behaviour;
- The new Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act was introduced, which streamlined available powers to tackle anti-social behaviour allowing a faster and more effective response to incidents.

THINGS THAT HAVEN'T GONE SO WELL:

- The procedure for reporting hate crime has been updated and whilst staff training has commenced this has not yet been completed;
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and procedures have also been reviewed but are yet to be published and implemented.

DURING 2016/17, THE COMMUNITY SAFETY TEAM WILL:

- Work with South Tyneside Council to finalise and publish a new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy;
- Increase the number of referrals to the volunteer victim support team to ensure that victims are supported;
- Increase the use of new technology (including noise monitoring equipment) to gather evidence which will be used to increase enforcements regarding noise complaints.

DID YOU KNOW?

The recent improvement works (including sky rooms and sun rooms) were shortlisted for a **Local Government Award** with tenants taking part in a short video to showcase the work and the benefits which this has delivered for residents

DID YOU KNOW?

There were a total of **938** enforcement cases opened last year

A total of **376** warning letters were issued to residents for anti-social behaviour

Residents are invited to attend their local **PACT meetings** - details can be found at www.northumbria.police.uk



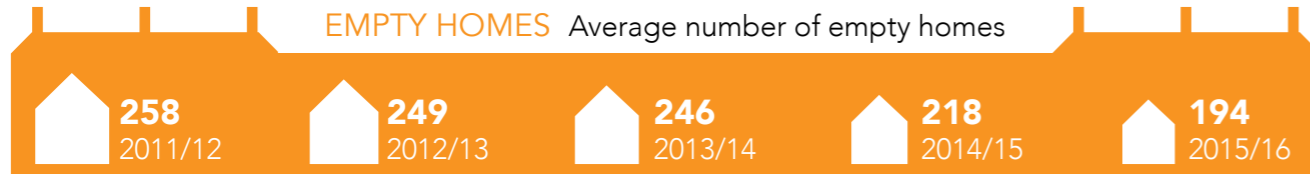
Performance Overview



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Service Area	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Anti-Social Behaviour	85.8%	91.8%	95.2%	92.6%	93.9%
Decent Homes	76.7%	91.54%	92.28%	93.56%	80.65%
Empty Homes	91.3%	91.54%	92.28%	94%	98.31%
Repairs and Maintenance	90.1%	95.46%	94.9%	97.44%	97.75%

EMPTY HOMES Average number of empty homes



DECENT HOMES

Number of homes made decent



REPAIRS

Number and % of routine repairs delivered within 20 days

Year	Number	%
2011/12	41,670	99.66%
2012/13	45,932	99.89%
2013/14	45,984	99.61%
2014/15	41,704	99.78%
2015/16	43,253	99.55%

Number and % of emergency repairs delivered within 4 hours

Year	Number	%
2011/12	14,339	99.18%
2012/13	14,904	99.7%
2013/14	12,750	99.3%
2014/15	14,233	99.41%
2015/16	13,727	99.36%

COMPLIMENTS Number received



COMPLAINTS Number received



ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

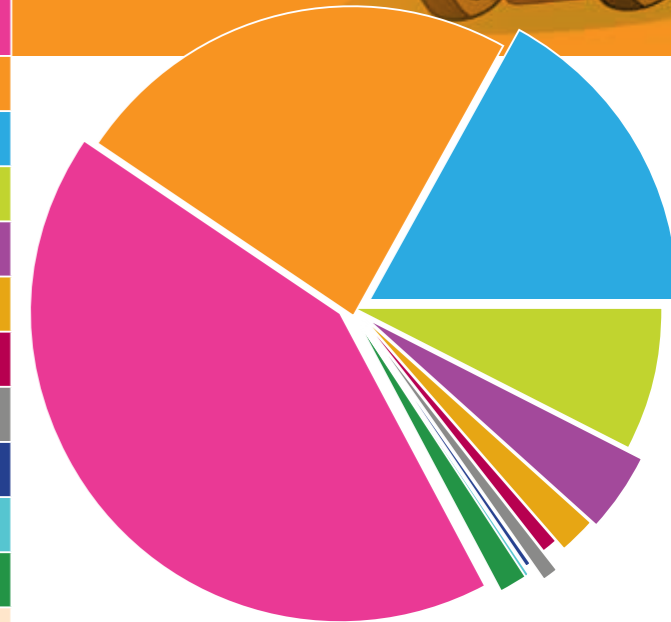
Number and % of complaints responded to within timescale

Year	Number	%
2011/12	682	100%
2012/13	592	98.48%
2013/14	647	99.52%
2014/15	660	99.31%
2015/16	938	99.61%

Making Sense of the Money

South Tyneside Homes manages around 17,500 homes on behalf of South Tyneside Council. In 2015/16 income was £70.3million. Below is an overview of how rent was spent during the year.

Capital Charges	£29.2m	42.3%
Repairs and Maintenance	£16.4m	23.8%
Housing Management	£11.5m	16.7%
Central Services	£5.3m	7.7%
Rents Rates and Taxes	£2.9m	4.2%
Estate Management	£1.2m	1.8%
Anti-Social Behaviour	£0.6m	0.9%
Income Management	£0.5m	0.7%
Empty Homes	£0.3m	0.4%
Tenant Involvement	£0.1m	0.1%
Other	1.0m	1.4%
TOTAL	£69.0m	100%



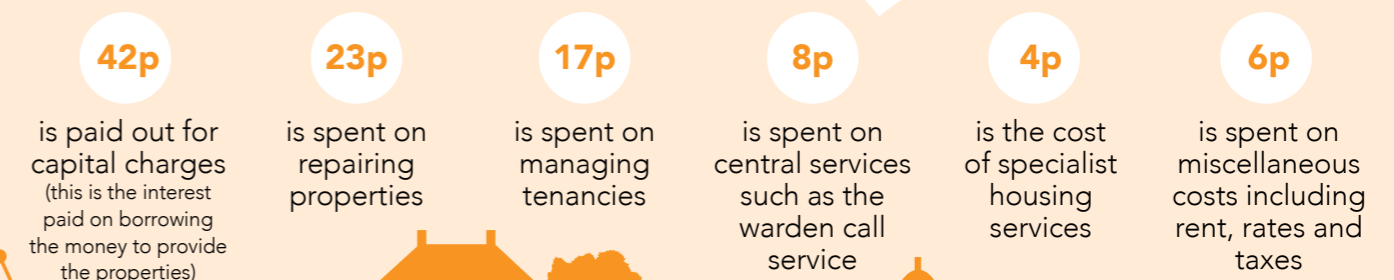
FOCUS ON INCOME

Most of the income comes from rent but tenants and leaseholders are also charged for services and facilities that South Tyneside Homes provides. The contributions come from various sources such as the fee for collecting water rates from tenants:

Property rents	£65.1m	92.6%
Garage and shop rents	£0.8m	1.2%
Charges for services and facilities	£3.4m	4.8%
Contributions towards costs	£1.0m	1.4%

TOTAL £70.3m 100%

DID YOU KNOW, FOR EVERY £1 OF RENT YOU PAY...





GET INVOLVED!

CONTACT THE INVOLVEMENT TEAM

☎ | 0300 123 6633

🌐 | www.southtynesidehomes.org.uk

📍 | Visit any local Housing Office

f | /stynesidehomes

If you know someone who needs this information in a different format, for example large print, Braille or a different language, please call Marketing and Communications on 0191 427 1717.

