



**Item: 14**

**Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 11 September 2024.**

**Tenant Satisfaction Survey.**

**Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.**

---

## **1. Overview**

- 1.1. A wholesale tenant satisfaction survey is required by the Scottish Social Housing Charter, the process for which is detailed and prescriptive for landlords with up to 1,500 tenants, including achieving a return rate of 40%.
- 1.2. The results are used by the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of the process of regulating Local Authority Housing Services.
- 1.3. Between March and May 2024, a tenant satisfaction survey was undertaken by an independent body, IBP Strategy and Research, on behalf of the Council, the results of which are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.4. The results of the survey are notified to the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of the Annual Return against the Charter and linked to the Annual Assurance Statement, which is the topic of a separate report to this cycle of meetings.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
  - i. Scrutinise the results of the tenant satisfaction survey, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, in order to obtain assurance with regard to the performance of the Housing Service.

## **3. Tenant Satisfaction Survey**

- 3.1. The Scottish Social Housing Charter, which came into effect on 1 April 2012 and was updated in 2017, includes a series of outcomes and standards against which housing services are to be regulated.

- 3.2. The Charter includes a requirement that landlords undertake regular surveys of their tenants to assess their satisfaction with services and report the findings to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 3.3. The Scottish Housing Regulator, in conjunction with Ipsos MORI, has produced guidance on undertaking such surveys. The guidance is detailed and prescriptive. It requires that landlords with up to 1,500 tenants are required to survey all their tenants and that all landlords seek to achieve at least a 40% return rate, which is challenging. It also provides detail on the type of questions to be asked to ensure that the Scottish Housing Regulator can in turn receive information on certain key outcomes.
- 3.4. It has been determined locally that it is more appropriate to undertake surveys every two years rather than every three years to ensure the data is reflective of the current tenant base. The last tenant survey was undertaken in May 2022.
- 3.5. IBP Strategy and Research, which specialises in undertaking surveys for landlords, was procured to undertake the survey. Using an independent contractor to undertake the survey allows the added advantage of being able to anonymise information and allows tenants to respond openly without the Council receiving details of individual responses.
- 3.6. The survey, which is the fifth one for Council tenants, was undertaken between March and May 2024.
- 3.7. The survey was undertaken during 2024 using the main method of data gathering as a telephone interview. Tenants were also given the opportunity to request a paper copy of the questionnaire and subsequent follow ups were made by e-mail. This differed from previous surveys where the main method of data gathering was a postal self-completion survey.
- 3.8. Accordingly, of the responses, 19% were made by post/online and 81% by telephone interview. This compared to the survey of 2022, when 64% were by post and 36% by telephone. In addition, the methodology adopted for the 2024 survey allowed us to reach a higher proportion of younger tenants and in particular, working tenants.
- 3.9. An action plan, attached as Appendix 2, has been developed and further evaluation and consultation will be taken in respect of this area of work.

**For Further Information please contact:**

Lesley Mulrairie, Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation), extension 2170, email [lesley.mulrairie@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.mulrairie@orkney.gov.uk).

## Implications of Report

1. **Financial:** The survey was undertaken by a private contractor, procured in line with the Council's Contract Standing Orders at a cost of £5020 exclusive of VAT.
2. **Legal:** The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 section 31 introduced changes to the basis on which the Scottish Housing Regulator would be responsible for regulating housing services. The Charter does not replace any of the legal duties that apply to social landlords, but in several cases the outcomes describe the results social landlords should achieve in meeting their legal duties. Therefore, although not laid down formally in legislation, the Scottish Social Housing Charter determines the outcomes against which social landlords will be regulated. This includes a requirement for a regular tenants' satisfaction survey to be undertaken and for a performance report to be published.
3. **Corporate Governance:** Not applicable
4. **Human Resources:** None.
5. **Equalities:** An Equality Impact Assessment is not required in respect of performance monitoring.
6. **Island Communities Impact:** An Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required in respect of performance monitoring.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
  - Growing our economy.
  - Strengthening our Communities.
  - Developing our Infrastructure.
  - Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
  - Cost of Living.
  - Sustainable Development.
  - Local Equality.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk:** None directly related to the recommendations of this report.
10. **Risk:** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
11. **Procurement:** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
12. **Health and Safety:** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
13. **Property and Assets:** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
14. **Information Technology:** None directly related to the recommendations in this report.

15. **Cost of Living:** The survey incorporated questions around the cost of living and the impact on council tenants in respect of their financial situation.

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Tenant Satisfaction Survey Summary

Appendix 2 – Tenant Satisfaction – Action Plan



## Appendix 1

# Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024

## Summary Report

August 2024



# Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024



**ORKNEY**  
ISLANDS COUNCIL

Results based on feedback from 337 tenants

**74%**

Overall, 74% of our tenants said that they were satisfied with overall service provided. 28% said they were "very" satisfied and 15% said they were dissatisfied.

**64%**

of tenants think their rent is good or very good value for money



**84%**

of tenants said they were satisfied with the repairs service



**77%**

rated us positively for keeping tenants informed and 71% were satisfied with opportunities to take part in decision-making processes.

**68%**

of tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home.

**59%**

of tenants were satisfied with our management of the neighbourhood they lived in.

To access a summary of the findings please email:  
[housing@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:housing@orkney.gov.uk) (telephone 01856 873535 extension 2170)

This document summarises the results of Orkney Islands Council Housing Service's tenant survey for 2024. The survey explores tenants' views in relation to a number of themes including: overall satisfaction with the Housing Service; communications and participation; contact with the Housing Service; complaints; the home; repairs and housing services; rent and financial issues; affordability and the impact of affordability and the cost of living; neighbourhood issues; future priorities.

Where possible, results have been compared to those from the 2022 survey and further back to the 2020 and 2018 surveys. With respect to this, the difference in methodology should be noted. For the 2024 survey, the main method of data gathering was telephone interviewing, with a subsequent self-completion survey being issued to those tenants with an email address. This approach generated a total of 337 responses, of which 81% were by telephone. In 2022, the main method of data gathering was postal self-completion survey with a follow-up telephone survey being conducted at that point to achieve the target response. The proportion of responses gathered by telephone in 2022 was, therefore, significantly lower, at 36%.

In addition, the methodology adopted for the 2024 survey allowed us to reach a higher proportion of younger tenants and in particular, working tenants.

### ***RESPONDENT PROFILE***

The profile of survey respondents in relation to gender was broadly similar to that in the Housing Service's most recent survey in 2022, with 54% of respondents being female and 45% being male.

Compared to 2022, the sample had a younger age profile, with 43% being aged 16-44 compared to only 28% in 2022. There were significantly fewer respondents aged 45 or over compared to 2022 (55% in 2024 compared to 69% in 2022).

Most commonly respondent households were single occupancy (48%, compared with 59% in 2022) while 13% were two adult, no children households (up from 10%), 12% were lone parents (up slightly from 11%) and 20% were families with children (up from 14%).

The average net monthly income per household was estimated at £1,013.08 (up from £904.46 in 2022). It seems likely that this is a reflection of the methodology adopted in 2024 more effectively reaching working age tenants.

49% of respondents say that they or someone in their household have a physical illness or mental health condition or illness expected to last 12 months or more (also 49% in 2022).

Respondents were broadly split between Kirkwall (57%) and elsewhere in the Orkney Islands (42%). No location information could be identified for less than 1%. This profile was broadly similar for the 2022 survey but has a slightly higher proportion of Kirkwall tenants.

There has been significant change in the profile of the working status of the heads of household, with 53% in employment (up significantly from 38% in 2022) and 19% retired (down significantly from 43%). This is a significant enough change to potentially impact on the results and so, in relation to the ARC questions specifically, we have noted what these results would have been had the 2024 survey reflected the employment profile from 2022.

### ***COMMUNICATIONS AND PARTICIPATION***

There has been a notable increase in the proportion of tenants who feel that the Housing Service is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions. This figure has increased from 70% in 2022 to 77% in 2024 (78% when weighted to reflect the employment profile from 2022).

A similar pattern is evident in relation to satisfaction with opportunities to take part in the Housing Service's decision making processes, which has increased from 61% to 71% between 2022 and 2024 (75% when weighted to reflect the employment profile from 2022).

### ***CONTACT WITH THE HOUSING SERVICE***

61% of respondents said that they had contacted the Council's Housing Service in the last 12 months with a query other than to pay their rent or a service charge (up from 52% in 2022).

Respondents' last method of contact with the Council was mainly by telephone (75%, down slightly from 78% in 2022) or by email (up slightly from 11% to 12% between 2022 and 2024). There continues to be a small minority contacting the Housing Service by any other means.

The Council continues to achieve positive ratings across a number of aspects of customer service and the extent of this has improved in relation to some aspects. 82% of respondents indicate that staff were helpful compared to 75% in 2022; 80% said it was easy to get hold of the right person compared to 63% in 2022; 71% indicated that their query was answered within a reasonable time compared to 73% in 2022; 60% expressed satisfaction with the final outcome of their query compared with 68% in 2022. Overall, 80% of respondents had a positive view of the overall quality of customer service compared to 77% in 2022.



## *COMPLAINTS POLICY*

Fewer respondents than in 2022 said they were aware of the Housing Service's complaints policy (59% compared to 62%). The proportion that indicated they had made a complaint in the previous 12 months was 5%, down slightly from 7% in 2022. 39% of those that said they had made a complaint expressed satisfaction with the way their complaint was handled overall; this was significantly higher than the figure of 27% in 2022. 24% expressed satisfaction with the final outcome of their complaint compared to 17% in 2022. It is important to note the very low base number of individuals who had made a complaint as this can mean that changes are based on responses from a very small group of people.

## *THE HOME*

Of those that moved into their home in the last year, the majority (58%, down significantly from 76% in 2022) were satisfied with the standard of their home when they moved in.

Amongst respondents that moved into their home in the last year the majority were also satisfied with all aspects of the moving in process. However, there was a decline in the proportion of respondents that expressed satisfaction with the condition of the home when they moved in (from 64% in 2022 to 58% in 2024), although satisfaction has improved in relation to the process for applying for a home (85%, up from 76%). Again, the small base number of responses for this specific question means that significant percentage changes can arise based only on the views of a small number of people.

14 respondents indicated that they had had contact with the Council's homelessness and advice section over the past two years or so. Of these, 92% expressed satisfaction (up slightly from 91% in 2022). 12 people indicated that they had been provided with homeless accommodation. Of these, 100% expressed satisfaction (up from 60% in 2022).

Overall, 68% of respondents said that they were satisfied with the overall quality of their home; this was down from the 75% recorded in 2022 but the extent of this reduction was much more limited when results are weighted on the basis of the employment profile (satisfaction on this basis being 73%).

The majority of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with a range of specific aspects of their homes, although satisfaction figures recorded in 2024 were generally slightly lower than those recorded in 2022. The exceptions being, satisfaction with the external appearance of the home (78%, up from 70%) and private gardens (77%, up from 72%).

Ratings for all aspects of heating systems have shown improvement since 2022 with the majority rating most aspects as good or very good. The exception related to cost effectiveness where 40% rate it as very good or good (this is up slightly from 36% in 2022). Satisfaction with a number of aspects of common areas, where relevant to the tenant, has declined between 2022 and 2024. This was the case for each of common gardens (73% very or fairly satisfied, down slightly from 77% in 2022); bin areas (70%, down slightly from 73%); communal back / drying areas (69%, down significantly from 80%) common entrance / door entry systems (64%, down significantly from 84%), stair cleaning (44%, down significantly from 73%) and fencing (48%, down from 56%).

### ***REPAIRS AND HOUSING SERVICES***

The majority of respondents (61%, up from 58% in 2022) indicated that they had repairs carried out in their home in the last 12 months. Amongst those that have had repairs carried out in their home in the last 12 months, 84% were satisfied with the service they received (down very slightly from 85% in 2022). However, when results are weighted to reflect the 2022 sample profile in relation to employment, satisfaction actually increases to 91%.

The vast majority of respondents that have had repairs carried out in their home in the last 12 months were very or fairly satisfied with a range of specific aspects of the service they received; the level of satisfaction with these specific aspects of service has improved slightly in relation to most aspects, with the exceptions being workers clearing up after themselves (87%, down from 90% in 2022) and the time taken to complete the work (85%, down very slightly from 86%).

18% of respondents indicated that they had planned maintenance improvements carried out in their home within the previous two years or so (this figure was 21% in 2022). 78% of those that had such work undertaken expressed satisfaction with it (down from 84% in 2022).

Amongst all respondents, regardless of whether or not they have had repairs carried out in their home in the last 12 months, 81% were very or fairly satisfied overall with the Housing Service's repairs service (down very slightly from 82% in 2022).

### ***RENT AND FINANCIAL ISSUES***

A slightly higher proportion of respondents than in 2022 paid full rent; this was up from 48% to 53%, most probably reflecting the differences in survey methodology between the two years.

64% of respondents considered their rent to be good value for money; this is down somewhat from the 69% recorded in 2022. This result improves very slightly (to 65%) when results are weighted to reflect the employment profile from the previous survey in 2022.

Overall, 61% of respondents indicated that they considered the Council's rents to be less expensive than those of other landlords (up significantly from 43% in 2022) compared to 9% that considered them to be more expensive (down significantly from 19%).

The great majority of respondents (81%) consider that the Housing Service's approach to dealing with arrears is a reasonable one (the comparable figure in 2022 was 85%).

#### ***AFFORDABILITY AND COST OF LIVING ISSUES***

12% of respondents indicate that they find it fairly or very difficult to afford their rent payments (down very slightly from 13% in 2022) and a further 35% that they find this "just about affordable" (down from 41%). 27% indicate that more than 30% of their net household income goes on paying rent and service charges to the Council's Housing Service (down slightly from 29% in 2022).

85% indicate that they spend more than 10% of their net household income on household fuel use and (down slightly from 87% in 2022), of these, 47% indicate that they spend more than 20% of their net household income on this (up very slightly from 46%).

31% indicate that more than 10% of their net household income goes on paying their Council tax and water and sewage charges (down very slightly from 32% in 2022).

In terms of overall finances, it is notable that less respondents now say that they are managing either quite or very poorly. This figure was 22% in 2022 and has now reduced to 14% in 2024.

#### ***THE NEIGHBOURHOOD***

Satisfaction with the Housing Service's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood has declined from 67% in 2022 to 59% in 2024. This figure improves to 63%, however, when results are weighted to reflect the employment profile from the 2022 survey.

Despite this, ratings for various aspects of the neighbourhood have improved with 91% feeling very or fairly safe in their neighbourhood (up slightly from 90% in 2022); only 4% indicate that they feel at all unsafe. While respondents were less likely to express a positive view about other aspects of their neighbourhood, these ratings have also improved since 2022: overall appearance of the neighbourhood (78% up from 73%); cleanliness of the neighbourhood (77% up from 68%); car parking (68% up from 59%) and grounds maintenance (65%, up from 60%).

Further analysis of the various satisfaction figures suggests that dissatisfaction with management of the neighbourhood overall is driven by dissatisfaction with grounds maintenance, as well as wider issues relating to neighbourhood appearance and cleanliness to a somewhat lesser extent.

Where respondents have reported anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months, ratings for the way the complaint was dealt with and the final outcome of their complaint have improved since 2022.

#### ***FUTURE PRIORITIES***

The issues that tenants most commonly place in their “three most important issues” are the overall quality of the home (62%, down from 68% in), the energy efficiency of the property (62%, also 62% previously) and the value for money of rents (41% compared to 33% in 2022). In previous years tenants third most important priority had been the quality of the repairs and maintenance service, and while still seen as important, tenants are less likely to put it in their top three (33%, compared with 41% in 2022).

88% of respondents (compared to 77% in 2022) feel it is important that the Housing Service make more properties available for rent.

#### ***OVERALL SATISFACTION***

Overall, 74% of respondents now indicate that they are very or fairly satisfied with the service provided by the Housing Service of Orkney Islands Council. This has reduced slightly from the 76% recorded in 2022 although this small change can be attributed in whole to the change in sample profile in relation to age and working status.

## Appendix 2

### Housing Services – Tenant Satisfaction

Indicator.	Stats (to 31/03/22).	Stats (to 31/03/24 ).	Action.	Performance Measure.	Target.	Resource Requirement.	Completed.
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>							
Overall service provided by landlord (indicator 1).	76%.	74%.	1. Review of dissatisfaction to be undertaken through a questionnaire/tenant engagement/focus group.	Customer satisfaction for Indicator 1 to have increased to 78% by next survey.	May 2026	Tenant Participation Officer	
			2. Raise the profile of service work through regular social media posts and 4 monthly newsletter which is provided either digitally or hard copy dependent on tenant's choice.	Regular posts on Housing Service social media page evident.  Newsletter completed and distributed to ensure 100% coverage.	Annually Spring, Summer and Winter Newsletter to be distributed.	Tenant Participation Officer	

Indicator.	Stats (to 31/03/22).	Stats (to 31/03/24 ).	Action.	Performance Measure.	Target.	Resource Requirement.	Completed.
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services. (indicator 2)	70%	77%	1. Raise the profile of service work through regular social media posts and quarterly newsletter which is provided either digitally or hard copy dependent on tenant's choice.	Customer satisfaction for Indicator 2 to increase to 83%.  Written information to tenants to encourage participation.  Annually Spring, Summer and Winter Newsletter to be distributed.	Ongoing	Tenant Participation Officer/Housing Management Team	
			2. The Tenant Participation Officer along with Housing Management Team to continue to promote participation and engagement such as Resident Panel, Armchair Panel, Residents'	Increase participation by tenants.  Baseline attendance at groups and establish a stretch aim.	Ongoing.	Tenant Participation Officer/Housing Management Team	

Indicator.	Stats (to 31/03/22).	Stats (to 31/03/24 ).	Action.	Performance Measure.	Target.	Resource Requirement.	Completed.
			Groups, Facebook Page, etc in community.				
			3. Housing Management to use written resources to promote tenant participation to new/existing tenants.	Increase participation by tenants.  Baseline attendance at groups and establish a stretch aim.	Ongoing.	Housing Management Team	
			4. Arrange one off events to encourage participation	Create a diary of events for each year.	Annually in January.	Tenant Participation Officer	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to	61%.	71%.	1. Tenant Participation Officer along with Housing Management Team to continue to promote participation and engagement such as Resident Panel, Armchair Panel, Residents'	Customer satisfaction for Indicator 5 to increase to 77%.  Regular posts on Housing Service	Ongoing.	Tenant Participation Officer	

Indicator.	Stats (to 31/03/22).	Stats (to 31/03/24 ).	Action.	Performance Measure.	Target.	Resource Requirement.	Completed.
participate in their landlord's decision making processes (indicator 5).			Groups, Facebook Page, etc in community.	social media page evident.  Newsletter completed and distributed to ensure 100% coverage.	Annually Spring, Summer and Winter Newsletter to be distributed.		
			2. Tenant Participation Officer to continue to develop written information for tenants to encourage participation, inc. information on Council website/social media.	New material is made available on OIC website.	Ongoing.	Tenant Participation Officer	
			3. Arrange one off events to encourage participation.	Create a diary of events for each year.	Annually in January	Tenant Participation Officer	



Indicator.	Stats (to 31/03/22).	Stats (to 31/03/24).	Action.	Performance Measure.	Target.	Resource Requirement.	Completed.
			4. Tenant Participation Strategy Consultation to be completed and update based on outcomes.	Updated strategy to be reported to be taken to Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.	November 2024	Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness & Schoolcare Accommodation/ Tenant Participation Officer	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (indicator 7).	75%.	68%.	1. Review of dissatisfaction to be undertaken through a questionnaire/tenant engagement/focus group.	Customer satisfaction for Indicator 7 to increase to 75%. Service has clear understanding of areas of dissatisfaction and establishes an improvement agenda to rectify this.  Use of complaints/compliments	November 2024  Ongoing	Tenant Participation Officer  Team Manager (Resources)	

Indicator.	Stats (to 31/03/22).	Stats (to 31/03/24).	Action.	Performance Measure.	Target.	Resource Requirement.	Completed.
				information to evaluate.			
			2. Provide an abbreviated programme of works in respect windows, doors, kitchen, bathrooms and heating within newsletter.	Tenants to receive a planned programme of work via the newsletter.	October 2024/Ongoing	Team Manager (Maintenance & Heritage) Tenant Participation Officer	
			3. Undertake additional quality assurance of voids (10%) (In addition to NS & I processes).	To provide additional quality assurance of service.	Ongoing	Team Manager (Housing & Homelessness)	
Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months	91% (Figures from questionnaires rather than Survey).	89% (Figures from questionnaires rather than Survey).	1. Ongoing evaluation of complaints/compliments /comments being discussed with Measured Term Contractor/NSI on monthly basis.	Customer satisfaction for Indicator 12 to increase to 91%.  Discussion with Measured Term Contractor/NS & I on a monthly basis.	Ongoing	Service Manager (Housing Homelessness & Schoolcare Accommodation) Service Manager (Resources) Team Manager (Maintenance and Heritage)	

Indicator.	Stats (to 31/03/22).	Stats (to 31/03/24).	Action.	Performance Measure.	Target.	Resource Requirement.	Completed.
satisfied with repairs and maintenance service (indicator 12).						Data Analysts	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in (indicator 13).	67%.	59%.	1. Review of dissatisfaction to be undertaken through a questionnaire/tenant engagement/focus/data from IBP Consultants.	Customer satisfaction for Indicator 13 to increase to 67%.  Service has clear understanding of areas of dissatisfaction and establishes an improvement agenda to rectify this where possible and controlled by the Service.	November 2024.	Tenant Participation Officer.	

Indicator.	Stats (to 31/03/22).	Stats (to 31/03/24 ).	Action.	Performance Measure.	Target.	Resource Requirement.	Completed.
Percentage of tenants who feel the rent for their property represents good value for money (indicator 25).	69%.	64%.	1. Completion of SHN Value for Money return to enable Service to focus on cost of services provided including (apportioned costs), efficiency and to benchmark spend and performance against other Councils.	Customer satisfaction for Indicator 25 to increase to 70%.  Completion of SHN Value for Money return.	Annually	Head of Service/Service Manager (Resources)/Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness & Schoolcare Accommodation) /Data Analysts	
			2. Annual Rent Consultation with tenants.	Consultation evaluated and suggested rent levels reported to Education, Leisure and Housing for rent setting.	Annually	Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness & Schoolcare Accommodation) Team Manager (Housing & Homelessness) Data Analysts	
			3. Increase reporting through newsletter to tenants, social media post regarding how	Regular reports within newsletter/social media posts.	Ongoing	Tenant Participation Officer	

Indicator.	Stats (to 31/03/22).	Stats (to 31/03/24 ).	Action.	Performance Measure.	Target.	Resource Requirement.	Completed.
			tenant's rent money is used.				