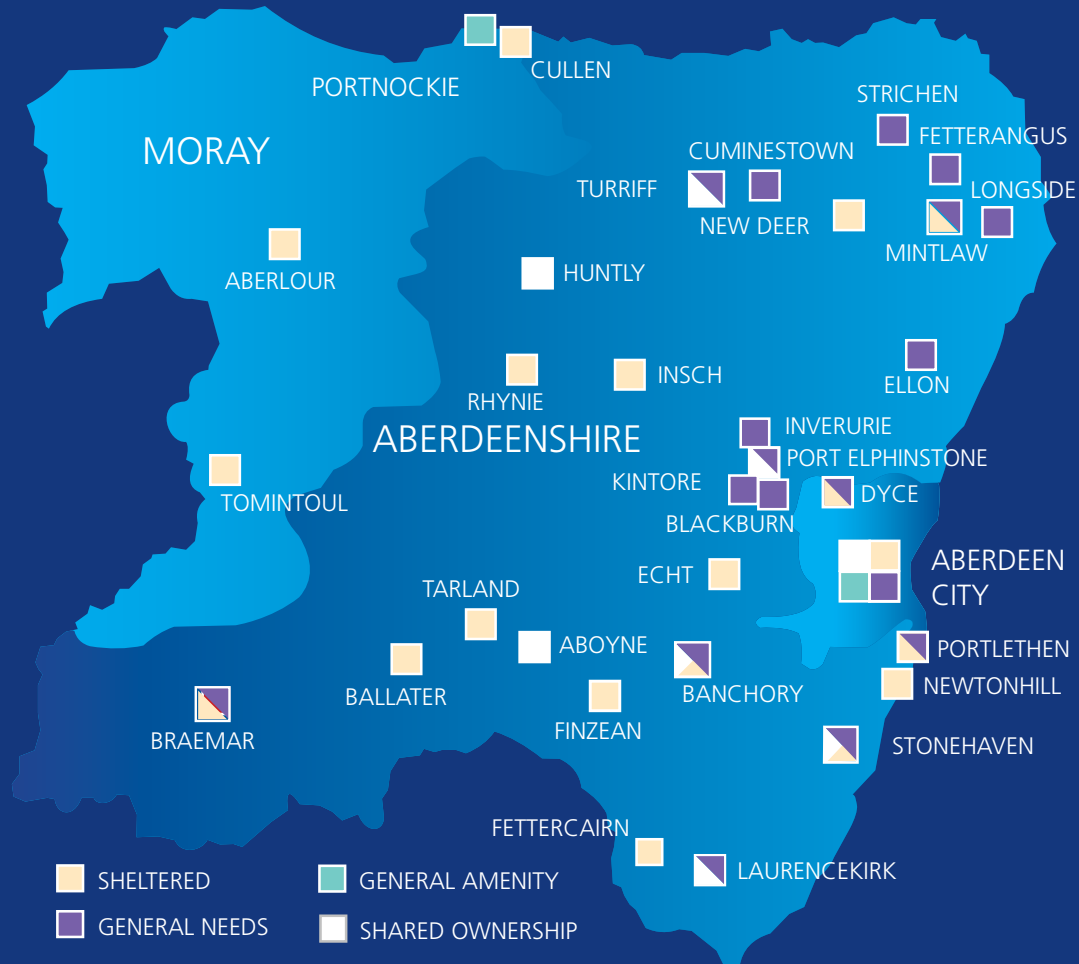


A large, blue-tinted photograph of three people—two older women and a younger woman—smiling and holding a white cup. The image is used as a background for the title text.

ANNUAL CHARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT **2019-2020**





About This Report - How We Compare?

This year we have compared our performance against the previous year (2018-2019), and against the Scottish Average figures for Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Each RSL submits this information to the Scottish Housing Regulator annually, who calculate the Scottish Average from the data provided. This provides a benchmark for comparison.

The traffic light system

The traffic light faces are to help provide an easy and clear indication of our level of performance.



Green indicates that our performance is better than the Scottish Registered Social Landlord (RSL) average.



Amber indicates that performance is on a par with the RSL average.



Red indicates that performance is not as good as the RSL average and where improvement is needed.

Our Staff

Castlehill Housing Association has 74 full-time equivalent posts across all our services. Staff are based between our Carden Place and Waverley Place offices and our Sheltered Schemes throughout Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. Staff turnover this year was 15.6%.

WELCOME TO THE CASTLEHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CHARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019 – 2020

Welcome to our annual Charter Performance Report 2019-2020. Publishing this report aims to help inform Castlehill tenants on how we are doing in comparison with similar housing providers throughout Scotland.

The performance statistics in this report are for the period ending on 31st March 2020 and have not, therefore, been impacted by the lockdown and restriction measures that we have all faced for the rest of 2020. Throughout the Covid 19 pandemic, we have endeavoured to deliver as much of our normal service as we possibly can, within the published health advice, whilst ensuring that the wellbeing of tenants and our staff is the priority. Initially, in lockdown, we were not able to re-let properties that became vacant and only able to carry out emergency and the most urgent repairs. With the safety of residents in mind we were also able to continue with essential works such as gas boiler servicing. Much of our normal planned maintenance, such as kitchen or bathroom upgrades, has had to be put on hold and we look forward to resuming these activities as soon as possible. I'm pleased to report that we are also now able to recommence with the final phases of upgrading our smoke and fire detection systems in all our properties.

I am happy to report that despite a temporary suspension of works on construction sites, our programme to deliver new houses has continued to progress with more new homes at Portstown, Inverurie. We currently have developments on site in Banff and Kintore as well as further homes in Inch in the pipeline.

During this year we undertook a full-scale tenants survey and while the results of this were generally very positive, there were clear areas where we need to make improvements. Please be assured that Castlehill's Management Committee will act on the survey findings, working with our tenant's groups to deliver changes and improvements where needed. Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey and made their views known.

I hope that you will find this year's Charter Report to be informative and of interest.

Janice Lyon

Convenor of Management Committee



OUR PROFILE

2017/18

Total number of houses



Total rent due in the year

£7,972,730

Percentage average weekly rent increase applied

3.9%

2018/19

Total number of houses



Total rent due in the year

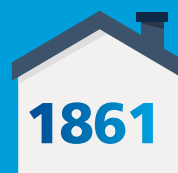
£8,552,157

Percentage average weekly rent increase applied

3.9%

2019/20

Total number of houses



Total rent due in the year





£9,057,698

Percentage average weekly rent increase applied

2.7%

The average rent increase across all Registered Social Landlords in Scotland this year was

2.4%

Number of Bedrooms	Number in Stock	Average Weekly Rent	Scottish Average
Studios	84	£66.52	£73.47
 x 1	963	£89.32	£78.02
 x 2	570	£96.75	£80.10
 x 3	228	£105.56	£87.08
 x 4	16	£110.01	£96.18

CHA average weekly rent includes our service charges, across general needs, sheltered and very sheltered homes. Charges are higher in supported accommodation and as our stock includes all types of properties this shows in our weekly cost. Not all Registered Scottish Landlords include service charges in their weekly rent calculation and not all have supported accommodation, which makes comparison harder between our costs and national average.

TENANT PARTICIPATION & SATISFACTION

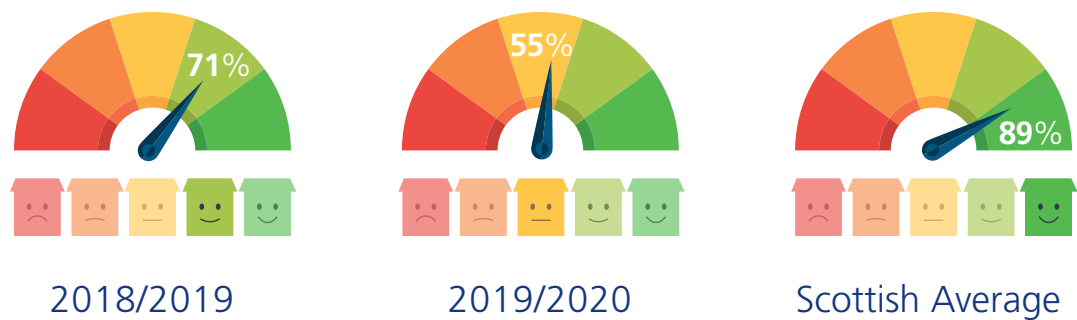
Percentage of tenants satisfied with overall service



Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and outcomes



Percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate in their landlord's decision making processes



Property Services

2019/20 has been a challenging year for a number of reasons, one being the COVID-19 Pandemic and the challenges this has brought. It has had positives, one being a push to digitalise processes to deliver services remotely and efficiently.

Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs

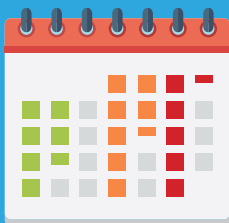


3 hours 45 mins
2019/2020

3.8 hours
2018/2019

2.7 hours
Scottish Average

Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs



7 days
2019/2020

5.3 days
2018/2019

5.7 days
Scottish Average

Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed first time

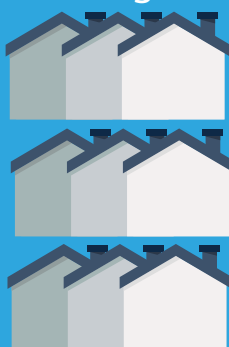


90%
2019/2020

92.5%
2018/2019

92.8%
Scottish Average

Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard



99.8%
2019/2020

99.8%
2018/2019

93.8%
Scottish Average

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



80%
2019/2020

95.1%
2018/2019

91.7%
Scottish Average

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

Number of cases of
anti social behaviour
reported in last year



123
2019/2020

89
2018/2019

Percentage of cases
resolved within
locally agreed
targets last
year



79%
2019/2020

83.1%
2018/2019

94.9%
Scottish Average



GETTING GOOD VALUE FOR RENTS & SERVICE CHARGES

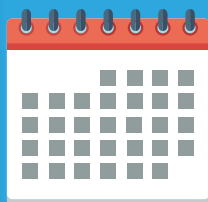
Average length of
time taken to re-let
properties in the
last year



32 days
2019/2020

51.1 days
2018/2019

25.7 days
Scottish Average



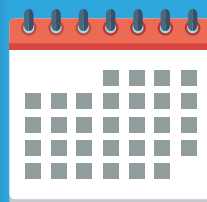
Percentage of rent
lost through properties
being empty in the last
year



1.8%
2019/2020

0.9%
2018/2019

0.9%
Scottish Average



Percentage of total rent due collected in the previous year



2019/2020	100%
2018/2019	99.3%
Scottish Average	99.3%

Court Actions initiated



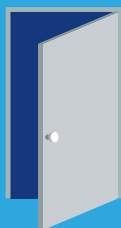
2019/2020	14
2018/2019	12

Court Actions initiated which resulted in eviction due to non payment of rent



2019/2020	2
2018/2019	4

Number of abandonments



2019/2020	5
2018/2019	11

Percentage of gross rent arrears



2019/2020	3.8%
2018/2019	3.8%
Scottish Average	4.4%

Number of mutual exchanges



2019/2020	19
2018/2019	22

Percentage of lettable homes that become vacant in the last year



2019/2020	13%
2018/2019	11.6%
Scottish Average	8.7%

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in



2019/2020	82%
Scottish Average	92.2%



CaRTO'S Digital Inclusion Project Launched

Castlehill's tenants' group, CaRTO, knows that in the 21st century a lack of digital skills and access to the internet can be a major disadvantage for people.

Having signed up to the Digital Participation Charter, CaRTO have devised a pilot initiative to help residents at one of Castlehill's sheltered housing schemes get online.

Queen Elizabeth Court, Fettercairn has been selected as the first recipient for the scheme, which, if successful, may be rolled out across other Sheltered schemes. CaRTO has ensured that the scheme has secure broadband and connectivity in the common room and has provided means of accessing the internet, which tenants can use at any time.

'We know that 20% of people in Scotland lack the essential digital skills to fully participate in modern life,' said Catherine Coutts, Castlehill's Tenant Participation Officer. 'Those who have no means of accessing the internet people are more likely to face other forms of social exclusion and inequality. With more and more services moving online, we want to help tackle these inequalities by giving our tenants the tools and support to thrive in a digital world.'

A group from CaRTO came to Queen Elizabeth Court to help fellow tenants use the available tools and develop necessary skills to access the wide variety of services available.

'In our research and talking to tenants we found that being unable to access the internet can increase feelings of loneliness and isolation. It is fantastic to be able to keep in touch with friends and family by text and email and even video calling, and it is great to be able to show tenants how to do this with our training sessions,' said Ken Willox of CaRTO.

CaRTO is Castlehill Housing Associations award winning tenant participation group, who provide a vital role in recommending service improvements where needed. 'We are proud of the work CaRTO does and look forward to seeing how this initiative works in practice,' said David Lappin, Castlehill's Chief Executive, 'it would be nice to be able to roll similar projects out in the future, so we will be watching the uptake carefully.'

Join us!

**Be part of our forward thinking,
positive team and help make a difference!**

WE NEED PEOPLE WHO:

- Want to get involved in making important decisions about their homes and services
- Want to work in partnership with Castlehill
- Are willing to share ideas
- Like to meet new people
- Are willing to learn and develop new skills

There are lots of options to get involved at any level to suit you.

INTERESTED?

Please contact Catherine on **01224 628109**
or catherine.coutts@castlehillha.co.uk for more info.
www.castlehillha.co.uk

Tenant Participation - your voice matters!

Tenant participation gives tenants an opportunity to influence decisions about the housing services they receive, and it helps us deliver better services that focus on tenant priorities.

We asked our tenants, "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with opportunities given to you to participate in your landlord's decision-making processes?" **744** tenants responded:



Castlehill tenants have opportunities to have their voices heard on the subjects which matter most to them. Our tenants are involved in sharing ideas, solving problems and planning for the future, as well as shaping our services and how we deliver them.

It is important that tenants can take part at a level they feel comfortable at, so we support different ways to get involved. Our approach is flexible to give tenants a choice of options. Tenant participation is open to everyone and all experiences are valid.

CaRTO (Castlehill Registered Tenants Organisation)

This tenant group works independently, but in partnership with Castlehill. Their focus is on helping us to improve our housing and housing-related services for all our tenants. CaRTO are integral in shaping policies and publications and have actioned of their own several initiatives, including digital inclusion, participatory budgeting projects and virtual scheme chats.

Tenants have also taken part in scrutiny exercises. Scrutiny is when tenants are supported to independently review a topic of their choosing. Tenants drill down into this topic and make recommendations to our Management Committee to help us improve our performance.

CaRTO Home Link

CaRTO Home Link is a digital solution for tenants who want to be involved without the commitment of attending regular meetings. We will let you know about upcoming projects you may like to take part in, such as reviewing a policy, designing a new publication or asking you about your experiences as a tenant.

Estate Walkabouts

These visits are organised to inspect the standards of our schemes, checking on things like gardening services, external maintenance, and communal cleaning. Tenants are invited to join their Housing Officer and Property Services Officer at these visits, so that they can point out any areas of concern.

Feedback and Consultations

We value our tenants' feedback and value the insight that only people with real-life experience of living in a Castlehill home can provide. We aim to make it as easy as possible for people to take part in our consultations, offering online, postal and telephone options. We encourage everyone to participate in our consultations and to make us aware of anything we can do to make the consultation process more accessible.

Beyond Castlehill

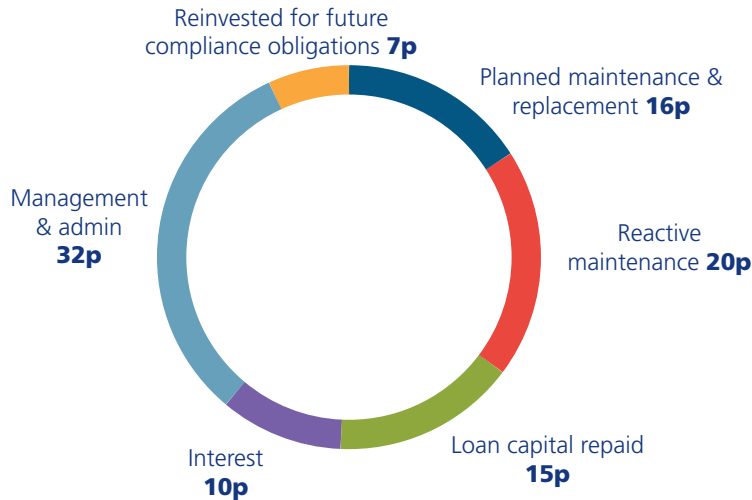
We are proud to be part of the award-winning partnership group NETRALT (North East Tenants, Residents and Landlords Together) and take part in events and initiatives across Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray. We are part of TPAS Scotland (Tenant Participation Advice Service) and CaRTO tenants have the opportunity to engage with tenants from other landlords across Scotland, take part in training and attend conferences.

We are open to new ideas about making it easier for tenants to get involved. If you have a suggestion, or would like to get involved in any way, please call 01224 628109 or email info@castlehillha.co.uk

Value for money

Rental income is the main source of income for Castlehill and it is of upmost importance to us that you receive value for money for your rent and that you understand how the money you pay is spent by the Association. The graph below gives you an indication of how we spent your rental income for 2019-20.

£1 of rental income in 2019-20 was spent as follows:



Maintaining our homes

Providing high quality homes is a key objective for Castlehill and that requires significant investment year on year to maintain those standards across the full range of our housing stock. Just over a third of rental income is spent on component replacement programmes such as kitchens & bathrooms, decoration works, adhering to mandatory legislation such as fire safety & fire detection works and energy efficiency (EESHH) requirements and also day to day repairs as these are reported by tenants.

Funding for new homes

In terms of funding of new build developments, private finance from the major Banks is required to fund the shortfall between build cost and Government Grants we are awarded. Any new private finance requirement is always sought through a competitive tender exercise to ensure we secure the best rate of interest and charges and balancing that with the repayment term for the loan. We need to ensure that the Association can meet its future obligations in terms of capital and interest repayments from the additional rental income earned from the properties added to the portfolio. For 2019-20, 25p in the £ was spent on capital and interest repayments to our various lenders.

Management & Administration costs

Approximately a third of rental income is spent on the office running costs, including staff salaries. We undertook a benchmarking exercise on our salary

scales in 2019-20 using an external consultant to ensure we were paying competitive rates to retain and attract high quality individuals, focused on customer service. We also undertake tender exercises for other administration costs to ensure we receive best value for money for our tenants. During 2019-20 we have tendered our external audit service and our heat & light costs as existing contracts expired.

Compliance obligations

The Sector in which we operate becomes ever more bound by regulations each year and we must demonstrate compliance with these regulations. Unfortunately there is always a cost associated with compliance and thus we must ensure we have future funds set aside to ensure we can comply with these future requirements such as extended regulations on energy efficiency and fire safety.

Partnership working

An additional way we seek to improve value for money is through partnership working with other Housing Associations. This works by either spreading the cost of procurement across a number of Associations, gives us access to skills in other organisations or increases our buying power as volumes are increased with joint procurement. Recent examples of this include mandatory periodic electrical inspections, fire detection works, framework for selection of consultants and PPE in relation to our response to the Covid pandemic.

Complaints Procedure

Castlehill value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

Our Complaints Procedure is in line with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)'s Model Complaints Handling Procedure. The procedure has 2 stages, as detailed below.

Stage 1 Complaints

As set out in our Complaints Procedure, we aim to resolve stage 1 complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

Stage 1 complaints are generally investigated by the relevant Housing Officer or Property Services Officer, as appropriate. Our decision at stage 1 is communicated in 5 working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If it is not possible to resolve a complaint at this stage, we explain why. If complainants are still dissatisfied, they can ask for their complaint to be investigated further through stage 2.

Stage 2 Complaints

A complaint is considered to be stage 2 when it has not been resolved at stage 1 or when it is complex and requires detailed investigation.

When a stage 2 complaint is raised, Castlehill's Compliance Advisor acknowledges receipt of the complaint within 3 working days. The Compliance Advisor checks with the complainant to ensure correct understanding of the complaint.

Once the complaint has been fully investigated and the outcome approved by a member of Castlehill's Senior Management Team, a full written response is provided to the complainant, as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If the complainant is still dissatisfied after the stage 2 complaint investigation, they can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to investigate the complaint.

Lessons learned from stage 1 and stage 2 complaints are identified and action is taken, as appropriate, to improve our services.



Complaints Raised

Between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, 84 stage 1 complaints were raised. The reasons for the complaints were as noted below. Also noted below are the number of complaints which could not be resolved at stage 1 and were therefore escalated to stage 2.

Reason for Stage 1 Complaint	Number of Complaints	Number Escalated to Stage 2
Abandonment	1	0
Allocations	1	0
CHA Contractor	17	1
Factoring	2	0
Gardeners	3	0
Housing Management	6	0
Neighbour	4	0
Property Services	42	4
Staff	8	0

In this same period, 20 stage 2 complaints were raised.

The reasons for the complaints were as noted below. Also noted below are the number of stage 2 complaints which were upheld or partially upheld.

Reason for Stage 2 Complaint	Number of Complaints	Number Upheld or Partially Upheld
Allocations	1	0
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) (Where tenant was not satisfied with CHA's response to the initial ASB complaint).	4	0
CHA Contractor	2	1
Property Services	9	4
Staff	4	1

Lessons Learned

As noted above, Castlehill value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services. Noted below are 2 examples of lessons learned from complaints, including the resulting action taken by CHA to improve our services.

Lesson Learned	Action Taken by CHA
Lack of consistency across CHA documentation regarding internal decoration standards.	Review & update of documentation to ensure consistency and clarity.
Lack of sufficient control surrounding Contractor access to properties.	Process reviewed and amended to ensure sufficient control.



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