

Inspection report

Thomas Chalmers Housing Association

June 2005

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Glossary

Thomas Chalmers Housing Association Inspection 2005 Summary

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 Thomas Chalmers Housing Association took place in December 2004.

Inspection Findings

Thomas Chalmers Housing Association is based in the west end of Glasgow. It provides sheltered and care housing to older people in a complex containing 37 flats. The Association was first registered in 1984 and it employs an agent, Whiteinch and Scotstoun Housing Association, to manage some of its services.

The Association achieves generally good levels of satisfaction with its services and works hard to ensure that its tenants are provided with secure, comfortable homes. The Management Committee is well informed and has worked to create a positive relationship with Whiteinch and Scotstoun. However, it is vulnerable to risk and weak at ensuring representation on the committee from tenants and the wider community.

The Association has not fully recognised that the Christian ethos behind its establishment, and of many of the Committee members, may not be reflected amongst its tenants and the wider secular community. It is not always achieving a clear separation between Committee members' individual interests and the interests of the Association.

The most significant challenge facing Thomas Chalmers arises from the unexpected major structural repairs potentially required to the complex. The Association has a decreasing surplus for 2005 and will not be able to afford the repairs without additional funding. This affects the medium term financial viability of Thomas Chalmers and means the Association must give careful consideration to its future direction. It is acting to address the risks this brings and must ensure that the recommendations from its business review are fully considered, agreed with tenants and implemented.

Overall, Thomas Chalmers has some strengths but with many areas where improvement is required.

Key strengths in Thomas Chalmers' Services:

- It provides a secure and comfortable place for older people to live;
- It works to sustain tenancies by giving all tenants a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) and providing good information and support;
- It provides good opportunities for tenants to feedback their views and the Association is mainly responsive to tenants' priorities.

Key areas for improvement in Thomas Chalmers' Services:

- The management, monitoring and reporting of lettings to demonstrate that reasonable preference is given to those in priority need;
- Meeting its homelessness responsibilities;
- Consulting, monitoring and reporting on the outcomes for new housing management policies;
- Promotion of the Association to housing applications from all sections of the community, including Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, and;
- Compliance with legislation on the Right to Repair.

Next steps

Thomas Chalmers should respond to our findings with an improvement plan, within 8 weeks of the publication of this report.

How to get more information and contact details

If you would like to see Thomas Chalmers' improvement plan you should contact:

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The full report is on our website at <http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk> .
This 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.

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 inspectors:

- spoke to tenants, staff and members of the governing body;
- 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.

The inspection team

1.4 The lead inspector was Dave Le Sage (Associate Inspector) supported by Jill Anderson (Financial Analyst). We were on site on 20th December 2005. We would like to thank everyone involved in the inspection, particularly the governing body members, staff of Whiteinch and Scotstoun HA and tenants for their time and co-operation.

Responding to this inspection

1.5 We expect all inspected bodies to make the summary 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. CONTEXT

About the organisation

- 2.1 Thomas Chalmers Housing Association was established by the Free Church of Scotland in 1970, and registered with the Housing Corporation (now Communities Scotland) in 1984. Following its opening in 1990, management and maintenance services were provided by Whiteinch and Scotstoun Housing Association (WSHA) while all other services were provided from the Free Church's offices in Edinburgh. The organisation decided to base all its activities in the west of Scotland in 1998. It limited its activities and then entered into a full management agreement with WSHA.
- 2.2 The Association has a sheltered complex of 37 tenancies at Westland Court, close to houses owned and managed by WSHA. There is a generally high demand in the west end of Glasgow for conventional, social rented properties of this style.
- 2.3 The agency management agreement provides for administration and financial services. The Association also has a separate agreement with WSHA for development services for a prospective very sheltered housing scheme and day centre in Milngavie. Thomas Chalmers is registered with the Care Commission and directly employs the Warden through the Management Committee.

Key Facts

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
No. of properties owned	40	40	40
No. of members	14	14	16
No. of employees (FTE)	1	1	1
Annual turnover (£'000)	162	170	159 (budget)
Total possible income from rent (£'000)	150	117	159
% of rental income from housing benefit	42.4	54.0	34.4
Average weekly rent	41.51	46.47	48.84
Average rent increase	4.0	3.5	5.1
Total no. of lets	5	2	3

- 2.4 We ask housing associations to identify a peer group of similar organisations for the purposes of benchmarking and comparing performance. Thomas Chalmers considers the most suitable peer group to be those associations who operate in urban areas and have less than 250 houses. This is the peer group we use to compare the Association's performance in this report.

3. How good are the services?

Housing Management

Access

Social landlords should provide open, fair and equal access to their housing lists and should work with partners to simplify and maximise access to housing.

- 3.1 Thomas Chalmers has a generally open access housing list but could improve how it advertises the availability of its properties. It has not developed good links with referral agencies or with prospective client groups. While the organisation has a low availability of lets and relatively large numbers currently on the waiting list, Thomas Chalmers is not as well known as other local housing organisations.
- 3.2 During 2003/04 the Association received no homeless referrals from the local authority under section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. While the Association has entered into a homelessness protocol with Glasgow City Council, it is not listed with reference to referrals in a recent Council report. The Association should ensure it is known to the Council as other sheltered housing complexes in the west end of Glasgow are receiving referrals.
- 3.3 While the Association monitors the ethnic origin and levels of disability of applicants, there are no applicants on the housing list from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and neither are there any current tenants from such communities. The Association has not promoted its services within BME communities to try to redress this imbalance. The approach to meeting the needs of disabled and elderly people is well developed but providing access to all its potential client groups and their particular needs is poor. This is not consistent with its equal opportunities policy, which aims to promote equality and diversity more comprehensively.
- 3.4 The Association takes 45 working days on average to process an application for housing. Though the applicant is informed of the likelihood of their case being successful during this period, this timescale could be improved.

Meeting need and maximising choice

Social landlords should meet housing need through lettings and should maximise choice for applicants.

- 3.5 Thomas Chalmers cannot demonstrate whether it is meeting the requirement to give reasonable preference in letting to those in priority need. The lettings policy is based upon meeting greatest housing need,

and the points system for prioritising applicants is focused on current housing conditions, social and health issues. However, some recent lets have shown significant differences in the relative circumstances of the successful applicants. There is also a noticeable clustering of applicants around the same points totals, indicating that there are insufficient criteria to differentiate cases and ensure that those in most need are recognised and prioritised. These factors indicate a need to review the criteria for the award of points.

- 3.6 There is no reporting of the profile of applicants successfully housed, so that the committee can monitor whether the policy is achieving its aims to house those in greatest need. This would also be useful feedback on the changing demographic balances within the complex and an input to policy review.
- 3.7 Thomas Chalmers offers some choice to applicants, for example a refusal of a particular house is not penalised with a withdrawal of future offers. We recognise that, with the extremely low numbers of annual re-lets, choice is limited by actual availability.

Sustaining tenancies and preventing homelessness

Social landlords should maximise security of tenure for all residents of their accommodation, and should work to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness through their delivery of housing management services.

- 3.8 The Association has worked well to sign up all its tenants to the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, within the statutory time period.
- 3.9 Thomas Chalmers provides good quality information and moving-in support to tenants. We found that a thorough explanation of rent and service charges and of the eligibility for housing benefit and supporting people grant is offered to prospective tenants before they sign the tenancy agreement. However, there is some lack of awareness amongst current tenants of the welfare benefits advice available

Quality of neighbourhoods

Social landlords should deliver services to ensure that neighbourhoods are attractive, well-maintained and safe places to live. They should deal appropriately with antisocial behaviour.

- 3.10 Thomas Chalmers maintains an attractive building and gives considerable attention to the layout and landscaping of the gardens. This resource is well used by residents, for many of whom a safe and welcoming environment is crucial. The service charge reflects this level of expenditure.

3.11 The latest tenant Satisfaction Survey was reported in January 2002 and 98% of respondents indicated that their neighbourhood was good or very good.

Property Maintenance

Access to the repairs service

Social landlords should have arrangements in place that make it easy for tenants to report repairs and have them carried out.

3.12 Tenants report repairs to the Warden and this system works well.

Speed and quality of response repairs service

Social landlords should set challenging targets for completing repairs, strive to achieve them and ensure repairs are completed to a high quality.

3.13 The Association sets targets for dealing with response repairs which could be more challenging. For example, the national median for routine repairs is 10 working days. Its 24 hour target for emergency repairs is limited by its monitoring system and it does strive to match the national median of 6 hours. The table below summarises the Association's performance against these targets over the last three years.

	Target response time	Thomas Chalmers			National median 2003/04	Peer average 2003/04
		2001/02	2002/03	2003/04		
Emergency Repairs	24 hours	100%	100%	100%	99.2%	97.4%
Urgent Repairs	3 working days	100%	98%	98%	96.0%	94.2%
Routine Repairs	15 working days	98%	99%	96%	95.7%	90.7%

3.14 The Association's reported performance in completing repairs against its target timescales is very good, though it has decreased overall since 2001/02. Around 96% of respondents to the most recent survey were satisfied with the quality of the repair service.

3.15 Pre and post inspections are important tools for ensuring repairs are targeted accurately and carried out to a high standard. All re-lets are pre and post inspected, as are all adaptations. There is no pre and post inspection policy but maintenance staff from WSHA provide an effective system of checks.

- 3.16 Thomas Chalmers does not operate a Right to Repair scheme that fully complies with its statutory duties. While repairs are completed within the statutory timescales, there are gaps in information to tenants and communication with contractors could be improved.

Physical quality of houses

Social landlords should have good information about the condition of their houses and should deliver effective maintenance programmes that take account of housing quality and home safety needs.

- 3.17 Scottish Ministers have set a target that all social landlords' houses should meet the new Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015. Landlords are required to prepare a plan showing how they will achieve this, by April 2005. Thomas Chalmers is aware that the properties in the complex will not meet the SHQS, unless possible structural failings and necessary stonework repairs are dealt with. This situation has highlighted the inadequacy of reserves for such a contingency and triggered the instruction of a review and options appraisal by the Association's auditors. Glasgow City Council has given an in principle approval for a repairs grant of £100,000 in 2005/06 and £200,000 in 2006/07. The Association has not yet started work to assess if it will meet other new standards, such as for insulation.
- 3.18 The Association provides planned and cyclical maintenance. It uses a recently updated life-cycle costing plan to inform its budgeting for future cyclical and planned expenditure. Although the financial reserves prudently built up by the Association were planned to be adequate for future maintenance, the uncertainties around funding for the unexpected works may mean that existing plans for future planned and cyclical repairs cannot be completed on time.
- 3.19 Also, the 15 year old complex was designed with service layouts, for elements like heating, which limit access for essential maintenance. As a result, some cyclical maintenance may need to be completed earlier than expected. This should be factored into the long-term financial projections.
- 3.20 We found that the Association gives a high priority to home safety as some repairs have been completed in advance of the planned programme to ensure the safety of residents. Performance is excellent in ensuring gas safety inspections are carried out within the 12 month statutory timescale. The lifts are also well maintained and an asbestos survey has been carried out, in June 2002. This indicated a minimal incidence of asbestos and contains a plan to minimise and manage the effects of any disruption to asbestos in the Association's buildings.

- 3.21 Thomas Chalmers re-lets its houses in good condition and is also very good at involving tenants in the installation of adaptations. It uses allocated funds for adaptations to the full and its agents are pro-active in seeking funds from the local authority.

Responsiveness to tenants

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.

- 3.22 We found decisions and practices are influenced by tenants' priorities and the mechanisms for tenant feedback are effective. These include a quarterly meeting between the Management Committee and residents, running feedback to the Warden and some satisfaction surveys. Feedback on single issues, for example rent setting, has also been gathered. There has not yet been any action to extend membership to the residents and encourage some to stand for committee membership.
- 3.23 The most recent satisfaction survey shows only one area of dissatisfaction, among several tenants. This relates specifically to the social use of the common room. The response suggests a perception that some activities commonly entertained in sheltered complexes are disallowed. The Office Bearers told us that they have no wish to restrict activities and plan to consult with tenants on future uses for the common room, including for religious observances. However, it is around 3 years since the satisfaction survey reported and the Association has not yet acted on its agent's advice to respond to this feedback. The committee should ensure that updated, detailed, feedback from tenants on these matters is responded to in accordance with its aims to encourage diversity.
- 3.24 While the Association generally deals with complaints appropriately, issues raised by a single tenant as part of the satisfaction survey have also not yet been addressed.

4. Is the service managed for improvement?

Resource management and efficiency

Social Landlords should maximise their income, in a way that is fair to service users, and manage costs effectively.

- 4.1 Thomas Chalmers' average weekly rent for 2003/04, of £48.84, is slightly higher than the local peer group. A full explanation of the rent setting policy is provided to tenants. Rent collection is handled efficiently and sensitively, with year on year arrears figures typically much lower than peer averages. The current high level is due to one case which has recently been resolved.

- 4.2 The Association minimises rent increases in order to keep the complex affordable to those not eligible for full housing benefit. Almost 75% of tenants are in this category. The number of tenants not eligible for full housing benefit is higher than the peer average of 63%.
- 4.3 Service charges are high and heavily influenced by the annual expenditure on common parts. The past year has seen a substantial increase in expenditure. Some limited economies are achieved by tendering with the agents for adaptations and some consultancy items. Joint tendering in partnership with other appropriate associations, for works such as lift maintenance and annual inspections, might assist in achieving some further economies of scale. The Association does not benchmark service charges and this would be useful, given the current high level at which they are set.
- 4.4 The Association has improved how quickly it re-lets its houses in 2004/05, from an average re-let time of two or three times that of its peer group average. There is a low turn-over of properties and rent lost during the re-let period now compares well with the peer average.
- 4.5 The remit to review the agent's performance has been delegated to a committee sub group while the Association is concentrating on reviewing options for its long term future. While the management arrangement offers good value, the agency agreement has been renewed for a further "cover year" without a review. This was agreed because the Association expects to make an early decision on its future direction but it will have to be reviewed if it opts to remain independent.

	2002/03	2003/04		National average
	TCHA	TCHA	Peer average	
Cost of housing management services per unit	579	629	601	560
Reactive maintenance costs per unit	710	418	249	299
Planned maintenance costs per unit	79	400	388	447

- 4.6 As indicated in the table above, reactive repairs, including void repairs, vary substantially from year to year. The life cycle maintenance programme for a small stock level causes annual spending to vary markedly.
- 4.7 Maintenance is procured both on a facilities management basis, with annual tendering or a three-year partnering contract, and on an individual repair works basis. We found that the Association has a good spread of

contractors and reasonable charging rates though it has not yet considered joint procurement.

Performance management

Social landlords should have clear objectives, standards and targets for services, should monitor achievement of these, and should work to continuously improve services.

- 4.8 The Association recently undertook a full-scale business review to examine short and medium term viability. This has been a direct response to the recent discovery of potentially significant structural failings in the complex. This study has taken the place of a management plan for 2004/05 and is being used to determine the strategic direction for the Association. A partnership sub group has also been established to explore the available options, including a possible merger with a partner organisation. The Association plans to set clear objectives and a timetable for action, to bring this work to an early conclusion.
- 4.9 Thomas Chalmers generally monitors and reports service performance well. It has sub groups to monitor performance although it has temporarily suspended some the policy and performance groups to focus its resources on its business review plans.
- 4.10 The Association has recently introduced new policies. However, a decision to give priority to complying with Care Commission and supporting people grant requirements has meant that the outputs of these have not yet been measured or reported.
- 4.11 The Association has a good awareness of the requirements of these new care and funding regimes. They will have a particular bearing on the staffing cover at the complex and the Staffing Matters working party works well to consider the implications.

5. Governance and Financial Management

Leadership and Governance

A clear vision or purpose and an inclusive, well informed planning process are key to effectively delivering the services that people want

- 5.1 The Association is currently reviewing the future direction of the organisation, using the full scale business review commissioned from its auditors. This is of fundamental importance and has replaced more routine planning until it is concluded. The Committee recognises that resolving the risks in relation to short and medium term viability must

- be given priority at present and we agree that it must give careful consideration to the options available.
- 5.2 The level of involvement, debate and evaluation of complex issues by committee members is excellent and there is a range of appropriate knowledge and skills. There is a positive relationship between the Committee and its agents and a clear division of responsibilities. When there is a range of opinion on issues, there is an inclusive approach to ensuring that all are given consideration.
- 5.3 The information reported to the Committee has concentrated on these broader strategic matters. The decision to seek specialist advice is appropriate and has resulted in detailed information to assist further decision making.
- 5.4 It is positive that there is a specification of the characteristics sought from prospective committee members. The role of Free Church of Scotland members in establishing the Association, and the financial contributions from the Church over the years, are recognised as being crucial to the early viability and success of the organisation. However, the custom and practice of including the prayer of one denomination at the opening and closing of meetings and the leading statement in the desired characteristics of committee members of “church or other community connections”, could act as deterrents to secular members of the wider community. The Association needs to be proactive in avoiding any suggestion of discrimination, in accordance with its equal opportunities policy.
- 5.5 A strong membership and good levels of participation are important ways for RSLs to demonstrate accountability to the people they serve. In practice, Committee membership and Association membership are mutually inclusive, so the effect is that committee composition is by invitation only. This precludes any meaningful electoral process. No tenants have been invited to join the committee to date and none have been encouraged to take out Association membership. The Committee should make this opportunity available, but it is also recognised that effective methods are used to collect and respond to tenants views.

Ethical Standards

Staff and governing body members should promote values that underpin good governance and should act with honesty and integrity, focusing on the best interests of the organisation and its service users.

- 5.6 Committee members are clearly committed to acting with honesty and integrity. Because of the committee composition, there is little likelihood of having to manage individual benefits received in accordance with

Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. However, clear arrangements for managing such issues, should they arise, should be put in place.

- 5.7 Conflicts of interest are more likely to arise, such as for those members who also hold membership of an organisation which offers a financial donation. All members should identify their interests in a Register for that purpose and exclude themselves from decisions in which they have a conflict or duality of interest. Management of any such conflicts is particularly necessary when, as during the inspection, donations have been offered with inappropriate conditions attached to their use.

Managing Risk

Social landlords should be aware of all the risks they face and put in place robust arrangements to minimise these risks and to deal with them if they do occur.

- 5.8 The Association recognises that it is facing serious risks to the long term sustainability of the organisation as an independent body. It did not have a risk management process in place to help it anticipate and manage these risks before they materialised, but it has now acted quickly and appropriately to protect the interests of its tenants. This is the most significant issue currently facing the Association.
- 5.9 The Association has acted properly in undertaking a rigorous re-examination of its financial position in response to the risks highlighted by the potential structural repairs at Westland Court. It is considering how to fund these and whether to proceed with a merger or partnership with a specialist housing association for the elderly. Although the review has been triggered by this specific set of circumstances, the relative isolation of the organisation, and its inability to achieve any meaningful efficiencies of scale, are already exposing its tenants and the services they receive to increased risks which need to be well managed.
- 5.10 An example is the warden service, currently running substantially over budget due to sickness leave and agency cover. There is also a demand for further weekend and out of hours cover, by a personal service. The profile of tenants does not indicate a ready means of financing such a service. There is need for a constant balance between the Association's aim to restrict rent increases and ensure affordability, and the level of service required by elderly residents.
- 5.11 The Association recognises that it cannot provide these enhanced services from its own resources. It should take account of how these can best be provided for in its appraisal and risk assessment of future options.

Financial Viability and Management

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

- 5.12 Thomas Chalmers has areas of weakness and has concerns about its medium term viability, which are being discussed with the regulator. The details of the main issues with an impact on viability have been highlighted elsewhere in this report. The business review and options appraisal has resulted in a strategy to try to source additional funding and seek another organisation for a potential partnership. Without additional funding the organisation will not be able to carry out maintenance work possibly required to its properties and remain viable in the medium term.
- 5.13 The financial results for the 3 years to 31st March 2004 show increasing turnover and the generation of surpluses. However, the budget for 2005 shows a decrease in turnover and, as a result, decreases in surpluses. This surplus figure is now on a downward trend and cannot accommodate a large, unexpected major repair, nor give cushion to the high risk development phase which the Association has entered into. If the donation offered by the Free Church and the repairs grant from the Council can be accessed, these will make a positive difference to the budgeted performance in 2004/05.

Financial performance	£000's 2000/01 (Actual)	£000's 2001/02 (Actual)	£000's 2002/03 (Actual)	£000's 2003/04 (Actual)	£000's 2004/05 Budget
Turnover	158.9	159.0	161.9	170.4	159.0
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	38.4	32.4	29.5	30.9	18.9
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	42.8	35.9	31.0	31.6	15.5

- 5.15 Thomas Chalmers has a good financial management framework and regular reports are made to the committee on progress against the budget.

6. Areas for Improvement Action

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

Across all of its areas of activity, Thomas Chalmers should;

- Develop an equal opportunities action plan to complement the current policy, and;
- Improve the quality of monitoring and reporting on new policy outcomes.

6.2 In housing management, Thomas Chalmers should:

- Demonstrate transparency in the allocation of houses in line with its policy;
- Develop better links with referral agencies and prospective client groups to encourage wider access to its housing;
- Benchmark its service charge levels with similar organisations to see if efficiencies can be achieved;
- Ensure that it is available to receive homeless referrals from Glasgow City Council, and;
- Improve the speed of processing applications for housing.

6.3 In property maintenance, Thomas Chalmers should:

- Review how it procures maintenance services and consider how best it can benefit from joint procurement practices, and;
- Ensure it complies fully with the Right to Repair.

6.4 In Governance and financial management, Thomas Chalmers should:

- Ensure that the recommendations from the Business Review are fully considered, that tenants are consulted and that the outcomes are implemented quickly;
- Actively encourage tenants to become committee members;
- Develop a clear policy on the management of benefits to staff and committee members, and;
- Develop a register of interests for staff and committee members;

7. Next steps

- 7.1 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 require Thomas Chalmers to submit an improvement plan for agreement with us within 8 weeks of the publication of this report.
- 7.2 If you would like to see Thomas Chalmers' improvement plan you should contact:

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The full report is on our website at <http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk> .
This 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:
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Glossary

Annual Statistical and Performance 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.
Average	The arithmetic mean – the sum of all the values divided by the number of values.
Benchmarking	A process used by organisations to systematically compare service processes and performance to identify best practice.
Care Commission	The regulatory body for care services and housing support. Landlords who provide these extra services are subject to regular inspections in addition to those from Communities Scotland.
Cyclical maintenance	Planned programme of work to deal with predictable deterioration of building components, for example regular painting of window frames.
Housing list	A list of applicants for housing which is used by the RSL to allocate its housing stock.
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.
National median	The central value of the ordered performance of all Scottish RSLs.

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.
Planned maintenance	The planned renewal or maintenance of key property components.
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.
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.
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.
Technical Arrears	Rent arrears which are will be paid by housing benefit, to which the tenant is entitled.

Regulation & Inspection

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