

Communities Scotland
Inspection report

Hunters Hall Housing Co-operative

January 2006

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Context	2
3. How good are the services?	3
4. Is the service managed for improvement?	9
5. Governance and financial management	11
6. Areas for improvement action	14
7. Next steps	15
Appendix 1 Examples of Positive Practice	i
Appendix 2 Sources of Evidence	ii
Glossary	iii

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 The Hunters Hall inspection was carried out by Roisin Harris who was supported by Lynne Bell (Financial Analyst). We were on site on 29 September 2005. 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

* see glossary

raised in this report. We require that the summary of this report is issued to all tenants.

2. Context

About the Organisation

- 2.1 Hunters Hall Housing Cooperative was formed as a result of a stock transfer from Edinburgh District Council. The Cooperative was registered in May 1988. It is a non charitable Industrial & Provident Society* and is constituted as a fully mutual housing Cooperative, which means that all its tenants must be members and all its members must be tenants or prospective tenants. The Cooperative owns 201 new build and modernised properties in the Niddrie House area of east Edinburgh. The stock includes nine dwellings built or adapted for people confined to wheelchairs.
- 2.2 The Cooperative is governed by a voluntary management committee elected at its AGM. It currently has 11 committee members, all of whom are tenants. At the time of inspection Hunters Hall had two full time employees and five part time employees. The Cooperative receives accountancy and technical services from Manor Estates Housing Association, and welfare rights services from Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association. The table below shows some key facts on Hunters Hall.

Key Facts	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Houses owned	201	201	201
Employees (full time equivalent)	4	5	4.5
Annual turnover (£000's)	457	464	479
Total possible rental income (£000's)	448	457	473
Total Arrears (£'s)	45,384	64,866	54,093
Average weekly rent	43.42	44.66	46.35
Houses re-let*	19	12	10
Average days to re-let	30	41	23.5
Responsive repairs carried out	840	699	608

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 Hunters Hall provides good access to its housing list^{*}, through participation in Edindex^{*}. Edindex is a partnership of 25 housing organisations who have one common housing register^{*} for people who want to rent a home. Application forms are available at Hunters Hall's office to take away or applicants can receive help completing the form. Edindex continually reviews the waiting list; however at the time of inspection the Cooperative did not regularly monitor Edindex performance against agreed targets, for example time to add new applicants to the housing register. Since inspection the Cooperative has started to report Edindex performance on a regular basis to Committee.
- 3.2 Hunters Hall provides excellent access to its repairs services. Tenants can report a repair by phone, email, free post enquiry card, to staff onsite or in person at its office. It publicises arrangements for reporting repairs in its "repairs information leaflet". Tenants have direct access to the out of hours emergency repairs telephone numbers. These are also publicised in the repairs information leaflet and telephone list contained in the tenancy pack. The numbers are recorded on the answering machine message and its office door. Hunters Hall has also recently circulated emergency repairs business cards. The Cooperative does not operate a formal appointment system for repairs. However it tries to accommodate suitable access times as far as possible. Tenants continually express high satisfaction levels with Cooperative staff when reporting a repair.
- 3.3 Hunters Hall provides good access to its services. It has one office, which is located within walking distance of all its properties. The office is wheelchair accessible. A private interview room is available. Staff are able to use Lothian Interpreting and Translation Service and this is advertised in reception and on all correspondence. The Cooperative is trying to ensure all publications are in plain English and easy to read, as a result all correspondence is now in size 14 font. Braille and signing are also available on request. There is an advertised mobile hearing loop system in operation, which the Cooperative can use in other venues, if required.

^{*} see glossary

Service Quality

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

Housing Management

- 3.4 Hunters Hall operates an allocation policy that is based on housing need and clearly prioritises those entitled to reasonable preference* under the legislation, while still meeting the aspirations of its own transfer applicants. Allocations are sourced from three lists. Edindex applicants, City of Edinburgh nominations and the Cooperative's own transfer tenants each receive 33% of allocations. One house per year can be allocated to the Move UK scheme. The Cooperative carries out a very small number of relets* each year, for example in 2004/05 there were only 10 relets. Hunters Hall is trying to help City of Edinburgh Council accommodate homeless people; a protocol is in place for Section 5* referrals from the Council. Quality control of allocations is good; a second member of staff verifies all allocations and if there is a deviation from the policy e.g. sensitive lets or under occupation, it is approved by the Director.
- 3.5 Hunters Hall has not yet had to use suspensions or exclusions. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to deal with suspensions and exclusions.
- 3.6 All Edindex applicants are added to the register within five days and can then be considered for allocation. Hunters Hall selects the applicants from the top of the register and they are invited to its office for an interview to verify their application information. Hunters Hall tries to form a good relationship with prospective and new tenants. Applicants have a membership interview with a panel from the committee, based on an appropriate set of questions. The Cooperative will give applicants two offers, if they refuse both of these; they are invited to discuss their needs. Applicants are accompanied on viewings. If the tenancy is accepted arrangements are made for a detailed tenancy sign up meeting.
- 3.7 Hunters Hall has signed up all but one of its tenants to the Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)* agreement, and is taking steps to sign up the remaining tenant. To date it has

* see glossary

not been relevant to offer any tenants the short SST^{*}; however the Cooperative is prepared to use this type of tenancy in appropriate circumstances and has an agreement in place.

3.8 New tenants receive a good tenancy pack. This includes information on:

- the repairs service, right to repair^{*} and the “repairs code of conduct”;
- neighbour disputes;
- rent arrears;
- complaints and appeals; and
- tenant participation.

Hunters Hall is continuing to develop its tenancy pack replacing more formal policy documents with easy to use information leaflets.

3.9 The Cooperative issued 77 Notices of Proceedings^{*} and initiated 5 court actions during 2004/05, all relating to tenant rent arrears:

- two of these cases were dismissed after the rent arrears were cleared;
- one was suspended while repayment arrangements are being maintained; and
- in two cases orders for recovery of possession were granted; in these cases one tenant abandoned and the other terminated their tenancy.

3.10 Hunters Hall has a good approach to support and welfare advice. New tenants are offered support at sign up and during the six week settling in visit. All tenants can access the Welfare and Support Officer directly. Publications e.g. the arrears leaflet include contact details for support and advice agencies; and a range of leaflets are displayed in its office.

3.11 We visited Hunters Hall’s estates and found that they are of a good standard. The area is clean and there is little evidence of graffiti or vandalism. CCTV is in operation and shrubs are pruned regularly to enhance security. Staff carry out regular estate checks and work with the local authority neighbourhood concierges to arrange uplifts of large refuse items and clear dumping rubbish. The last tenants’ survey in November 2004 found that 92% of tenants were satisfied or very satisfied with Hunters Hall as a place to stay. Complaints regarding the condition of the estates are minimal.

* see glossary

3.12 Hunters Hall has a good approach to antisocial behaviour. The Cooperative received five antisocial behaviour complaints in the last quarter. 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. Hunters Hall works closely with the local community, particularly children to raise awareness of antisocial behaviour and to try to prevent it. The Cooperative has a good relationship with the Community Police Officer, and a protocol is in place for information sharing. Although the Cooperative does not offer formal mediation, staff have received training and they are able to make referrals to the Edinburgh Community Mediation Service.

Property Maintenance

3.13 Hunters Hall has an emergency repair target of 3 hours to make safe and 24 hours to complete the repair. Routine repairs have a 10 day target for completion. These are more challenging than the peer and national averages. However the target for urgent repairs is 5 working days, this is less challenging than the national and peer average of 3 working days. The Cooperative has not reviewed its targets recently.

3.14 Hunters Hall has an aim to complete 95% of repairs within target timescales. It has improved its reported performance in completing repairs since 2003/04. During 2004/05 it completed 99.3% of emergency repairs and 96.3% of urgent repairs on target. Performance dipped slightly for routine repairs with 95.3% completed on target compared to 96% the previous year. However overall performance remains better than peer or national figures.

3.15 The most recent repairs satisfaction report for April to June 2005 shows that 100% of tenants think the repair service is either excellent or good; and are satisfied with the quality of the repair. In response to feedback from repairs satisfaction forms Hunters Hall has recently issued an excellent "Repair Code of Conduct" for tenants to help them understand what to expect from contractors. This has been highlighted as positive practice in Appendix 2.

3.16 Hunters Hall has an excellent approach to pre and post inspections, which are carried out by its housing assistants and technical staff from Manor Estates Housing Association. The Cooperative pre inspects 10% of all contractors work and more

* see glossary

complicated repairs or those that need clarification. Post inspections cover 10% of all contractors and all jobs over £250. Results are regularly reported to the Repairs, Housing Management and Estate subgroup. Technical staff work with contractors where remedial action is required.

3.17 The Cooperative has had a statutory duty to provide tenants with right to repair since September 2002. Hunters Hall now provides tenants with their statutory right to repair, but this was only introduced in August 2005. Hunters Hall publicises the scheme by:

- informing new tenants when they sign their SST;
- writing to existing tenants once a year; and
- displaying its own right to repairs leaflet in its office.

Hunters Hall has a good approach to giving information to tenants on their right to repair. Tenants are notified when they report a repair if it qualifies for right to repair. The satisfaction form highlights if the repair qualifies for right to repair. It also includes details on an alternative contractor and when the repair should be completed. They also receive Hunters Hall's own right to repair leaflet. At the time of inspection the Cooperative had not had to compensate any tenants.

3.18 Scottish Ministers have set a target that all landlords' houses should meet the new Scottish Housing Quality standard (SHQS)* by 2015. Landlords are required to prepare a delivery plan showing how it will achieve this by April 2005. At the time of inspection Hunters Hall had failed to submit a delivery plan, this is a major weakness. The Cooperative has 30 year life cycle* costings in place and 5 year investment plans. However at the time of inspection, these had not been updated to reflect the work required to meet the SHQS.

3.19 Hunters Hall is required to carry out safety checks every 12 months on all gas appliances and flues, which it provides for its tenants' use. Hunters Hall has an excellent approach to gas safety checks. It has achieved 100% continuous cover for its properties with gas supply. 10% of gas checks are post inspected by the contractor and a further 10% by an independent gas consultant.

3.20 From May 2004 social landlords have had a statutory duty to manage asbestos in the common areas of their properties. The Cooperative did not meet the statutory

* see glossary

timescale to prepare a written asbestos management plan, nor has it yet identified for all common areas in its housing stock whether asbestos is present; this is a weakness. However the Cooperative is doing some work to manage the risk from asbestos including:

- carrying out type 2 surveys on 20 of its properties;
- maintaining a register of known asbestos and copying it to all contractors;
- alerting contractors to known asbestos when ordering a repair; and
- carrying out type 3 surveys prior to any intrusive maintenance or refurbishment work.

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.

3.21 Hunters Hall has an excellent approach to engaging with service users. The Cooperative carried out a full tenant satisfaction survey in 2002 and has updated this annually with sample surveys of 24.8% (50) of its tenants. Results are reported to the Management Committee and published in “Scoop”; its newsletter. Tenants also receive satisfaction surveys for responsive repairs and gas central heating services. Hunters Hall carries out one off surveys; for example in October 2005 it surveyed tenants on the recently introduced stair cleaning service. In response to survey results an action plan called the “Future Development Plan” is produced and progress is reported regularly to committee and in “Scoop”. The “Future Development Plan” has been highlighted as positive practice in Appendix 2. The last tenant satisfaction update in November 2004 survey found 92% of tenants are satisfied or very satisfied with the Cooperative as a landlord.

3.22 Hunters Hall tenants participate as members of the management committee and subgroups or as co-opted members of subgroups. Apart from the satisfaction surveys, Hunters Hall has focus groups* and stair consultations and tenants are invited to become involved through advertisements in “Scoop”. Tenants can use the general enquiry form and free post envelopes to suggest improvements or query service levels at any time. Free post enquiry forms have been highlighted as positive practice in Appendix 2. Evidence of responsiveness to tenants includes:

- introducing regular shrubbery and tree pruning to help prevent vandalism to cars;

* see glossary

- amending the repairs satisfaction survey form to make it easier to complete;
- providing gas servicing at weekends to accommodate working tenants;
- providing skips for tenants to use several times a year; and
- introducing the “repairs code of conduct” to help tenants gauge satisfaction with contractor services.

The last tenant satisfaction survey found 93% of tenants are very or fairly satisfied that the Cooperative asks for and acts on their views; and 85% are very or fairly satisfied that the tenants have a real say in the running of the Cooperative. Hunters Hall has a good approach to tenant consultation. For example it consulted on the rent increase by writing to all tenants with an options survey, holding a focus group and reporting findings to committee.

- 3.23 Hunters Hall has a fair approach to dealing with complaints. The Cooperative has identified reporting complaints outcomes as an area for improvement; and is planning to review its policies next year; starting with a tenants focus group in March 2006. Written and verbal complaints are recorded and categorised on the complaints register. There is a formal process for complaints about services, staff or management committee members, with related targets for responding to the complainant. Hunters Hall takes complaints into account when reviewing services. We found that response targets were not always being met and Hunters Hall has already reviewed its procedures to minimise any delays.

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 including: housing benefit direct, standing order and by post office giro card. Hunters Hall is currently consulting tenants on increasing payment options to include: Allpay cards, direct debit, telephone and internet banking.
- 4.2 Although total arrears have reduced slightly in 2004/05, as a percentage of total gross rental income, they are still high compared to the previous year’s peer and national figures. The reduction is due to a significant decrease in outstanding

housing benefit payments. As a percentage of gross rental income this has fallen from 5.7% in 2003/04 to 0.97% in 2004/05. However non technical arrears for current and former tenants have increased. Current tenant non technical arrears as a percentage of gross rental income has increased significantly from 7.7% in 2003/04 to 9.1% in 2004/05.

4.3 Hunters Hall has identified arrears recovery as an area for improvement. As a response to poor performance during 2003/04 a new rent arrears policy was adopted in October 2004, with an emphasis on prevention. Performance at 30 June 2005 showed an improvement, with current non technical arrears decreasing to 8.7%. Hunters Hall has set a target of 6.4% for the end of 2006/07; to achieve this would bring them in line with peer and national performance.

4.4 Hunters Hall has a fair approach to the management of arrears. Some key strengths are:

- a strong relationship with City of Edinburgh Benefits staff;
- participation in housing benefit verification; and
- availability of the Welfare and Support Officer.

However there are still some key weaknesses:

- although decreasing, non technical arrears are still high compared to peer and national performance; and
- at the time of inspection performance reporting to committee was infrequent; the last report was January 2005.

Since inspection, performance reporting has become a standard agenda item.

4.5 The turnover of houses has decreased to 4.98% in 2004/05; when there were 10 relets. The average time to relet was 23.5 days; this is less than peer and national figures and is an excellent improvement from 2003/04 when it was 41 days. The first quarter of 2005/06 has seen the improvement sustained, with houses let on average, within 23 days. Hunters Hall has set a challenging target of 21 days for the current year. During 2003/4 Hunters Hall lost 0.9% of rental income through voids. This level of performance places them 9th out of 20 registered social landlords (RSLs)* in their peer group* and it is ranked 90th nationally. Rental income lost has decreased to 0.5% in 2004/05.

* see glossary

- 4.6 There are some barriers to the further improvement of re-letting times. In common with other housing associations in Edinburgh, Hunters Hall has experienced ongoing difficulties in identifying new tenants from the Edindex list and often has to contact large numbers of applicants before being able to successfully allocate an empty home. The Cooperative has also stopped using decoration allowances at the request of tenants and will now decorate if required, which can add to void timescales.
- 4.7 Hunters Hall's costs for delivering its housing management services were £812.35 for each of its houses in 2004/05. This is an increase of 23% on 2003/04. The cost is significantly higher than peer and national figures. The Cooperative took the decision to implement a new staffing structure, including the employment of technical, financial, welfare and support services and the provision of youth work. It accepted that the improvement in services would have an impact on costs. However at the time of inspection this had not impacted on tenant's rents.
- 4.8 Hunters Hall has a good range of policies and procedures. It is aiming to review these on a three yearly basis. The review of policies usually involves surveying tenants, holding focus groups and reporting feedback to committee. The Cooperative employed consultants to carry a three year project of internal audit in 2000. There has been no internal audit since 2003, this is a weakness.
- 4.9 Hunters Hall is committed to continuous improvement; this is evident from its "Future Development Plan". However it does not always meet the deadlines for statutory duties for example right to repair and asbestos management.

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 Hunters Hall has an internal management plan and action plan in place for 2005/06, however it needs further development. The plan currently has no strategic vision statement, or related objectives tied into a prioritised action plan. There are no links to financial plans, internal audit or the risk management strategy. The plan is due for review in April 2006.

- 5.2 Hunters Hall committee is made up of 11 tenants. The Cooperative completes a training audit for each committee member annually after the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and an action plan is put in place. New members receive a welcome pack and take part in an induction event involving the whole management committee shortly after the AGM. This is used as a refresher course for all committee members. Average attendance at committee meetings is 64% and all meetings have been quorate in the last year. Hunters Hall has 222 members; the last AGM was quorate with a good turnout of 14% of members attending.
- 5.3 Hunters Hall recognises the importance of both staff and Committee members adhering to the highest ethical standards. We found Hunters Hall acts in accordance with statutory requirements relating to the granting of benefits in Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, and it achieves high standards in managing potential conflicts of interest in most areas. However, in the area of rent arrears we found that in line with policy the members affected did not declare interest or withdraw from committee meetings when matters relating to rent arrears were being discussed, this is a weakness.
- 5.4 Hunters Hall has a limited approach to risk management. It has a strategy, which covers strategic, operational and financial risks. Risks are prioritised and have action plans. The strategy and action plans are due for review. Staff and Committee have received risk management training. Although risk is not mainstreamed as yet, impact assessment training is planned for October 2005. The current risk management strategy does not cover the SHQS.

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 Hunters Hall's financial performance has been good for many years although a planned increase in cyclical and major repairs expenditure resulted in deficits in 2003. Although surpluses are forecast throughout the 25 year financial projections, substantial major repairs expenditure results in eroding cash balances over the years. This becomes a problem for the Co-op with negative cash balances forecast from 2012 onwards. In addition the financial projections have not been updated to

take account of the financial implications of meeting the SHQS. Long term sustainability is therefore not demonstrated by the existing cashflows.

- 5.6 The financial management framework has some areas of weakness. A one year budget is presented annually to the committee for approval, although in 2005 this did not take place until after the start of the financial year. The budget reports include a good level of income and expenditure and cashflow detail. However, no balance sheet information or key performance indicators* are included.
- 5.7 Separate financial reports are prepared and presented to the committee quarterly to monitor actual spend against budget. The information is limited to income and expenditure and balance sheet, with no cashflow or key performance indicators information presented to the committee.

* see glossary

6. Areas for improvement action

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

In Access Hunters Hall should:

- monitor and report on Edindex performance against agreed targets.

In Service quality Hunters Hall should:

- prepare and submit a delivery plan for the SHQS; and
- ensure that it complies with its legal duties on the management of asbestos in common areas..

In Performance and resource management Hunters Hall should:

- improve its performance in collecting rent;
- increase the frequency of key performance indicator reporting to committee; and
- develop a regular rolling programme of internal audit.

In Governance and financial management Hunters Hall should:

- further develop its Internal Management Plan;
- mainstream risk assessment;
- amend conflict of interest procedures to include management committee arrears;
- demonstrate long term sustainability in cashflows;
- approve the budget before the start of the financial year; and
- increase the information included in budget and financial performance reports for committee.

7. Next steps

- 7.1 This report highlights our findings following this housing inspection. We expect Hunters Hall to respond effectively to our recommendations using an improvement plan to be submitted to us within eight weeks of the publication of this report. The plan should show how the organisation intends to respond to our findings. The plan will be agreed with us.
- 7.2 If you would like to see Hunters Hall's improvement plan you should contact the Chairperson at:
Hunters Hall Housing Cooperative Ltd
77 Niddrie House Drive
Edinburgh
Telephone: 0131 657 3379
Email: sfinlayson@huntershall.org.uk

Sources of Evidence

Groups and third parties consulted:

- Edinburgh City Council
- Edindex
- Communities Scotland Homepoint Team
- Communities Scotland Quality and Transfer Delivery Unit
- Communities Scotland Tenant Participation Development Team
- Care Commission

Interviews / meetings:

- Members of the Association's Committee
- Director
- Housing Officer
- Housing Assistants (2)

Reality checks:

- Review of legal actions against tenants
- 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
- Observation of annual general meeting

Key documents reviewed:

- Inspection submission*
- Schedule 7 register
- Conflict of interest register
- Complaints register
- New Tenancy pack
- Management committee rent accounts
- Hunters Hall membership procedures
- Draft Annual Report
- Performance reports

* see glossary

Examples of Positive practice

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

Service user focus

- Hunters Hall produces an annual action plan based on feedback from its tenants survey. This is called the “Future Development Plan”. Progress against this plan is reported regularly to their management committee and in “Scoop” their regular newsletter to tenants. The 2005/06 “Future Development Plan” covers enquires and complaints policy, privacy in the office, monitoring contractors performance, home noise insulation, heating systems and activities for older tenants.

Service Quality

- In order that tenants can contact the Cooperative without having to come into its office or incur the expense of a phone call, Hunters Hall developed free post enquiry forms. These are simple enquiry forms that can be used for any purpose including:
 - reporting a repair;
 - making a complaint;
 - making an enquiry; and
 - making a suggestion.

The form lets tenants specify when and how they would be like to be contacted regarding their enquiry. There is a free post business reply envelope. All tenants are supplied with a number of forms and envelopes on a regular basis.

- Hunters Hall’s “repairs code of conduct” was developed to help tenants understand what to expect from the responsive repairs service. It particularly outlines what contractors should and should not do. It also details the Cooperative’s and the tenant’s responsibilities. The “repairs code of conduct” was developed in response to tenant feedback. A focus group involving tenants, staff, contractors, and technical staff produced the code. The “repairs code of conduct” has been circulated to all tenants and is included in the tenancy pack for new tenants.

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.
Edindex	The Edinburgh Common Housing Register.
Focus group	A group of people brought together to have a structured discussion on a specific subject or set of subjects, facilitated by an independent person.
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.
Life cycle costing	A method of calculating the cost and timing of the repairs to, and replacement of, major building components.
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.
Reasonable Preference categories	Homelessness, overcrowding, large families, living in below tolerable standard housing or unsatisfactory living conditions.
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

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