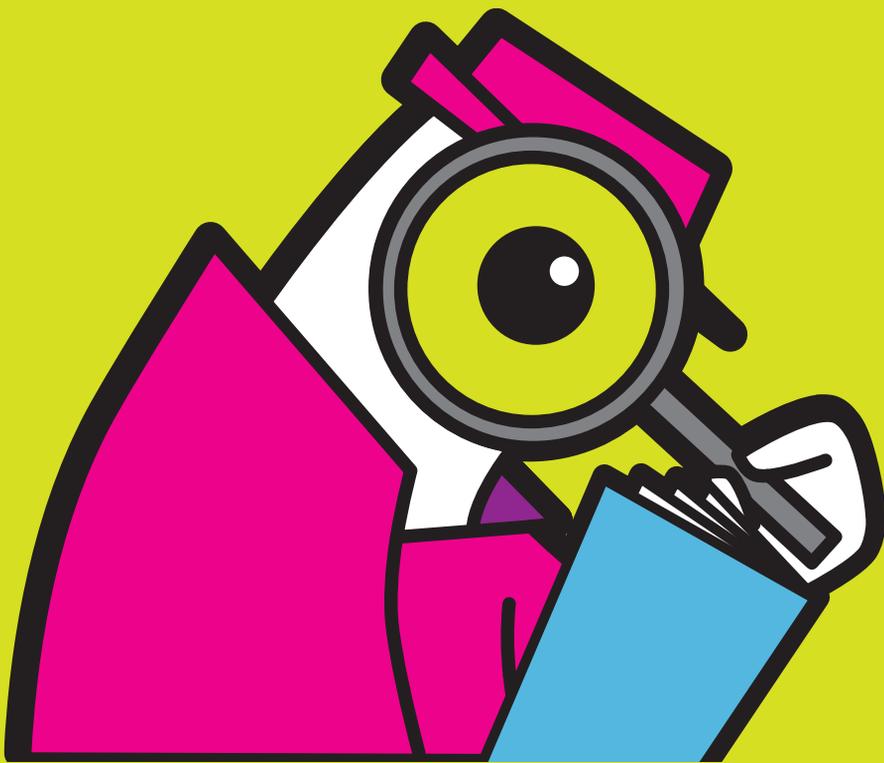


Landlord Report to Tenants 2014

TENANT
APPROVED





Content

Customer-Landlord Relationship	2
Housing Quality & Maintenance	3
Neighbourhood & Community	4
Access to Housing & Support	6
Getting Good Value for Rents & Service Charges	8
Other Customers	8
Context Indicators	8
How can you get involved?	9
Tenant Feedback	9
Contact Details	9



Welcome to Falkirk Council's first Landlord Report to you, our customers!

Whether you are a tenant or simply use the Housing Service for some other reason, it is important that you know how we perform as a landlord. This report, which was written in consultation with our tenants & residents, is designed to provide you with information on our performance.

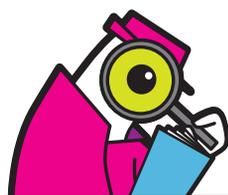
The content of the report follows the themes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, and provides performance information on:

- **Our relationship with you, our customers.**
- **The quality of the housing we provide you with and how well we maintain our homes for rent.**
- **How we manage your neighbourhood and community.**
- **How our customers can access housing from us and any support they require.**
- **Whether the rent we charge, or other service charges we make, represents value for money.**
- **What other customers (for example travelling people) think of the services we provide.**

For the first time ever, you can visit the Scottish Housing Regulator's website and see how our performance compares with other landlords across Scotland. You can do this by visiting <http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/> At the site, you can choose which landlords you want to compare us with.

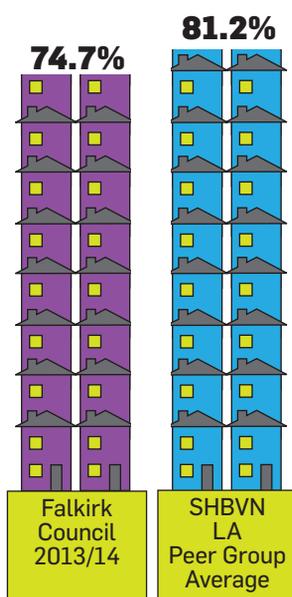
I hope you find the information in the report useful and easy to understand. If you want to know more, or be involved in scrutinising our performance, you can call Alan Christie (Community Engagement Co-ordinator) on 01324 590796 or by email at inspector.tenant@falkirk.gov.uk

Jennifer Litts
Head of Housing



How we have compared our Charter performance with other landlords: The Council is a member of the Scottish Housing Best Value Network, which helps us benchmark and compare our performance with other landlords. We have set out our Charter performance in each area against the average for Scottish Local Authorities under each performance indicator.

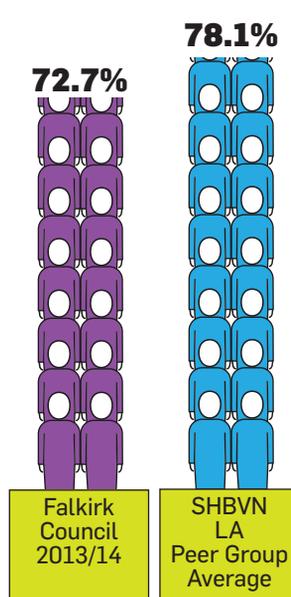
Customer- landlord relationship



Indicator 1
Percentage of tenants satisfied with our overall landlord service

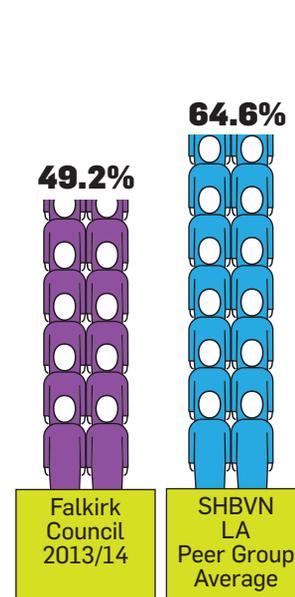
To improve our tenants' and customers' satisfaction with our overall service, we are listening to what you have told us about why you are dissatisfied. The recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey, which collected over 1,000 tenants views, told us that we need to communicate better with you on issues such as complaints and progress with repairs.

To help with this we have introduced a pilot scheme using new technology so we can update tenants in real time on progress with their repair.



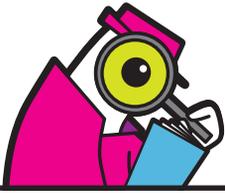
Indicator 3
Percentage of tenants who feel we are good at keeping them informed about our services and decisions

Generally, older tenants feel better-informed than our younger tenants. To increase satisfaction amongst this group, Falkirk Council has introduced a strategy for engaging with younger people, and we have redesigned our publicity, tenants' magazine, and our website to attract younger customers. We have also begun to use social media to help us engage with younger people more effectively.

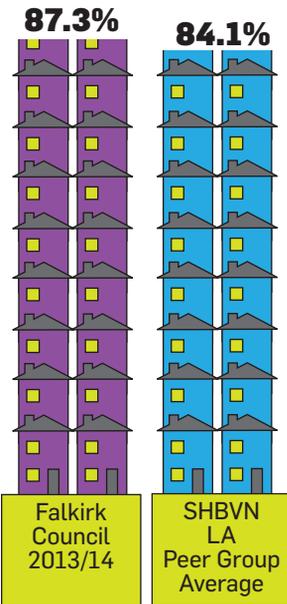


Indicator 6
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities to participate

Current performance varies across the age profile of tenants. Generally, younger tenants are less satisfied with the opportunities given to participate and be involved. The Housing Service is working in partnership with Education Services and Community Learning & Development to actively engage with younger people. We have also introduced a mascot called "Inspector Tenant" who will feature in publications and at events to promote involvement. We are currently producing a promotional DVD featuring tenants and customers who are already involved to encourage others to participate.

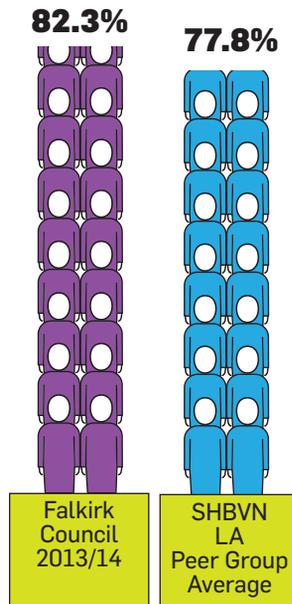


Housing quality & maintenance



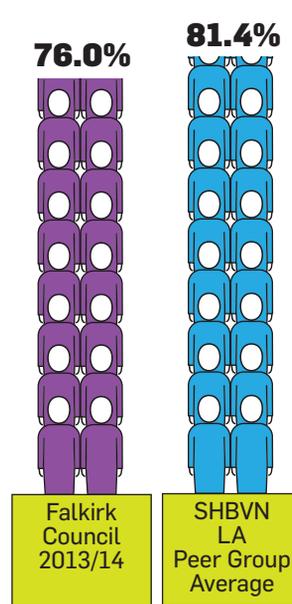
Indicator 7
Percentage of our stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)

We have an active investment programme in our houses to ensure we meet the SHQS. We anticipate all our properties will meet the Standard by the 2015 deadline.



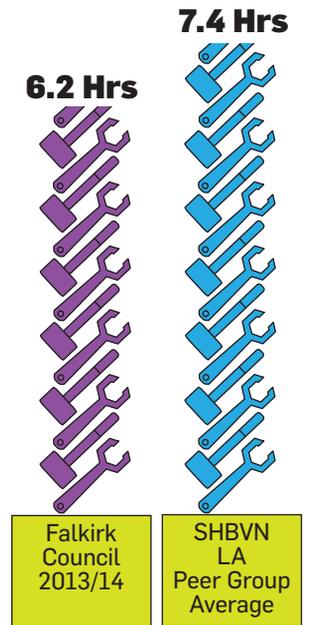
Indicator 9
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in

To continue to increase satisfaction, we have been asking our tenants and other customers what standards they would expect when they move into a Council property. A consultation exercise was completed in the Summer of 2014. We are now evaluating the information collected, and this information will form the basis of our new Empty Property Standard.



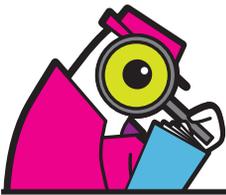
Indicator 10
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home

Satisfaction with the quality of tenants' homes is slightly below the national average. The main areas of dissatisfaction relate to kitchens, bathrooms and dampness/condensation. We have a planned programme of kitchen and bathroom renewals and extensive investment in relation to heating and insulation measures which will help to alleviate issues regarding dampness and condensation. We also provide information to tenants on how to heat and ventilate their homes.



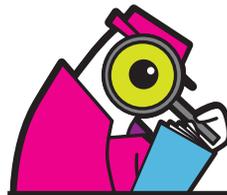
Indicator 11
Average time to complete Emergency repairs (in hours)

We are performing above the Scottish Average for the average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs. The introduction of a mobile working solution along with a vehicle tracking system will help us to allocate repairs work more quickly and in a more effective manner.



Housing quality & maintenance

Continued



Neighbourhood & community

14.1 Days



Falkirk Council 2013/14

10.0 Days

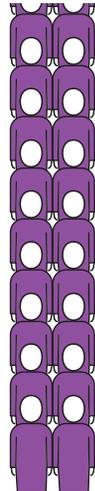


SHBVN LA Peer Group Average

Indicator 12
Average time to complete non-Emergency repairs (in working days)

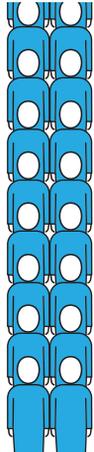
We anticipate that our increasing spend on planned housing improvements will reduce the number of responsive repairs. In turn, we should be able to turn around responsive repairs more quickly, following the introduction of a new mobile working solution which will increase the opportunity to offer more repairs on an appointment basis to avoid access problems.

90.1%



Falkirk Council 2013/14

86.1%



SHBVN LA Peer Group Average

Indicator 16
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service

We are performing above the Scottish Local Authority average in relation to satisfaction with our repairs and maintenance service. Further improvements are anticipated following the introduction of mobile working due to an improvement in the allocation of repairs work, along with improved communication with tenants as staff will have access to 'Real Time' repairs information.

Just over half of our 1st and 2nd stage complaints were answered within the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman recommended timescales (5 days and 20 days respectively). Part of the reason for our below average performance is that our recording system timescales didn't match those in the Charter. The other reason is that we approved an extension to investigate some complex complaints, but this isn't recognised by the Charter. To address this we have introduced a new recording system to bring our system in line with Charter requirements.

100%



Falkirk Council 2013/14

100%



SHBVN LA Peer Group Average

Indicator 4a
Percentage of 1st Stage complaints (on Equalities) responded to in full

66.7%



Falkirk Council 2013/14

66.7%



SHBVN LA Peer Group Average

Indicator 4c:
Percentage of 2nd Stage complaints (on Equalities) responded to in full

99.7%



Falkirk Council 2013/14

98.4%



SHBVN LA Peer Group Average

Indicator 4b:
Percentage of 1st Stage complaints (on other issues) responded to in full

94.1%



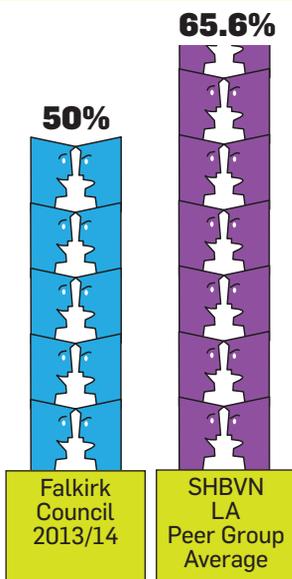
Falkirk Council 2013/14

97.2%

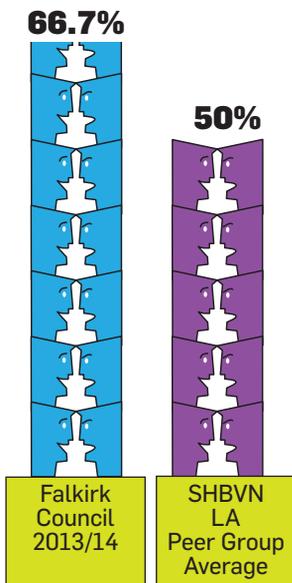


SHBVN LA Peer Group Average

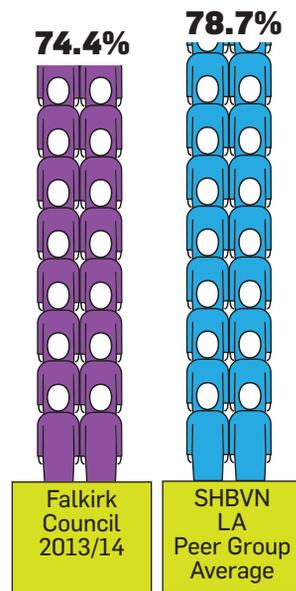
Indicator 4d:
Percentage of 2nd Stage complaints (on Other issues) responded to in full



Indicator 5a: Percentage of 1st Stage complaints that were answered within the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman recommended timescale (5 days)



Indicator 5b: Percentage of 2nd Stage complaints that were answered within the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman recommended timescale (20 days)



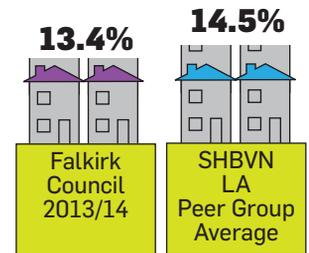
Indicator 17
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of their neighbourhood

The percentage of our tenants satisfied with the management of their neighbourhood is lower than the Scottish average for Local Authorities. Our survey showed that the main reasons for dissatisfaction were problems with litter and antisocial behaviour, and we will develop actions to respond to this feedback. We are also working with other Council services to identify and improve areas of both soft and hard landscaping throughout our housing estates.



Indicator 19
Percentage of antisocial behaviour cases resolved within our locally agreed targets

It is generally recognised that recording timescales for tackling antisocial behaviour cases is a complex and difficult task. We are looking at improving our recording as incomplete reporting has resulted in our overall performance being inaccurately reflected.

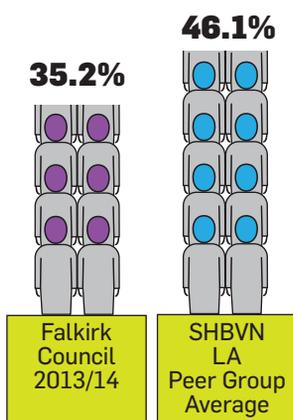


Indicator 24
Percentage of court actions initiated which resulted in eviction

We are broadly in line with the Scottish average for Local Authorities in relation to evictions. We recognise that there will be occasions when a failure to pay rent will result in legal action being taken. However, eviction is always viewed as a last resort as it has high social and economic costs for both the tenant and the Council. The Council has a responsibility to make sure that tenants are aware of their social responsibility to pay their rent. However, where possible we must help to sustain tenancies and provide assistance and support to the tenant to avoid a decree for eviction being sought in court, or being enforced once granted.

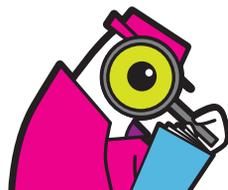


Neighbourhood & community Continued

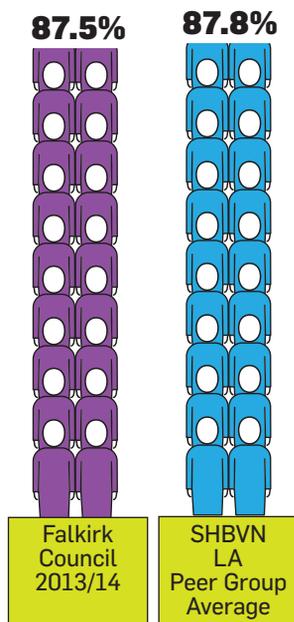


Indicator 18
Percentage of tenancy offers refused

We had fewer refusals on our tenancy offers last year compared to the Scottish average for Local Authorities. Refusals are lower in Falkirk as we operate a Choice Based Letting System called Home Spot, which means that applicants bid for properties they are interested in, rather than the traditional method of matching applicants with properties. The majority of refusals are due to applicants deciding that their preferences haven't been met after they bid for the property.

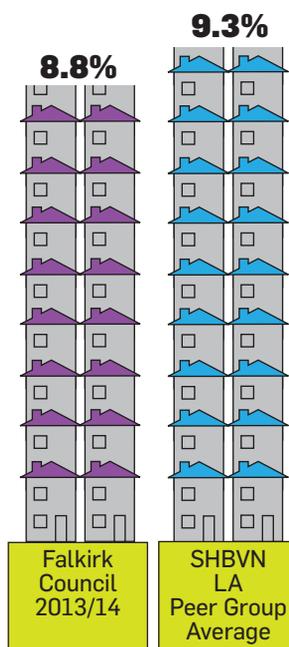


Access to housing & support



Indicator 20
Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than 12 months

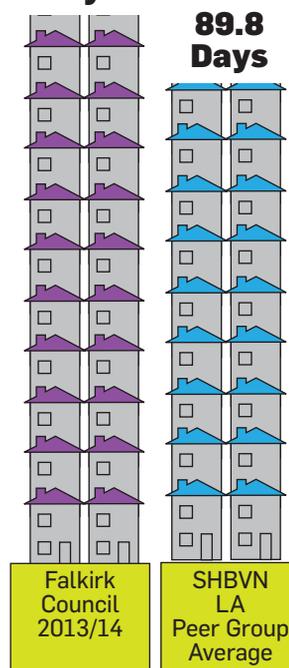
We are performing near the average for the number of new tenancies that are sustained for more than a year. The majority of tenancies sustained for less than 12 months did not fail but were ended by choice. However, to minimise tenancy failures, we are planning to introduce a number of housing support initiatives.



Indicator 21
Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant

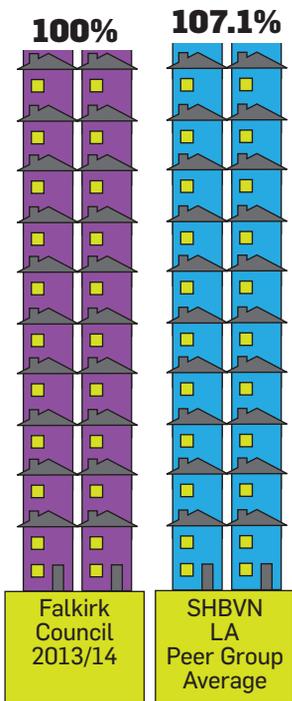
We had less lettable houses available for let last year compared to the national average. This indicates that our tenancies are being sustained. However, in order to address housing need, it is important that there is turnover of our housing stock. To support this we have introduced incentives to encourage the turnover of stock, for example through our tenant incentive scheme which supports tenants who wish to move to a smaller property.

116.9 Days



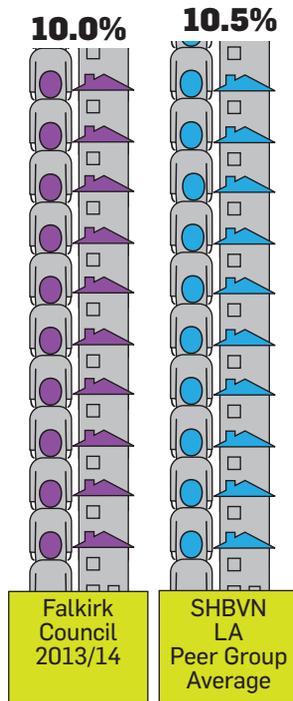
Indicator 25
Average length of time spent in temporary or emergency accommodation (in days)

We are performing below the Scottish average for the average time spent in temporary or emergency accommodation. However, we have improved the time taken to rehouse homeless applicants in the last year to 88% being rehoused in under six months.



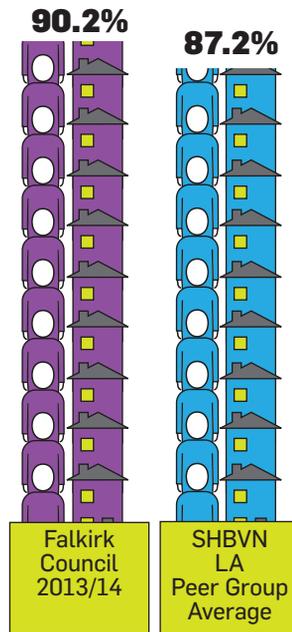
Indicator 26
Percentage of households requiring temporary or emergency accommodation who receive an offer of that type of accommodation

All our applicants who require temporary accommodation are made an offer of temporary accommodation.



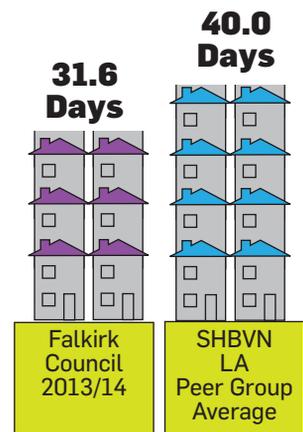
Indicator 27
Percentage of temporary or emergency accommodation offers refused

10% of those who were offered temporary accommodation refused the offer. This was mainly because the accommodation available did not meet specific requirements for an area or property type.



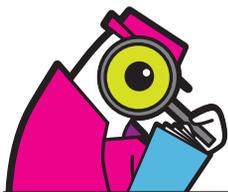
Indicator 28
Of those households homeless in the last 12 months, the percentage satisfied with the quality of temporary or emergency accommodation

We are performing above the Scottish average for Local Authorities in regards to satisfaction with the quality of our temporary accommodation.

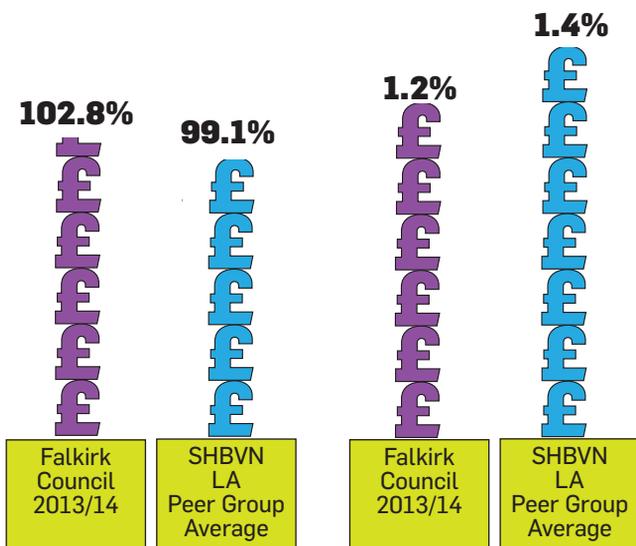


Indicator 35
Average time to re-let properties

We are performing above the Scottish Local Authority Average for this indicator. However, the introduction of Housing Benefit charges to tenants for unused bedrooms has increased demand for our smaller properties, but also increased our number of 'Low Demand' properties, in particular 3-bedroom flats.

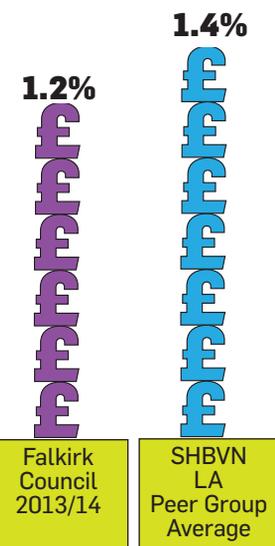


Getting good value for rents & service charges



Indicator 30 Rent we collected as a percentage of the total rent due

This is a new performance measure introduced by the Scottish Social Housing Charter which measures the total amount of rent collected in the year from both current and former tenants.

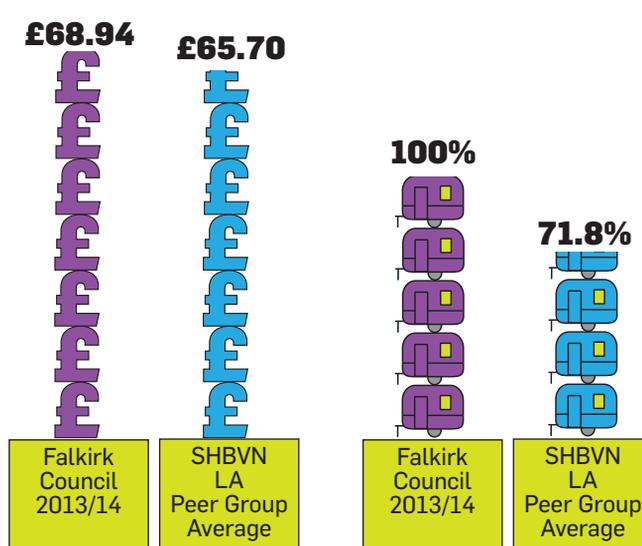


Indicator 34 Percentage of rent due that was lost through properties being empty

We are performing above the Scottish average for the rent lost through empty properties. This is directly in relation to Indicator 35 - Time taken to relet properties, which is also above the national average.

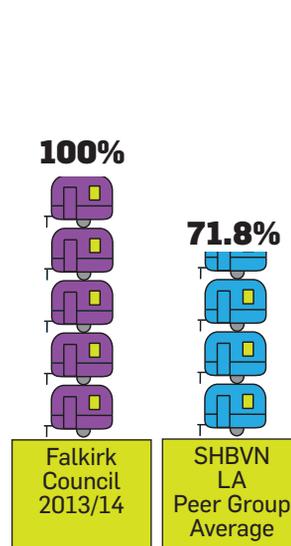


Other customers (Gypsy Travellers)



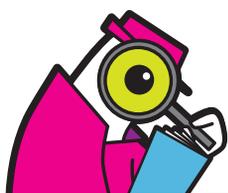
Indicator 36 Average weekly rent per pitch

We aim to provide high quality accommodation on our Travelling Persons site and have recently undertaken a refurbishment of our chalets to ensure they meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.



Indicator 37 Percentage of Gypsies/Travellers satisfied with our management of the Travelling Persons' site

Our travellers are very satisfied with the quality of the site. We are developing further consultation with the travellers on our site to see how we can further improve the facilities and services that are available to them.



Context indicators

Indicator C17

Stock by House Types, Apartment Sizes and Average Weekly Rents

	House	High Rise	Tenement	4 in a Block	Other Flat/ Maisonette	Total	Nos of Lettable Units	Average Weekly Rent
1 APT	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	£23.28
2 APT	603	360	315	379	996	2,653	2,613	£43.79
3 APT	2,789	618	1,616	2,607	859	8,489	8,389	£53.18
4 APT	3,458	0	467	441	197	4,563	4,463	£61.33
5 APT	404	0	2	43	19	468	461	£68.31
Total SC	7,254	978	2,400	3,470	2,073	16,175	15,928	£54.36

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
 - Exhibitions
 - Comment Cards
 - Consultation Register
 - Customer Led Inspection
 - Project Award Panel
 - Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations
 - Editorial Panel
 - Estate Walkabouts
 - Tenant Magazine
- and much more...

Contact Details

Falkirk Council Community Engagement Team

Suite 4
The Forum
Callendar Business Park
Falkirk
FK1 1XR

Tel: 01324 590796 or 01324 590809

Email: inspector.tenant@falkirk.gov.uk

Web: www.falkirk.gov.uk/inspectortenant

Scottish Housing Regulator

Highlander House
58 Waterloo Street
Glasgow
G2 7DA

Tel: 0141 242 5642

Email: shr@scottishhousingregulator.gsi.gov.uk

You can compare how Falkirk Council's performance compares with other social landlords across Scotland by visiting the Scottish Housing Regulator's website at: <http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/contact-us>

Tenant Feedback

Falkirk Council has already been working with many local tenants and residents to make positive changes in their area.

This is what they had to say about the experience:

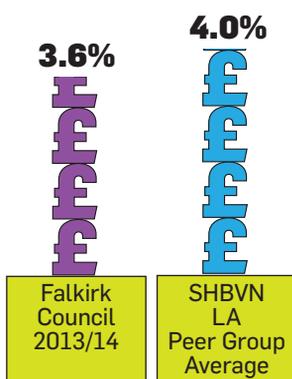
"I participate because we're making a difference in our community."
Pearl H.

"If there's not an RT0 in your area, the best thing to do is start one."
Mary M.

"I wanted to see how things worked from the inside as well as the outside."
Colin R.

"I decided to take part in order to give young people a voice."
Jordan M.

If you would like this information in another language, Braille, LARGE PRINT or audio tape, please contact one of our Neighbourhood Offices/One Stop Shops.



Indicator C21
Percentage rent increase in 2013/14



www.falkirk.gov.uk/inspectortenant



Falkirk Council