

Annual Report to Tenants

Glasgow Housing Association
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.



What's inside?

Chair's welcome	3
Supporting our customers	4
Improving our services	6
Homes and communities	8
Your repairs service	10
Rent and value for money	12
Engaging with customers	14

Welcome

from GHA Chair **Bernadette Hewitt**



The extraordinary events in March 2020 challenged GHA – 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, GHA responded in the interests of its customers and staff.

The crisis necessitated a temporary halt to many of our activities, including our investment and new build programmes. However, we built a further 391 homes over the financial year, invested £47m in planned improvements to existing homes and supported 341 people from our homes into work or training.

The aftermath of the Covid-19 outbreak will continue to test us as an organisation in the months and years ahead. But our strong position as part of Wheatley Group, together with our Think Yes culture and our track record in adapting to even the most difficult of circumstances, mean we can face the future confident in our ability to respond to whatever challenges it brings.

Here are some of our highlights of the year.

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 GHA, we have been determined to support our communities in every way we can.

When the coronavirus crisis struck in March this year, we responded instantly.

We invested significantly in new services to help people in need and in new ways of working that enabled our staff to be there to support tenants and their families 24/7.

Here are just some of the measures we put in place.

- We equipped our housing officers and customer service advisors to work from home, in line with government guidance, enabling them to help tenants every day by phone, text and online.
- Staff have made over 173,000 calls offering help and advice to GHA customers since lockdown began.
- EatWell has provided over 28,000 emergency food packages to people in need across Wheatley communities since the start of the pandemic. A supermarket voucher system, put in place a few months ago, has led to over 1400 vulnerable households receiving £45,000 worth of food to date.

- Our expert welfare benefits advisors have been helping customers with Universal Credit claims and making sure they are getting all the benefits they are entitled to.
- An emergency response fund was launched in March, offering practical help to 2000 customers in need, supplying everything from mobile phone top-ups to microwaves.
- We've helped thousands of customers with pre-payment meters to access fuel vouchers.

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.



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.

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.

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

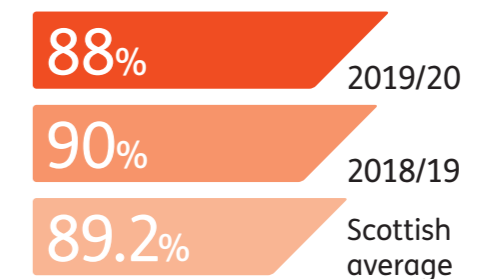
Before the pandemic, working with Wheatley Foundation and Wheatley 360, we:

- created 457 opportunities for people from our homes to get into work or training, with 341 of our customers benefiting;
- supported 1,178 new tenants with household budgeting, running a home and settling into their community through My Great Start;

- gave 653 tenants up-cycled furniture through our Home Comforts service;
- awarded 37 young people from our homes a bursary to go to university or college; and
- provided free books every month to 501 children under five in our homes through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library initiative.

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

In spite of the difficulties faced this year, overall customer satisfaction at GHA remained high – at 88% – and the number of tenants satisfied with opportunities for participating in decision-making was at 80%.

The percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their existing home stood at 87%.

87%
tenants satisfied with the quality of their home



GHA was also recognised in a number of awards this year.

The conversion of the old stables at Bell Street, with our partners in Wheatley, Lowther Homes, won the Affordable Housing Category at this year's Scottish Design Awards.

Bell Street was also a finalist in the Medium Development of the Year in the Homes

for Scotland awards, while the new GHA's Hinshelwood Drive was a finalist in the Large Development of the Year.

GHA's tenant magazine The Key was also named Best Publication in the CIPR Excellence Awards.

88%
tenants satisfied overall with GHA



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, GHA built 391 new affordable homes over the year, 269 of them for social rent, 119 for mid-market rent, and three for shared equity.

Our completed new homes included 143 in the Gallowgate, 113 at Hinshelwood Drive in Ibrox, and 52 new mid-market rent homes at Bell Street.

We also progressed work on homes in Bellrock Street in Cranhill, Linkwood Crescent in Drumchapel and Glenacre Drive in Castlemilk.

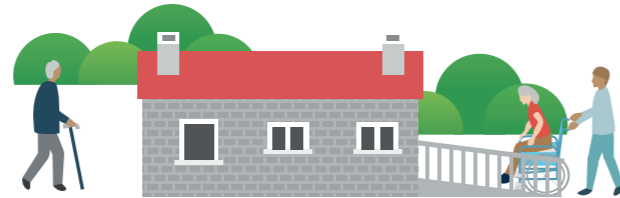
Investing in our homes

In 2019/20, we delivered £47m of planned improvements in our homes and communities.

This included:

- £3.4m on providing new heating systems for more than 1700 tenants;
- £1.5m on new lifts at Drygate and Townhead;
- £3.6m on improvements to the Winget properties in Carntyne.

391
new homes built
in 2019/20



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.

Improving our neighbourhoods

Creating clean, green and safe neighbourhoods where people are proud to live remained one of our priorities.

Wheatley's Community Improvement Partnership (CIP) – made up of seconded police and fire officers and our own staff – continued to work with GHA communities to tackle anti-social behaviour, crime and fire safety.

Our refreshed Stay Safe campaign saw more than 3000 home fire safety visits carried out across Wheatley communities in 2019/20, with the total number of accidental fires in Wheatley homes falling by 10%.

We resolved 100% of all anti-social cases reported to us in the past year.

Our sector-leading partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful continues to see staff and customers assess the environment in our neighbourhoods. We are delighted that six of our areas have now achieved a five-star rating, with another 14 working towards achieving the same rating in assessments over the coming year.

Tenants' satisfaction with GHA's contribution to the management of their neighbourhood was at 82%.

82%
Tenants satisfied with GHA's
contribution to management of
their neighbourhood

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	258	101	0	2324	2683	2667	£70.10
2 Apt	142	3202	3169	314	531	7358	7346	£79.33
3 Apt	2716	4467	9376	3630	164	20353	20232	£84.57
4 Apt	2955	189	2439	2259	234	8076	7984	£98.88
5 Apt +	1065	0	148	12	27	1252	1251	£108.24
Total Self-contained	6878	8116	15233	6215	3280	39722	39480	£86.26

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 working with City Building (Glasgow), jointly owned since 2017 by our parent company, to launch our MyRepairs service in September 2019 with the first phase of improvements for customers. These included:

- ▶ setting up a specialist repairs team within our customer contact centre, with full training delivered to 34 specialist call-handlers;
- ▶ introducing 'next day' appointments service and 'appointment reminder' texts to customers to help us reduce 'no access' levels; and

▶ new guidance on medical adaptations, cyclical maintenance, the consent process for owners (including a review of communications with owners) and stair lighting renewals.



94%
Satisfaction with the repairs service



We were delighted that tenant satisfaction with the repairs service remained at 94% for the second year in a row.

Emergency repairs took an average of 2.9 hours, slightly up from 2.8 the previous year and well down from an average five hours in 2013/14. Non-emergencies reduced from 5.7 working days the previous year to an average of 5.5 days.

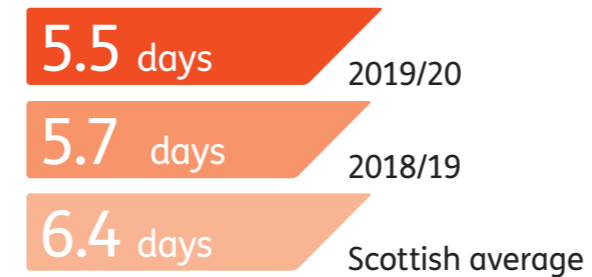
A total of 96.3% of repairs were completed right first time, up slightly from last year's figure of 96%.

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

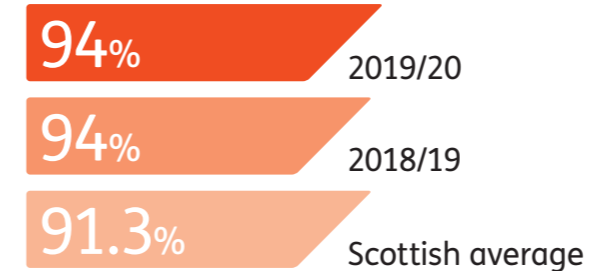


Gas safety

Like all social landlords, GHA 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.

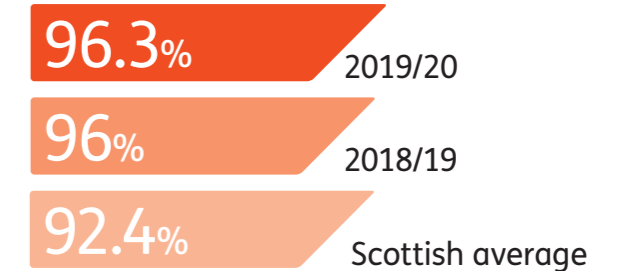
Repairs and maintenance

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.



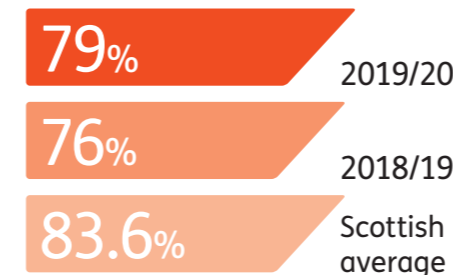
In 2019/20, the percentage of tenants who felt the rent for their home represented good value for money was 79%, up from 76% the year before.

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 online discounts scheme, MySavings, continues to help customers make their money go further and cut the cost of their weekly shop.

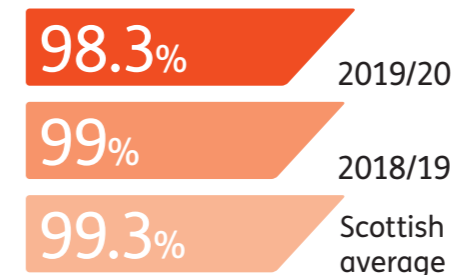
Our gross rent arrears increased slightly to 4.8% from 3.9% the previous year, while rent collection – at 98.3% – (last year 99%) remained steady despite the economic difficulties facing our communities.

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.

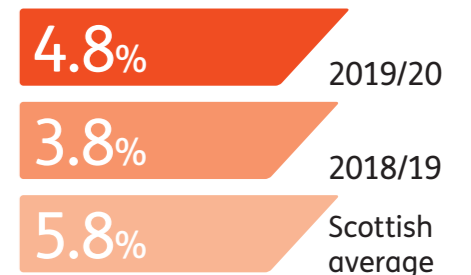
Value for money
Percentage of tenants who feel their rent is good value for money



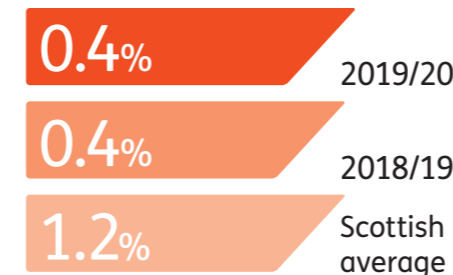
Rent collected
Rent collected as a percentage of total rent due



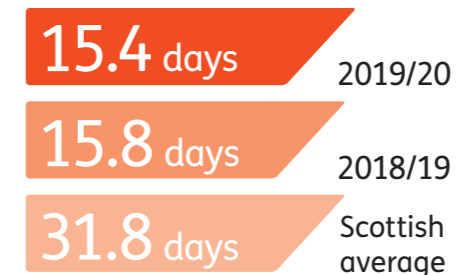
Rent arrears
Gross rent arrears



Rent lost
Rent lost through properties being empty



Re-let properties
Average length of time taken to re-let properties



Engaging with customers

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

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

88%

Tenants who feel GHA is good at keeping them informed



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 talk@gha.org.uk or phone us on 0800 479 7979.

We engaged with more people online than ever before. More than 19,760 people followed our GHA Facebook and Twitter pages – an increase of almost 2000 people on last year. Our housing officers introduced new ways of talking with customers online, for example through Whatsapp and Zoom.

We continued to support our customers to get online and to encourage them to engage with us through our digital channels and online self-service accounts. The past year saw a 55% increase in number of people registered for an online account with us, and a 32% increase in the number of transactions online.

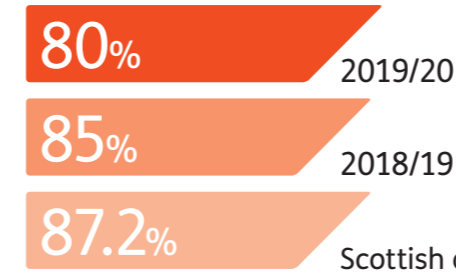
The percentage of tenants who felt GHA was good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions was at 88%, down from 92%, while the percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision-making stood at 80%, down from 85%.

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



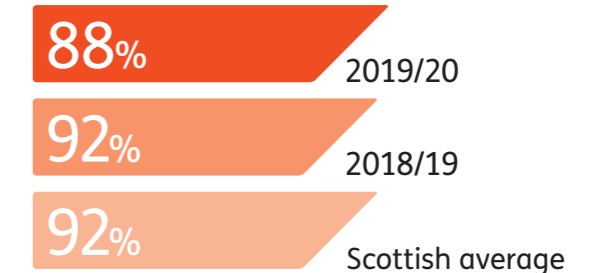
Decision making

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



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