

Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership

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. The inspection of Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership (DGHP) took place in May 2006. We awarded DGHP the following grades:

Housing management	C	Fair	Some strengths, but with many areas where improvement is required or with a small number of significant weaknesses.
Property maintenance	C	Fair	Some strengths, but with many areas where improvement is required or with a small number of significant weaknesses.

Inspection Findings

DGHP was registered with Communities Scotland in April 2003, when it acquired 11,887 properties from Dumfries and Galloway Council. It is constituted as a company limited by guarantee.

DGHP is governed by a Board of Management. Membership of the Board comprises tenant and independent members who are elected by the members of the company, and local authority members who are nominated by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

The Partnership is undertaking a comprehensive strategic review of its services, in recognition that its current methods of service delivery need to be modernised to help it meet changing customer expectations, meet the restated vision of the Partnership in terms of the provision of new homes and estates and respond to the Scottish Executives efficiency agenda.

Our inspection report contains a summary of the Partnership's progress against the commitments it made to tenants as part of the stock transfer process. Overall we found that DGHP has made good progress against its transfer commitments and objectives. To ensure further delivery it has also used them as the basis for its strategic plans. Where there has been slippage or reconfiguration, DGHP has plans in place to address these. The Board and senior staff have demonstrated effective leadership, particularly during difficult times and are developing a more outward focus as the organisation becomes more established.

Key strengths are:

- its awareness of its strengths and weaknesses in housing management;
- it is good at promoting access to its housing list and giving choice to people who apply to it for housing;
- it has significantly reduced the number of evictions, and has promoted the prevention of homelessness and sustaining tenancies by introducing a good range of help and support services;
- its work in cyclical maintenance is good;
- its collection of tenant feedback;
- its work to ensure access to the repairs service; and
- high levels of tenant satisfaction.

Key areas for improvement are:

- it allows one offer of housing and refusal leads to a 12-month suspension;
- its levels of bypassing homeless applicants and the length of time homeless people wait to be housed;
- its lack of firm guidelines, targets or outcome monitoring in its estate management service;
- improvements to its approach to anti-social behaviour have yet to be fully implemented;
- its management of high-balance arrears, former tenant arrears and debt write-off;
- its performance in completing repairs, when considered from a service user's perspective;
- it does not meet its statutory duties on Right to Repair;
- it does not fully meet its statutory duties in gas safety or asbestos management;
- it does not recharge repairs effectively to tenants and owners;
- it has a high level of variations to repairs;
- it has involved tenants in making improvements to property management services but does not always use its performance information and tenant feedback to pursue tenant-centred service improvements in property management; and
- its management of compliance with the guidance and requirements of Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Next steps

DGHP should produce an improvement plan to show how it intends to respond to our findings. The plan will be agreed with us. We require DGHP to give this summary of the inspection report to all its tenants.

How to get more information and contact details

If you would like to see DGHP's improvement plan you should contact:

Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership
Grierson House
The Crichton

Bankend Road
Dumfries
DG1 4ZS

Telephone: 01387 242500
E-mail: info@dghp.org.uk

The full report is on our website at. www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk. A Summary can also be made available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages. For information please contact Janette Campbell on 0131 479 5163 or email janette.campbell@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk.

اپنی کمیونٹی میں بولی جانے والی زبان میں اس دستاویز کے ترجمے کے بارے میں معلومات کیلئے برائے مہربانی
جینیٹ کیمل Janette Campbell کو 0131 479 5162 پر فون کریں یا اس پتے پر ای میل کریں

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如果索取這文件的翻譯版本，請致電 Janette Campbell
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আপনার সম্প্রদায়ের ভাষায় এই দলিলপত্রের অনুবাদের জন্য জ্যানিট ক্যাম্পবেল-কে 0131 479 5162 নম্বরে
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করবেন।

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