

**CUSTOMER
APPROVED**

Landlord Report to Tenants **2020**



Welcome to Falkirk Council's Landlord Report

This report is to update you on how your Housing Service performed in 2019/20, in our annual Charter return to the Scottish Housing Regulator. Our tenants and residents groups have helped design the report, to show what is most important to them.

We have continued over the last year to make positive changes to our Housing Service. This includes:

- Your Housing Officer being in contact more frequently with you.
- Reports of antisocial behaviour are now all handled by our dedicated Conflict Resolution Service
- Consulting with you on changes to our Allocations Policy
- Successfully bringing over 470 empty homes back into use since 2013
- Full ISO accreditation for the Housing Service
- Winning an award at the national Tenant Participation in Scotland (TPAS) awards for performance reporting, for a video developed to go along with the Landlord Report
- Gold TPAS accreditation for our tenant participation service
- Continued progress with our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, to improve homelessness outcomes

We will continue to invest in your home, with £155m of improvements set out in our Housing Investment Programme over five years. We will also provide 200 new homes a year.

Where we want to increase performance in certain areas, we have looked at these more closely and put improvement plans in place.

This report covers the period from April 2019 to March 2020, before the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has presented significant challenges to us as a Housing service, in how we deliver our services and support our tenants. We have done all we can to ensure services run as smoothly as possible. We are also making improvements to how we work digitally, so we can make services more accessible to you.

However, we do expect to see significant changes in some areas of our performance next year as a result of the pandemic.

To compare with other landlords across Scotland, view our Engagement Plan or Annual Assurance Statement or find out more about the Charter, you can visit the Scottish Housing Regulator's website at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

We hope you find the information in the report useful and easy to understand. If you want to know more, or become more actively involved in helping us improve our service, you can email inspector.tenant@falkirk.gov.uk or call us on 01324 506070.

We would like to thank all tenants and residents, whether you are involved in our groups or not, for your feedback and participation. By telling us what you think, this allows us to shape our service as it continues to change and improve in these challenging times.

Kenny Gillespie
Head of Housing & Communities

Our Properties and Rent

Indicator C17

Stock by House Type, Apartment Sizes and Average Weekly Rents

	House	High Rise	Tenement	Four in a Block	Other Flat/Maisonette	Total
1 Apartment	0	0	0	0	20	20
2 Apartment	605	361	327	417	989	2699
3 Apartment	2857	617	1634	2797	918	8823
4 Apartment	3367	0	462	432	211	4472
5+ Apartment	434	0	3	41	17	495
Total	7263	978	2426	3687	2155	16509

	Total Number of Lettable Units	Average Weekly Rent (calculated on lettable units)	Scottish Average
1 Apartment	19	£51.62	£73.42
2 Apartment	2630	£58.19	£77.44
3 Apartment	8678	£68.09	£79.44
4 Apartment	4427	£76.13	£86.20
5+ Apartment	495	£87.35	£95.29
Total	16249	£69.24	£80.76

Indicator C5

Rent increase to be applied next year

We consulted with all tenants on our rent increase in late 2019. Our average rent was the sixth lowest of Scottish local authorities who have housing stock.

3.0%
Falkirk Council

2.49%
Scottish Average

2020-21

2020-21 3%

2019-20 3%

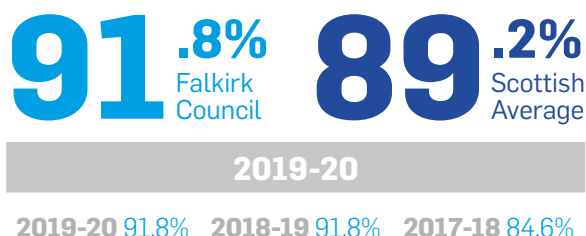
2018-19 3.6%

Customer Landlord Relationship

Indicator 1

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord

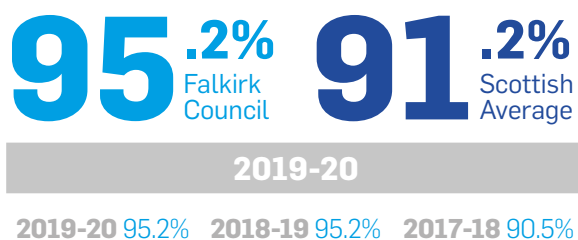
Our last Tenant Satisfaction Survey was carried out in December 2018. We surveyed 1000 people face to face, asking a variety of questions about the service, including how satisfied our tenants are. We are required by the Scottish Housing Regulator to carry out these large scale surveys at least every three years.



Indicator 2

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

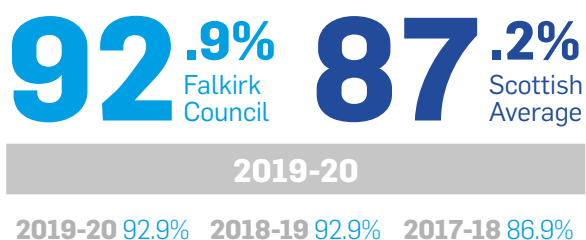
This information was collected in our last Tenants Satisfaction Survey carried out in December 2018. We have listened to what our tenants have told us about preferred methods of communication, and made changes to reflect this.



Indicator 5

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

We have been awarded the Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Gold accreditation for our work involving our tenants in decision making. Recent tenant surveys have found that most tenants are happy with communication and engagement as options for involvement (i.e. to give/receive information through publications, surveys, complaints and comments etc.), but less likely to be involved through participation or scrutiny (i.e. form an Registered Tenants Organisation, be part of a focus group or panel etc.). However, we continue to promote all options for involvement, and encourage as many tenants and customers to give us their views, in a way they are comfortable with.

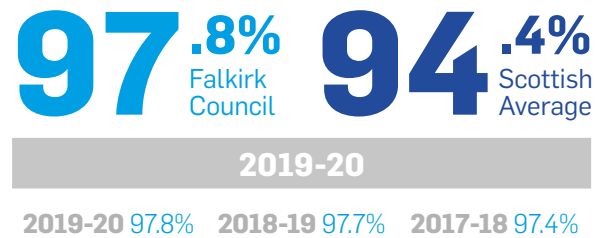


Housing Quality And Maintenance

Indicator 6

Percentage of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) at the reporting year end

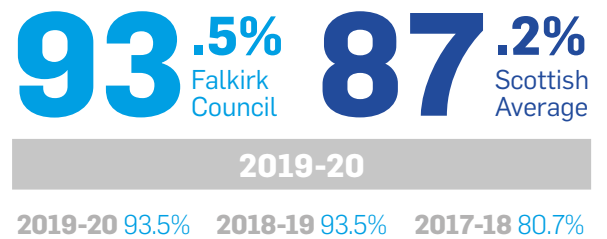
A five year investment programme is in place to ensure our stock continues to be maintained to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by December 2020. We will continue to work to reduce the number of properties not currently meeting the standards. However, several of these are due to non-participation by private owners in communal works, where the Council is not in the majority.



Indicator 7

Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home

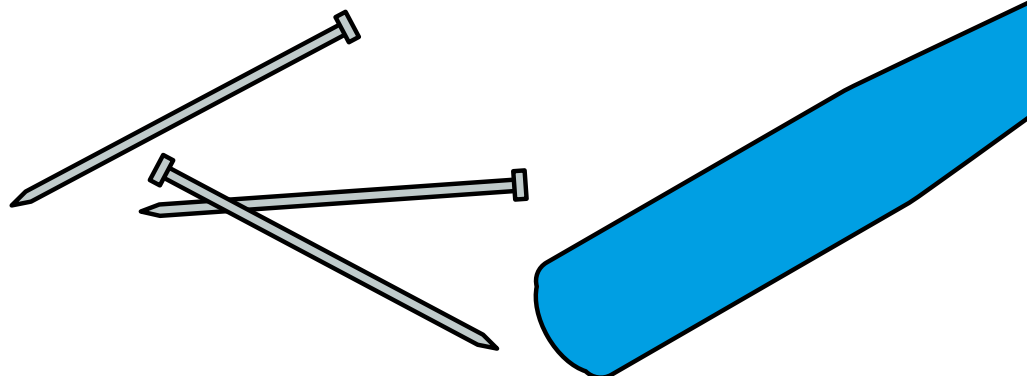
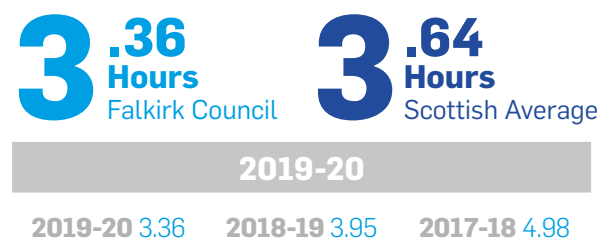
This indicator was last surveyed in our Tenant Satisfaction Survey in December 2018. We continue to invest in our tenants homes, with £155m of spending planned in five years in our Housing Investment Programme. This work includes replacement of windows and doors, energy efficiency works, external improvements to properties, and improving our estates.



Indicator 8

Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)

Emergency repairs continue to be carried out within our target timescales. While we perform well, we are aware that the volume of emergency repairs remains high. A review of the repairs reporting process is on-going, with the aim of identifying measures to reduce the volume of emergency work and support improvement in repairs timescales overall.



Indicator 9

Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (days)

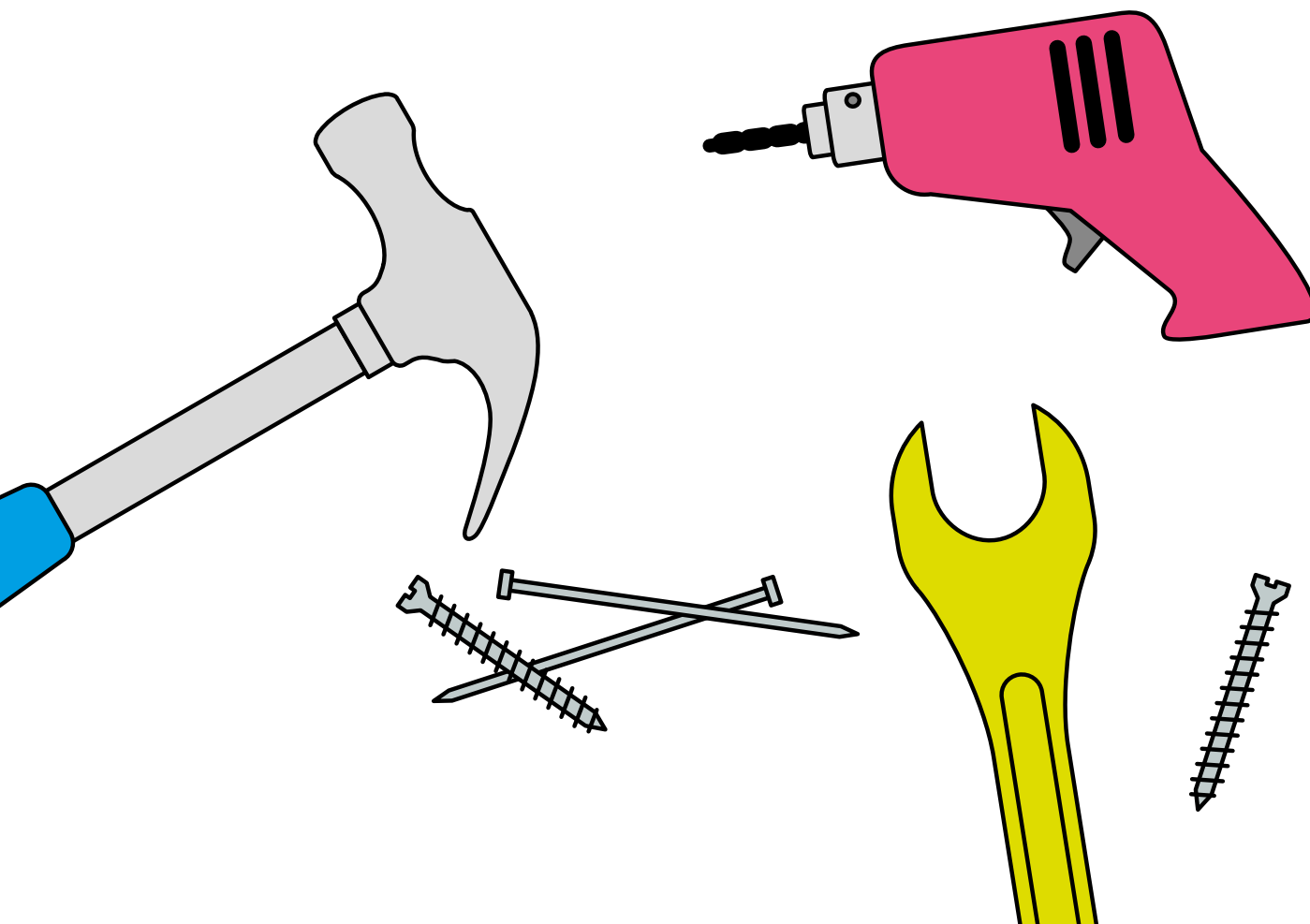
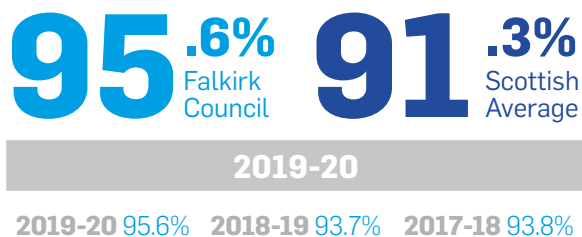
Non-emergency repairs continue to be carried out within our target timescales. We have reduced our average timescales by improving call handling and scheduling of repairs appointments. By carrying out fewer emergency repairs, this will also leave more opportunities to schedule appointments for routine works.



Indicator 12

Satisfaction with repairs service

Repairs satisfaction data is collected throughout the year, through online and telephone methods advertised to all tenants reporting repairs. We also contact a number of tenants after their repairs are complete. While we are pleased to see satisfaction rates increase, we are also looking to increase the number of survey returns we receive.

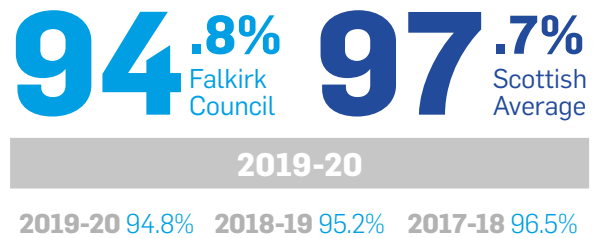


Neighbourhood & Community

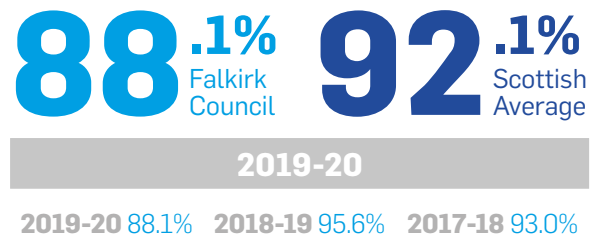
Indicator 3

Percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 1

We have a strong focus in the service to ensure that complaints are responded to in full, however, a small number will inevitably cross over reporting years and mean this figure is under 100%.



Percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 2



Indicator 4

The average time in working days for a full response at Stage 1 (complaints)

This is a new indicator for this year, and so cannot be compared against previous years. We always try to answer complaints as quickly as possible, and within the required timescales. We will continue to focus on the value which complaints bring and the trends which underlie the figures. We will aim to use complaints as a tool to help us identify areas where our service can be improved, and to drive that improvement.



The average time in working days for a full response at Stage 2 (complaints)



* Indicator 4 was revised in 2019/20, so no comparative data available for previous years.

Indicator 13

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the contribution to the management of the neighbourhood that they live in

This indicator improved in our large scale Tenants' Satisfaction Survey in December 2018. Our Housing Operations staff are now working in a more mobile and flexible manner, making them more visible and approachable in our communities.

94.3% Falkirk Council **87.4%** Scottish Average

2019-20

2019-20 94.3% 2018-19 94.3% 2017-18 92.3%

Indicator 14

Percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year

We operate a Choice Based Letting System, and in 2019/20, all applicants could receive two offers of housing. We monitor reasons for refusal of properties. Following consultation with tenants and applicants, we introduced a new Allocations Policy in October 2020, which should help us improve refusal rates in future.

36.7% Falkirk Council **34.2%** Scottish Average

2019-20

2019-20 36.7% 2018-19 30.4% 2017-18 28.9%

Indicator 15

Percentage of antisocial behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved

This indicator has changed this year, and so cannot be compared to previous year's performance. From 1 July 2019, we centralised handling of antisocial behaviour cases to our Conflict Resolution Service. This has allowed us to deal with cases in a quicker and more streamlined way.

91.2% Falkirk Council **94.1%** Scottish Average

2019-20

2019-20 91.2% 2018-19 n/a* 2017-18 n/a*

* Indicator 15 was revised in 2019/20, so no comparative data available for previous years

Indicator 22

Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction

The percentage of court actions initiated that resulted in eviction has reduced from fairly stable position in last three years. This is due to an improved focus across the service on all proposed evictions, particularly where children are in the household. This both delays evictions and makes eviction less likely, while alternative measures are sought to support tenants.

10.0% Falkirk Council **n/a***

2019-20

2019-20 10.0% 2018-19 14.6% 2017-18 15.4%

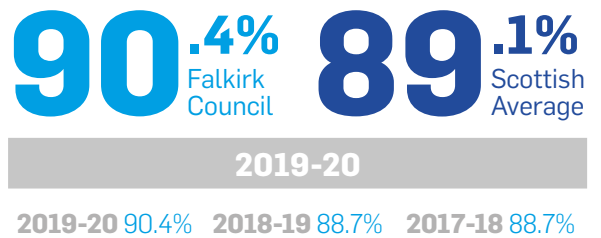
* We do not compare this indicator against other authorities, as it would not be appropriate to set a target for evictions.

Access To Housing And Support

Indicator 16

Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year

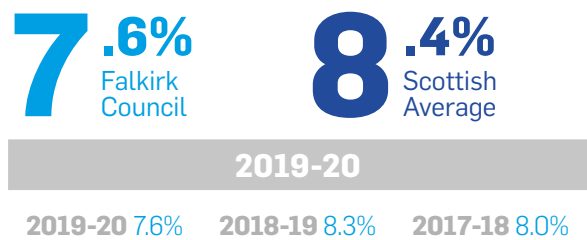
Our approach to tenancy sustainment is based on building a positive relationship with tenants and our frontline housing staff. We have also improved working practices, including a programme of annual visits, reviewing how we deal with rent arrears, and ways we can support tenants with other Council services. These have all helped contribute to improvement in this indicator.



Indicator 17

Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant during the year

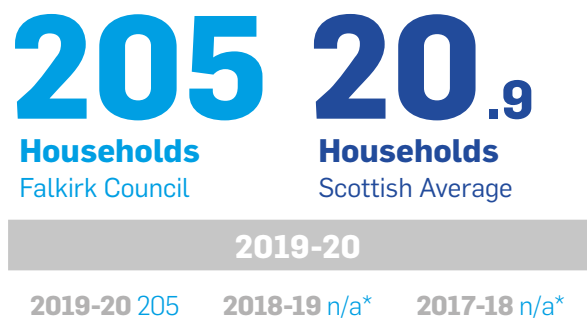
The percentage of lettable houses falling vacant in the last year has fallen slightly, however, this is in keeping with our increases in tenancy sustainment, reduced evictions and abandonments, and reduced numbers of properties being let in the last year.



Indicator 19

Number of households currently waiting for adaptations to their home

This indicator has changed this year, and so cannot be compared to previous year's performance. When comparing to the Scottish average, we are comparing against a number of much smaller landlords (including Housing Associations) who are carrying out fewer adaptations in a year. When comparing against other medium sized local authorities, the average figure is 103.8 households.



* Indicator 19 was revised in 2019/20, so no comparative data available for previous years.



Indicator 20

Total cost of adaptations completed in the year

This is a new indicator. We will monitor performance in this against other landlords, and our performance in future years. When comparing to the Scottish average, we are comparing against a number of much smaller landlords (including Housing Associations) who are carrying out fewer adaptations in a year. When comparing to other medium sized local authorities, the average cost of adaptations in the year is £769,374.56.

£1,265,733

Falkirk Council

£195,917

Scottish Average

2019-20

2019-20
£1,265,733

2018-19
n/a*

2017-18
n/a*

Indicator 21

The average time to complete adaptations (days)

This indicator has changed this year, and so cannot be compared directly to previous year's performance. However, the average time to complete adaptations has remained broadly similar to the last year, which was achieved with a higher number of adaptations completed within the year.

32 Days
Falkirk Council

41.5 Days
Scottish Average

2019-20

2019-20 32

2018-19 n/a*

2017-18 n/a*

* Indicators 20 and 21 were revised in 2019/20, so no comparative data available for previous years.

Indicator 30

Average time to re-let properties

We have recognised an increase in the average number of days to re-let void properties. This was due to a number of reasons, including staffing issues, increase in works required to fire damaged properties, and difficulties in implementing mobile working technology. We also had a larger number of properties which were re-advertised, leading to longer timescales in being let. A full review of how we manage void properties has been undertaken, involving all relevant parts of the service, to identify areas for improvement and how to action these. This has included a number of improvements to procedures. In addition, three new posts of Void Resource Officers were appointed, which has improved working relationships within the service. Cross service monthly meetings are held at an operational level to discuss findings of recent inspections, identify common themes and put improvements in place to assist future performance.

41.2 Days
Falkirk Council

31.8 Days
Scottish Average

2019-20

2019-20 41.2

2018-19 35.5

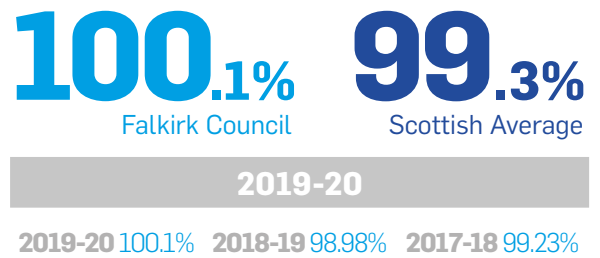
2017-18 31.8

Getting Good Value From Rents And Service Charges

Indicator 26

Rent collected as percentage of total rent due in the reporting year

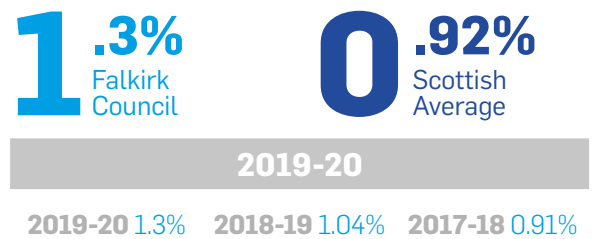
Our rent collection is usually based on a 364 day year, so every 5-6 years, rent is calculated over 53 weeks, as has happened in 2019/20. This has brought our performance over 100%, meaning that 2019/20 collection looks higher than previous years, despite the Covid-19 pandemic impacting on rent collection in March.



Indicator 18

Percentage of rent lost through homes being empty during the last year

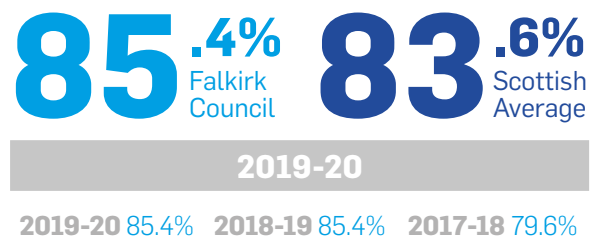
We have seen increased rent lost due to homes being empty, as average times to re-let properties have increased. A full review of how we manage void properties has been undertaken throughout this year, involving all relevant parts of the service, to identify areas for improvement and how to action these.



Indicator 25

Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money

We asked this question in large scale Tenants Satisfaction Survey in December 2018, so performance has not changed this year. We are currently looking at ways to communicate with our tenants about rent affordability and value for money.

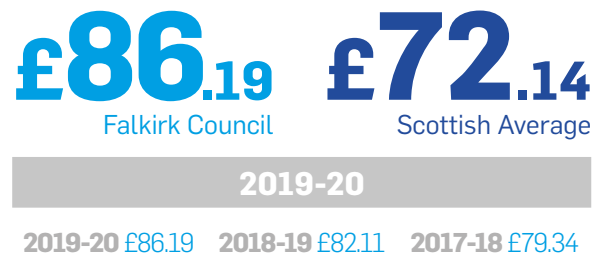


Other Customers

Indicator 31

Average weekly rent per pitch

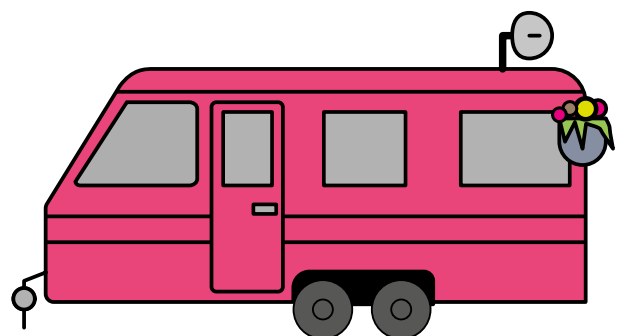
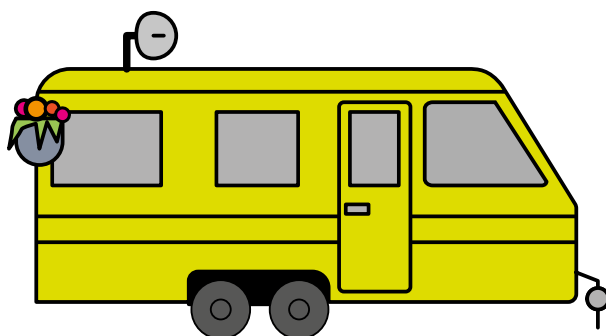
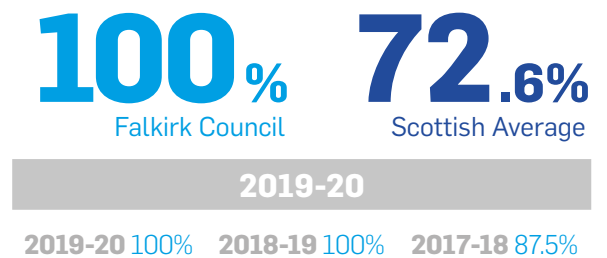
Our rents for the travelling persons site rise by 3%, in line with our other rents. The figure shown here is slightly higher than this, as we calculated this year's rent over 53 weeks, but the calculation of this indicator was made over 52 weeks.



Indicator 32

Satisfaction with management of site

Satisfaction with the management and standards of the travelling persons site remain high. A 'Travelling Person Site Tenants Association' was established last year, and have been supported to access funding to make improvements to the site. We also have a multi-agency approach in place, guided by the Scottish Government Travellers strategy, to ensure site residents have the same access to services as other tenants, and that specialist services are put in place as required.



Tenant Feedback Contact Details

Falkirk Council Community Engagement Team

The Forum
Callendar Business Park
Falkirk FK1 1XR
Tel: 01324 590796
Email: inspector.tenant@falkirk.gov.uk
Web: www.falkirk.gov.uk/inspectortenant

Scottish Housing Regulator

Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow G4 0HF
Tel: 0141 242 5642
Email: shr@shr.gov.scot

You can compare Falkirk Council's performance with other social landlords across Scotland, view our Engagement Plan, and learn more about the Charter by visiting the Scottish Housing Regulator's website at www.housingregulator.gov.scot

If you would like this information in another language, Braille, LARGE PRINT or audio tape, please contact one of our Advice & Support Hubs.

How can you get involved?

Falkirk Council's Inspector Tenant is here to help you tell us how Housing Services could improve its performance.

With your involvement, you will be able to tell us what you think about the services we provide, make suggestions on how we could do better, and check out how we are performing.

There are many ways that you can get involved and help Housing Services to keep you informed. These include:

- Tenants' & Residents' Forum
- Open Days
- Questionnaires & Surveys
- Comment Cards
- Consultation Register
- Customer Scrutiny Panel
- 'Make A Difference' Project Award Scheme
- Housing Asset Management Plan Group
- How Your Rent Money is Spent Group
- Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations
- Editorial Panel
- Estate Walkabouts

We are keen to keep in touch during the Covid-19 pandemic. If you would like to be involved using social media, please contact the Community Engagement Team on 01324 590796 or by email at tenant.participation@falkirk.gov.uk



Falkirk Council

www.falkirk.gov.uk/housing

