Tenant Annual Report

2024 - 2025

TENANT'S VOICE APPROVED

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

2024/25

Council Housing & Development Services

Exeter City Council

Introduction

Welcome to this year's annual report to you, our tenants. This report covers the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the performance of our service.

It is important that we provide you with clear and transparent information about how we are managing our social housing, investing in our properties and involving tenants in decision making.

This report contains information from tenant surveys and complaints investigations.

Foreword

Councillor Marina Asvachin Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Customer Services

Welcome to this year's annual report to tenants.

It's been a busy year as always and I'd like to start with some good news: Tenant satisfaction is up.

We've just completed our second annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey, and I am pleased to report that 76% of you told us you are happy with our overall service - that's up from 70% last year and even higher than the England average of 73%

Thank you to everyone who took part – your feedback helps us improve and is always welcome.

I'm extremely proud to announce the completion of Brook House, our newest development on the Hamlin Gardens estate, which provides 21 beautiful new homes for tenants aged 60+. They have all been built to Passivhaus standards for energy efficiency and lower heating bills.

There is more good news - construction at Whipton Gardens is now complete.

We have also been improving existing properties, adding new energy efficient measures, so that existing tenants can also benefit from lower heating bills.

This year's Tenant Focus Week was about listening, learning, and working together to make our neighbourhoods even better. Here's what we got up to:

- We worked with our repairs contractor, Mears, to install new benches in shared spaces and build community planters using recycled materials
- We helped residents start local gardening clubs
- We dedicated a full day to tackling damp and mould issues

Thank you to our partners at Mears and Devon Wildlife Trust for their support.

We've also been busy updating our policies to make sure they're fair and clear.

This year, we introduced or updated:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Vulnerabilities Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Gas & Electrical Safety Policies

These updates help us support you better and stay legally compliant. It is really helpful to have input from the Tenants' Voice group in updating and developing these policies.

Our two dedicated tenant groups - Tenants' Voice and the Complaints and Performance Group – continue to meet every other month to help shape the services we provide.

As always, they have made a real difference this year, and we're always looking for new members If you're interested in joining, please do get in touch with our Resident Involvement Team - they'd love to hear from you.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the report and a special thank you from me to the entire team who work so hard and to all our tenants who make the hard work worthwhile.

We are always looking to improve our service, and if you wish to provide feedback or suggestions about ways we can do so, please visit our website or email us at: resident.involvement@exeter.gov.uk

What are Tenant Satisfaction Measures?

Between August 2024 and March 2025, a representative sample of tenants were invited to participate in an important survey through a telephone or online interview.

The survey was carried out by an independent market research company, Acuity Research and Practice. The survey focused on how happy you were with the way Exeter City Council maintained your home and delivered key services. The survey also included Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) as required by the Regulator of Social Housing.

The findings provide information about the main drivers behind satisfaction levels and tenant concerns. These in turn, help inform our future strategic and operational planning.

574 tenants took part out of a total of 4,393 households. A big thank you to everyone who participated.

More details on the results of our Tenant Satisfaction Measures can be found online: www.exeter.gov.uk/tsm

There are 22 measures, 12 of which formed part of a survey; the remaining 10 are technical measures such as information on gas servicing.

We have included the results throughout this report – look out for the boxes labelled “Tenant Satisfaction Measures”

You can see how we compare against other landlords in England: Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/25 - GOV.UK

We have also continued to adjust parts of our service so that we were compliant with the Consumer Standards, launched on 1st April 2024. These standards are designed to protect you and improve the service you receive.

You can read more about the consumer standards online: Regulatory standards for landlords - GOV.UK

Your property

Repairs, Maintenance & Planned Works

In 2024/2025 we spent £15,192,519 on capital works and £11,293,222 on revenue spending.

Capital expenditure relates to investments in assets such as building new homes and improving existing ones including works to improve the energy efficiency of our properties.

Revenue spending covers day-to-day costs such as wages, emergency repairs, gas servicing, and works to empty properties.

This is how we spent the money.

Capital works	For every pound, we spent:
Communal footpath & wall	1p
Disabled adaptions	7p
Fire risk assessments	3p
Electrical remedial works	9p
Gas boiler replacements	7p
Kitchen & Bathroom replacements	17p
Structural Works	8p
Energy conservation	24p
Planned works	24p

Revenue works	For every pound, we spent:
Asbestos management	5p
General Servicing	18p
Cyclical exterior decoration & repairs	13p
Voids	19p
General Maintenance	45p

During the year:

- We retrofitted 152 homes
- The average number of calendar days taken to complete repairs has risen from 17.94 (2023/24) to 18.85 days but still sits below the UK average for local authorities 19.30 days.
- The average number of properties we own decreased from 4800 to 4763. These properties were sold under the Right to Buy scheme.

Tenant satisfaction measures: Tenant survey results

- 3 out of 4 tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by Exeter City Council's Housing Services (76%).

- Around 8 out of 10 tenants are satisfied they are provided with a home that is well maintained (78%).
- Slightly more tenants are satisfied that Exeter City Council provides them with a home that is safe (81%).
- Around 6 out of 10 tenants with communal areas are satisfied that these areas are kept clean and well maintained (63%).
- 7 out of 10 tenants said they had a repair carried out to their home in the last 12 months (70%).
- Around 8 out of 10 of these tenants are satisfied with the overall repairs service over the last 12 months (78%).
- Slightly more tenants are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair after they reported it (81%).

Tenants were asked to explain why they gave the rating they did for overall satisfaction, and 500 tenants gave comments.

Many tenants praised our overall service. Other tenants would like improvements to the repairs service, including outstanding repairs that have not been dealt with, the time taken to complete repairs and the quality of work.

Tenants also mentioned the condition of their property, such as problems with damp or mould, and communications and information.

Tenant satisfaction measures: technical measures

- 4.5% of homes that do not currently meet the Decent Homes Standard
- 88.5% of non-emergency responsive repairs were completed within our target timescale
- 99% of emergency responsive repairs were completed within our target timescale

Health and Safety

During the year we:

- Checked 15,837 smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Carried out 405 fire risk assessments on blocks of flats.
- Safety inspected and serviced 4361 gas boilers and carried out 377 electrical safety inspections (tests and servicing, not upgrades).
- Carried out asbestos re-inspections in 436 communal areas and ensured every home with asbestos has had an asbestos survey completed.

What are we doing? We are:

- Continuing to remove asbestos when properties become empty.
- Continuing to ensure that all required gas and electrical safety checks are carried out.
- Producing new Gas and Electrical policies.

You said: You felt that we need to improve how we communicate.

We did: We held training sessions for staff on how to write in clear English, free from jargon. We also updated the wording on our website.

We have a team of Compliance Officers dedicated to ensuring your safety. They can be reached by emailing or calling our repairs team: housing.safety@exeter.gov.uk 01392 265031 where you will be directed to the relevant officer.

Please help us help you by always allowing access for safety checks.

Tenant satisfaction measures: technical measures

- 99.9% of required gas safety checks have been completed
- 100% of required fire risk assessments have been completed
- 100% of required asbestos management surveys have been completed
- 100% of required legionella risk assessments have been completed
- 100% of required communal passenger lift safety checks have been completed

Your Tenancy

During the year:

- We re-let 225 properties, with an average re-let time of 53.23 days compared to 231 properties and 58.52 days the previous year. (the UK average for Local Authorities is 62.28 days).
- The number of cases of anti-social behaviour reported increased to 181 cases compared to 137 cases in the previous year, which is below the national average per 1000 properties.
- We held 50 community activities, including a Tenant Focus Week where we engaged with communities across the City, listening to residents' concerns and working with them to improve their outdoor surroundings.
- We introduced a new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and procedure.

- We introduced new Vulnerability and Domestic Abuse policies, as suggested by the Housing Ombudsman
- We introduced security awareness training for staff carrying out security checks when discussing personal details

We reviewed and re-launched the Tenant Handbook. You can find it online here: www.exeter.gov.uk/tenanthandbook or request a paper copy by contacting us.

You said: You didn't always feel listened to when you reported anti-social behaviour

We did: We've updated our policy and procedure to make it more tenant focused. Our officers will take the time to talk to you and understand how you are being affected by the anti-social behaviour you are experiencing. We'll complete a risk assessment so that we can ensure you are receiving additional support if you need it. We'll also agree an action plan with you which will clearly explain how and when we will update you on your case, and the action we are going to take.

You said: You wanted greater security for new tenants

We did: Following consultations with tenants, we launched a new Tenancy Policy that reduced the length of time tenants must wait before being granted a secure lifetime tenancy.

Tenants now move directly from an introductory tenancy onto a lifetime tenancy, providing greater security for households and allowing people to better plan for the future.

Tenant satisfaction measures: Tenant survey results

- Around 6 out of 10 tenants are satisfied that Exeter City Council listens to their views and acts upon them (62%).
- Over 7 out of 10 tenants are satisfied that they are kept informed about things that matter to them (73%).
- Around 4 out of 5 tenants agree that they are treated fairly and with respect by Exeter City Council (81%).
- 3 out of 4 tenants are satisfied that Exeter City Council is easy to deal with (74%).
- 3 out of 10 tenants who made a complaint in the last 12 months are satisfied with complaints handling (30%).

Retrofit and new build

- Throughout the year we continued work on our project to improve the energy efficiency of our properties by investing in new windows, doors, insulation and other energy saving measures.
- During 2024/2025 we completed work to a further 152 properties. The improvements meant that residents who have received the upgrades to their homes can expect them to be cheaper to heat.
- We have recently appointed a new contractor, Sureserve, so that we can continue to deliver this programme for a further three years.
- Throughout the year we also completed construction on a new block of flats on the Hamlin Gardens estate, now known as Brook House. The building was constructed on the site of a former car park and provides a mixture of 1 and 2 bedroom flats.
- Brook House is built to certified Passivhaus standards. This standard means the homes will be very energy efficient and exceptionally airtight, with high levels of insulation which will keep the inside temperature warm without having to rely on other heating sources.
- During the year work also continued on a new block of Passivhaus flats on Pinhoe Road in Whipton (Cherry House and Damson House) which have since been completed and new tenants have now moved in.
- Cllr Marina Asvachin (pictured right of image), Lead Councillor with responsibility for Housing, said: “It is great that the first residents have now moved into these fantastic new energy efficient council homes - it was such a pleasure to meet them and see how happy they are in their new home.”

Finance

Money Matters

- In housing our turnover for 2024/2025 was over £28 million (£28,258,000).

Where did the money come from?

Income	**Every £1 we received was made up of:**
Housing rents	91p
Service charge	7p
Garage rents	2p

Where did the money go?

Expenditure	Every £1 we spent was used for:
Capital charges ((This is the cost of larger projects, for example building new homes and making improvements to homes spread over a period of time)	34p
Housing Management costs (This is the cost to run the housing service)	32p
Repairs and maintenance	33p
Other	1p

- Please note that these figures are still subject to external audit.

Your Neighbourhood & Community

Housing Community Initiatives

We held a number of events and activities in local communities for our tenants and leaseholders.

This year we hosted:

- A tenant event with residents from across Devon
- 4 housing surgeries and 4 estate walkarounds in local communities providing in-person advice on residents' doorsteps
- 8 community and environmental engagement days in our communities, involving organisations such as Devon Wildlife Trust, Community Builders and local Councillors

We also funded a series of regular classes to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

- 24 Goldies sing and smile sessions
- 36 computer confidence classes
- 260 seated exercise sessions

Tenants' Voice

We work closely with our Tenants' Voice group which is a group of 12 tenants who act as a "critical friend". They meet regularly to look at issues, policies and procedures, and provide feedback from a tenants' perspective.

This year Tenants' Voice examined the following topics:

- Housing health and safety (compliance)

- Vulnerabilities policy
- Domestic abuse policy
- Gas and electrical safety policy
- Moving out standards
- Resident involvement strategy
- Exeter City Council website

Tenants Voice also participated in our Tenant Focus week activities. Throughout the week the Housing team engaged with communities across the City, listening to residents and working with them to improve their outdoor surroundings.

We also held a drop-in surgery at our Civic Centre offices, where we spoke directly to tenants about issues such as damp and mould, complaints, universal credit and benefits, and repairs.

During the year Tenants' Voice also undertook a review of our approach to domestic abuse, and we used their feedback to help us produce the Domestic Abuse Policy. You can read about their findings here: www.exeter.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-review24

Tenant satisfaction measures: Tenant survey results

- 2 out of 3 tenants are satisfied that Exeter City Council makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood (67%).
- Fewer tenants are satisfied with Exeter City Council's approach to handling anti-social behaviour (56%).

Tenant satisfaction measures: technical measures

- 42.2 anti-social behaviour cases were opened per 1,000 homes
- There were no anti-social behaviour cases that involved hate incidents

You said: You want us to increase our contributions to local neighbourhoods and communities

We did: We held a Tenant Focus week where we held sessions in local communities about what residents would like to see improved.

We worked with our repairs partner, Mears, to deliver 5 new community planters made from recycled material, 3 new community benches, and we help enable local residents to establish 4 new community gardening groups.

Complaints and Performance

Complaints and Performance Group

The tenant-led Complaints and Performance Group continues to meet on a regular basis to help support us to identify improvements to the service.

The group has:

- Updated our complaint response guidance that investigating officers use to ensure our complaints responses include the necessary information. The language has been simplified and where using complex language is unavoidable, explanations will be given.
- Guided us in finding a clearer method of presenting data to tenants
- Taken part in a training session delivered by TPAS (National Engagement Specialists), together with housing staff and tenants from fellow housing providers
- Contributed to the updated Housing Complaints and Compensation Policies
- Updated the Housing Complaints Webpage
- Reviewed our latest Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment document
- Suggested changes to streamline our meetings
- Designed and implemented a ‘mapping exercise’, a new process that has now started in Housing, tracking tenant journeys when reporting repairs
- Helped design the questions or the Housing Complaints Feedback Surveys
- Recommended Complaints Clinics for staff who investigate Housing complaints

Tenant satisfaction measures: technical measures

- 42.2 stage one complaints were received per 1,000 homes
- 8.3 stage two complaints were received per 1,000 homes
- 97% of stage one complaints were responded to within the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code timescales
- 94.9% of stage two complaints were responded to within the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code timescales

What is a complaint?

A complaint is ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents’ (Housing Ombudsman).

We have a dedicated complaint handling team who can support you through our two stage complaints process. More information about the complaints process can be found on our webpage or you can contact us if you would like more information.

Did you know… you can access the support and guidance from the Housing Ombudsman at any time when you have a complaint.

The Housing Ombudsman has a complaint handling code which sets out good practice principals that help support landlords to respond to complaints effectively and fairly.

As a member landlord we must complete regular self-assessments using the Code in order to identify areas where improvements can be made.

The current self-assessment is available on our website.

Complaints at a glance…

The number of complaints received in Housing has increased to 212 (up from 83 in 2023/2024). This pattern can be seen right across the country and will be in part due to the work landlords are doing to make sure that more enquiries are identified as a complaint to ensure issues are resolved appropriately.

- The average response time for all complaints is 10.83 days, up from 10.4 days in 2023/2024.
- 67.27% (111 out of 165) of Stage 1 complaints were upheld.
- 51.85% (14 out of 27) of Stage 2 complaints were upheld.

You can listen to our podcast to hear more about how complaints, or visit our website for more information

If you have a complaint or if you have already reported an issue but feel it has not been resolved appropriately, please report your complaint using the following contact details:

Tel: 01392 265759
Email: housing.complaints@exeter.gov.uk

Your local Councillor: Find your councillor
or MP: Find your MP - MPs and Lords

Online: Housing complaints

By post:
Landlord Services at Exeter City Council
Civic Centre
Paris Street
Exeter
EX1 1JN

How do complaints we receive improve service?

When a resident contacts us with a complaint, it is treated as an opportunity to find ways to improve the service.

We value all feedback, and are keen to investigate concerns to prevent similar complaints arising in the future.

Complaints are reviewed at monthly manager meetings, the Council Housing & Development Advisory Board meetings, and by the Complaints & Performance Group.

Some of the improvements that were identified include:

- Complaints Clinics have been held for all staff in the Housing Service.
- The Housing Complaints team have hosted training sessions for staff.
- Reactive Repairs have created a dedicated complaints inbox to streamline their complaints process.
- Further work is being undertaken with the aim of reducing the number of upheld complaints regarding communication and to ensure service users are informed of any works.
- We worked with our Councillors to ensure where a service user has been expressing dissatisfaction, it can be transferred to our complaints process and logged as a complaint.
- We have worked closely with Mears (our main contractor) to ensure standard repair parts are kept in vans. This streamlines the repairs process and ensures a quick turnaround.
- We added extra checks to how complaints are logged on our housing system to reduce the risk of a complaint being misallocated.

Whilst you can report your concerns to any staff member, logging an official complaint directly with the Complaint Handling Team will help us to resolve your complaint more efficiently.

Do you know what the Housing Ombudsman Service is?

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As a member landlord we must complete regular self-assessments using the Code in order to identify areas where improvements can be made.

The current self-assessment is available on our website.

Contact details for the Housing Ombudsman

Complaint form to submit a new landlord complaint:

Online complaint form: Housing Ombudsman Service

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Tel: 0300 111 3000

By post:
Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 1484
Unit D
Presto
PR2 0ET