

Elderpark Housing Association
inspection report

MARCH 2008



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1. Introduction

About this inspection

- 1.1 Communities Scotland carried out this inspection 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. We conduct inspections within a published framework of *Performance Standards*.

How we assessed performance

- 1.2 Our inspectors asked two key questions:
- How well is Elderpark Housing Association delivering?
 - How well is Elderpark managed for improvement?
- 1.3 In order to answer these questions inspectors:
- spoke to tenants, service users, staff and committee members;
 - asked other partner organisations for their views;
 - visited homes and local areas;
 - saw and tested first hand how well services were being delivered;
 - examined key policies, publications, information and the organisation's self-assessment submitted for this inspection; and
 - analysed published performance and financial information.
- 1.4 We have awarded a grade for the overall performance of the organisation. The grade and our judgements are based on evidence. The grade summarises performance in the following ways:
- Grade A = Excellent
 - Grade B = Good
 - Grade C = Fair
 - Grade D = Poor
- 1.5 When we provide a summarised assessment and award a grade, we take various factors into account. These factors are:
- outcomes for service users;
 - how far the service or organisation meets Performance Standards;

- performance against key indicators in comparison with others;
- compliance with legislation;
- how good the leadership and accountability are;
- how far good practice is followed;
- the organisation's level of self-awareness;
- how well value for money is being achieved;
- local context and legitimate local priorities; and
- commitment to, and track record of, improvement.

The inspection team

1.6 Paul Milligan (Inspector) led the inspection team, which included Roisin Harris (Inspector) and Murray Smith (Business Analyst). Danny Mullen (Tenant Assessor) carried out a desktop review of some of the Association's publications and met with the Association's tenants. We were on site between 3 and 14 December 2007. We would like to thank everyone involved in the inspection, particularly the committee members, staff, service users and tenants for their time and co-operation.

Responding to this inspection

1.7 We expect all inspected bodies to make the inspection grades and overview section of 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.

2. Inspection grade and overview

In this section we set out our overall assessment of Elderpark's performance, including inspection grades and we summarise our inspection findings.

Grades

- 2.1 The inspection of Elderpark Housing Association took place between 3 and 14 December 2007. We awarded the following grade:

Elderpark has achieved a **B** grade overall. This is a **good** performance.

- 2.2 Overall our assessment is that Elderpark has many strengths and some weaknesses. The Association delivers good quality services. It has successfully dealt with challenges that have impacted on service delivery and has demonstrated a willingness and an ability to improve its performance. It has a high level of self-awareness and has a good understanding of its weaknesses. Elderpark has already put in place improvements to deal with many of these weaknesses and we are confident that it will continue to improve.

How well is Elderpark delivering services?

- 2.3 We found that Elderpark has many strengths in delivering its services:
- it consults with tenants in a variety of ways;
 - it provides tenants and applicants with a good range of information;
 - it has significantly improved its performance in reletting empty properties;
 - it is good at managing its estates and has good tools to deal with antisocial behaviour;
 - it has significantly improved its management of gas safety inspections;
 - it sets challenging repair response times and accurately monitors performance;
 - it deals appropriately with the Right to Repair;
 - it is good at managing its assets and maintaining its stock;
 - it works well with partner organisations to deliver quality new build homes in Govan; and
 - it effectively monitors the performance of its contractors.

2.4 We found that Elderpark has some weaknesses which directly affect those who use its services. It has begun to address some of these with new procedures, policies and plans. The Association's weaknesses are:

- it has high levels of current and former tenants rent arrears;
- it has a small number of properties where it does not fully understand the maintenance requirements;
- it has some weaknesses in its allocation policy and practices; and
- its programme of policy reviews which places a significant burden on the Association.

Is Elderpark managed for improvement?

2.5 The Association has many strengths in its approach to managing improvements in its services. It has also worked well to address the recommendations made in our last inspection report and in our thematic study 'Evictions in Practice' that the Association took part in. Elderpark has a good approach to identify its strategic direction and priorities. Its committee structure is effective and it is considering how to improve its approach to training for committee members. Elderpark is financially viable and it has a good approach to identifying risks. It has an effective performance management framework and the committee closely monitors performance. Elderpark is developing its customer focus and it provides tenants with a good range of easily accessible information. It is meeting its statutory tenant consultation duties and is responsive to tenant feedback. Elderpark is good at achieving value for money in procurement. It has effective maintenance programmes and is confident that it will meet the requirements of the SHQS by 2015.

2.6 We found some areas where the Association needs to make improvements. It has a low membership and does not know if it is representative of its community. It also does not have well developed methods to involve tenants. Elderpark has not developed a corporate approach to recording and monitoring complaints. The Association's overall approach to dealing with equalities and diversity is underdeveloped.

Key recommendations

- 2.7 Our inspection report covers a wide range of issues. Elderpark must respond effectively to them. These are our most important recommendations:
- it should set itself a more challenging improvement target for its collection of rent from its current and former tenants;
 - it should address any potential risks associated with its more recently purchased properties, where it does not hold stock condition information;
 - it needs to develop its approach to understanding equalities issues in Elderpark;
 - it should ensure that the way it allocates its houses, fully complies with legislation and guidance;
 - it needs to increase the general membership level and to better understand the composition of its membership;
 - it should introduce a more manageable programme of policy reviews ; and
 - it should seek to involve more of its tenants in influencing the way it delivers its service.

3. Context

In this section we look at Elderpark Housing Association as an organisation and the context in which it operates.

About the organisation

- 3.1 Elderpark Housing Association was registered as a social landlord in 1976. It is also an Industrial and Provident Society and a Registered Charity. Its main purpose is to provide good quality, affordable rented housing. The Association's office is located in the Govan area of Glasgow. Its 1,083 houses are located in Elderpark and nearby at Ibrox, Kinning Park and Cessnock.
- 3.2 The Annual Performance and Statistical Return (APSR) asks Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to select a peer group which best describes their organisation. Elderpark selected the group described as RSLs that operate in pre-1919 urban areas with more than 250 houses. This is the group we use to compare Elderpark's performance.
- 3.3 A voluntary management committee, elected annually by the Association's members, governs Elderpark. Elderpark currently has 14 members on the management committee. Four of these are the Association's tenants with the remainder being either GHA tenants or owners. The majority of members have been in place for some time, although it has recently managed to attract newer members onto the committee.

About its current and future tenants

- 3.4 Based on the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, Govan has a higher percentage of people of working age than Glasgow or Scotland. Govan has a relatively high number of residents born outside the European Union. In the 2001 census these residents accounted for 8.4% compared to 4.0% in Glasgow and 2.5% in Scotland. Elderpark has told us that there is a significant local African population and in more recent years a growing Polish community.
- 3.5 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation found Govan was broadly in line with Glasgow levels of deprivation, which is significantly higher than Scotland as a whole. Govan is the tenth most deprived Scottish Parliamentary constituency in Scotland.

- 3.6 Govan has a higher percentage of people claiming jobseekers allowance, across all working age bands between 16 and pension age, than Glasgow or Scotland. This is despite the fact that Greater Govan is the most jobs dense area in Glasgow outside the City Centre and the West End. At March 2007 Elderpark received 56.7% of its rent from housing benefit, which is higher than the national figure, but slightly lower than its peer group.
- 3.7 Elderpark re-let 222 houses during 2006/07 and at September 2007 it had 487 people on its housing list. The largest ethnic groups on Elderpark’s list are white Scottish, white non British/Irish and Black. The Association does not have any ethnicity information for 3% of its applicants and 25% of its current tenants.

About its housing stock

- 3.8 Approximately 81% of Elderpark’s stock is tenements built before 1919. The rest of the stock consists of houses (10.6%) and 4 in-a-block or other flat types (8%) mostly built by Elderpark after 1982. Elderpark has 20 shared ownership properties. The Association is currently building 64 new homes and has plans to complete further developments in the future.
- 3.9 The table below presents a summary of key information for Elderpark Housing Association showing trends over the last three financial years.

Key facts	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Houses owned	1,096	1,093	1,083
No. of applicants on housing list as at 31 March	231	183	335
Employees	19	19	18.5
Annual turnover (£,000)	1,908	2,036	2,232
Total possible rental income (£,000)	2,132	2,197	2,359
% of rental income from Housing Benefit (HB)	62.2	53.0	56.7
Average weekly rent (£)	43.5	39.9	42.6
Average rent increase (%)	4	4	4
Houses relet	158	171	222
Response repairs carried out	2,939	2,924	2,712
Maintenance spend per house (£)	333	397	499
Right To Buy sales	3	2	2

Sources: Inspection submission and APSRs

4. How well is Elderpark delivering?

In this section we set out our assessment of Elderpark's performance in delivering its housing services for tenants.

Tenant satisfaction

4.1 In 2005 85% of respondents to Elderpark's tenant satisfaction survey were very or fairly satisfied with the Association; its next survey is due during 2008. In surveys during 2007 Elderpark found:

- 51% of tenants living in tenements thought the appearance of their neighbourhood had improved; and
- 95% of tenants were satisfied or very satisfied with the reactive repair service.

4.2 Tenants we spoke to during the inspection told us:

- Elderpark is a good association;
- they get value for money for their rent;
- they are happy with the repairs and new estate management services;
- they appreciate the assistance on welfare benefits; but
- they are concerned about the level of anti-social behaviour in the area.

Access to housing

4.3 Elderpark operates an open housing list and accepts applications from anyone aged 16 and over. Information on how to apply for its properties is available in the Association's office and on its website. The Association encourages applicants to seek assistance when completing an application form. Elderpark also offers a Polish translator to assist with applications. Three of Elderpark's staff, including its receptionist, are currently doing HomePoint training in providing housing information and advice.

4.4 Elderpark publicises its housing list in other local housing providers' offices, at the local social work office and at Elderpark library. It has taken part in a local Polish day, at which it provided a summary of its letting policy and an application form translated into Polish. The Association has also promoted access to its housing list on community radio.

- 4.5 Elderpark has a good application pack, which includes an excellent stock location map, illustrating local landmarks, services and public transport. Our tenant assessor found that although the pack was informative, the lettings booklet was complicated. Elderpark plans to revise its application pack when it reviews its allocation policy in spring 2008.
- 4.6 Elderpark is good at giving applicants choice. Applicants can choose the streets and floor level they would like to live at. The Association will make applicants two offers before it will invite them to review their application preferences to better meet their needs and aspirations.
- 4.7 At September 2007 Elderpark had 487 applicants on its housing list. It aims to review its list every six months although it has not done a review since March 2007.
- 4.8 Elderpark processes housing applications very quickly. It has a ten day target, which its committee monitors; but on average it takes less than two days. The Association's housing assistants' process and point applications and the housing officers verify them. The letters issued to applicants contain good quality information on the result of their application.
- 4.9 At the time of the inspection Elderpark had suspended 34 applicants from its housing list, most for tenancy related debt. We saw that the Association was generally managing suspensions well. However not all of its correspondence tells applicants the reasons for their suspension or about their right to appeal. Elderpark committee receives quarterly reports on the reasons and number of suspended applicants.
- 4.10 In summary, Elderpark has a good approach to providing access to its properties. It operates an open housing list and provides applicants with good quality information.

Lettings

- 4.11 Elderpark published its current allocation policy in February 2006. It designed the policy to deal with the high number of empty houses it had in its tenement properties. The policy splits properties into low turnover 'waiting list' properties

- and 'available to let' tenements. Applicants can opt to apply for either or both. The Association awards points based on a range of housing needs which reflect the statutory reasonable preference categories. As Elderpark no longer has a high number of empty houses it is planning to consult tenants, partners and support agencies and introduce a new allocation policy in early 2008.
- 4.12 Elderpark currently uses a quota system to manage its lettings process and to help it contribute to a sustainable community. It aims to offer the first 12% of its empty properties to interested transfer applicants. Thereafter it offers to section 5 referral households and then to applicants on its housing lists. Elderpark's current system does not transparently give reasonable preference to the statutory groups; however the Association new allocation policy will address this.
- 4.13 Elderpark has a draft Homelessness Duty protocol agreement with Glasgow City Council (GCC), which is under review. From April to September 2007, Elderpark housed 5 households under section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, but refused 14. During 2006/07, Elderpark housed 21 households under section 5 but refused 35. We found that the Association did not always deal with homeless referrals under section 5 in line with legislation or the Code of Guidance. However, Glasgow City Council has not disputed any of the returned referrals and Elderpark has a close working relationship with the local social work team and support agencies.
- 4.14 Elderpark's committee receives quarterly reports on the offers of accommodation and allocations it has made. This includes information on the type of let, source of application, policy objective category and ethnicity. However the report does not include information on how Elderpark is giving reasonable preference to the statutory categories. Elderpark plans to review its allocation reports in line with its new policy in early 2008.
- 4.15 The Association has used a special initiative for one of its streets from September 2006 to March 2007 in response to low demand and serious crime and anti-social behaviour in the area. Following consultation with a residents focus group it began an initiative that included:
- allocating two specific members of staff to manage the street;

- fitting new magnetic locking security doors;
 - removing shutters on ground floor windows and replacing with toughened glass and curtains;
 - reducing rents for new tenants and introducing good neighbour bonuses for existing tenants for a limited period;
 - purchasing extra police patrols at weekends;
 - supporting youth activities; and
 - promoting the street at a local Polish day.
- 4.16 The initiative also included targeting over 25 year old applicants; although Elderpark did let 9 out of the 55 houses to people under 21 years old. The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the 2001 Act prohibits landlords from taking a person's age into account when allocating general needs housing.
- 4.17 The Association ended the initiative after six months as it had let all the empty houses. It now has a waiting list for the area. The Association plans to refurbish the only two remaining sealed off tenements. The Association also plans to demolish a disused Church in the street and replace it with new build flats to rent.
- 4.18 Elderpark is working in partnership with one of Glasgow Housing Association's (GHA) Local Housing Organisations, Clydeview Housing Partnership. The Association is building 64 properties which it is allocating to GHA tenants under a ten year nomination agreement. GHA and Elderpark are planning to allocate part of a block of flats only to people over 50. This is not in line with legislation.
- 4.19 In summary, Elderpark is fair in its approach to meeting need and maximising choice. The Association has achieved significant decreases in empty houses through its allocation policy and special initiative. It is already planning for its new allocation policy to address many of the areas of weakness including its management of section 5 referrals and the use of age restrictions and targeting.

Tenancies and neighbourhood management

- 4.20 Elderpark provides its tenants with a wide range of information about their tenancy. It uses its newsletter, notices in its reception area, mail shots and website to keep its tenants informed. The Association does not currently have a

- tenant's handbook, but it plans to develop a new one in spring 2008. It gives new tenants a package of useful and relevant information and it visits them in their homes four to six weeks into their tenancy.
- 4.21 The Association checks if tenants are vulnerable or have particular needs at sign up, during new tenant visits and by annual surveys. It stores individual tenant's requirements on its IT system, which flags these to staff each time they access a tenancy record. It has developed a directory of local agencies and services to help give advice to tenants. The Association also gives its new tenants a list of support providers.
- 4.22 The Association and its tenants told us that antisocial behaviour (ASB) in Elderpark is a major problem. The Committee have identified vandalism and ASB among the top risks to the Association. Elderpark has separate policies for dealing with ASB and racial harassment, which it reviewed during 2007. It has developed and implemented new comprehensive procedures for dealing with antisocial behaviour and estate management complaints.
- 4.23 Elderpark categorises complaints by seriousness and type and its IT system automatically prompts staff to take action and proceed to the next stage. Its housing officers agree an investigation action plan with the complainant. Elderpark uses a variety of methods to deal with complaints, including warning letters, acceptable behaviour contracts and GCC's mediation service. Elderpark keeps complainants informed throughout and has recently started surveying them after their complaint is completed.
- 4.24 Elderpark received 104 complaints of ASB in 2006/07, up 60 on the previous year. The Association told us this was due to an increase in reporting by tenants and also because all staff can now log complaints on the IT system. Elderpark provides its tenants with good information about ASB and its estate management arrangements. It publicises these in its newsletter and a useful leaflet. Our tenant assessor thought that the leaflets covered the important issues, including definition of ASB, categories of seriousness, remedial actions and related timescales. The Association provides the committee with quarterly performance

reports on anti-social behaviour, racial harassment and estate management complaints.

- 4.25 Elderpark has a good working relationship with the police and it has paid for extra weekend police patrols in some of its areas. The Association is currently working with Govan Housing Association and the Community Safety Department of the Police to develop a residents' survey which is due to be completed by March 2008. The results should help identify local trouble hot spots and the key issues concerning residents. It hopes the results will influence the funding decisions of the local Community Planning Partnerships.
- 4.26 The quality of the local environment and communal areas in Elderpark is improving. The Association is now proactively managing its local environment. It introduced a new estate management system in October 2006, which included appointing a member of staff. Tenants we spoke to during the inspection told us this has made a significant difference to the local environment.
- 4.27 Other examples of how Elderpark is involved with improving the local environment include:
- holding area based focus groups for residents when problems arise;
 - replacement of satellite dishes with a communal TV reception service;
 - organising litter pick and vandalism clean up events involving local young people;
 - using CCTV to monitor antisocial behaviour;
 - hosting a well attended fun day in Elderpark Street; and
 - developing an information poster for tenements detailing close cleaning arrangements and listing useful telephone numbers.
- 4.28 In summary, Elderpark is good at tenancy and neighbourhood management. The Association provides its tenants with a good range of information. Elderpark's estate management service has improved the local area. Elderpark gives tackling ASB a high priority and continues to seek new ways to help deal with the issues.

Income maximisation

4.29 Elderpark's performance in maximising its income through the collection of rent is poor. The Association's total arrears at March 2007 were 8.2%, above its peer group performance of 6.5% and national median of 5.1%. By December 2007, Elderpark's total arrears had increased to 9.5%. The Association told us this increase was partly due to a delay in receiving some housing benefit payments for new build properties which it had just let. However, Elderpark's overall poor performance is due to its current and former tenants' non technical arrears.

4.30 The table below summarises the Association's reported performance in collecting rent.

	At March 2006	At March 2007			At Dec 2007
	Landlord	Landlord	Peer group	National median	Landlord
Total arrears as % of total gross rental income	8.0%	8.2%	6.5%	5.1%	9.5%
Total current arrears as % of total gross rental income	5.8%	5.3%	4.7%	3.8%	5.1%
Current arrears (non technical)* as % of total gross rental income	4.8%	5.2%	3.8%	2.6%	4.5%
Current arrears (technical) as % of total gross rental income	0.8%	0.2%	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%
% of current tenants in serious arrears**	5.1%	7.2%	6.7%	3.6%	6.5%
Total former tenant arrears	£53,706	£67,978	-	-	£112,969
As % of total gross rental income	2.4%	2.9%	1.8%	1.1%	4.2%
Rent arrears written off	£78,541	£38,498	-	-	-

Source: Annual Performance and Statistical Returns

4.31 At March 2007 Elderpark received 56.7% of its rental income directly through housing benefit payments: its current tenant technical or housing benefit related arrears at December 2007 were 0.6%, significantly lower than its peer group at 1.0% and the national median of 0.7% at March 2007. The Association has a

- good relationship with its local Housing Benefit office. It encourages tenants to complete and keep their housing benefit claims up to date.
- 4.32 Elderpark has slightly improved its performance at collecting rent from its current tenants, but this is still poor. At March 2007 its current tenant (non technical) arrears were 5.2%, and it reduced these to 4.5% by December 2007. However the level is still significantly higher than the national median for all Scottish RSLs of 2.6% and its peer group performance of 3.8% at March 2007.
- 4.33 The percentage of Elderpark's tenants in serious arrears has decreased from 7.2% at March 2007 to 6.5% by December 2007. This is still higher than the national median of 3.6%, but is lower than Elderpark's peer group performance of 6.7% at March 2007.
- 4.34 Elderpark recognises that it has high levels of rent arrears. In response to this it revised its policy and procedures during 2006/07. The new procedures take account of the recommendations made in our 2005 thematic study 'Evictions in Practice', which Elderpark took part in. The Association's new approach includes:
- visiting tenants in arrears at weekends;
 - a close working relationship with the Govan Law Centre and Money Advice;
 - referral of all households who receive a Notice of Proceeding (NOP) to Social Work's welfare advice officers; and
 - a weekly Citizens Advice Bureau surgery in Elderpark's office.
- 4.35 Elderpark has also set an overall target to reduce its total current tenant arrears to 4.85% by March 2008. However, this will still be higher than its peer group performance at 4.7% and the national median at 3.8% at March 2007.
- 4.36 Elderpark's collection of its former tenant arrears has been poor. At March 2007 its former tenant arrears were 2.9%, which is greater than its peer group at 1.8%, and the national median at 1.1%. In November 2007 Elderpark started to use a debt collection agency to pursue its former tenant arrears. Elderpark has also now adopted a good approach to writing arrears off.

- 4.37 During 2006/07 31 of its tenants, or 2.9%, abandoned their homes. This is nearly treble its peer group average of 1%. From April to September 2007, 21 of its tenants had abandoned their homes. The Association monitors and reports to its committee the number of abandoned tenancies each quarter and the level of associated debts. We saw that Elderpark were identifying and dealing with abandoned properties quickly and in line with its procedures. The Association recognises that it has a high rate of abandoned properties and hopes its comprehensive arrears management policy and procedures will help reduce this.
- 4.38 Elderpark issued 86 NOPs in 2006/07; up from 61 in 2005/06. Up to September 2007 the Association had issued 48 NOPs, none of which resulted in abandoned properties. The Association told us that the reason for the increase in NOPs is that it has begun to take a more robust approach to tackling serious arrears. As a result the percentage of tenants in serious arrears has declined over the last year. Despite its robust approach, we also saw that the Association takes account of tenants' individual circumstances when managing their arrears.
- 4.39 At September 2007 the Association had obtained 20 orders for recovery of vacant possession. It had repossessed 13 properties and in the other 7 cases, decrees were recalled, extra support and repayment arrangements put in place or new tenancies created. Elderpark's management committee approves all evictions. The committee receive detailed reports providing the history of the case, including the actions taken to resolve it.
- 4.40 The table below summarises the Association's reported performance in letting houses that have become empty.

	2004/05	2005/06	At March 2007		
	Elderpark	Elderpark	Elderpark	Peer group	National median
Rental income lost due to empty houses (£)	£236,432	£176,529	£139,018	-	-
As % of total rental income	11.1%	8.0%	5.9%	1.3%	0.8%
Total no. of re-lets	158	171	222	-	-
% re-let in <2 weeks	3.8%	5.3%	18.5%	30.4%	33.3%
% re-let in 2 - 4 weeks	1.9%	6.4%	29.7%	28.9%	25%
% re-let in >4 weeks	94.3%	88.3%	51.8%	35.9%	52.2%
Average time to re-let (days)	89	124	93	36	26

Source: APSRs

- 4.41 In 2006/07 Elderpark lost 5.9% of its total rental income because of empty houses. Although this is an improvement on the previous two years, it is significantly higher than its peer group performance and national median. Its average re-let time has improved, from 124 days in 2005/06 to 93 days in 2006/07. By December 2007 the Association achieved significant improvements in its management of empty properties. It had reduced rent loss to 0.6% and average relet time was down to 14.5 days.
- 4.42 The Association's performance in managing empty homes improved as it implemented its allocation policy and special initiative. This included a more intensive estate management process to help it tackle vandalism and antisocial behaviour in the area. In general we saw that Elderpark has an efficient and effective process to manage its empty properties.
- 4.43 In summary Elderpark's overall performance in maximising its income is fair. The Association has put in place some good procedures to deal with arrears and although rent collection is poor, it is improving. Elderpark has also performed well to significantly reduce the income it loses due to empty properties and its procedures to relet empty properties are good.

Asset management strategy and planning

- 4.44 Elderpark is aware of the importance of having a robust approach to planning and strategically managing its assets. The Association works with a wide range of stakeholders and takes into consideration a diverse range of priorities in order to develop its assets. The Association considers the local authority's housing strategy, its own housing list information and the priorities of the organisations it works with. To build new properties it will work in partnership to ensure that it addresses current and future needs and demands and sustainability issues.
- 4.45 Scottish Ministers have set a target that all social landlords' houses should meet the new Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015. Social landlords were required to prepare a plan for submission to Communities Scotland by April 2005, showing how they would achieve this. Elderpark achieved this target for

- the majority of its properties and it is confident that its proposed future investment programme will ensure compliance with the SHQS by 2015.
- 4.46 The Association has purchased a number of properties on the open market. It has undertaken significant work to improve the standard of some of these properties, however, it has not improved all of them and does not hold formal stock condition information for 43 flats. The Association will survey these properties later this year to determine the extent of work needed to bring them up to the SHQS requirements. Until it does this, and puts in place appropriate plans, these properties represent a potential risk to the Association.
- 4.47 For the remaining stock, the Association surveyed all of its properties to examine the condition of the external components. It also surveyed 17% of properties to examine the internal components. The Association is confident that stock condition information it has, accurately reflects the condition of the majority of its stock.
- 4.48 Elderpark plans to carry out further stock condition surveys in 2008. It will use these surveys to update its life cycle costing information and future investment assumptions. The Association has confirmed that these surveys will be representative of all of the stock it owns.
- 4.49 In summary, Elderpark generally demonstrates a good approach to managing its assets. It takes into consideration current and future needs and demands, when considering stock development. However, it is exposed to some risk as it does not understand the planned maintenance needs for all of its stock. The Association is taking steps to address this during 2008.

New homes

- 4.50 The Association is currently working with a number of partners to provide 64 new build properties in Govan. The development consists of two and three storey townhouses, maisonettes and flats. Property sizes will range from two and three apartment flats to six apartment townhouses. The properties achieve good energy efficiency ratings and are barrier free where possible. One of the key objectives of this project is to rehouse tenants whose homes GHA is demolishing.

- 4.51 The Association has a number of other development proposals planned. It is actively working to acquire land to develop proposals for a mixed tenure development of up to 120 units. The Association intends to build around 50 units for rent with a further 10 for the Homestake initiative. The remainder will be sold as low cost home ownership properties.
- 4.52 The Association has recently completed comprehensive tenement improvement work to five closes in Govan. These improvements and its new build properties will all achieve Secure by Design accreditation and achieve good energy efficiency ratings. It plans to design future new build developments to Eco-homes standards. Elderpark's aim is to achieve a 'very good' rating as a minimum standard.
- 4.53 In summary, the Association is good at working in partnership with key organisations to develop quality new build properties in Govan. It demonstrates a good understanding of the current and future needs and demands for housing and puts in place good proposals to achieve its goals.

Investment & home safety

- 4.54 The Association invests in its stock annually by undertaking planned and cyclical maintenance programmes. It has set out its next five year programme of works which it has issued to tenants for information and comment.
- 4.55 The Association spends over £200,000 per year on cyclical maintenance, including paintwork, gas servicing and electrical safety inspections. Over the next five years its aims to spend in excess of £1.3 million on planned maintenance. These works will involve the renewal of gas central heating systems, window replacements, door entry systems and roof works.
- 4.56 By law, Elderpark must make safety checks every 12 months on all gas appliances and flues that it provides for its tenants. We found that until recently the Association's performance in meeting its statutory duty has been very poor. Only 50% of its properties had a safety check carried out within 12 months of the previous check. Of these, 31% were carried out over 15 months from the

previous inspection. The table below details the Association's performance to October 2007.

	October 2007	
	Number of houses	%
Houses with gas appliances	903	100%
Houses with current gas safety certificates	846	93.7%
Houses where safety check was carried out within 12 months of previous check	454	50.3%
Houses where safety check was up to 1 month late	74	8.2%
Houses where safety check was between 1 and 3 months late	35	3.9%
Houses where safety check was more than 3 months late	285	31.6%

- 4.57 The Association had improved its performance by the time of our inspection and over 99% of properties had a current certificate in place. It has introduced tight procedures to ensure that it is carrying out safety checks within target timescales. Where a tenant does not provide access the Association will take court action and force entry to ensure the safety check is undertaken.
- 4.58 From May 2004 social landlords have had a statutory duty to manage asbestos in the common areas of their properties. They were required to produce an asbestos management plan by May 2004. Elderpark put in place an asbestos management plan in 2004 and updates this annually. It keeps an asbestos register that details all known asbestos containing material and how it should deal with this material. The Association's repair recording system will raise a warning if a repair is logged where asbestos may be present. The Association also tests artex in empty properties for asbestos.
- 4.59 In summary, Elderpark has demonstrated a good approach to investing in its stock. It deals appropriately with safety issues and has introduced good procedures to meet its gas safety requirements. It has effective medium term planned and cyclical maintenance programmes and it knows the future cost of this work.

Response repairs

4.60 In 2006/07 the Association changed its target timescales for completing repairs to deliver a quicker service to its tenants. Its new targets are more challenging than the national averages and its peer group across all categories, particularly for routine repairs. The table below shows Elderpark's performance in completing emergency and routine repairs has slipped since it introduced its new targets in 2006/07. However its urgent repair performance has improved. We also found its methods of recording performance in completing repairs are robust and accurate.

Repair category	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07		
	Landlord	Landlord	Landlord	Peer group	National median
Emergency 4 hours (%)	100	100	95.5	98.4	98.8
Urgent 2 days (%)	90	88.5	93.7	95.4	95.2
Routine 7 days (%)	88	92.6	88.6	95.7	95.6

Source: Annual Performance and Statistical Returns

- 4.61 Pre and post inspections are important tools for ensuring that organisations accurately target repairs and have carried them out to a high standard. The Association sets a target to pre and post inspect 10% of repairs and generally meets these targets.
- 4.62 Elderpark has clear procedures in place to undertake post inspections. It carries these out when it receives any feedback that a tenant is dissatisfied with a contractor's work. It also post inspects to assess value for money, the quality of the work and tenant satisfaction.
- 4.63 Elderpark operates the Right to Repair scheme. It writes to each tenant annually advising them of their rights under the scheme. Information on the scheme is also contained in the Association's Repair Handbook which is available on its website. It gives tenants appropriate information when they contact the Association to report a repair. Details of the scheme and alternative contractors are contained in the repairs receipt it issues to the tenant. Where the Association has failed to carry out repairs within the appropriate timescales it has paid compensation. The Association monitors all qualifying repairs and reports performance to the management committee.

4.64 In summary, Elderpark sets good targets to complete repairs and its performance in carrying out repairs within its response times is fair. We found that the Association reports its performance accurately. It has a good approach to dealing with pre and post inspection's and is meeting its statutory duty to implement the Right to Repair scheme.

5. Is Elderpark managed for improvement?

Leadership and strategic planning

- 5.1 Elderpark's key strategic planning document is its internal management plan (IMP) which sets out the high level objectives for the organisation. The plan pulls together other documents such as its strategic and development funding plan, its risk management and performance management strategies.
- 5.2 To develop the IMP, staff and committee attend an away day and discuss the general direction of the Association and the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. From this staff develop strategic objectives and present these to committee for further discussion, amendment and agreement. Elderpark's strategic objectives give a clear indication of its medium term priorities, although some of them are more operational in nature.
- 5.3 In order to meet its strategic objectives the Association sets departmental action plans to identify each department's key priorities. The Association does not set realistic timescales for the completion of objectives; most of these are due for completion on or around the end of the financial year. However, committee regularly receives good reports on performance against the objectives.
- 5.4 The Association approved approximately 28 policies between September and October 2007, and at the time of the inspection it still had a further 18 revised policies awaiting approval by the management committee. This places a significant burden on staff and committee members.
- 5.5 In summary, the Association's approach to strategic planning is fair. Some of the IMP's strategic objectives are operational in nature, and its departmental action plans do not have clear timescales. However its overall approach to identifying its strategic direction and priorities over the medium term is good.

Governing body

- 5.6 The Association deals with the majority of its business through the management committee which meets on a fortnightly basis. It also has an audit committee and a joint consultative committee, which meet when needed. The Association

changed its sub-committee structure in response to our last inspection.

Committee members told us the current structure is working well.

- 5.7 Elderpark has 14 members on its management committee. Attendance at committee meetings over the last three years has been low; only 58% of members on average attended meetings during 2006/07. The Association told us that a contributory factor was that a number of members had suffered ill health during the year.
- 5.8 Members of the management committee undertake a self assessment skills audit each year to identify their training requirements. However, the way it undertakes the skills audit may not fully identify all training needs. The Association is considering other ways to more effectively deal with this. It gives new committee members an induction pack of relevant material, they meet with the director and heads of departments, and attend external training courses.
- 5.9 In summary Elderpark has an appropriate committee structure that allows it to effectively deal with the Association's business. It has a healthy committee membership although it has a low average attendance at meetings. The Association is aware that it needs to better identify committee training requirements.

Accountability and public reporting

- 5.10 A strong membership and good levels of participation at Annual General Meetings (AGMs) are important ways for a landlord to demonstrate accountability. The Association has 188 general members. This is a relatively low level of membership considering the Association's size and age. The Association promotes membership during new tenant visits and advertises in its newsletters. However these methods have not led to any significant increase in membership levels over a long period of time. The Association's satisfaction survey in 2005 found 61% of those surveyed did not know how to become a member of the Association.
- 5.11 The Association does not know the breakdown of its membership by categories such as age, gender, race or disability. The Association consequently does not know if the membership is representative of all of its service users. Nor does it

analyse membership to ensure that it is open to all. The Association also does not know how many members are its tenants.

- 5.12 Elderpark provides good reports on its general activities through its quarterly newsletter and in its annual report. However, it provides only limited statistical information on how the Association is performing. While its annual report comments on performance against the Association's targets, it does not report against peer or national performance.
- 5.13 In summary, the Association's approach to accountability is poor. Its membership is low and static. It does not know the composition of its membership or analyse this to ensure it is open and representative of its community. It has not fully developed its approach to public reporting.

Ethical standards and clear values

- 5.14 Elderpark has adopted Communities Scotland regulatory code of governance and has a range of other policies to ensure it operates to the highest standards. The Association has appropriate procedures in place to deal with granting benefits to relevant people as determined by Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Elderpark acts in accordance with these statutory requirements.

Financial performance and management

- 5.15 The Association is financially viable and should remain so in the medium term. It has a low exposure to financial risk.
- 5.16 The Association consistently generates annual surpluses and it normally carries a cash balance in excess of the equivalent of a whole year's rental income. The Association is forecasting the balance of £2.6m at March 2007 to increase to around £4m by March 2012. Its private finance borrowing levels are low and it is forecasting the balance sheet to strengthen annually in the medium term. The table below summarises some key financial information from the last three years.

Financial year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
	£,000	£,000	£,000
Turnover	1,908	2,036	2,232
Operating surplus	84	208	141
Net surplus	86	219	175
Capital and reserves	3,669	3,888	4,064

- 5.17 The Association is forecasting significant medium term investment in building new properties. It intends to increase its housing stock by more than 200 units during the period from 2007/08 to 2011/12 and although it also anticipates some stock losses as a result of Right to Buy (RTB) sales, it will increase its stock levels by around 20% overall.
- 5.18 The Association's five year financial projections show an expected increase in planned maintenance costs in the later years as it undertakes work necessary to comply with the requirements of the SHQS. It expects to fully meet the Standard by 2015.
- 5.19 The Association's financial capacity and liquidity is good when compared to performance benchmarks for their classification group and the sector as a whole. This is largely due to low debt levels and consequently low debt servicing costs.
- 5.20 In summary, Elderpark is a financially viable organisation. It demonstrates a good performance in a number of key areas.

Management of risk

- 5.21 Elderpark has appropriate policies and procedures in place to manage the risks the Association may face. One of its key documents is its risk management strategy. The strategy identifies the risks, prioritises these and identifies review periods. The Association also has a risk management policy and procedure that details how it will implement the strategy and identifies who has responsibility for areas of risk.
- 5.22 In order to further reduce the possibility of risks materialising the Association undertakes a rolling programme of internal audits. To prioritise the audit programme the management team identified the key risks and scored these. It

then deals initially with the areas of high risk. The Association is currently tendering the internal audit function.

- 5.23 One area, where the Association has not assessed potential risk relates to properties that the Association purchased on the open market. The Association is considering a number of options for this stock and it will investigate this further this year.
- 5.24 In summary, the Association generally has a good approach to identifying and monitoring the risks it faces.

Performance management, planning and reporting

- 5.25 The Association has worked well since our last inspection to develop its approach to performance management. It has put in place a range of performance indicators to monitor its performance across key service delivery areas. The Association sets realistic and challenging targets to encourage improvements.
- 5.26 The Association provides regular reports on performance to the management committee and compares itself to similar type organisations for some performance indicators. It presents reports to committee on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis depending on the priority it has given to the area of performance. The management committee advised us that they thought the quantity and quality of the reports they received was appropriate. The range and type of performance information that the Association produces will improve as it introduces new modules to its IT system.
- 5.27 Elderpark has an inclusive approach to the development of its annual objectives. The Association's staff and management committee develop the strategic objectives together. Each department has an annual action plan and reports its performance against these to committee. Staff have monthly workplans derived from the departmental action plans. Line managers monitor these and meet with staff to agree monthly plans.

- 5.28 In summary, the Association has adopted a good approach to performance management. It sets a good range of performance indicators and targets and it reports performance to the management committee on a regular basis.

Customer focus

Service standards and targets

- 5.29 Elderpark introduced a new customer care policy in October 2007 that contains a range of service standards that it aims to achieve. The policy also sets out a behavioural code for its staff, committee and consultants to adhere to. Although Elderpark already reports to committee on its performance in meeting some of the service standards, it has not yet developed how it will monitor all its customer care targets.
- 5.30 A tenants' focus group raised the development of good customer care as an important issue in Elderpark. Although the Association presented the draft policy to a focus group it did not involve its tenants more widely in setting the standards. The policy is available for tenants in its reception area, but the Association has not yet publicised the standards to tenants and other service users.

Accessible services

- 5.31 Elderpark's main office is located near central Govan and within walking distance of most of its stock. Its other properties are all close to underground stations, making it easy for its tenants to reach its office by public transport. Elderpark plans to ask tenants about office opening times in its 2008 satisfaction survey and review this accordingly.
- 5.32 The Association's main office is on three levels of a modern building, but is only accessible for people with physical disabilities on the ground floor. There are two private interview rooms and a portable hearing loop system. The reception area is small, but displays a good range of posters and leaflets.
- 5.33 The Association also has a separate repairs office a few minutes walk from its main office. This office has a public counter, where tenants can report a repair, but is not fully accessible for people with physical disabilities. The Association has plans to bring all staff into one location in a larger office in the future.

- 5.34 Elderpark produces an excellent newsletter for its tenants and aims to provide this four times a year. The colour publication contains information on services, policy changes, developments and general news. Our tenant assessor found that the newsletters were easy to read, in plain English and good at getting across a lot of important information.
- 5.35 The Association launched its website in January 2006. Our tenant assessor thought that although it was informative, it contained basic information and was underdeveloped. The Association added more documents to it during our inspection. Elderpark monitors the use of its website, however it does not know how many of its tenants can access it. The Association did not involve any tenants in the development or expansion of its site.
- 5.36 In addition to providing access to telephone based translation services, Elderpark also employs a translator specifically to help its Polish tenants and applicants. The translator holds two hour weekly surgeries and is also available to help with tenancy sign ups and home visits. The Association monitors use and satisfaction with this service and positive responses led to it continuing the service into 2008. The Association told us that it feels this service is important, as it there is a significant and growing local Polish community.

Customer influence

- 5.37 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires the Association to publish a tenant consultation strategy. The Act also requires landlords to inform and consult tenants about changes to its services and take tenants' views into account when making decisions that will affect them. The Association revised its Tenant Participation policy in October 2007 and published the related task plan in its Newsletter. During 2007 Elderpark consulted tenants on increasing their rent, and changes to its rent arrears, empty houses, ASB and estate management procedures and its tenant participation policy. It also consulted its residents on changes to the factoring service. The Association next plans to consult tenants on its new allocation policy.
- 5.38 Elderpark does not have any registered tenants organisations or informal tenants groups. The Association does meet with groups of tenants usually to discuss

- specific issues or problems in an area. The Association told us that its tenants do not want tenants' groups. Tenants we spoke to during the inspection told us that although there is a level of disinterest, some of them would like to be more involved.
- 5.39 Elderpark usually consults its tenants or residents by holding a focus group or through its newsletter, but attendance levels at focus group meetings has been low. It gives clear information on the outcome of consultations through its newsletter. Elderpark is planning to ask some questions on tenants' consultation preferences as part of its rent consultation exercise in February.
- 5.40 Apart from general feedback in its newsletter the Association responds individually to all written comments it receives during consultation. It gives maintenance contractors and support providers feedback when it has surveyed tenants' satisfaction. Elderpark has changed its way of working and services in response to tenants and residents. Examples include:
- developing action plans for investigating ASB complaints;
 - tailoring close cleaning specifications to suit the majority of households in a tenement;
 - changing community alarms from hardwired to pendant systems;
 - refurbishing laundries; and
 - producing a handbook on its factoring service.
- 5.41 Elderpark is keen to gauge its tenants' level of satisfaction at the time they receive a particular service. It surveys: applicants; new tenants; anti-social behaviour and estate management complainants; and tenants who receive a reactive repair or have experienced planned maintenance. Satisfaction levels are generally high. Elderpark hopes to extend this sort of information gathering to more of its services.
- 5.42 Elderpark has a fair approach to responding to complaints about its services. At the time of our inspection the Scottish Public Ombudsman had received no complaints about the Association during 2006/07. The Association received 11 complaints during 2007/08. We reviewed a number of complaints and found Elderpark had dealt with them satisfactorily. The right to complain is widely

- publicised in correspondence, newsletters and housing list applications. Its policy is available in reception, although it does not provide more summarised information on how to complain.
- 5.43 The Association does not record complaints centrally and its individual departments record complaints differently. This makes it difficult for the Association to monitor complaints; however it plans to computerise its recording of complaints during 2008.
- 5.44 In summary, Elderpark has a fair approach to focussing on its customers and enabling them to influence the way it delivers its services. The Association provides its tenants with a good range of information and its services are generally accessible. Elderpark has a customer care policy and standards, but has not developed how it will fully implement or monitor these. We saw some good examples of how Elderpark has changed its services in response to customers. However, it only gets a limited level of participation from its tenants using its current methods of consultation. Elderpark deals with complaints well, but it does not yet have a corporate approach to recording and monitoring complaints.

Equalities and diversity

- 5.45 The Association's approach to dealing with equalities and diversity is underdeveloped. It has an equal opportunities policy and procedure, but these contain limited information. The Association monitors equal opportunities in relation to housing applications, offers of housing, allocations, evictions and employment and during 2006/07, Elderpark's lets broadly reflected the level of ethnic groups on its waiting list. However it does not monitor equalities in areas such as membership, suspensions from its housing lists, medical adaptations and antisocial behaviour.
- 5.46 The Association does not have an overall strategy that demonstrates equalities are an issue it considers across all that it does. It also does not have an equalities action plan in place that would allow it to develop its approach to monitoring and dealing with equalities and diversity. The Association's staff and committee have not received any recent training in this area.

- 5.47 The Association has however taken some positive steps to deal with equalities issues as they have arisen. It has employed a part-time translator as the number of tenants and applicants from Poland has increased. It will also provide written information in other languages on request and has readily available information in Polish. It has also installed a portable induction loop system in its offices.
- 5.48 In summary the Association approach in dealing with equalities and diversity is fair. Although it has taken steps to introduce some good practices, it cannot demonstrate that it fully understands equalities and diversity issues across all its services.

Value for money

Efficiency and costs

- 5.49 The Association spends a significant proportion of its budget on its staff costs, which is a key component of its management costs. In 2006/07 the management costs were £1,054 per unit, up 18% rise from 2005/06. At this time Elderpark's cost were higher than the classification and sector medians of £781 and £863 per unit respectively. It projects total management costs to rise in the medium term. However it expects that a projected 20% increase in stock will reduce its unit management costs from 2007/08 onwards.
- 5.50 Elderpark's costs for delivering its housing management services have increased over the last three years to £555 per unit at March 2007. During 2005/06 it had lower costs than its classification group. The Association's cost for delivering its property maintenance services have also increased over the last three years to £499 at March 2007. During 2005/06 its costs were higher than its classification group and national averages. The Association told us that the higher costs are due to an increase in staffing levels to enable it to deliver enhanced services.

Value for money in procurement

- 5.51 Elderpark may tender for planned and reactive maintenance contracts or it may enter directly into a partnership agreement or a combination of both. For reactive and planned maintenance the Association holds an approved list of contractors. Contractors are subject to ongoing qualitative assessments of their work, on

- issues such as cost, quality of work and tenant satisfaction. It reviews the list annually and will remove contractors if performance does not meet a set standard.
- 5.52 The Association has worked with two other local RSLs to develop a joint framework agreement to procure the services of consultants and contractors for development projects. This is based on an assessment of quality, best value and price. The agreement will allow the Associations to go through one tendering process and select a range of consultants and contractors that they will work in partnership with. The agreement will operate for four years. This approach will also be applied to future planned and cyclical maintenance work undertaken by the three Associations. This is a good approach to the use of shared services to deliver efficiencies in the procurement of services.
- 5.53 In summary the Association has a good approach to achieving value for money in the procurement process. It will determine the most effective procurement route depending on the type of contract that it is dealing with. It will enter into partnering arrangements when it can achieve a good balance between quality and price, and has used joint procurement with other RSLs.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 This report highlights our findings following this housing inspection. We expect all organisations to respond effectively to our recommendations using their own improvement planning processes. We do not require Elderpark to submit an improvement plan detailing the actions it will take in relation to all our recommendations. We have however asked that it provides us with details on the actions it intends to take in relation to the properties it has purchased on the open market.
- 6.2 If you would like to see how Elderpark plans to respond to the issues raised in this report you should contact the Association by:
- Telephone: 0141 440 2244
 - E-mail: admin@elderpark.org
 - Website: www.elderpark.org

Appendix 1 Sources of evidence

Groups and third parties consulted

- Glasgow City Council DRS Team (Strategic and Investment)
- Glasgow City Council South West Community Homeless Team
- Glasgow City Council Social Work Services
- Glasgow City Council Govan Benefits Team
- Strathclyde Police
- Communities Scotland Area Team
- Communities Scotland Tenant Participation Team
- Homepoint

Interviews / meetings

- Members of the Elderpark Management Committee
- Director
- Deputy Director
- Maintenance Manager
- Finance Manager
- Housing Manager
- Housing management staff
- Property maintenance staff
- Discussions with a range of tenants and service users

Reality checks

- Observing management committee meeting
- Review of gas safety documents
- Review of complaints
- Review of responsive repairs
- Review of housing list applications and allocations
- Review of void re-let standard
- Review of information for applicants and tenants
- Review of rent arrears cases
- Review of abandonments
- Review of anti-social behaviour cases
- Review Schedule 7 cases
- Review of housing management complaints
- Shadowing void inspection
- Shadowing estate management inspections
- Shadowing allocation process
- Disability Discrimination Audit

Key documents reviewed

- Inspection submission
- Abandonment procedures
- Allocations procedures and policy
- Annual accounts for year ending 2006/07
- Annual performance and statistical returns to Communities Scotland
- Annual Reports and Newsletters
- Anti-social Behaviour and Estate Management Complaints Procedures and Policies
- Applicant and new tenant information packs

- Application procedures
- Committee skills audit questionnaire and outcomes
- Complaints Policy and Housing Management Complaints records
- Customer Care Policy
- Equal opportunities policy and procedure
- Estate Management Policy
- Estate Management Survey 2007
- Five year financial projections
- Gas Safety Procedure
- Gifts and hospitality policy and register
- Internal Audit Progress Report
- Internal Management Plan
- Membership policy
- Papers related to work with Strathclyde Police
- Performance monitoring reports for arrears, allocation and repairs response times
- Planned Maintenance programme
- Racial Harassment Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs policy
- Rent arrears policy and procedures
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Resident Satisfaction Survey 2005
- Right to Repair policy
- Risk Management policy
- Risk management strategy
- Schedule 7 register
- Focus Group papers
- Management Committee minutes and papers
- Tenant and Resident Participation Policy and Task Plan
- Website

Appendix 2 Examples of positive practice

These are areas we would highlight as working particularly well, taking account of the organisation's operating context.

Tenancy and Neighbourhood Management

The Association utilised its new computer system to improve its antisocial behaviour (ASB) and estates management complaints service. When Elderpark staff developed procedures for ASB and estate management complaints, they broke each stage into detailed steps. Elderpark customised a standard IT package, building each step into the system. The system will automatically guide staff through its procedures. It prompts them to move to the next step or stage and generates any related paperwork. The system also allows staff to cross reference and link cases, which will help them, build up evidence. The new system will mean tenants and residents should receive a consistent service exactly in line with Elderpark's policy. Elderpark can now easily track complaints and its Committee will receive more detailed performance and trend reports.

Elderpark has developed an information poster to display in the common areas of all of its tenement properties. The poster gives examples of anti-social behaviour and estate management problems along with the phone numbers for tenants or residents who wish to complain. Along side this; the poster outlines the close cleaning timetable and specification. It also includes a list of useful external telephone numbers for example Strathclyde Police, Transco, and Scottish Power.

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.
Asset Management	Is a range of activities undertaken by RSLs to ensure that its housing stock meets needs, demands and standards, now and in the future, in the most efficient way.
Average	The arithmetic mean – the sum of all the values divided by the number of values.
Common Housing Register (CHR)	A register of all applicants for social housing used by two or more landlords within an area.
Cyclical maintenance	Planned programme of work to deal with predictable deterioration of building components, for example regular painting of window frames.
Ecohomes	Is a method of rating homes in relation to balancing environmental performance with the need for a high quality of life and a safe healthy internal environment.
Focus group	A group of people brought together for a structured discussion on a specific subject(s).
Housing list	A list of applicants for housing which the RSL uses to allocate its housing stock.
ICT	A landlord's information communication technology system.
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.
Internal Management Plan (IMP)	Strategic plan which sets out what the organisation aims and objectives are as well as outlining how it will achieve them.
Key performance indicator	A measure of how an organisation is achieving its objectives or performing in particular activities. An organisation can compare its performance indicators against a pre-set standard (a benchmark) or with other organisations.
Life cycle costing	A method of calculating the cost and timing of the repairs to, and replacement of, major building components.
National median	The central value of the ordered performance of all Scottish RSLs.

Non Technical Arrears	Rental charges owed to a landlord after it has taken account of outstanding Housing Benefit claims or payments.
Notice of proceedings (NOP)	Documentation required to be served by a landlord advising the tenant(s) of the landlords intention to raise an action in the courts to end the tenancy.
Partnering	In contract-management, a structured approach to improving efficiency and quality of work. It aims to reduce confrontation between the RSL and its consultants and contractors. Partnering requires formal objectives, agreed methods for solving problems and searching for continued, measurable improvements.
Peer group	A group of organisations facing similar tasks and challenges with which an RSL can make comparisons. RSLs choose which peer group they belong to when they submit their APSRs.
Performance Standards	Housing standards for all social landlords in Scotland.
Planned maintenance	The planned renewal or maintenance of key property components.
Post Inspection	Inspection by a member of the landlords staff to check the on the quality or deal with a complaint concerning a response repair.
Pre inspection	Inspection by a member of the landlords staff to check the on the exact nature of the work required before ordering a response repair.
Rechargeable repairs	Work that is the responsibility of the tenant but the landlord carries out the repair.
Registered social landlord (RSL)	Is a landlord that provides social rented housing and is registered and regulated by Communities Scotland.
Re-lets	Is an allocation of housing, made by a landlord, to a property previously tenanted. It is distinguished from, new lets, to a newly built or modernised property.
Response repairs	Day to day repairs carried out on a reactive basis, distinguishable from planned, capital or cyclical maintenance.
Right to Repair	Statutory scheme which sets out the timescales a landlord must complete certain repairs within. It also details tenants' rights to use alternative contractors and to receive compensation.

Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001	Defines how those involved with RSLs (governing body members and staff) do not benefit in an inappropriate fashion.
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	The independent body appointed to investigate individual complaints against public service bodies including Registered Social Landlords (RSL).
Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	This is a minimum quality standard across all of Scotland's homes and is to be achieved by 2015.
Section 5 referral	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.
Secure by design	A UK-wide accreditation scheme that endorses building designs and specifications that includes crime-prevention measures to help reduce the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime.
Serious arrears	Where a tenant owes more than 13 weeks' rent payments and this is more than £250.
Shadowing	An inspection technique that involves accompanying and observing staff while they carried out their day-to-day tasks.
SMART	Performance management acronym for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound.
Stakeholder(s)	Any person or organisation that obtains a service from the landlord or is effected by the landlords actions.
Statutory reasonable preference categories	People who have one of these housing needs: homelessness, overcrowding, large families, living in below tolerable standard housing or unsatisfactory living conditions.
Suspension or Suspension Policy	Policy by which a landlord may temporarily suspend an applicant from receiving offers from its housing list as defined in the 1987 Housing (Scotland) Act and amended in the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act.
Technical arrears	Rental charges owed to a landlord as a result of outstanding Housing Benefit claims or delayed payments.
Tenant Assessor	Tenant assessors are trained lay people (tenants) who are part of the inspection team. They are involved in the preparation for the inspection, reading landlord materials and on-site visits as well as talking to tenants.

Turnover (empty houses) The number of houses that tenants vacate in a year, expressed as a percentage of the landlord's lettable housing stock.

About Regulation and Inspection

Regulation & Inspection (R&I) is a separate division of Communities Scotland, the national housing and regeneration agency. We act on behalf of Scottish Ministers to register and regulate independent social landlords. These are usually housing associations, but they can also be housing co-operatives or companies limited by guarantee. We also inspect the landlord and homelessness services provided by local authorities. We operate independently and impartially, while remaining accountable to Scottish Ministers for the standard of our work and for inspecting and reporting within the overall context of Scottish Ministers' strategic objectives for the social housing sector and tackling homelessness. A code of practice sets out what Ministers expect from us in delegating their regulatory powers to us. Our independence is further safeguarded by a Regulation Board that oversees our work.

We aim:

- to be a catalyst for improvement in the quality of housing and homelessness services; and
- to protect the interests of tenants, provide assurance to service users and taxpayers and maintain funders' confidence in registered social landlords.

Our work supports the principles of public service reform by promoting good services that are organised around the needs of the people who use them. We encourage registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities to be open, accountable, efficient and well governed. And we expect them to provide equal opportunity and open access to their services.

Regulation & Inspection

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