

2020 - 2021

 With head
& heart



Annual Tenants' Report



**Welcome from
CEO**
see page 2

**Housing and
Maintenance**
see page 5

Finance
see page 14

**Why we write this
report**
see page 4

**Customer
Service**
see page 8



Click the menu icon to
return to this page



Ark[®] People Housing Care

arkha.org.uk

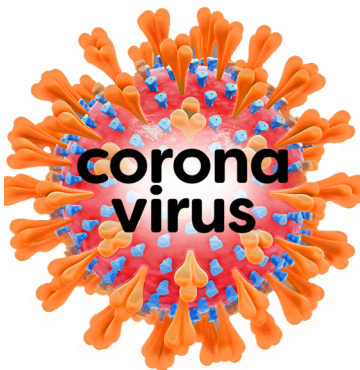
Welcome

Bobby Duffy
Ark Chief Executive



Welcome to Ark's annual report for our tenants. This report will tell you how Ark is doing as landlord.

This report is about the period from April 2020 to March 2021, which is when Covid-19 had the greatest impact on all of our lives. I hope you and your families have stayed well.



The Covid-19 restrictions meant that all non-essential housing and maintenance activities had to stop. We could only carry out emergency repairs or things like gas safety checks.

The housing and maintenance teams kept providing excellent services and I thank them for their work during this difficult time.

We were able to carry out a tenant's survey at the end of 2020. This survey told us how happy you are with Ark as your landlord.

Thank you if you responded to this. If you did not respond, please do so the next time, as we want to hear from you.



These are some of the areas we did well:

- 97% of repairs were completed right first time.
- 94% of tenants who moved into their home in the previous year were still in that home a year later.



These are some of the areas we could do better:

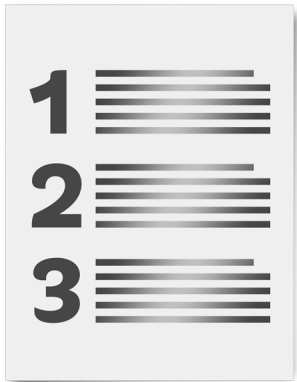
- 54% of those who responded to the survey said they were happy with the opportunities to have a say in Ark.
- It took a little longer to respond to emergency repairs, from 3 to 5 hours.

We are now in year 2 of the business plan and we are working on:

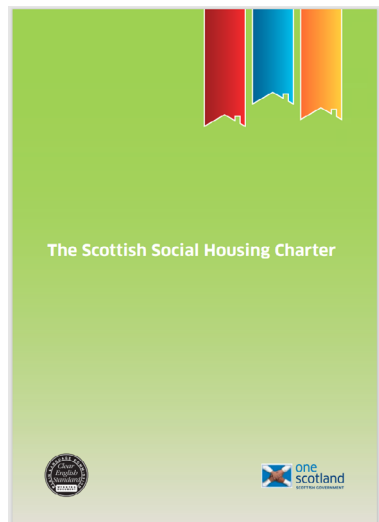
- Putting together a Tenant Scrutiny Group
- Creating a Community Benefit Fund to improve your community.
- Reviewing our repair service to make it better.

I hope you enjoy reading this annual report and if you have any questions, please speak to the housing and maintenance teams.

Bobby



Why we write this report



It is the law that all social landlords like Ark must follow the standards set in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

The Charter tells you what you should expect from us.
The Charter says that we must have this annual report to tell you how well we are doing as a landlord.



This year we asked you what you wanted to see in the annual report. 25 tenants replied to us.
We listened to them and we included information they said was important to them.

The report has 3 sections:

- Housing & Maintenance
- Customer service
- Finance



Housing & Maintenance

Quality of housing



Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)

Social landlords must make sure their tenants' homes:

- are energy efficient, safe and secure
- not seriously damaged
- have kitchens and bathrooms that are in good condition

This year:

- Not all our properties meet the SHQS and other housing associations are doing better than us.

Our plans to get our properties to SHQS standard had to stop because of Covid-19 restrictions. We will catch up on this work.

- Fewer tenants are happy with the quality of their home this year.

In our Winter Newsletter we will have an update on our 2 new build sites at Penicuik and Livingston.



Housing & Maintenance

Quality of housing



Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)



The Scottish Government put this in place to encourage landlords to make their properties warmer and more insulated. This will help the environment and the tenants' pocket!



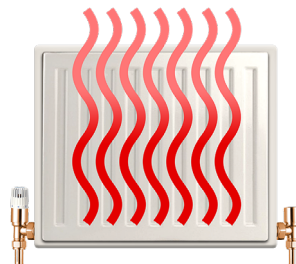
- We have 230 properties that meet this standard.



- We need to work on 41 properties that do not meet this standard.

Housing & Maintenance

Repairs



This year:

- We spent money for new boilers, new heating, new bathroom and repairs.
- Emergency repairs took longer than last year.
- Non-emergency repairs took the same time as last year and we are still doing better than other organisations.
- We could not carry out 1 gas safety check because we did not have access to the property.



Customer Service



Tenant Participation



Tenant participation are all those opportunities to have a say in Ark and the housing service you get.

The law says that landlords must include and support tenants to take part.



In this photo for example Ark tenants in Inverurie were planting trees for Scottish Housing Day. Ark funded this activity through the Utilita Community Fund.



This year:

- Slightly more tenants said Ark is good at keeping them informed.

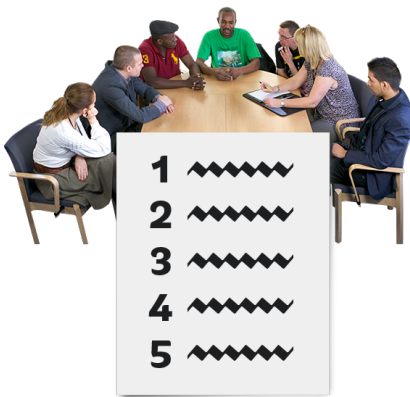


- Fewer tenants are happy with the opportunities to have a say in Ark.



The Covid-19 restrictions made it difficult for our housing team to visit tenants. However they continued to keep in touch through:

- newsletters
- phone calls
- online events
- questionnaires
- the tenants' survey



They also set up a new **Tenant Group**. This group will look at the way Ark does things and it will make recommendations to the Ark Board of Management.

Customer Service



Positive feedback & complaints



‘Thanks again for all your help over the past year and a bit. It was delightful having you as a housing officer!’

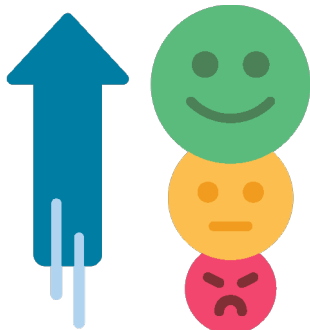
‘I used to tell my colleagues to think, not just of technicalities but, how would you hope to be treated if you were in the same position. You have done this in this instance and my wife and I are exceedingly grateful!’

This year:



- We received 11 complaints about our housing and maintenance services. We responded to all of them.
- It took us a bit longer to respond to complaints.

Learning from complaints



The issue: one of our tenants was not happy about the way they had to make an appointment with one of our contractors.

What we did: the Maintenance Officer sorted the issue and we are now looking at how we can have a better repair service.



The issue: the relative of a supported tenant made a complaint as he was frustrated at the lack of repairs and decoration.

What we did: we decided to review how we communicate with our customers.

Customer Service



Tenancy Sustainment

Tenancy sustainment is the support we give you to keep your home.

It starts when we decide who should get a property:

- We make sure all the checks are completed.
- We carry out face to face interviews to explain the tenancy agreement.
- We then visit the new tenant after 8 weeks to check that everything is ok.
- We also visit once a year to provide more support and information.



This year:

- The vast majority of new tenants stayed with us. We are doing better than other housing associations.
- Between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 we carried out 27 'settling in visits'. The majority of these visits were carried out virtually or via a telephone call due to Covid- 19.



Customer Service



Anti-social behaviour

We want you to be happy in your home. We make sure that any issues of anti-social behaviour are dealt with as quickly as possible.



This year:

- Fewer anti-social behaviour cases were reported. We resolved them all.
- The same amount of tenants are happy with how we manage their neighbourhood. Other housing associations do better than us.



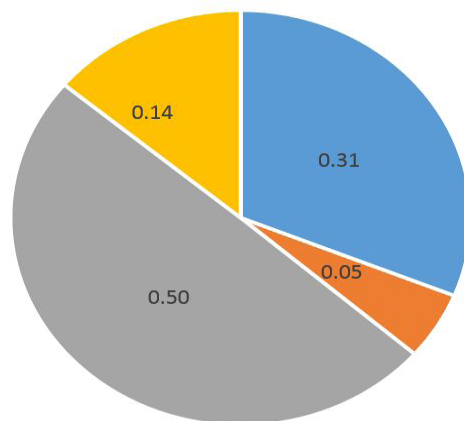
Finance



How do we spend your rent?

How £1 of Rent is Spent

■ Staff Costs
■ Loan Costs
■ Property Repairs & Improvements
■ Other Running Costs



All of the rent is put back into services and used to improve properties.

In this pie chart you can see how we spent every £1 of rent collected in 2020-2021.



This year:

- It took us longer to re-let properties. This was because the lockdown restrictions meant people could not move between local authorities areas.
- We did not take court actions against any tenants for non-payment of rent.



Finance



Value for money



In 2020 we asked you if your home and our housing service is good value for money. 169 tenants took part in the survey.

The majority of those who replied said yes, it is.



Every year we ask you how much we should increase the rent. Our latest consultation was in December 2020. The Board of Management agreed with people who responded that there will be an increase in the rent charge for 2021-2022 by 2.6%.



As part of our new business plan the housing team will review all of the service charges to make sure that they are good value for money.

We hope that you enjoyed reading our 2020/2021 Annual Report.

Please let us know what you think of this report by completing the feedback form.

Each year we ask tenants what they want to see in the report.

If you would like to be take part in creating next year's annual report please let us know.



Housing Services Team Contacts

housing@arkha.org.uk
0131 478 8146



Property Services Team Contacts

repairs@arkha.org.uk
0131 478 8143