

Aberdeen City Council Housing



Overview

- Regulation
- Current stock – types, age, challenges
- New Build Programme
- Allocations – changes – CBL
- Digital Options – Blended approach
- Our Housing & Support Service Transformation
 - Why
 - New Structure
 - Benefits
 - Future



Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC)

The first Charter came into effect on 1 April 2012 and was reviewed during 2016.

As required by section 31 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, the Scottish Ministers, in the SSHC, set the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities

The new Charter was published in April 2017 with very little change to the Outcomes required of Social Landlords

Our role is to carry out our duties on a day-to-day basis to meet the Charter Outcomes



Outcomes & Standards

Customer/Landlord Experience

- **Equalities** - every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services
- **Communication** - tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.
- **Participation** - tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Housing quality and maintenance

- **Quality of housing** - tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated; are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by December 2020.
- **Repairs, maintenance and improvements** - tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

Neighbourhood and community

- **Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes** - tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

Access to housing and support

- **Housing options** - people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them.
 - tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.

Social landlords ensure that:

- people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

- **Access to social housing** - people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and on their prospects of being housed.
- **Tenancy sustainment** - tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.
- **Homeless people** - homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

Getting good value from rents and service charges

- **Value for money** -tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay
- **Rents and service charges** - a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them
- tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including details of any individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

Other customers

- **Gypsy/Travellers** - sites are well maintained and managed, and meet the minimum site standards set in Scottish Government guidance.




Scottish Housing Regulator

Statutory body, separate from the Scottish Government, who regulates to protect the interests of tenants, people who are homeless, and others who use social landlords' services.

Monitors, assesses, reports and intervenes (as appropriate) in relation to social landlords' performance of housing activities.

Requires Landlords to submit and publish an Assurance Statement signed off by their governing body i.e. our Committee Convener



The data we submit to the SHR reflects and evidences if we are achieving the Charter Outcomes:

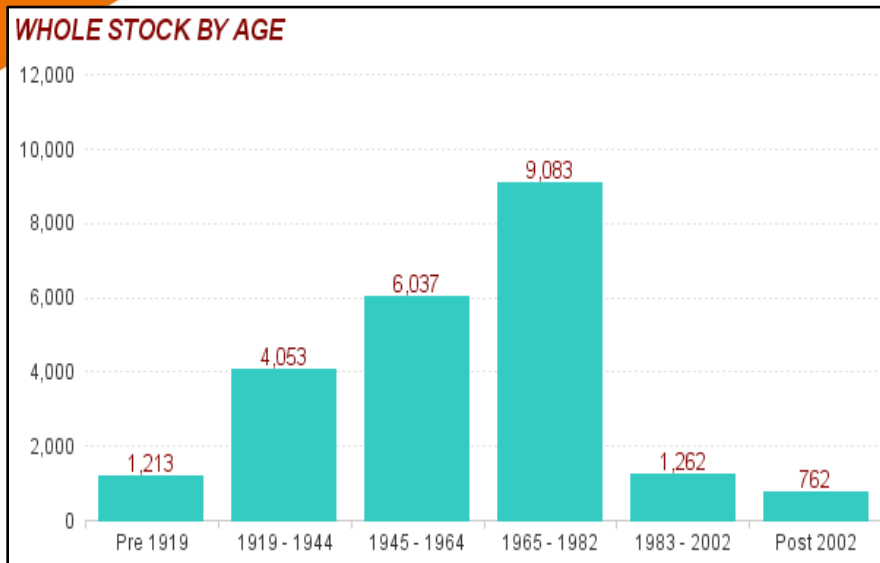
- **Customer Satisfaction**
 - Overall Service
- **Housing Quality & Maintenance**
 - Repair timescales
 - Gas Safety
 - SHQS
- **Estate Management**
 - Complaints
 - Offer refusals
 - Anti Social Behaviour
 - Abandonments, Court Actions and Evictions
- **Access to Housing and Support**
 - Voids
 - Waiting List
 - Homelessness
 - Relet times
 - Tenancy Sustainment
- **Rents**
 - % of rent collected that was due
 - Gross Rent Arrears
 - Rent Lost through Voids



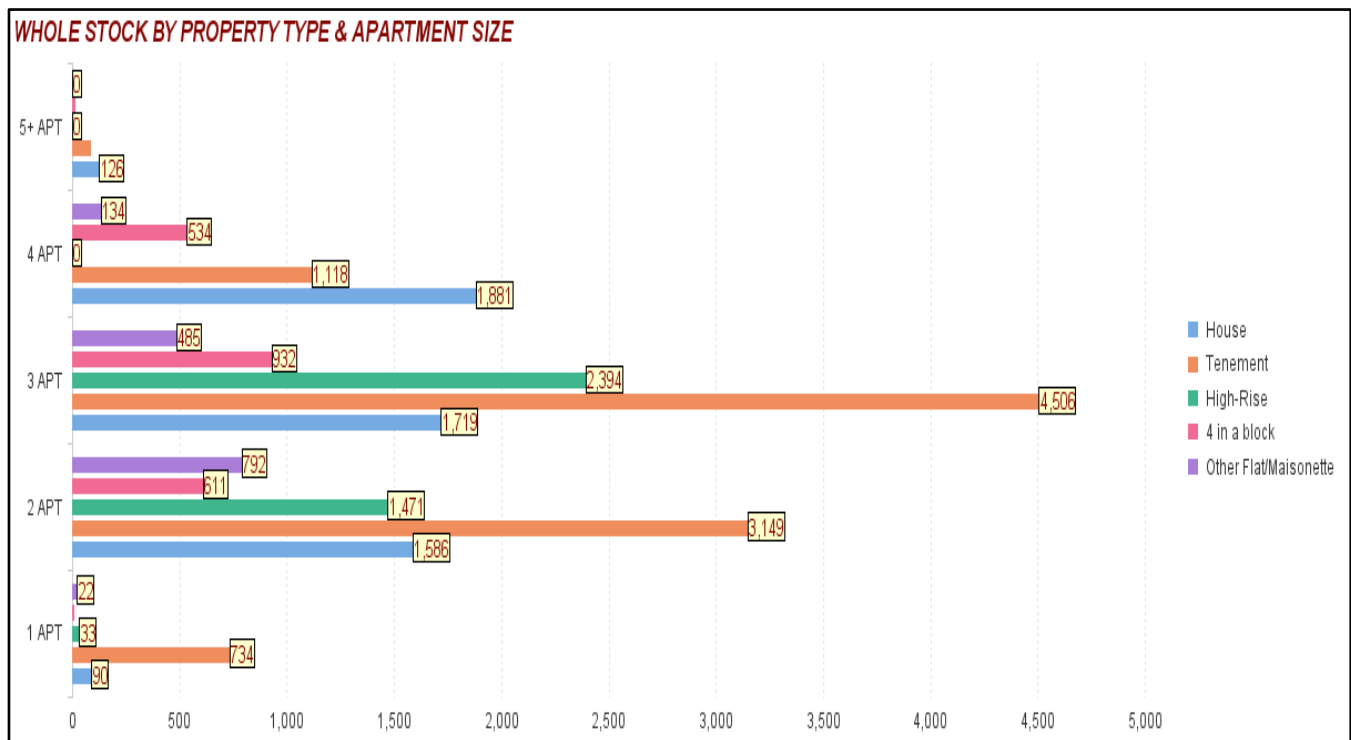
Current Stock

- Aberdeen City Council owns & manages over 22,000 properties (approx. 1 in 5 Houses in the city)
- All rented to people who have a housing need
- Mixture of house types – flatted, cottages, multi storey maisonettes/flats, split level cottages & four in a blocks
- Mixture of
 - Mainstream/General needs housing
 - Amenity
 - Sheltered housing -.
 - Very Sheltered housing

Stock Breakdown by Age



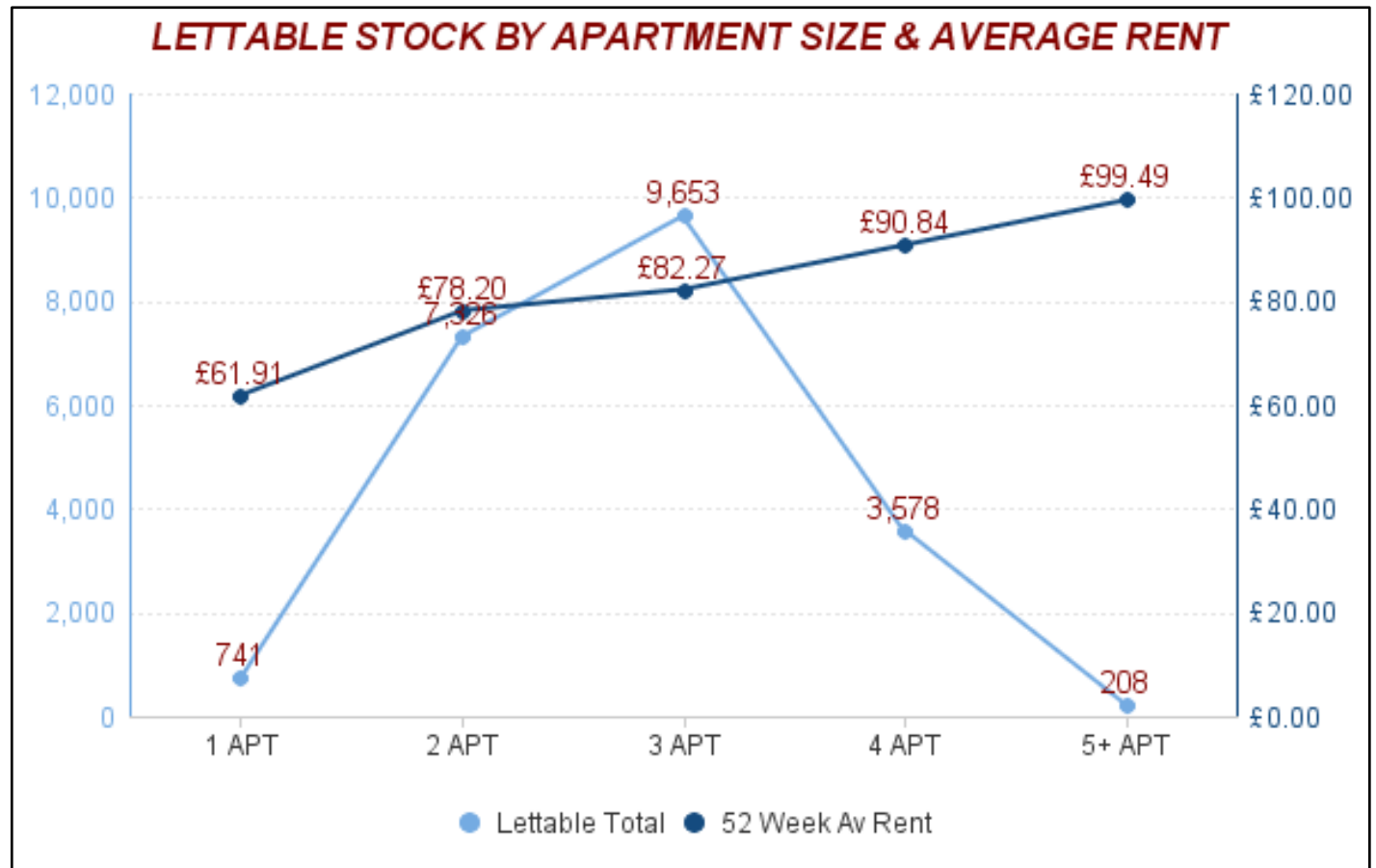
- Relatively older stock profile – can be more challenging around maintenance
- New build program which will see 2000 new homes be built – so post 2002 will increase over the next 5 years



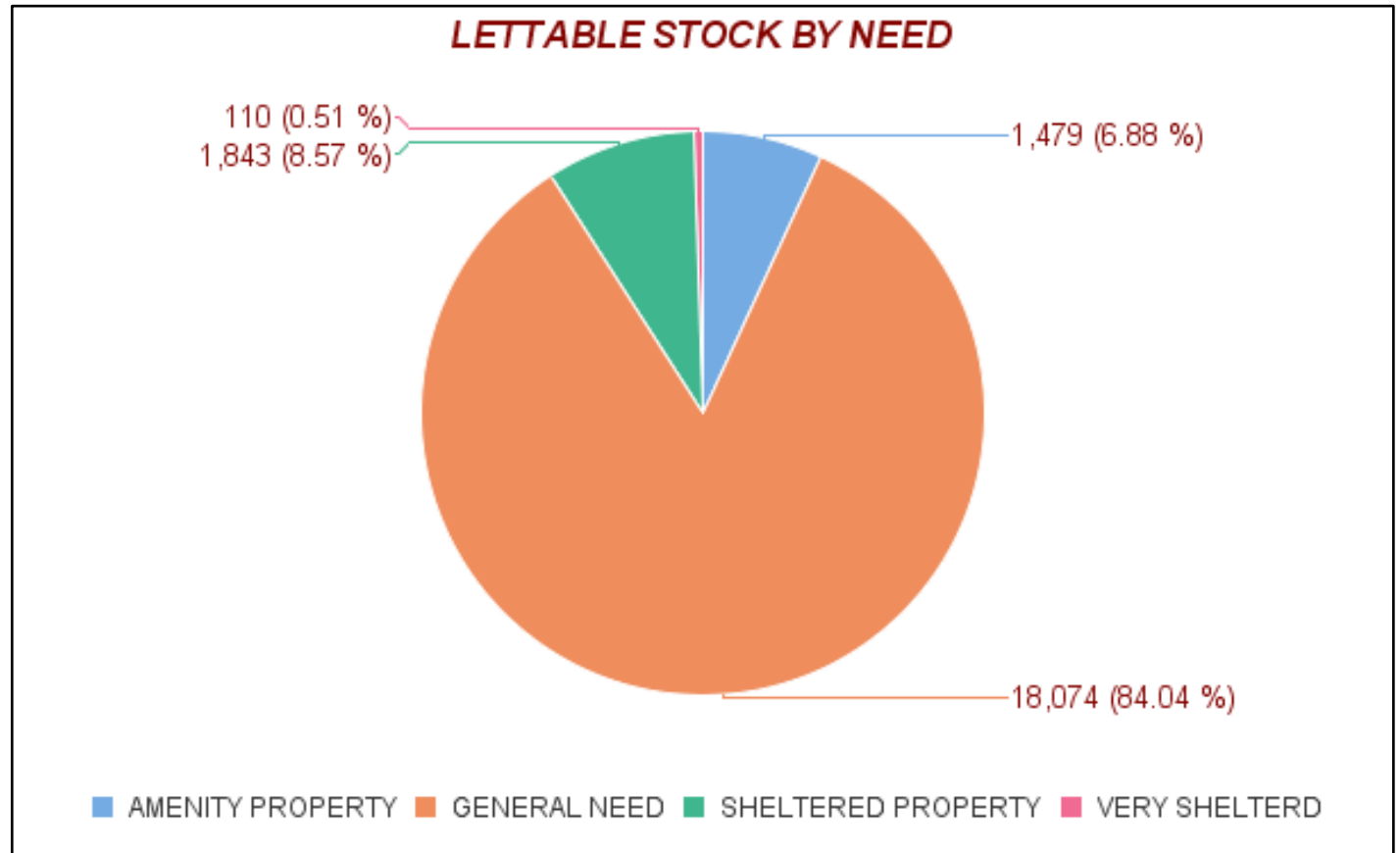
Property Type and Size

Most common stock type is 3 bed flatted, closely followed by 2 bed flatted

Average rent



Lettable stock by need





New Build Programme

- Commitment to build 2000 new homes across the city
 - Began with sites at Smithfield (3 bed houses & flats) (2017) & Manor Walk (3/4 bed houses & flats) (2018)
 - Wellheads Dyce (283) – flatted accommodation-
varying sizes (video)
 - Summerhill Site (369) – due for completion later this year
 - Auchmill (92) – flats and wheelchair designed flats
 - Kincorth – 2 sites – Craighill (99) & Old Kincorth academy (212) – Houses and flats
 - Tillydrone – 70 new homes
 - [Video: Tenants move into new-build council houses in Aberdeen | Scottish Housing News](#)



Affordable & Accessible Homes

- All new homes to meet the gold standard in construction
 - enhanced standards for storage, insulation, natural lighting and security.
 - Half of the homes will have Electric Vehicle charging points, and the other half will have the potential to be converted in the future.
 - connectivity to digital infrastructure
 - Mobility space for a wheelchair or pram or bicycle. All ground floor flats will be wheelchair accessible with wheelchair accessible wet-rooms, and will be ready for adaptation for disabled equipment and dementia-friendly design.
- Existing stock – ongoing programme of upgrades to meet SHQS (Scottish Housing Quality standards)
- Expansion of the Aberdeen set Heat & Power Network not only for new build properties



Combined Aberdeen Heat & Power Network

- CHP plant is an installation where there is a simultaneous generation of electric power and useable heat, in a single process. It generates electricity locally and captures the waste heat produced to provide space heating and hot water through a district heating network.
- Two outcomes
 - Reduction in fuel costs for customers connected to the network – standard rate – irrespective of usage (50% reduction in cost)
 - Reduction in carbon emissions for the city (56% reduction in emissions)



Allocations

Overview of how we allocate housing

Overview of housing options

Future model of allocations -
Choice Based Lettings



Housing Lists

The four main lists are as follows:

Urgent Housing Need - Priority by Assessment

Housing with Support (Amenity/Sheltered/Very Sheltered/High Support) - Priority by Assessment

Transfers (applicants are current tenants of Aberdeen City Council or a Registered Social Landlord within Aberdeen)- Priority by Points - awarded for under-occupation or room deficiency

Waiting (applicants are those who are not tenants of Aberdeen City Council or a Registered Social Landlord within Aberdeen) - Priority by Points – awarded for room deficiency, non security of tenure, lack of facilities, living in a static caravan.



Urgent Housing Need

- Applicants on the Urgent Housing Need list are prioritised by way of an assessment process and ranked in order of the date of their priority some examples below
- **Emergency homeless:** Applications from persons who are assessed as emergency homeless through fire, flood or other natural disaster. Such applicants will be awarded a High priority on this list.
- **Statutory homeless:** Determined by a Homeless Assessment carried out in accordance with the terms of Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended. Such applicants will be awarded a Medium priority on this list. Chief Officer Early Intervention and Community Empowerment can exercise the ability to award a higher priority on the urgent list where issues of Public Protection prevail.
- **Young people looked after by Aberdeen City Council:** applications which are accepted for priority rehousing from such applicants will be awarded a High priority on this list.
- **Next stage housing applicants:** applications which are accepted for priority rehousing from such applicants will be awarded a Medium priority on this list.
- Aim is always to allocate housing on the basis of housing those in the greatest of need



Delegated powers



Downsizing Scheme



Special lettings initiative for lower demand sheltered & amenity housing –



Refusals

- Placement on a list for housing is determined by an applicant's priority for housing, details of which can be found in the allocation policy. The applicant must wait for an offer of accommodation which will be based on their priority and the availability of the type and size of property required.
- Housing applicants are only allowed to refuse one offer of accommodation before their application is put on hold for a period of 12 months, during which time they will not receive any further offers of accommodation.
- Applicants assessed as Statutory Homeless will be entitled to one offer of accommodation under their Statutory Homeless priority.



Housing Options & Advice

- Approach of providing options and advice rather than just submitting application with Aberdeen City Council
- Anyone approaching for housing advice will be provided with all options including
 - Mutual exchange – for current ACC tenants or tenants of any Registered social landlord – process that allows them to swap homes if homes meet need
 - Other housing providers in the city – submitting an application with ACC will not automatically put you on lists with other housing providers
 - Private Lets



Choice Based Lettings

- Planned launch towards end of 2022 in Aberdeen City
- Already used across many other RSL & LA's
- Offers applicants the option to bid on properties they want that meet their need
- Auto bid option in place for those that are unable to bid
- Gives greater choice and control to applicants
- Reduce refusal rates



Digital Approach

- Pandemic – impact – positive/negative
- Eg re virtual viewings – was a reaction the pandemic as we still had to provide housing of those in greatest need throughout but had to consider safest way to do it
- Housing Online – self serve options
- Housing chatbot – launch date TBC
- Teams meetings – TP continued
- Quicker and easier communication (email addresses for around half our tenants)
- Blended approach – digital inclusion



Housing Transformation

- Next section is a closer look at our recent transformation within the Housing Service
- Key areas – New Structure
 - Change Process
 - Benefits
 - Benefits of the new housing & support officer role
 - The future



Previous Structure

- Housing Access & Support Service
 - Providing housing advice & homeless assessments
 - Responsible for delivering low level support
 - Temporary Housing Management
- Housing Management Service
 - Responsible for tenancy/estate management & rent management



Why

- Outcome of tenant satisfaction survey
- The proposals within this redesign were aimed at establishing a model which improves outcomes and wellbeing for households and communities across the city.
- This proposed structure signify a deliberate shift to delivering more integrated, preventative and person-centred services, focussing on improving quality of life across Aberdeen, intervening early, and preventing cumulative harm being experienced which may in turn lead to long term reliance on public services



New Structure

- Housing Access Service
 - Providing housing advice & homeless assessments
- Housing & Support Service
 - Estate/Tenancy Management
 - Smaller Patches enabling staff to spend more meaningful time with their tenants and deliver better outcomes
 - Delivering low level support
 - Higher support needs referred on to commissioned services
 - Temporary Accommodation management (not yet in place)
- Corporate Debt Team
 - Dealing with ACC arrears (Rent, Council Tax etc.)
- Customer Contact Centre
 - Housing Enquiries Calls



Benefits

- Customer Contact Centre
 - Consistency in the information provided to tenants
 - 40% calls dealt with on the phone the first time freeing up H&SO
 - Urgent calls re-routed so they are picked up quickly
 - Non-urgent calls passed for actioning to relevant H&SO with required information on what the call was regarding
- Housing Access Service
 - More focus on allocations, housing options and homeless cases
- Corporate Debt Team
- Creation of a specialised team to oversee ACC debt
- Housing & Support Service
 - One point of contact for tenants for ensuring they are able to successfully manage and maintain a tenancy



Housing & Support Service – Benefits of the new model

- Smaller patches – reduction from approx. 650-800 per officer to 250-350
- Preventative approach
- Greater engagement
- Greater management of our tenancies – annual visits more for those who need it
- Greater support for those who need it – recognised earlier
- Resource to undertake Participatory Budgeting - giving residents the opportunity to direct how money is spent to improve the community they live in



The Future

- SVQ 3 Qualified staff who are SSSC Registered and able to support tenants to successfully sustain their tenancy
- CIH level 3 qualified staff who have a good understanding of housing legislation
- Creating a trauma informed service that better understands the issues some people face
- To be a more proactive service- intervening before the crisis
- To have Officers who have a greater awareness of the community they work in
- Increase tenancy sustainment, creating homes & communities that people want to stay in by choice



Useful links

- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter-april-2017>
- Housing allocation policy [New Housing Allocation Policy 21 1.pdf \(aberdeencity.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Housing Performance Report 2020:21 HD 1080p - YouTube](#)
- [Housing Online: Get Help to Register | Aberdeen City Council](#)