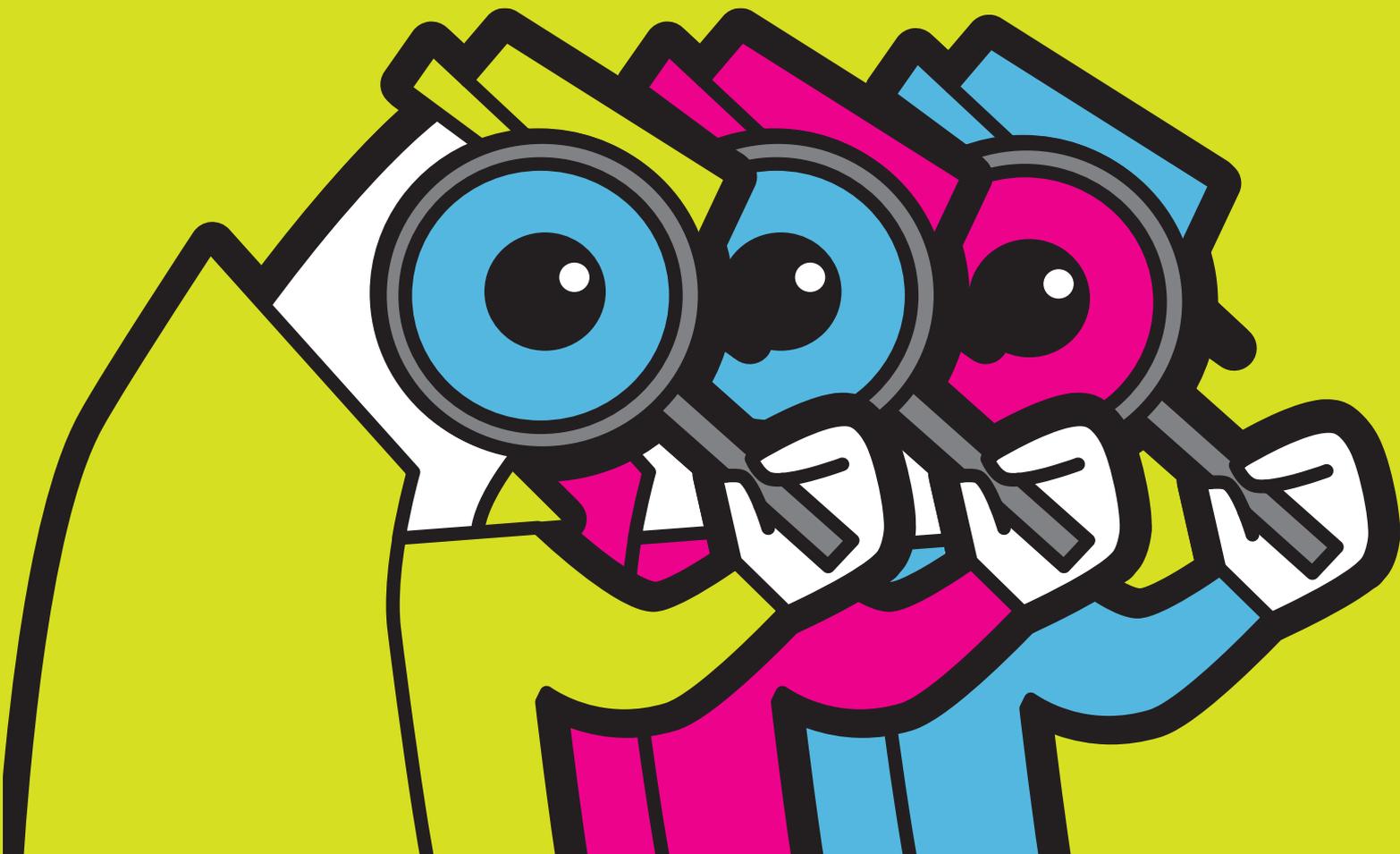


# Landlord Report to Tenants 2015

TENANT  
APPROVED



## 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	Scottish Average
<b>1 APT</b>	0	0	0	0	66	66	63	£36.17	£64.07
<b>2 APT</b>	605	361	320	384	951	2,621	2,572	£46.07	£68.56
<b>3 APT</b>	2,790	617	1,624	2,678	860	8,569	8,462	£55.74	£69.61
<b>4 APT</b>	3,417	0	475	443	206	4,541	4,485	£63.65	£75.70
<b>5 APT</b>	419	0	1	41	18	479	472	£72.13	£84.05
<b>5+ APT</b>	13	0	2	1	0	16	16	£74.58	N/A
<b>Total</b>	7,244	978	2,422	3,547	2,101	16,292	16,070	£57.31	£72.40



Falkirk Council rents are significantly lower than the average for all council and Housing Associations in Scotland based on Scottish Housing Regulator data.

### Indicator C21

#### Percentage rent increase in 2014/15



Welcome to Falkirk Council's second 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.**

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](mailto:inspector.tenant@falkirk.gov.uk)

Jennifer Litts  
Head of Housing

**We have set out our Charter performance in each area against the Scottish Local Authority Average under each performance indicator.**

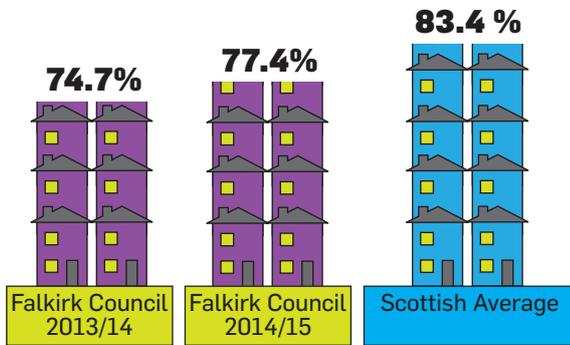
**Graphics are indicative and not to scale.**

## 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
How can you get involved?	9
Tenant Feedback	9
Contact Details	9



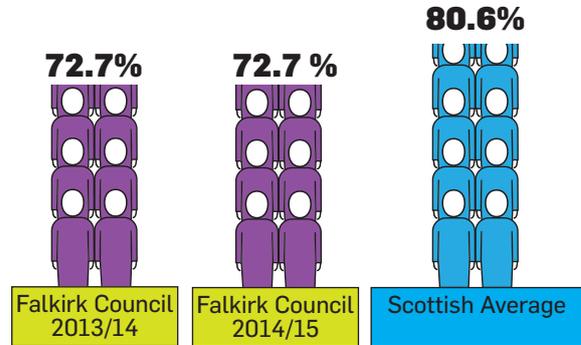
## Customer - landlord relationship



### Indicator 1 Percentage of tenants satisfied with our overall landlord service

In order to improve our tenants and customers satisfaction with our overall service, we have listened to the reasons why tenants are dissatisfied. The main reason for overall dissatisfaction relates to repairs. The Customers Satisfaction Survey (2013/14) told us that we need to communicate better with you on issues such as complaints and progress with repairs. In

response to this feedback we introduced a scheme that enables the service to update tenants in real time on the progress with their repair; this resulted in a slight increase in satisfaction. As the scheme develops it is anticipated that satisfaction levels will increase further. This initiative will be monitored to ensure that it helps us to meet your expectations.



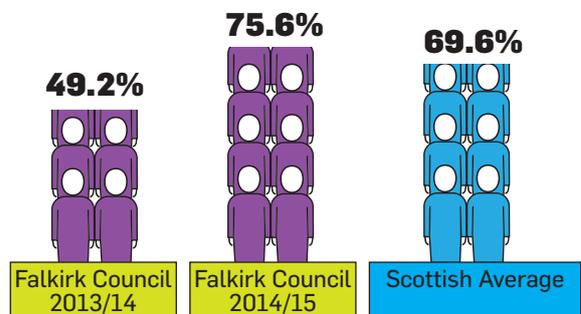
### Indicator 3 Percentage of tenants who feel we are good at keeping them informed about our services and decisions

From the tenant satisfaction survey carried out in 2013/14, 72.7% of 1,004 tenants surveyed said that they felt the council was good at keeping them informed. The two main areas of dissatisfaction highlighted by tenants were information on personal issues and general information about the service. Recognising the difference between older tenants and younger tenants, the latter feeling they are less well informed, work has continued with our strategy for engagement with

younger tenants. Your tenant magazine has seen improvements in its content, style and design, feedback has been encouraging and the publication is seen by tenants as their preferred method of finding out about housing issues. We will continue to monitor this indicator in order to ensure that our methods of communication are in line with your expectations of the best ways to keep you informed. A survey will be carried out in 2016/17 which will inform us if we have improved.

### Indicator 6 Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities to participate

Surveys carried out with 1,004 tenants in 2013/14 told us that our performance was below the Scottish Average. It was important that we understood the reasons why our tenants felt this way. A second survey of 1,034 tenants was carried out in late 2014 with more specific detail and questions asking about satisfaction and dissatisfaction with opportunities to participate. It is clear from the second survey results that tenants' understanding of what participation is varies widely, with most people thinking participation means being actively involved, going to meetings, time commitments etc. The survey considered 4 main areas, communication, engagement, participation

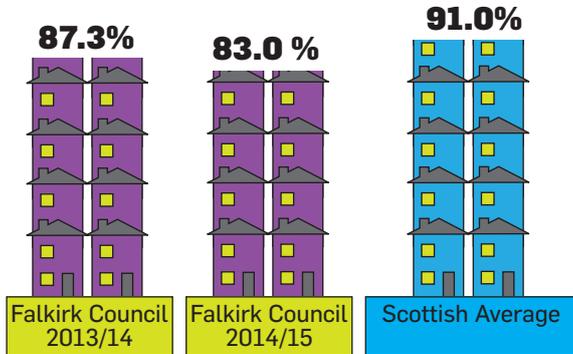


and scrutiny. The results show that most tenants are happy with communication and engagement as options for involvement (i.e. to give/receive information through surveys, publications, complaints and comments etc.) When the broad range of

options for participation that Falkirk Council offers were outlined and then the question on satisfaction with opportunities to participate was asked, satisfaction increased to 75.6%. This is significantly higher than the Scottish average.



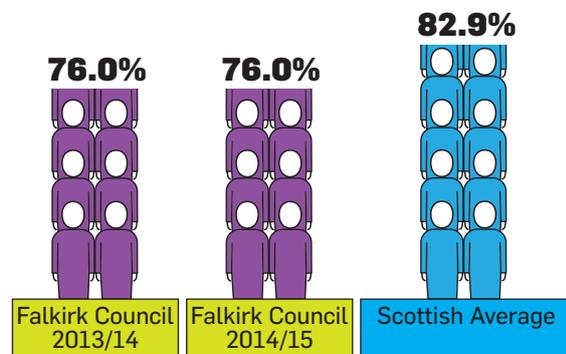
## Housing quality & maintenance



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

We consider the Council has met the SHQS in full by the defined deadline, in that 100% of all properties we can upgrade have been upgraded. Although this year's figure of 83% is less than the reported figure in 2014, this is due to a change in the way we were asked to report our figures to the Scottish Housing

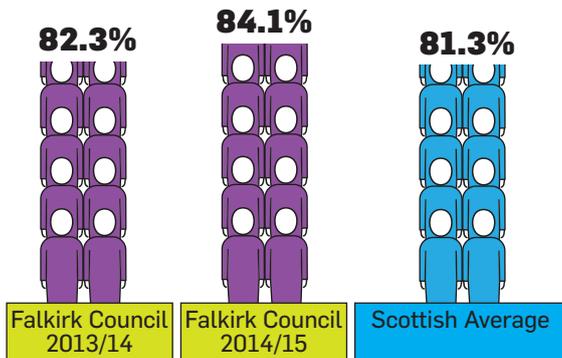
Regulator. The 17% of houses that do not meet SHQS are due to tenants not allowing access, tenants refusing planned work or technical reasons. We have put processes in place to tackle the houses not meeting SHQS and we will continue to investigate further initiatives to reduce the numbers.



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

This figure remains unchanged as it is taken from last year's comprehensive tenants' survey which is only required to be carried out every three years. We anticipate the level of satisfaction will improve, as we are continuing to carry out significant improvements to our existing houses through

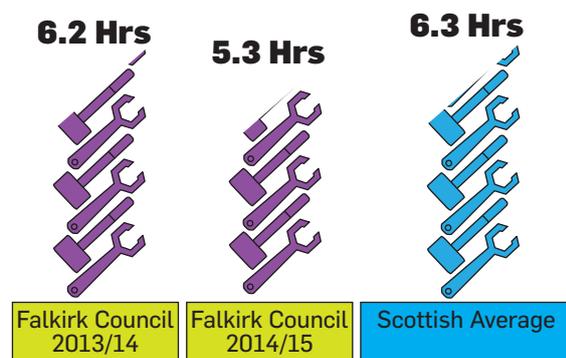
our Investment Programme. Over the next three years, £51.5m of investment is planned and includes improvements such as: roofing and roughcasting; insulation measures; kitchen and bathroom replacement; electrical safety checks and installation of Carbon Monoxide detectors.



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

This figure has improved by 1.8% and is well above the national average. We hope to improve the levels of satisfaction even further this year following the introduction of a new Standard for Letting Council Housing. This new standard

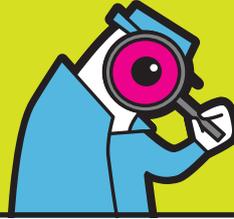
was introduced on 1 April 2015 following a consultation exercise carried out in 2014 which sought the views of tenants and other customers on what they expect when they move into a Council property.



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

The introduction of our vehicle tracking system has helped improve our performance by almost 1 hour and continues to be above the Scottish Average. The current review of our

Building Maintenance Team will aim to further improve this area of service by ensuring repairs are allocated and carried out more effectively and efficiently.



## Housing quality & maintenance (Continued)

**14.1 Days**



Falkirk Council  
2013/14

**11.8 Days**



Falkirk Council  
2014/15

**9.5 Days**

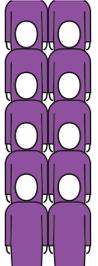


Scottish Average

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

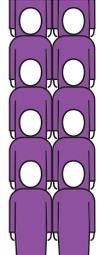
This figure has improved by 2.3 days and we anticipate further improvements over this year as a result of increasing the number of appointments and offering tenants appointments within 3 days of reporting a routine repair.

**90.1%**



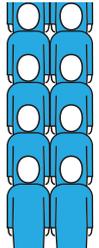
Falkirk Council  
2013/14

**89.3%**



Falkirk Council  
2014/15

**86.9%**



Scottish Average

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

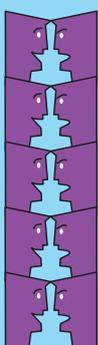
Our performance has slightly dropped, but is still well above the Scottish Local Authority average of 86.9%. We have taken positive steps to improve tenant satisfaction levels for this year by introducing a Workflow Planning Team. This team will provide the main point of contact for reporting repairs, include highly trained staff with technical skills to assist with ensuring the repair is diagnosed 'right first time' and will ensure the level of communication is improved by keeping tenants informed about their repair.

## Neighbourhood & community

Three quarters of our 1st stage complaints were answered within the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) recommended timescales (5 days), an improvement of 25% on the previous year. Almost two thirds of our 2nd stage complaints were answered within recommended 20 days.

As well as a recording tool, by monitoring our complaints we are able to review our processes to further improve the standard of services we provide.

**100%**



Falkirk Council  
2013/14

**100%**



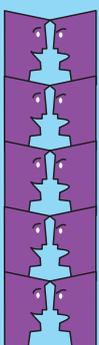
Falkirk Council  
2014/15

**66.7%**



Falkirk Council  
2013/14

**100%**



Falkirk Council  
2014/15

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

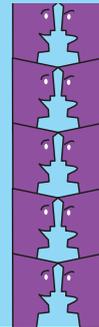
### Indicator 4c: Percentage of 2nd Stage complaints (on Equalities) responded to in full

**99.7%**



Falkirk Council  
2013/14

**96.8%**



Falkirk Council  
2014/15

**94.1%**



Falkirk Council  
2013/14

**90%**

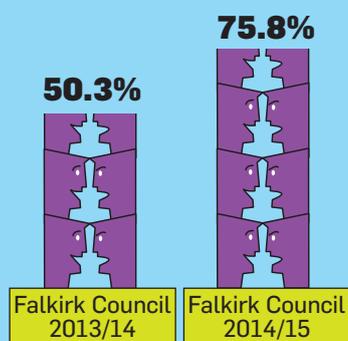


Falkirk Council  
2014/15

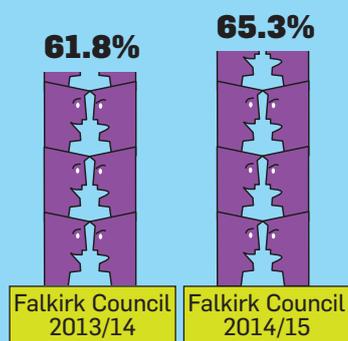
### Indicator 4b: Percentage of 1st Stage complaints (on other issues) responded to in full

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

The regulator has changed the way it calculates complaints results to fit more closely with the SPSO measurements. As a result there are no consistently applicable benchmarks for the complaints indicators for 2014 /15. Instead we have simply stated the Falkirk Council results for 2013/14 and 2014/15.



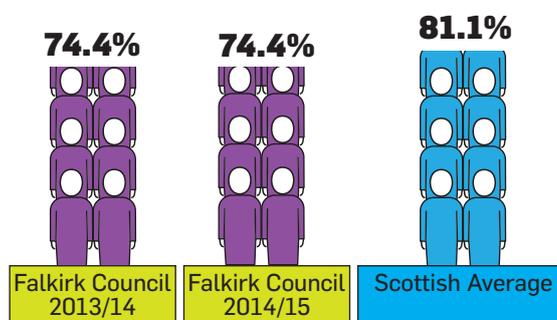
**Indicator 5a:**  
Percentage of 1st Stage complaints that were answered within the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman recommended timescale (5 days)



**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**

Satisfaction in this area is gathered every three years, the next large-scale survey being carried out in 2016/17. The percentage of our tenants satisfied with the management of their neighbourhood was at the time of survey lower than the national average for Local Authorities. Our survey showed that the main reasons for dissatisfaction were

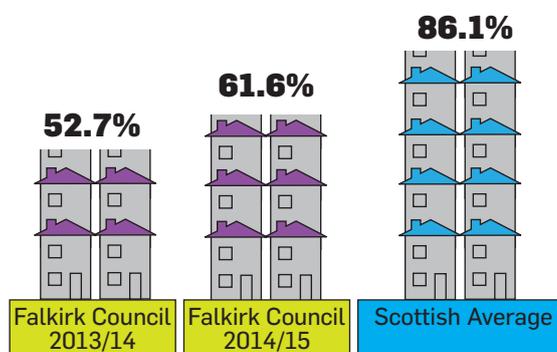


problems with litter and antisocial behaviour. We have worked with internal and external partners to develop programmes to tackle the issues important to tenants. Significant work is ongoing for example to address issues of waste

management within our communities. We are continuing to work 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**

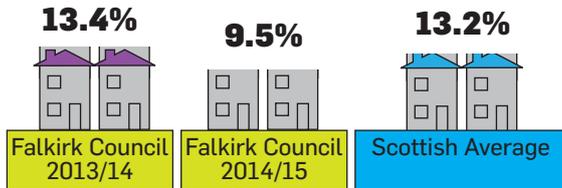
It is generally recognised that recording timescales for tackling antisocial behaviour cases is a complex and difficult task. Our performance has increased since last year. We are continuing to review our processes to improve services and maintain improvements in performance.





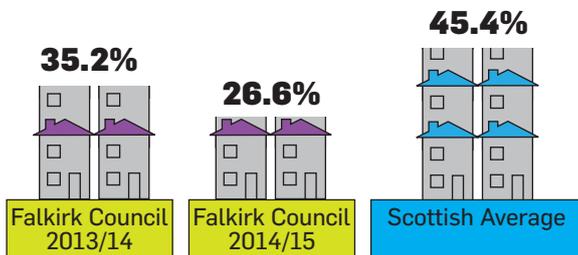
## Neighbourhood & community

(Continued)



### Indicator 24 Percentage of court actions initiated which resulted in eviction

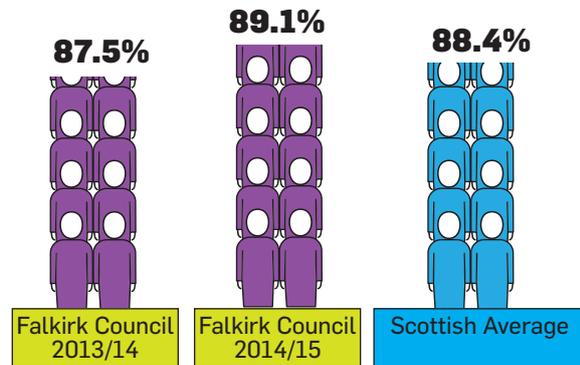
During 2014/15 we raised more court actions and carried out more evictions, while the evictions as a percentage of court actions appears to have reduced (from 13.4% in 2013/14 to 9.5% in 2014/15) this is due to a high number of court actions commencing in last quarter of 2014/15 that will not lead to eviction until 2015/16. On this basis we would expect the number of evictions, as a percentage of number of court actions, to increase in 2015/16



### Indicator 18 Percentage of tenancy offers refused

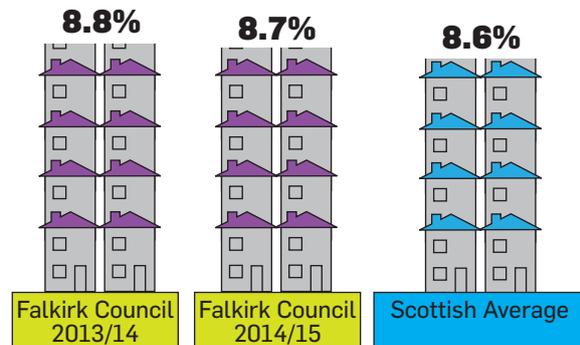
We continue to have fewer refusals on our tenancy offers and our performance has improved since last year. Refusals are lower in Falkirk as we operate a Choice Based Letting System called Home Spot which means applicants bid for properties they are interested in rather than the traditional method of 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



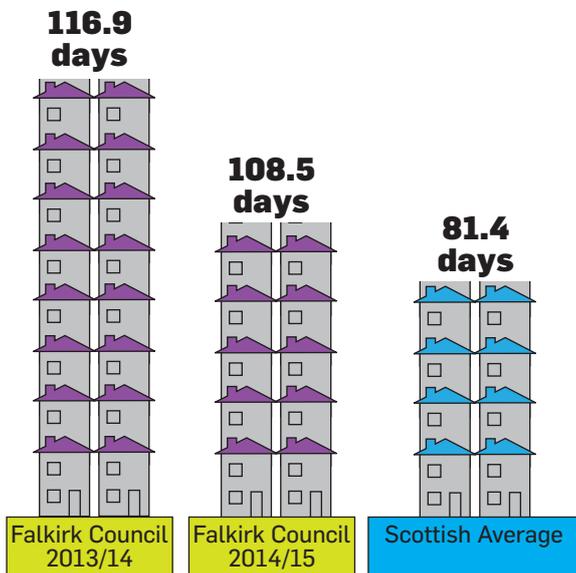
### Indicator 20 Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than 12 months

Our performance has improved since last year and we are slightly above the national average for the number of new tenancies that are sustained for more than 12 months. The majority of tenancies that were not sustained for 12 months did not fail but were ended by choice. To minimise tenancies failing, we offer a number of housing support initiatives such as the Tenancy Sustainment Officers who seek to support tenants at an early stage who run the risk of rent arrears and other debts.



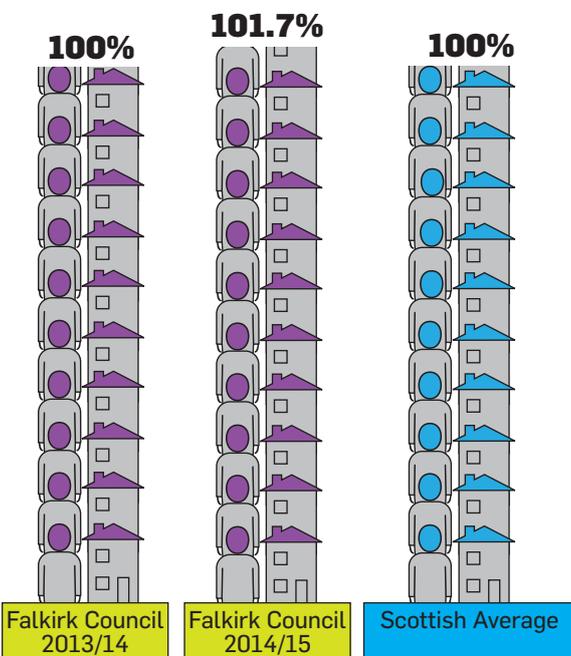
### Indicator 21 Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant

The number of properties becoming vacant has stayed the same and is in line with Scottish average. This indicates that our tenancies are being sustained. However in order to address housing need it is important that there is turnover of housing stock. To support this we have incentives to encourage stock turnover, for example our tenant incentive scheme supports tenants who wish to move to a smaller property.



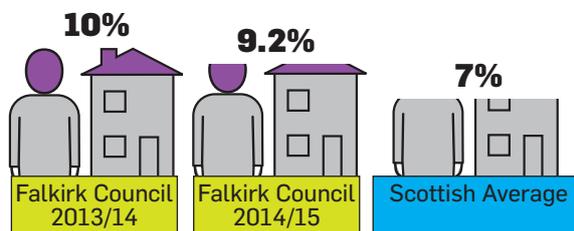
**Indicator 25**  
Average length of time spent in temporary or emergency accommodation (in days)

We are still performing below the Scottish average for this indicator. However, we continue to improve the time taken to rehouse homeless applicants.



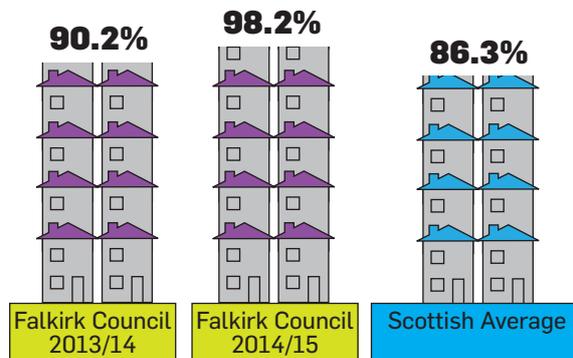
**Indicator 26**  
Percentage of households requiring temporary or emergency accommodation who receive an offer of that type of accommodation

All our applicants who require temporary accommodation are made an offer of temporary accommodation. The reason that our performance is above 100% is that this figure includes applicants who receive more than one offer.



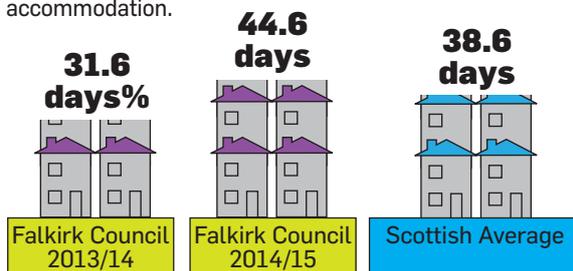
**Indicator 27**  
Percentage of temporary or emergency accommodation offers refused

Our performance is slightly above the Scottish average for this indicator. This is mainly because the accommodation available did not meet the specific requirements of applicants for their area or property preferences. We have been reviewing our pool of temporary accommodation and our performance has improved slightly since last year.



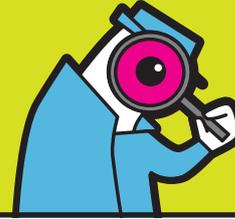
**Indicator 28**  
Of those households homeless in the last 12 months, the percentage satisfied with the quality of temporary or emergency accommodation

Our performance has improved from last year and we are performing above the Scottish average with regards to satisfaction with the quality of our temporary accommodation.

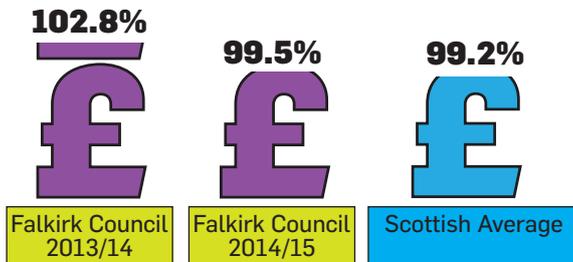


**Indicator 35**  
Average time to re-let properties

We are performing below the Scottish Average for the length of time taken to re let properties. The introduction of housing benefit changes for tenants with unused bedrooms continues to put demand on our smaller properties, with less demand for our other properties in particular 3-bedroom flats. This resulted in an increase in the number of adverts placed in Homespot needed to identify a suitable applicant, which creates a delay in the allocation process. During the year we have relaxed our criteria for applying for properties larger than the applicant requires resulting in a number of these properties being allocated. The full impact of this revision will likely be seen in the next reporting year.



## Getting good value for rents & service charges



### Indicator 30

#### Rent we collected as a percentage of the total rent due

While the 2014/15 performance of 99.5% is down on the reported figure of 102.8% reported for 2013/14 we remain above the national local authority average of 99.2% for 2014/15. This figure demonstrates that in 2014/15 we collected £47.15 million out of £47.4m rent billed.



### Indicator 34

#### Percentage of rent due that was lost through properties being empty

We are performing below the national average for rent lost through empty properties. This is directly related to the increase of over 10% in the number of properties becoming vacant during the year and the delay in letting 3 bedroom flats as noted in indicator 35.

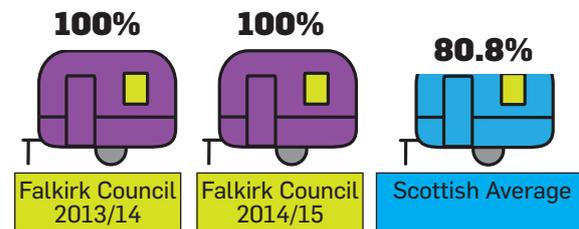
## Other customers (Gypsy Travellers)



### Indicator 36

#### Average weekly rent per pitch

We aim to provide high quality accommodation on our Travelling Persons Site. Whilst our rents have increased since last year, they are now slightly below the Scottish average.



### Indicator 37

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

Satisfaction with the quality of our site remains very high. We will continue to consult with gypsy/travellers to identify service improvements.

## 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 Scrutiny Panel
- Project Award Panel
- Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations
- Editorial Panel
- Estate Walkabouts
- Tenant Magazine

and much more...

## Tenant Feedback Contact Details

### **Falkirk Council Community Engagement Team**

The Forum  
Callendar Business Park  
Falkirk  
FK1 1XR

Tel: 01324 590796 or 01324 590809

Email: [inspector.tenant@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:inspector.tenant@falkirk.gov.uk)

Web: [www.falkirk.gov.uk/inspectortenant](http://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](mailto: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>

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.

[www.falkirk.gov.uk/inspectortenant](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/inspectortenant)



Falkirk Council