



Better homes, better lives

Annual Report to Tenants

Dumfries and Galloway
Housing Partnership
Highlights and performance
2019/20



Welcome to the Annual Report to Tenants for 2019/20. You'll find information about our performance over the year and what we achieved by working with our tenants and communities.

The report is based on the key indicators we give the Scottish Housing Regulator.



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Welcome from DGHP Chair Maureen Dowden



The unprecedented events in March 2020 challenged DGHP – our communities, tenants and staff – as never before.

But while the coronavirus crisis overshadowed the year, and will continue to do so for a long time to come, DGHP responded in the interests of its customers and staff.

Of course, this was also the year DGHP formally joined Wheatley Group. A huge majority of tenants who took part in the ballot in November 2019 – 95.5% – voted in support of the partnership. The result of the vote, which saw a 75.3% turnout, meant the partnership formally took place in December last year.

We are already working closely with our partners in Wheatley as part of our Transformation Programme to deliver the partnership commitments, sharing expertise and resources to provide more benefits and value for money for all DGHP tenants.

At the start of lockdown, we successfully transferred 93 employees into our in-house repairs service to help us invest in the service and deliver improvements.

The coronavirus crisis led to a temporary halt to many of our activities, including our investment and new build programmes. However, we were on site with 49 new homes over the financial year and invested more than £23m in planned improvements to existing homes.

The aftermath of the Covid-19 outbreak will continue to test us as an organisation in the months and years ahead. But our Transformation Programme, and our strong position as part of Wheatley Group, mean we can face the future confident in our ability to respond to whatever challenges it brings.

Landlord self-assurance is at the heart of the Scottish Housing Regulator's approach to regulation. An important element of this is our Annual Assurance Statement. We have assessed compliance against the relevant regulatory requirements and the Wheatley Group Board considered evidence at its meeting on 28 October 2020. The Wheatley Group Board has confirmed that all Registered Social Landlords which are part of Wheatley Housing Group Limited – GHA, Dunedin Canmore Housing, Cube Housing Association, Loretto Housing Association, West Lothian Housing Partnership, Barony Housing Association and Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership – comply with all relevant requirements set out in the regulatory framework. The full statement is available to view at www.wheatley-group.com We also comply with the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This Annual Report provides an assessment of our performance against the outcomes and standards.

Supporting our customers

This year has been a difficult and challenging time for everyone.

At DGHP, we have been determined to support our tenants and communities in every way we can, particularly through the pandemic.

As well as the difficulties posed by the coronavirus crisis, more than a fifth of Wheatley customers are now on Universal Credit (UC), an increase of almost 10% from last year. In DGHP, a quarter of customers are now in receipt of Universal Credit.

We continued to support our customers through the challenges they faced, particularly around the five-week delay in getting their first payment.

DGHP advisors helped customers claim over £1.4million in benefits they were entitled to last year, and over the next 12 months we will continue to do all we can to support customers cope with the difficulties posed by UC.



The Scrutiny Panel met with senior managers and staff to discuss how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted services and was pleased to see additional support, such as EatWell food packages, increased money and benefits advice, technology for children and other support for the homeless being given to vulnerable tenants and families. The Panel fully supports these additional measures being implemented from day one of the pandemic. It was reassuring to know that no one was left behind.

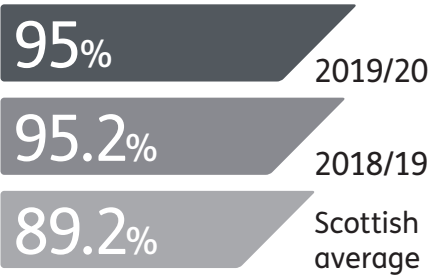
When the coronavirus crisis struck in March, we massively expanded the help we provide to our vulnerable customers. Our emergency food service EatWell, for example, has delivered over 3400 lifeline food packages to people in need in Dumfries and Galloway since the start of the crisis.

We know the pandemic and the challenges it has brought will be with us for some time. We remain committed to supporting our tenants and communities, now and through the uncertainties of the future.



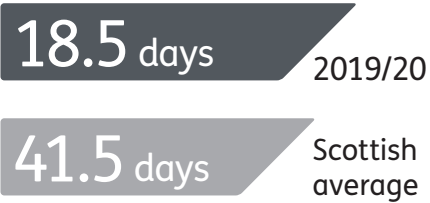
Overall satisfaction

Tenants satisfied with the overall service



Medical adaptations

Average time to complete approved applications for medical adaptations (calendar days)



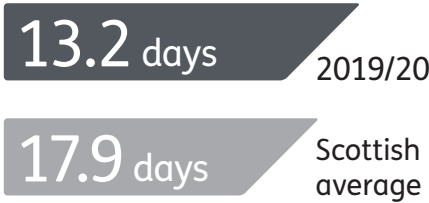
Complaints - Stage 1

Average time for full response to complaints (working days)



Complaints - Stage 2

Average time for full response to complaints (working days)




Improving our services

Despite the economic challenges our communities continue to face, we can once again report a strong and improving performance in 2019/20 in many of the areas we measure.

96%


Tenants who feel DGHP is good at keeping them informed



★

★

★



Overall customer satisfaction at DGHP remained high – at 95% – and the number of tenants satisfied with opportunities for participating in decision-making was at 95%.

The percentage of tenants who felt DGHP was good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions stood at 96%.


Tenant satisfaction with the repairs service was at 92%, and tenants’ satisfaction with DGHP’s

contribution to the management of their neighbourhood was at 93%.
The percentage of DGHP tenants who feel their rent is good value for money was at 90%.

95%

Overall customer satisfaction





Wheatley Group Scrutiny Panel

The Panel is pleased to see continued strong performance in overall customer satisfaction. Over the coming year we will monitor performance across all other aspects of customer satisfaction, including satisfaction with opportunities to participate and with rent as value for money.

Homes and communities

Building new homes

Despite all the challenges we faced this year, DGHP was on site with 49 new affordable homes over the year, all for social rent.

When completed, our new homes will include 32 in Lincluden, 12 in Sanquhar and five in Monreith.

Investing in our homes

In 2019/20, we delivered £23.8million of planned improvements in our homes and communities.

This included:

- £4.1m on external wall insulation
- £3.9m on new heating systems and boilers
- £3.6m on new windows and doors

Improving our neighbourhoods

Creating safe neighbourhoods where people are proud to live remained one of our priorities.

Throughout the year we carried out improvements to open spaces within our communities.

Our housing officers maintain strong connections within our communities to ensure our tenants continue to live in a peaceful and vibrant environment.

Tenants' satisfaction with DGHP's contribution to the management of their neighbourhood was at 93%.



We know local services and improvements are very important to tenants and we welcome the opportunity for tenants to improve their neighbourhoods. We will continue to review customer satisfaction with the management of neighbourhoods over the coming year.



Self-contained Stock								
Stock by type, apartment size and rent	House	High rise	Tenement	4 in a block	Other flat/maisonette	Total wholly owned stock	Number of lettable units	Average weekly rent
1 Apt						0		
2 Apt	1460		890	304	194	2848	2779	£74.01
3 Apt	2951		693	700	61	4405	4334	£80.83
4 Apt	2206		252	219	3	2680	2604	£86.82
5 Apt +	294		3	7	0	304	302	£94.34
Total Self-contained	6911	0	1838	1230	258	10237	10019	£80.90

Your repairs service

When the pandemic struck in March, we were only able to provide a restricted repairs service, with the safety of our tenants and staff always our top priority.

However, before then, we continued our mission to improve our repairs and maintenance service. This included:

- transferring 93 employees of Morgan Sindall Property Services into the business under TUPE
- introducing cutting-edge ICT including Dynamic Resource Scheduling to improve response times and reduce costs; and
- rolling out training for the incoming and existing teams.

These changes will help our repairs service become more efficient and bring better value to customers.



We were delighted that tenant satisfaction with the repairs service was at 92%, slightly up from 91.7% the previous year.

Emergency repairs took an average of 2.3 hours, the same as last year. Non emergencies took 8.4 working days, up slightly from last year's figure of 7.8 days.

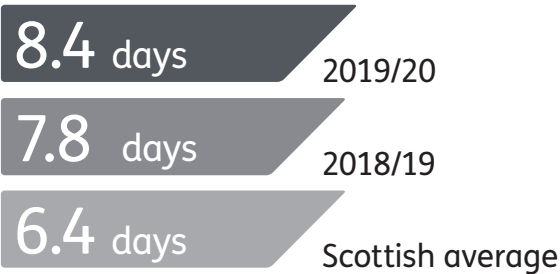
A total of 83.5% of repairs were completed right first time, down from last year's figure of 93%.

We are continuing – under the current pandemic restrictions – to provide as wide a range of services as possible.

We are working hard to reintroduce a full repairs service as quickly as we can and when it is safe to do so.

Non-emergency repairs

Average time to complete non-emergency repairs

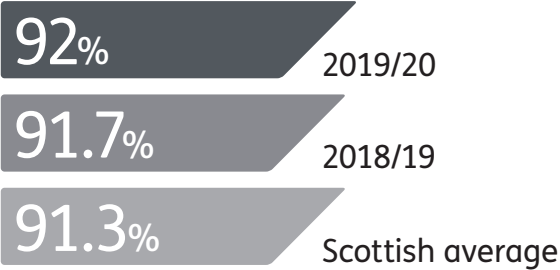


Gas safety

Like all social landlords, DGHP has a statutory obligation to carry out gas safety checks in tenants' homes within 12 months of a gas appliance being fitted or its last check. We completed all the required gas safety checks for the year 2019/20 on time.

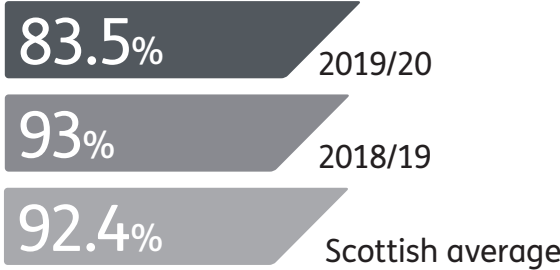
Repairs and maintenance


Satisfaction with repairs or maintenance in last 12 months



Reactive repairs

Reactive repairs completed right first time





The Panel concluded their review of the repairs service from the customer point of view, including repairs completed right first time and quality of repair. Our aim was to identify what works well and identify areas for refinement that are now being actioned. We will continue to review customer satisfaction with other aspects of the service over the next twelve months.

Rent and value for money

We understand many people will continue to face challenges as we live with the impacts of coronavirus.

That’s why it’s more important than ever that tenants feel their homes and services are good value for money.



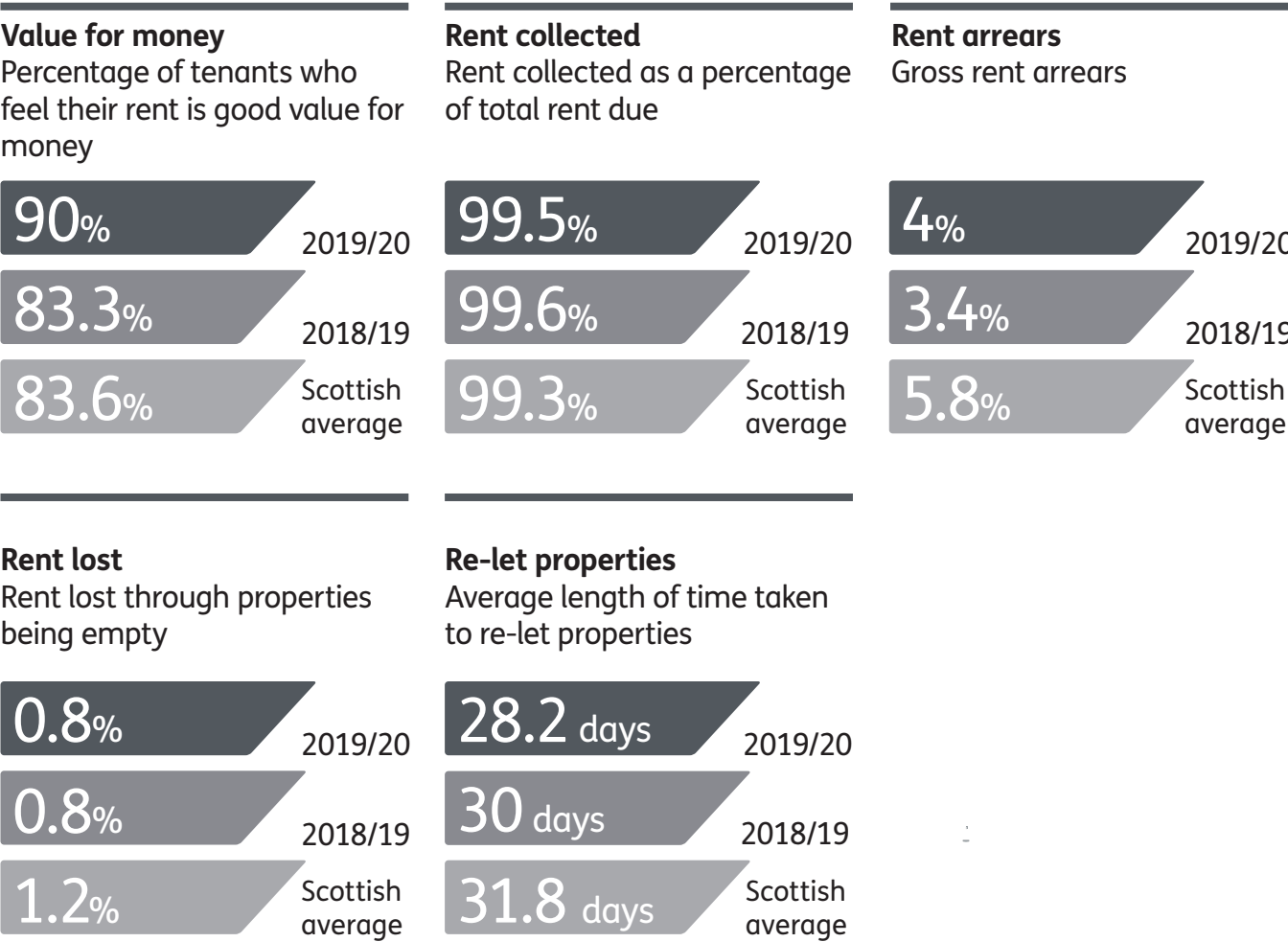
In 2019/20 the percentage of tenants who felt the rent for their home represented good value for money was 90%, up from 83.3% the year before.

Moving on to Universal Credit caused unprecedented challenges for many of our customers and we worked hard to help them access support available and to pay their rent and other household bills.

Our gross rent arrears increased to 4%, up from 3.4% the previous year, while rent collection – at 99.5% – remained steady despite the economic difficulties facing our communities.

The partnership between DGHP and Wheatley will see rent increases capped at 2% for the first three years, as well as accelerated investment in our tenants’ homes.

We will continue to do all we can to help our tenants overcome the challenges they face and ensure they feel their homes and services are good value for money.



Engaging with customers

In what has been a difficult year for everyone, engaging more effectively with our communities became more important than ever.

At DGHP, we have been determined to engage with and support our communities in every way we can.

95%
Tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision-making



We engaged with more people online than ever before. More than 5700 people now follow our DGHP Facebook and Twitter pages. Our housing officers introduced new ways of talking with customers online, for example through Whatsapp and Zoom.

We also engaged with 1,846 customers over the year through supporting community and tenant groups, carrying out talks on housing in schools throughout the region and holding focus groups and consultation sessions.

The percentage of tenants who felt DGHP was good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions was at 96%, up slightly from last year's figure of 95.6%, while the percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision-making stood at 95%, up from 94.5%.

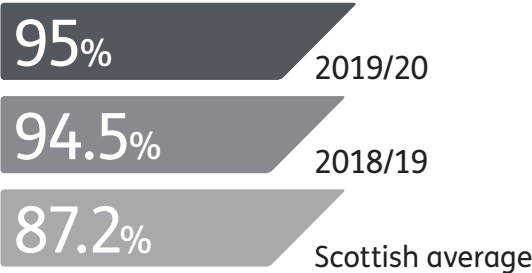
We will continue to do all we can to engage with tenants as much as we can and to support our communities 24/7.

Our commitment to increasing the number of our housing officers, and to create patch sizes of just 200, will help us develop an even closer working relationship with customers during 2020/21.



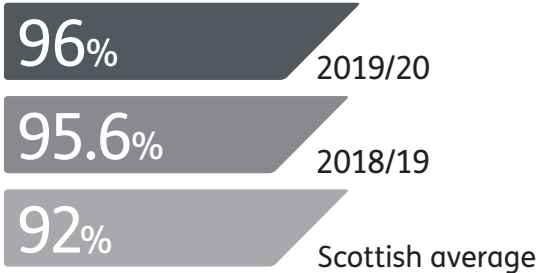
Decision making

Percentage of tenants who were happy with opportunities to participate



Keeping you informed

Tenants satisfied with their landlord keeping them informed about their services and decisions



Are you happy with how information is presented in this report? We can use your feedback to help improve things for other people. Email us at customerservice@dghp.org.uk or phone us on 0800 011 3447.

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