

Our Homes

Annual report for Chesterfield Borough Council tenants

Welcome to the 2020/21 housing annual report

The annual report is a summary for tenants on the performance of their landlord. In this report, you'll find updates on how we are doing in all our service areas to make sure we are efficient, effective and meet your housing needs. This report is designed to show the key areas of our performance under the different standards set out by our regulator 'Homes England'. The report sets out what we have done and what we are going to do to make services better in the year ahead.

If you want to find out more about the different standards referred to in the annual report please visit:
www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards



Cllr Chris Ludlow
cabinet member for housing

“The annual report allows us to show what we have achieved over the last year, but also identifies areas where we realise there is progress still to be made. It's been another busy year for us in which we've made real progress in the provision of high-quality housing services and we are proud to see the results of our projects to improve our existing homes and environments.

“Despite the challenges faced by Covid-19, we've made significant progress on a number of key projects and I'm very proud that our team continued to deliver

responsive and quality services throughout lockdown. Following the completion of new build projects at Heaton Court and Manor Drive earlier this year, we're well on our way to reaching our target of building or acquiring 100 new homes by 2023. An additional 21 homes at Brockwell Court are also expected to be completed in the coming weeks – you can read more about this on page 12.

“Please continue to stay safe and we look forward to continuing to work closely with you during the year to come.”

Priorities for 2021/2022

During the 2020/2021 financial year, the Covid-19 pandemic brought new challenges and disruption for housing services. As restrictions ease, many services are returning to normality. Our priorities for 2021/2022 are:

- To ensure all properties pass gas and electrical checks and stay compliant
- To continue to increase the number of disabled adaptations we deliver, making sure we have properties to meet our tenants' needs
- To continue to deliver our housing capital programme to ensure we have quality homes for our tenants
- To ensure we are prepared for the implementation of the Social Housing white paper (more information on page 20)
- To maximise the number of council homes available for letting to address the increasing housing demand. To achieve this a dedicated 'voids improvement group' has been established, that will prioritise properties requiring minimal work and divert resources from other areas to tackle the backlog that built up during the lockdown periods.

New homes at Brockwell Court

Construction of the latest council homes is progressing well, with new homes set to welcome families in the coming weeks.

As part of the council's commitment to increasing the supply of affordable houses across the borough, 21 new council houses are being built on the former Brockwell Court site in Loundsley Green.

Despite the challenges faced as a result of the pandemic, the council's main contractor, Henry Boot Construction, started work on site in May 2020 and the homes are set to be completed in late 2021.

The new development, named Badger Croft, will comprise of ten two-bedroom houses, six three-bedroom houses, four four-bedroom houses and one three-bedroom bungalow – all of which will be added to the council's housing stock.

Environmental improvements, such as the creation of wildflower meadows and planting areas, are also included in the scheme to help boost biodiversity, support pollinators and create a better living environment. Henry Boot Construction has been working with Holmebrook Conservation and Improvement Group to complete these additional landscaping works - including planting fruit trees, building and installing more planters and creating a new border for planting.

Councillor Chris Ludlow, cabinet member for housing, said: "We're pleased to see that works at Brockwell Court are progressing well. We're committed to meeting the housing needs of local people, now and in the future, and these new properties will provide affordable, modern and accessible homes for families in our borough.

"It's also really important that new developments in the borough take account of environmental issues – contributing to a more sustainable future for us all."



Tenant involvement and empowerment standard

We're committed to engaging and working with tenants to improve your quality of life as well as ensuring that you have the opportunity to play an active role in shaping what we do, and how we do it.

Following the outbreak of Covid-19, it was not possible to meet with tenants face-to-face due to the restrictions in place. As a result, the tenant participation service was temporarily suspended in March 2020 and tenant participation officers were redeployed to support other council services that were under extra pressure as a result of the pandemic.

However, keen to ensure that we could still engage with tenants, the team quickly adapted to the new ways of working. They were able to continue working with a tenant challenge panel and key staff from across the council, allowing tenants to have their say on the council's housing service.

As a result, the tenant challenge panel has still been able to review the council's updated policies – influencing significant changes to make sure they are fair and transparent for all tenants. This included:

- Scrutinising the Tenancy Policy which included some additions due to regulation changes – tenants also influenced some significant changes to tenancy management process, ensuring fairness and transparency.
- Tenants took part in reviewing the council's proposed new complaints policy to ensure it was written in a clear, concise and easily understandable way.
- Reviewing the 'repair tenant obligations' that were introduced in 2018 to check on progress that had been made. Looking at the outcomes of the tenant survey, the panel were able to recommend changes to the council.

As restrictions ease, our team are committed to finding new ways of engaging with our tenants and are looking forward to supporting them and their local communities recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.



If you are interested in working with us, please contact the tenant participation team by emailing: tpenquiries@chesterfield.gov.uk, calling 01246 345147 or visiting: www.chesterfield.gov.uk/housing/counciltenants/tenant-involvement/chat-get-involved

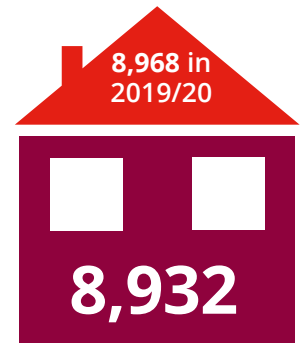
Tenancy standard

This standard looks at how we allocate our properties and support our tenants.

2020/21 figures
 2019/20 figures

Total properties managed by the number of bedrooms

Total number of properties we manage



3,194 One bedroom properties



2,803 Two bedroom properties



2,688 Three bedroom properties

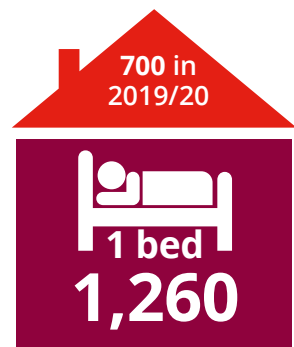


247 Four + bedroom properties

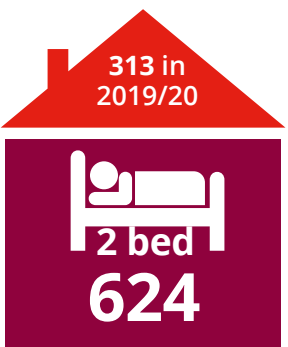
Number of households on the housing register



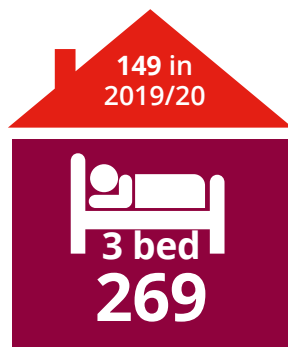
People applying for re-housing are looking for:



1,260 One bedroom properties



624 Two bedroom properties



269 Three bedroom properties



99 Four + bedroom properties

Changes to stock



+17 New properties brought into stock



+4 changes due to leasing of stock



-57 Homes sold under right-to-buy properties

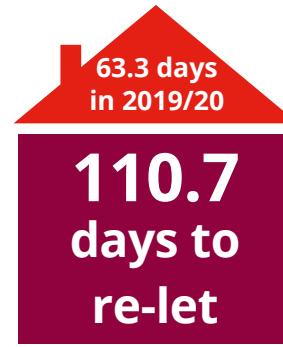
Lettings and empty properties



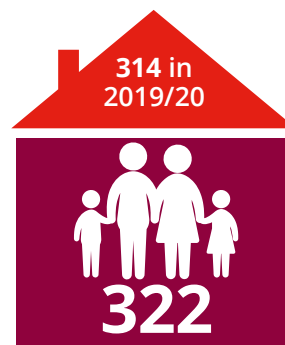
675 properties have been let



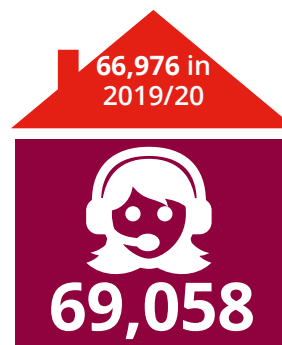
225 number of empty properties



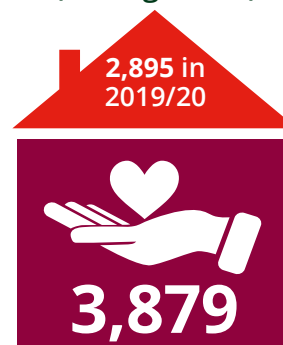
110.7 days to re-let empty properties (average time)



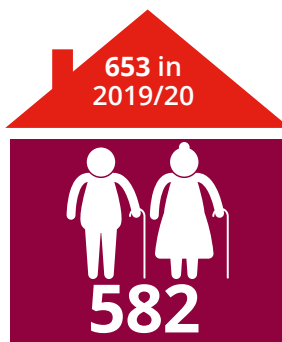
322 people supported by Tenancy Sustainment services



69,058 number of calls to Careline



3,879 emergency calls - (uninjured people) who had fallen and were lifted by Careline team



582 number of older people supported in their homes

Throughout the pandemic there have been several external factors that have impacted the number of properties that we have been able to let to tenants. Most noticeably were the restrictions that stopped people moving home between March 2020 and June 2020 meaning we were unable to let properties during this time, other than in an emergency.

Despite these restrictions easing in late June 2020, some restrictions remained in place until August which impacted the number of tenancies that we could offer. Now that restrictions have lifted, we are working hard to address this, and are aiming to reduce the time it takes to re-let a property.

We continued to offer support in emergency situations. We engaged with and supported the local response to the Government's "Everyone In" initiative - a national effort to house rough sleepers. We accommodated over 60 people experiencing homelessness during the first three months of the pandemic.

The demand for council houses is at the highest level in recent years - 2,252 households are currently registered on our Home Options system. This has increased significantly from 2019/20, although the figure shown for 2019/20 was lower than normal due to the introduction of the new Home Options system.

We're working hard to increase the supply of affordable homes to meet this demand by building and buying new properties for local families - read about the latest development on page 12.

Finding new ways of working to support our tenants



As a responsible landlord, keeping our tenants safe is our top priority. Over the past year we haven't been able to carry out as many repairs or planned maintenance and modernisation works due to Covid-19 restrictions. But despite the challenges we faced, our team has responded quickly to identify new, safe ways of working to make sure we can continue to keep you safe in your home.

Keeping on top of essential inspections

Our Housing Property Operations team routinely carry out around 8,150 gas service compliance checks per year. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, these checks were undertaken on a 10-month programme and 100% of our homes were compliant.



At the peak of the pandemic the 100% compliance rate unfortunately dropped and our team faced some challenges accessing tenants' homes for a number of reasons, including concerns about the spread of the virus. However, the team has worked hard to improve this position, working with tenants to reassure them of the safe working measures in place to protect them.

With new ways of dealing with the pandemic and improved ways of accessing council homes, we're working hard to achieve a 100% compliance rate once again.

We also carry out testing of electrical services and appliances every five years as, if not checked, these could be a hidden fire risk.

If we ask to visit your home for these checks to be carried out, please do help us – it's for your safety and peace of mind.

Getting back on track with repairs

In 2019/2020, our repairs team completed over 60,000 repairs to tenant's homes, from a leaking radiator to new fencing. When the pandemic hit, Government guidance advised us not to visit homes unless it was an emergency – as a result the number of repairs we could complete reduced, but we still carried out over 43,000 repairs in 2020/2021.

As restrictions eased in the summer of 2020, our team were quick to respond and get back to helping tenants with their repair requests, and we're working hard to reduce the backlog of work.

Going the extra mile!

During the height of the pandemic, as well as keeping your homes safe, our team delivered over 10,000 prescriptions to vulnerable people who were unable to leave their homes, along with food parcels and other essentials.

Providing homes for the vulnerable

Our voids team quickly adapted to Covid secure ways of working so we could continue to maintain empty properties - meaning we had properties readily available for vulnerable residents who needed a home.

In total, the team worked on 594 homes in 2020/21 so they could be let to local people at a difficult time.

Home standard



This standard looks at how we maintain your homes

40,093
responsive repairs carried out

12 days
Average number of days to complete a responsive repair

Amount of spending to maintain Decent Homes Standard

£11.41m on property maintenance
£3.34m sheltered home conversions
£4.38m on building new homes and acquisitions

Decent Homes spend - £19.13m

88.63%
of gas appliance checks completed

74%
Overall tenant satisfaction with repairs service

Number of properties with new:

Heating systems	73
Roofs	205
Kitchens	92
Bathrooms or adaptations to meet tenant's needs	34
Major adaptations	33
Minor adaptations	130
Overall tenant satisfaction with homes	80%

100%
of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard



Neighbourhood and Community Standard

This standard sets out how we should work with other agencies to manage estates and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Here to help our tenants

Our dedicated tenancy sustainment team is on hand to support you when you need it, and this has been more important than ever over the last year.

Despite the challenges created by Covid-19, the team has continued to help people manage their tenancies and stay living in their homes – making sure they could access the welfare benefits, grants and specialist care and support they were entitled to. Additional staff have been re-deployed into tenancy sustainment and tenancy management to ensure we are responding to the increased demand.

Over the last year we have seen an increase in the number of anti-social behaviour cases reported, a direct impact of the Covid-19 restrictions, with more people staying at home. We have redeployed staff to help meet the increased demand. We understand that people may have felt isolated or anxious during this time, and with many of us spending more time at home, relationships with neighbours may have also become strained.

Our teams have continued to respond to these reports and help tenants get support from other specialist agencies. Due to the pandemic, the Government suspended evictions and court services were very restricted. We therefore focused on new ways of managing tenancies to make sure nobody was evicted in 2020/2021.

We are pleased to report that for tenants who started to receive support from our tenancy sustainment team in 2019-20, 96% of them remained in their homes a year after support began.



Indicator	2019/20	2020/21
Anti-social behaviour (ASB)	329	490
Total evictions, due to:	33	N/A
Rent arrears	31	N/A
ASB	2	N/A
Closure Orders	2	N/A
Injunctions	1	N/A
Notice to quit served	11	17
Satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	79%	79%

Value for money

This standard looks at how we spend the money we receive as rent.

Average 52 week rent - £78.25 (up from £77.53 in 2019/20) per week

Rent collection rate - 99.8 per cent (up from 99.1 per cent in 2019/20)

Indicator	2020/21
Average rent per week	£78.25
Of which by property size:	
Bedsits/studio apartment	£61.78
One bedroom	£72.82
Two bedroom	£78.82
Three bedroom	£82.89
Four bedroom+	£91.04
Rent collection rate	99.8 per cent



How much we spent in 2020/21

	For every £100 in rent	Average cost per property
Maintaining properties (of which):	77.5p	£3,151
Major works and cyclical works	61.2p	£2,488
Responsive repairs and voids	16.3p	£633
Housing management (of which)	6.4p	£260
Rent collection	2.1p	£85
Letting homes	0.8p	£31
Tenant participation	0.5p	£19
Tackling anti-social behaviour	1.2p	£49
Tenancy management	1.8p	£76
Maintaining estates	2.5p	£103
Supported housing for elderly residents	1.7p	£69
Other costs (IT offices etc)	11.9p	£486
Total cost	£1	£4,069

New guidance to protect your rights

Protecting the rights of people who live in council homes and other social housing is the focus of new Government guidance.



Shaped by the views of residents across England, the new guidance, called the 'charter for social housing residents – social housing white paper,' sets out what tenants can expect from their landlords - including us - and is designed to improve housing standards across the country over the next two years.

It also makes sure you have opportunities to have your voice heard and be involved in what we do.

As a responsible landlord to tenants living in just under 9,000 council homes, we've always been committed to delivering excellent services. And over the next 12 months, we will be reviewing how we work to make sure we will meet the new standards, and work in line with the new guidance as it is published.

The charter sets out seven key commitments. Here is a summary of what you can expect from us as guidance is developed:

To be safe in your home

Your safety is our priority, and we will meet new requirements around things like fire safety, legionella, gas servicing, electric testing and lifts.

To know how we are performing as your landlord

We will regularly publish more information about:

- Repairs and maintenance
- Safety standards
- How we engage with you
- Neighbourhood management, including measures on anti-social behaviour
- How we spend money.

To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

- It will be easier and quicker for you to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman
- We must show we have learned from complaints about our service
- We are also reviewing our own complaints policy.

To be treated with respect

We're already committed to treating everyone fairly and with respect. We'll be regularly inspected and must formally report our performance to show this is happening.

To have your voice heard by your landlord

The charter recognises how important it is for landlords to listen to tenants' views. We're reviewing tenant representation and how we support our vulnerable tenants.

To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in

There will be a review of the decent homes standard and what landlords need to do to meet this.

To be supported to take your first steps into ownership

This final commitment primarily applies to housing association tenants to increase their home ownership opportunities.

For more information visit www.gov.uk/housing-local-and-community/council-housing-association

Commitment to the community

Chesterfield's Careline service has been presented with a Derbyshire Beacon of Hope award in recognition of its continued efforts to support over 4,000 residents, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, throughout the pandemic.

The Beacon of Hope Award is seen as a way of showing the county's gratitude to residents and organisations who have worked tirelessly and selflessly during these unprecedented times.

Since the start of the pandemic the team has continued to take calls 24/7 - assisting residents in an emergency, offering emotional support or just being a friendly voice at a time when people needed it most. As well as receiving calls from tenants, the team also made regular calls to isolated and vulnerable residents to check on their wellbeing during lockdown.

Councillor Chris Ludlow, cabinet member for housing, said: "Careline is a vital service and has been a lifeline for many, especially since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak. It allows many residents



in the borough to continue living independently with help and support available at the touch of a button.

"Throughout the pandemic, our dedicated team members have been working around the clock to answer calls and ensure everyone gets the support they need. Receiving this award is a testament to their commitment and determination."

To find out more about the service visit www.chesterfield.gov.uk/careline, email queries. careline@chesterfield.gov.uk or call 0300 303 3378.



Creating an attractive borough

We are fully committed to enhancing the borough's housing offer and creating attractive places for our tenants to live, now and in the future.

Over the past year, we have continued to make excellent progress on our modernisation and refurbishment projects. Our 'Residential Block Refurbishment' is progressing well with Pullman Close (shown right) at Staveley being one of the latest to benefit from a facelift.

The £8 million programme will see even more blocks of flats across the borough undergo extensive internal and external improvements over the next three years.

As well as the refurbishment of blocks, we're also carrying out environmental improvements to our estates which will not only make it easier for residents to get round the estates, it will also help boost biodiversity, support pollinators and create a better living environment.

We'll provide you with regular updates on the latest projects in future editions of Your Chesterfield.

