

Communities Scotland
Inspection report

Blochairn Housing Cooperative Ltd

June 2006

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Context	2
3. How good are the services?	3
4. Is the service managed for improvement?	10
5. Governance and financial management	12
6. Areas for improvement action	15
7. Next steps	16
Appendix 1 Sources of Evidence	17
Appendix 2 Examples of Positive Practice	18
Glossary	19

1. Introduction

About this inspection

- 1.1 This inspection was carried out by Communities Scotland under section 69 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 on behalf of Scottish Ministers. Our purpose in inspection is to provide an independent external assessment of the effectiveness of housing service delivery and make recommendations to help improvement. Inspections are conducted within a published framework of Performance Standards*.

How we assessed performance

- 1.2 Our inspectors asked two key questions:
- How good are the services we have inspected?
 - How well are these services being managed for improvement?
- 1.3 In order to answer these questions the inspectors:
- consulted partner organisations;
 - analysed published performance and financial information;
 - examined key policies, publications, information and the organisation's self-assessment submitted for this inspection;
 - analysed tenant satisfaction surveys;
 - saw and tested first hand how well services were being delivered; and
 - spoke to staff and members of the governing body.

The inspection team

- 1.4 Roisin Harris carried out the inspection and was supported by Luise Siekman (Financial Analyst). The inspection was managed by Michael Cameron. Roisin was on site during the 9th and 10th March 2006. We would like to thank everyone involved in the inspection, particularly the Management Committee and staff for their time and co-operation.

Responding to this inspection

- 1.5 We expect all inspected bodies to make this report available to anyone that wants it, report our findings to tenants and other stakeholders and respond to the issues raised in this report. We require that the summary of this report is issued to all tenants.

* see glossary

2. Context

About the Organisation

- 2.1 Blochairn Housing Cooperative was registered in March 1990. The Cooperative formed as a result of stock transfer from Glasgow City Council between 1991 and 1993. It is a non charitable Industrial & Provident Society* and is constituted as a non fully mutual housing cooperative, which means that all the tenants do not have to be members of the Cooperative. The Cooperative owns 219 properties in the Royston area of North Glasgow. The Cooperative's housing stock is a combination of new build developments and refurbished tenement properties. The Blochairn area is one of most deprived 10% in Scotland.
- 2.2 The Cooperative is governed by a voluntary management committee elected at its AGM. It currently has 11 committee members made up off 9 tenants, 1 owner and 1 co-opted member. At the time of inspection Blochairn had four full time employees. The Cooperative receives financial services from Reidvale Housing Association. The table below shows some key facts on Blochairn.

Key Facts	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006*
Houses owned	220	220	219
Employees (full time equivalent)	4	4	4
Annual turnover (£000's)	518	525	539
Total possible rental income (£000's)	481	510	525
Total Arrears (£'s)	44,435	49,540	54,348
Average* weekly rent (£)	43.61	44.05	45.59
Houses re-let	17	14	12
Average days to re-let	15	8	5
Responsive repairs carried out	779	849	-

Source: Annual Performance & Statistical Returns (APSR)* & annual accounts

* see glossary

3. How good are the services?

Accessible Services

Social landlords should provide open, fair and equal access to their services.

- 3.1 Blochairn provides good access to its housing list*. In partnership with two other Registered Social Landlords* (RSLs) in Royston it has developed a common application form and a good quality information leaflet. The shared application form is available at Blochairn's office to take away or applicants can receive help completing it. Although the application forms are available at the offices of the other two RSLs, the Cooperative does not publicise more widely. The three RSLs are in the process of formalising a written protocol which will include agreed performance targets. The Cooperative has not reviewed its list every year; however it last carried out a review in September 2005.
- 3.2 The Cooperative provides applicants with good information about their application. It sends new applicants a detailed housing prospects letter. This confirms which list the applicant would be on, their points and potential list position. It also gives details of the last time the type of property they want became available. Due to low turnover this can be several years. Applicants must decide if they want to be on the Cooperative's housing list by returning a confirmation slip. If applicants ask for advice, the Cooperative will always encourage them to return the confirmation slip. Applicants who do not return the slip are not added to the housing list; however their applications are kept on file in case they change their mind at any stage. This practice restricts open access to Blochairn's housing list.
- 3.3 The Cooperative does not hold waiting lists for its five apartment house or four wheelchair adapted properties due to the limited number and low turnover. It advises applicants who apply for these sorts of properties by letter that they do not hold a list and to either apply to two RSLs in Royston who do hold these sorts of lists or seek advice from their own landlord or the Council homelessness team. While it is good practice for Blochairn to give an applicant clear prospects advice and information on other housing options it has a statutory duty to accept an application from any person aged 16 or over.

* see glossary

- 3.4 Blochairn provides excellent access to its repairs services. Tenants can report a repair by telephone, to staff or in person at its office. Tenants have direct access to the out of hours emergency repairs telephone numbers and a staff mobile number. The Cooperative publicises arrangements for reporting repairs in its tenant handbook, newsletters and the numbers are recorded on the answering machine. The Cooperative operates a formal appointment system for repairs offering am or pm call times. It also offers a more specific time if necessary.
- 3.5 Blochairn has one office, which it rents. It is located within walking distance of all its properties. The office is not wheelchair accessible and there is no induction hearing loop. A private interview room is available. The Cooperative advertises the Language Line interpreter service through posters in reception, however not all its publications indicate availability in other formats. The Cooperative is considering Plain English when developing new publications. The last tenant satisfaction survey, which was carried out in 2004 found over 98% of respondents who last contacted Blochairn by telephone or visited the office were very or fairly satisfied. However, the current access arrangements are not in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 part 3.

Service Quality

Social landlords should deliver high quality services and maintain their houses to a high standard.

Housing Management

- 3.6 The Cooperative carries out a very small number of re-lets* each year, for example in 2004/05 there were only 14 re-lets and to date during 2005/06 there have been 12. Blochairn has let the majority of these houses to people with a range of housing needs which reflect the statutory reasonable preference categories*. Transfer applicants must have held their tenancy for a specified number of years before they can apply. Also transfer applicants, applicants living care of a tenant and previous residents receive points per year of residence; neither of these practices are in line with legislation or Scottish Executive guidance.
- 3.7 Like other RSLs in Glasgow, Blochairn and the Council have not yet agreed a formal protocol in relation to both organisations meeting their statutory duties to homeless

* See glossary

people. The Cooperative is trying to help Glasgow City Council accommodate homeless people by providing two properties for temporary accommodation. At the time of our inspection, Blochairn had received and offered housing to one household formally referred under section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001*.

- 3.8 Blochairn has policies and procedures in place to deal with suspensions and exclusions. It has suspended two applicants for rent arrears and other tenancy related debts during 2005/06. The suspended applicants received appropriate information including their right to appeal. The Cooperative reviews all suspended applicants' situations at the end of their suspension period.
- 3.9 When Blochairn applicants confirm they wish to be on the housing list the Cooperative will consider them for an allocation. The Cooperative uses home visits at the point of allocation to verify application information and explain the services that the Cooperative offers along with tenant's responsibilities. The Cooperative provides choice for applicants through its involvement in the local common housing register* managed jointly by Copperworks Cooperative and Spire View Housing Association. The Royston CHR has recently been highlighted as a case study in a resource for practitioners published by the Scottish Executive . Applicants can specify the landlord, property type, floor level and even which street they would prefer from a combined housing stock which covers a wide area of Royston. Blochairn does not limit the number of offers applicants can receive and staff accompany applicants on viewings. If the offer is accepted, a detailed tenancy sign up meeting will follow. Quality control of allocations is excellent; the Director verifies all allocations made by the Housing Officer and if there is a deviation from the policy e.g. a sensitive let, it is reported to committee. The Cooperative keeps clear audit trails for all allocations.
- 3.10 Blochairn has signed up all but three of its tenants to the Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)* agreement, and is excluding these tenants from its Tenants Incentive Fund to encourage them to sign up. The Cooperative prefers to use SSTs and has not had to offer a short SST*. If an appropriate situation arises the Cooperative intends to adopt the model short SST* agreement at that time.

* See glossary

- 3.11 Blochairn gives tenants a good tenancy pack. This includes the tenant handbook and a selection of leaflets. The SST agreement, housing benefit claim form, a membership application form, the complaints policy and a termination of tenancy letter template are also enclosed.
- 3.12 The Cooperative issued 13 notices of proceedings* and initiated 6 court actions relating to rent arrears during 2005/06. In two of the cases, orders for recovery of possession* were granted. One of these tenants abandoned before possession was recovered. The other cleared the debt with back dated housing benefit and the Cooperative is in the process of issuing a new tenancy agreement. The other court actions are still ongoing. The Cooperative writes to the Council's homelessness team and social work services ahead of any possible recovery of possession, but doesn't do this at the point which it raises proceedings for possession*.
- 3.13 Blochairn has a good approach to support and welfare advice. It visits new tenants six weeks into their tenancy. The Cooperative will assist tenants with completing Housing Benefit applications. For money and welfare advice it refers tenants to the near by North Glasgow Advice Centre. Blochairn promotes health and well being by hosting weekly slimming meetings and has negotiating free trial sessions and favourable membership rates at a local gym for residents. The Cooperative also works in partnership with the Royston Stress Centre by hosting stress relief sessions and helps it target potential clients. The Cooperative displays an excellent range of leaflets and posters in its office. Blochairn uses its newsletter to promote all these initiatives.
- 3.14 We visited Blochairn's estates and found that they are of an excellent standard. The area is litter free and there was little evidence of graffiti or vandalism. The Cooperative cuts the grass and prunes shrubs regularly to help create a pleasant environment. CCTV operated by Glasgow City Council's Streetwise is located throughout the area and camera angles can be adjusted on request. The Cooperative has a zero tolerance policy to graffiti and vandalism. Staff carry out regular estate and close checks and work particularly with young people to promote a good quality neighbourhood and a feeling of community. The tenant satisfaction

* see glossary

survey carried out in 2004 found that 93% of respondents felt Blochairn was a very or fairly good place to live; and 82% thought that there was a sense of community within the Blochairn area.

- 3.15 Blochairn has a good approach to tackling antisocial behaviour. The Cooperative received 32 antisocial behaviour complaints during 2005/06. It has a good record of resolving these complaints at an early stage and has never had to raise any anti social behaviour order (ASBO)* actions, but has used the threat of court action. Blochairn works closely with the local community, particularly young people to raise awareness of antisocial behaviour and to try to prevent it. It regularly issues young people with a personally addressed newsletter called the “Wee Issue”. The Cooperative has a good relationship with the Community Police Officer, and arrangements are in place for information sharing.
- 3.16 The Cooperative introduced the first tenants incentive fund in Glasgow in 2001. Tenants who adhere to their tenancy agreement receive an annual bonus of £52 and are eligible for inclusion in a monthly prize draw. Blochairn uses the tenant survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the fund. The survey found 62% of respondents think the Tenants Incentive Fund has helped the area to improve and 61% think it encourages good tenants. Over 90% felt that the bonus and the monthly prize draw are good ideas. Tenants who do not qualify for the bonus receive a letter stating the reasons why and informing them of their right to appeal. There were four appeals in December 2005; in three cases the payments were made.

Property Maintenance

- 3.17 Blochairn has set targets of four hours to respond to and complete emergency repairs, one working day for urgent repairs and five working days for routine repairs. These are more challenging than peer and national targets. During 2004/05 Blochairn reported that it completed 98.5% of urgent and 98.9% of routine repairs within target, which is better than peer or national performance. Emergency repairs dipped to 87.5% completed within target. This is due to one failure and one incorrectly classified job. At the time of inspection, performance had improved with 100% of emergency and urgent repairs and 99.2% of routine repairs completed within target.

* see glossary

- 3.18 The tenant satisfaction survey found 97% of respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with the repairs service. The Cooperative offers tenants the opportunity to complete a satisfaction slip after each repair. Although the return rate is low at 21%, satisfaction levels are high at 98.6%. There is a £10 monthly prize draw to encourage participation. The Cooperative has only received one complaint from the satisfaction slips during 2005/06; and is currently agreeing a suitable outcome with the tenant.
- 3.19 The Cooperative pre inspects all more complicated repairs or those that need clarification. It aims to post inspect a minimum of 10% of all contractors' work and all jobs over £500, in reality it is significantly exceeding these targets. During 2005/06 46% of jobs had been pre inspected and 45% post inspected. Blochairn uses these inspections as an opportunity to interact with tenants and obtain broader feedback; but it has not assessed the value for money of inspections at these high levels. The tenant satisfaction survey found that 98% of respondents were satisfied with the helpfulness of staff involved with their repair. Apart from inspections, the Technical Manager also carries out ongoing monitoring of all repairs and maintenance jobs and works with contractors where remedial action is required. The number of inspections along with the spread of job types and contractors used is reported monthly to the Housing Management and Maintenance Sub Committee.
- 3.20 The Cooperative has had a statutory duty to provide tenants with right to repair* since September 2002. Blochairn has an excellent approach to giving information to tenants on their right to repair. Tenants are notified when they report a repair if it qualifies. They also receive a letter detailing an alternative contractor and the target completion time for the repair. The Cooperative also publicises the scheme by:
- giving new tenants a leaflet;
 - outlining its responsibilities in the tenant handbook;
 - issuing existing tenants with a leaflet annually; and
 - displaying leaflets in reception.
- The Cooperative carried out 146 out of 147 qualifying repairs during 2005/06 within target.

* See glossary

- 3.21 Scottish Ministers have set a target that all social landlords' houses should meet the new Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)* by 2015. Landlords were required to prepare a delivery plan showing how it will achieve this by April 2005. The Cooperative's properties are all new build or refurbished tenement flats. The Cooperative has satisfied itself that all its properties will meet the SHQS* and has submitted its plan to Communities Scotland.
- 3.22 The Cooperative has good quality stock information and has a 30 year maintenance programme in place. The Technical Manager carries out ongoing condition monitoring of all properties and adjusts the 30 year programme accordingly.
- 3.23 Blochairn is required to carry out safety checks every 12 months on all gas appliances and flues, which it provides for its tenants' use. Blochairn has a good approach to gas safety checks. It has achieved continuous cover for 217 of its 219 properties with gas supply. Two properties did not have continuous cover; with gaps of 13 and 15 days. Blochairn has introduced a new monitoring system to ensure it achieves 100% continuous cover in the future. The contractor post inspects 21% of safety checks and reports regularly to the Technical Manager. Blochairn also carries out annual smoke detector tests and 5 yearly electrical tests. The Cooperative does all these safety tests for void properties.
- 3.24 From May 2004 social landlords have had a statutory duty to manage asbestos in the common areas of their properties. The Cooperative is meeting its statutory duties. It employed a specialist contractor to survey all common areas and a sample of individual homes. Blochairn has an asbestos register and management plan in place.

Service user focus

Social landlords should place the people they serve at the heart of their work, treat them with respect and be responsive to their views and priorities.

- 3.25 Blochairn has a good approach to engaging with service users. The Cooperative last carried out a full postal tenant satisfaction survey in 2004; 35% of tenants responded. It compared the results to the 1999 survey and reported them in its newsletter and

* See glossary

annual report. The survey found 96% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the Cooperative as a landlord. It also found 93% of respondents think Blochairn is very or fairly good at taking account of tenant views over matters that concern them and 96% think that Blochairn is very or fairly good at keeping tenants informed. The Cooperative has carried out a survey of housing list applicants in 1999 and 2003. Blochairn staff are continually out in the community and along with the internet facilities and slimming club in its office, this provides opportunities for informal feedback, interaction and participation.

- 3.26 Blochairn tenants participate as members of the management committee and subgroups. Apart from the satisfaction surveys, Blochairn invites tenants to become involved or give opinions on the Cooperative through articles in its newsletter. The tenants can also feedback using the customer service sheet, which is available in reception and issued with newsletters from time to time. Blochairn is responsive to tenants' views; for example it changed the way tenants access out of hours emergency services in response to a complaint.
- 3.27 Blochairn has a good approach to tenant consultation. For example, for the 2005/06 rent increases a newsletter article outlined the services that the Cooperative provides, the rent proposal and the reasons why. It also posed a number of key consultation questions. Blochairn asked tenants about their preferred methods of consultation in the last survey and found 68% of respondents prefer letters.
- 3.28 Blochairn has a good approach to dealing with complaints. The policy is well publicised in reception and is included in the new tenant pack. The policy gives tenants and staff clear guidance on identifying and dealing with complaints and related response targets. The Cooperative records written and verbal complaints in a register, although it does not record all of its targets. We found that there have been no formal complaints during 2005/06. Blochairn has recently started to record appeals regarding the Tenants Incentive Fund in the register.

4. Is the service managed for improvement?

Performance and resource management

Social landlords should have clear objectives, standards and targets, manage costs effectively and should work to continuously improve services.

- 4.1 Tenants can pay their rent in a number of ways using All Pay, at the post office, a pay point or a pay zone or by direct debit. Blochairn receives 55% of its rental income from housing benefit. The Cooperative introduced All Pay in 2005 because there are no banks in the Royston area, but there are convenient pay points.
- 4.2 Total arrears as a percentage of gross rental income have increased from 9.24% in 2003/04 to 9.71% in 2004/05. When separated current non technical arrears have increased slightly from 1.52% to 1.72% in 2004/05, however they remain significantly lower than the peer* figures or national median*. However current tenant technical arrears have also increased from 6.92% to 7.21% in 2004/05 and are significantly higher than the peer figures and national median. Blochairn's arrears have continued to increase during 2005/06. At the time of inspection current non technical arrears were 1.75% and current technical arrears were 7.23%. The increases in technical arrears may be resulting from the cumulative effect of differing payment periods used by Blochairn and the local authority.
- 4.3 Blochairn has a good approach to the management of arrears. Some key strengths are:
- daily monitoring of rent accounts;
 - value levels for triggering legal action; and
 - regular meetings and email contact with the Council's Housing Benefit team.
- During 2004/05 the Cooperative had the 7th lowest level of current non technical arrears out of 21 RSLs in their peer group and it ranked 46th lowest nationally. It was also ranked 7th lowest for the percentage of tenants owing more than 13 weeks rent in its peer group and 27th lowest nationally.
- 4.4 Blochairn has an excellent approach to the management of empty houses. The turnover of its houses has decreased to 6.4% in 2004/05; when there were 14 re-lets. The average time to re-let was 8 days; this is significantly lower than peer and national figures and is an improvement from 2003/04 when it was 15 days. At the time of inspection it had further improved performance; turnover had decreased to 5.5% and an average re-let period of 5 days. During 2004/5 Blochairn lost 0.14% of rental income through voids. It had the 2nd lowest level of rental income lost through voids in its peer group and the 15th lowest nationally. Rental income lost has decreased to 0.13% in 2005/06.

* See glossary

- 4.5 The Cooperative's costs for delivering its housing management services was £1,158 for each of its houses in 2004/05. This is an increase of 17% on 2003/04 and significantly higher than peer average of £935 and national average of £792. The Cooperative is aware of the high cost levels and is planning to review its situation.
- 4.6 Blochairn has a good range of policies and procedures and a clear review diary. The Cooperative uses its newsletter to consult tenants when reviewing policies. The Cooperative has no internal audit programme in place just now. The last internal audit reported in June 2004. The Cooperative has plans in place to resume internal audit during 2006/07.
- 4.7 Blochairn is committed to continuous improvement; this is evident from the trend of improving performance in re-let times, minimising rental income loss through voids and its current non technical arrears peer and national rankings. However technical arrears and the cost of delivering its services are high when compared to the peer group or national figures.

5. Governance & Financial management

Leadership, ethical standards and risk

Social Landlords should have a clear vision, promote values that underpin good governance and effectively manage organisational risk.

- 5.1 Blochairn has an internal management plan in place, which was recently reviewed by the Committee in January 2006. The plan sets out Blochairn's vision statement and objectives. The Cooperative identifies the priorities and risks to the Cooperative in the context of an environmental analysis. There is a related work plan with key targets for performance indicators, until the end of March 2006; however the plan is not due for review until September 2006, which leaves a gap of six months.
- 5.2 Nine tenants, one owner and one co-opted member make up Blochairn's Management Committee. The Cooperative has not carried out a committee skills audit for some time. However, Committee members have access to all Share and EVH training courses and conferences. Blochairn has also employed trainers to do specific in-house courses; the last one was equal opportunities in February 2004. New members receive excellent support. Induction for new members includes a

buddy arrangement and informal agenda discussions with the Director prior to committee meetings. New members also attend an introductory course on Housing Associations. The average attendance at committee meetings during 2005/06 is 69% and all meetings but one sub committee have been quorate in the last year. In this case the Cooperative followed appropriate procedures. Blochairn has 179 members; and the last AGM was quorate with 11.1% of members attending.

- 5.3 Blochairn recognises the importance of both staff and Committee members adhering to the highest ethical standards. It achieves high standards in managing potential conflicts of interest in most areas, apart from granting tenancies. In one case the committee approved the use of a special exception only after the start of the tenancy; this is in breach of Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 5.4 Blochairn has a good approach to risk management. The IMP identifies the key risks to the Cooperative and outlines its strategy to minimising risk. Currently Blochairn has identified the three greatest risks to it as being: viability, ability to continue committing resources to wider role activities and its relationship with other agencies. Although the Cooperative has informal plans to deal with risks, there is no formal action plan in place and there has been a gap in internal audit since 2004. The Director has attended risk management training.

Financial viability and management

Social landlords should be financially viable in the short and medium term and sustainable in the longer term. They should have a robust financial management framework.

- 5.5 Blochairn prepares five year financial projections which indicate that it is viable in the short to medium term. The projections primarily include an income and expenditure account and accompanying narrative. The income and expenditure account is based on up to date forecasted costs for large areas of expenditure such as planned maintenance. However, no balance sheet or cash flow is included and the income and expenditure account shows that large deficits are forecast for all but one of the five years. This high level of deficits weakens the Co-operative's financial position significantly over the five years and Blochairn is aware that it must consider its options for the medium to longer term.

5.6 Blochairn's financial management framework is suitable for its size and complexity, although it does not expand on its five year financial projections to include a cash flow or balance sheet. The annual one year budget has a clear and concise layout and includes informative narrative. The Committee uses separate quarterly financial reports to monitor actual spend against the budget. The format of the financial reports is also clear and they contain narrative to explain the figures as well as providing explanations for any large variances.

6. Areas for improvement action

These are the key areas that need to be targeted for improvement action. They are broadly in order of priority within each of the key service areas:

In Access Blochairn should:

- ensure it complies with legislative duties relating to Disability Discrimination and access to its office;
- review its use of a confirmation slip for new applicants who wish to be on the housing list;
- ensure all publications state availability in other formats; and
- ensure access to its housing list is publicised in a wide range of locations.

In Service quality Blochairn should:

- review its allocation policy to ensure it is in line with legislation and Scottish Executive guidance.

In Governance and financial management Blochairn should:

- ensure that it complies with all of the requirements of Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001;
- ensure the performance targets set in the internal management plan allow the Cooperative to review its position throughout the period of the plan;
- prepare a balance sheet and cash flow as part of its financial projections; and
- ensure Committee training is based on a clear understanding of their needs.

7. Next steps

- 7.1 This report highlights our findings following this housing inspection. We expect Blochairn to respond effectively to our recommendations using their own improvement planning process. We ask organisations that receive fair or poor assessments to submit an improvement plan to use within eight weeks of the publication of this report. We do not require Blochairn to submit an improvement plan.
- 7.2 If you would like to find out how Blochairn plans to respond to the findings of this inspection you should contact:

Blochairn Housing Cooperative Ltd
311 Roystonhill
Glasgow
G21 2HN
Telephone: 0141 553 1601
Email: Michael@blochairnhc.org.uk

Sources of Evidence

Groups and third parties consulted:

- Communities Scotland Homepoint Team
- Communities Scotland Quality and Transfer Delivery Unit
- Communities Scotland Tenant Participation Development Team
- Scottish Executive Housing & Regeneration Team
- Strathclyde Police
- Royston Stress Centre
- Full Employment Initiative
- Royston youth Action
- Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum
- Scotland's health at Work
- St Roch's Secondary School
- St Roch's Primary School
- Royston Primary School
- Glasgow City Council
- Scottish Public Ombudsman

Interviews / meetings:

- Members of the Cooperative's Committee
- Director
- Housing Services Officer
- Technical Manager
- Secretary/ Bookkeeper

Reality checks:

- Review of gas safety documents
- Review of complaints
- Review of reactive repairs
- Review of housing list applications and allocations
- Observation of the provision of information and advice
- Review of Schedule 7 register
- Review of Committee rent accounts
- Observation of committee meeting

Key documents reviewed:

- Inspection submission*
- New Tenancy pack
- Management committee rent accounts

* see glossary

Examples of Positive practice

These are areas we would highlight as working particularly well, taking account of the organisations operating context:

Service Quality

The Cooperative has a long history of working with the local community. In particular it focuses on young people; raising awareness of antisocial behaviour, quality of neighbourhoods, general health and wellbeing. The Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum recognised this work in 2005; when Blochairn was short listed under the “people” category for its best practice awards.

Glossary

Annual Performance and Statistical Return (APSR)	Annual questionnaire completed by RSLs and sent to Communities Scotland. Used to keep the Register of Social Landlords up to date and to track the performance of RSLs.
Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)	ASBOs are preventative orders designed to protect individuals from further anti-social behaviour that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress. Breach of an order is a criminal offence, punishable by a fine or imprisonment.
Average	The arithmetic mean – the sum of all the values divided by the number of values.
Common housing register	A register of all applicants for social housing used by two or more landlords within an area.
Housing list	A list of applicants for housing which is used by the RSL to allocate its housing stock.
Industrial and Provident Society	Many RSLs are legally incorporated as industrial and provident societies. I&Ps can be charitable or non-charitable, or housing cooperatives. They must be non-profit making and supervised by the Register of Friendly Societies.
Inspection submission	Documents submitted by the landlord at the start of the inspection to provide information to on its performance, context and how it is structured.
National median	The central value of the ordered performance of all Scottish Registered Social Landlords.
Notice of proceedings	The formal notice provided to tenants informing them that their landlord is taking legal proceedings to seek a court order for recovery of possession of a property.
Peer group	A group of organisations facing similar tasks and challenges with which comparisons can be made. RSLs choose which peer group they belong to when they submit their APSRs.
Performance indicator	A measure of how a RSL is achieving its objectives. Performance Indicators can be compared with a pre-set standard (a benchmark) or with other organisations.
Performance Standards	Housing standards for all social landlords in Scotland.
Proceedings for possession	Court action to bring a tenancy to an end.
Reasonable Preference categories	Homelessness, overcrowding, large families, living in below tolerable standard housing or unsatisfactory living

conditions.

Recovery of possession	Order granted by courts bringing a tenancy to an end.
Registered social landlord (RSL)	A landlord providing social rented housing that is registered and regulated by Communities Scotland.
Re-lets	Lets made to the second or subsequent tenant. Distinguished from new lets that are made when the property is first built or modernised.
Right to Repair	A scheme which gives tenants legal rights to have certain repairs in defined times.
Section 5 referrals	Under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 a local authority can request a registered social landlord which has accommodation in its area to provide accommodation to homeless people. This request is known as a Section 5 referral.
Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	All property managed by registered social landlords must be brought up to a certain standard by 2015.
Scottish secure tenancy (SST)	The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 establishes the Scottish Secure Tenancy as the tenancy for all tenants of social landlords in Scotland.
Short Scottish secure tenancy (SSST)	Section 34 and schedule 6 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 establish the basic conditions when a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy can apply to some tenants of social landlords in Scotland in place of a full SST

Regulation & Inspection

EDINBURGH

Rosebery House
9 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh EH12 5YA
Tel: 0131 313 3700

GLASGOW

Highlander House
58 Waterloo Street
Glasgow G2 7DA
Tel: 0141 226 4611