

How have we performed?

A summary of our 2011 annual report to residents



“ We would like to welcome you to the first edition of this new summary version of the residents annual report.

The past year has seen a lot of changes in the social housing sector and at DCH. Some staff have changed jobs meaning that they have had to adjust to new roles and locations whilst still giving us a high quality service.

Supporting people funding cuts have meant a change of support provision for some residents and a new way of working for the Independent Futures team.

However, we are optimistic that these changes are for the better in the long run with the ultimate aim of providing a financially viable, well-managed, and customer-focused housing association that caters for the needs of the residents.

So, without further delay, we would like you have a look at how DCH has met the Tenant Services Authority's (TSA) standards over the last year and set out how they aim to improve for the future where necessary.”

If you would like to read the full report or make any comments please email the communications team on news@dchgroup.com, or write or phone using the contact information on the back page.

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Les Mazurek and Carol Bosworth,
resident members of the DCH board

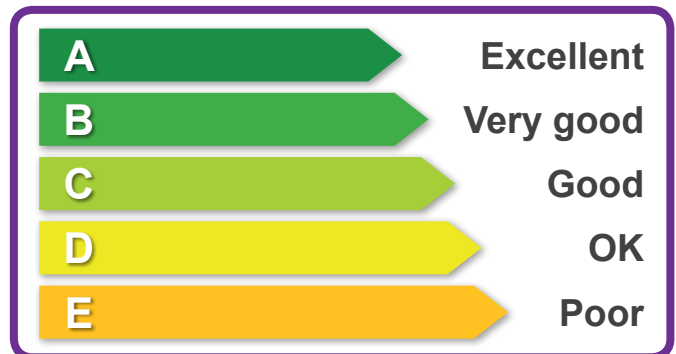
➔ About this summary

This summary explains how we are performing and how you can find out more.

We listened carefully to your feedback on our report last year. Some felt the report was too long, so this year we have produced a full report and a much shorter summary of our achievements, with more performance information, which many people said they would like.

This year Devon & Cornwall Housing Association (DCHA) amalgamated with Devon & Cornwall Housing Trust (DCHT), forming the new Devon & Cornwall Housing group (DCH). Most of our housing services are now delivered through our subsidiaries Penwith Housing Association (PHA) in Cornwall and Tor Homes in Devon. This has meant that we have been working even more closely as a group and we've seen new developments such as the group-wide local service standards.

To make this summary easy to read we have used an efficiency rating chart for each section of our standards, which shows how we have assessed our work.



We asked a sample of involved residents whether they agreed with this assessment, and we took their views into account.

➔ Achieving national and local standards

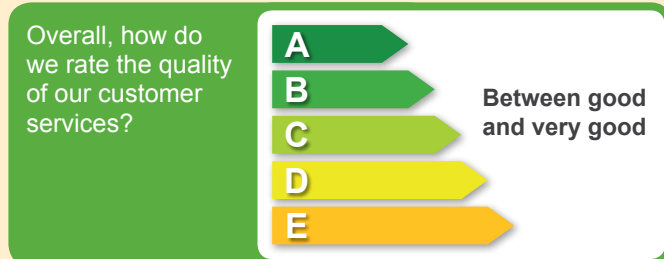
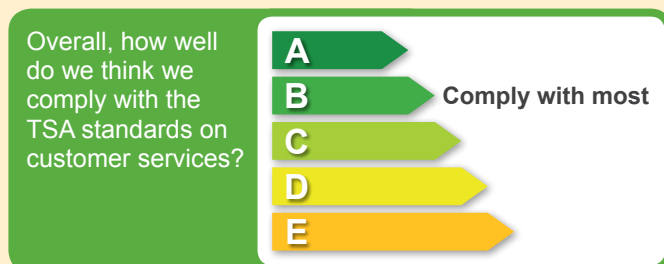
Customer services

How have we performed against our customer services targets?

Overall group resident satisfaction has increased slightly from 86.1% last year to 86.7% this year.

A housing association performing at the national average would have satisfaction of 83.2%. Our performance of 86.7% is very close to our target of being in the top quarter of housing associations (87.4%), which is encouraging.

How do we rate our work on customer services?



What improvements are we planning for the next 12 months?

Information and communication

This year we have published our new group-wide service standards, improved the style of our resident magazine Open Door across the group, produced group-wide customer-facing leaflets and amalgamated the DCHT and DCHA websites into one DCH website.

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- ➔ introducing a new single telephone number for tenants in Devon
- ➔ looking at whether we can cost-effectively improve our repairs appointment systems
- ➔ updating our resident handbooks and websites and sending all residents a summary of this report.

Customer care

PHA and Tor Homes each have strong and effective customer care policies in place. All staff receive training on customer care. We survey customers to find out satisfaction levels in key service areas, and we back this up with external independent surveys.

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- ➔ more structured mystery shopping to test our performance against a number of our local offer standards
- ➔ implementing new software to monitor performance on responding to letters, emails and texts within our agreed standards
- ➔ ensuring that all staff wear name badges consistently
- ➔ improving our local service standards in consultation with tenants.

Tailoring services to customer needs

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- ➔ **analysing customer information and offering tailored services to particular groups**
- ➔ **providing help for older or disabled people by doing additional repairs, improving our adaptations services and publicising our services on adapting properties**
- ➔ **more training for staff on equality and diversity**
- ➔ **using new technology to help people use our services in new ways, like texting, and more internet services.**

Responding to complaints effectively

We have agreed a group-wide complaints policy. This includes making sure that we learn from complaints, to minimise the risk of repeating the same mistake twice.

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- ➔ **improving how we monitor and report on our complaints performance.**

Equality and diversity

We have personal information in place for the vast majority of our residents and we are working to increase this. We are analysing the information to see how our services might affect people differently.

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- ➔ **working to meet the requirements of the new Equalities Act**
- ➔ **improving the way we analyse satisfaction surveys**
- ➔ **developing performance measures on how we can better assess compliance**
- ➔ **offering tailored services to particular groups and seeing what enhanced services we might be able to offer to older tenants**
- ➔ **more training for staff on equality and diversity.**

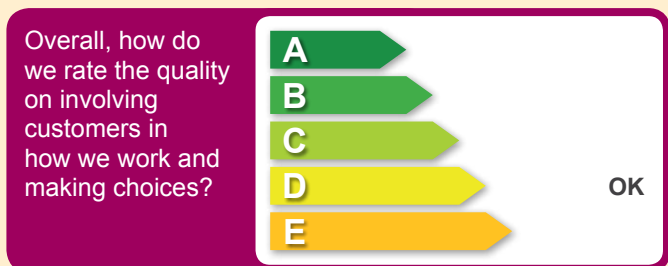
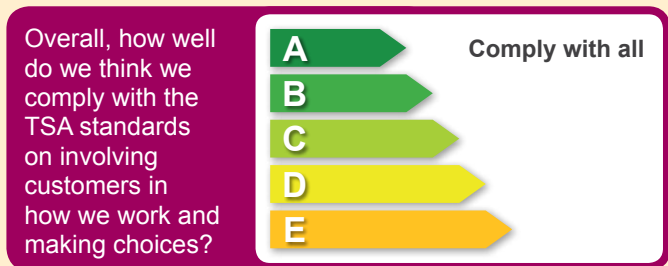
➔ Involving customers in how we work and making choices

Resident satisfaction with views taken into account has not changed, with satisfaction remaining at 62.8%. Performance varies across the group, with some areas having improved during the year. Overall, this is disappointing, and we will be keeping performance under careful review during the year. ServiceWatch, the new group scrutiny panel, is also likely to be looking closely at this area of work.

A housing association performing at the national average would have 64.1% satisfaction with views taken into account. To achieve our target of being in the top quarter of housing associations, we would need to achieve performance of 70%.

Satisfaction with keeping tenants informed has remained unchanged at 83.5%.

How do we rate our work on involving customers in how we work and making choices?



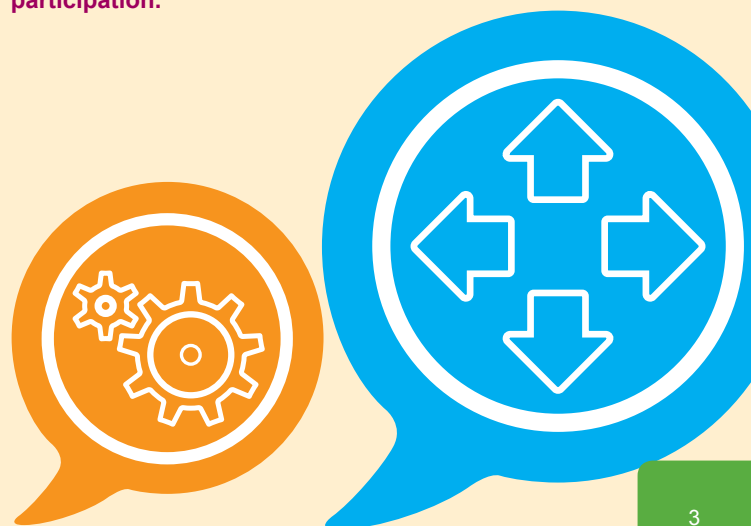
What improvements are we planning for the next 12 months?

PHA and Tor Homes each have comprehensive networks for resident involvement at all levels of our work. This includes mystery shoppers, focus groups, service improvement panels, and resident board and committee membership.

We currently have local scrutiny processes in place through the Tor Homes scrutiny forum, and the PHA Doing Things Better group. Both of these bodies are to be reformed as part of work on the new scrutiny process. We have agreed with residents on our planning group to call the new framework 'ServiceWatch'.

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- ➔ **implementing ServiceWatch, the group-wide customer scrutiny panel**
- ➔ **developing a group-wide resident involvement strategy supporting our customer services**
- ➔ **building an accurate database of active residents, their areas of interest and preferred methods of participation.**





➔ Repairs, maintenance and improvements

What improvements are we planning for the next 12 months?

PHA and Tor Homes each have cost-effective repairs and maintenance services that respond to needs and offer choices. Group-wide initiatives include:

- ➔ all our services being based around a right-first-time approach
- ➔ individual choices being offered to residents for major works
- ➔ resident involvement in selecting components, supplier agreements and contractor selection
- ➔ achieving good-practice standards of the balance between planned and responsive maintenance.

During the year we have joined a number of smaller maintenance contracts together to form larger ones. This has improved value-for-money and we have been able to use this to fund further improvements.

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- ➔ extending appointment times to better suit customer circumstances
- ➔ developing our own DCH group local standard that exceeds Decent Homes requirements
- ➔ enhancing our information on the condition of our homes
- ➔ ensuring our resident handbooks are useful and up-to-date
- ➔ expanding the Tor Homes direct maintenance team across our area of work
- ➔ developing a group-wide strategy for maintaining and improving our properties.

How have we performed against our targets on repairs, maintenance and improvements?

Our performance on resident satisfaction with repairs has improved slightly, from 82.1% to 82.5%.

A housing association performing at the national average for resident satisfaction with repairs would be achieving 78.4%. Our performance of 82.5% is very close to our target of being in the top quarter of housing associations (83.4%), which is encouraging.

There is information on our repair response times in the full version of this report.

How do we rate our work on repairs, maintenance and improvements?

Overall, how well do we think we comply with the TSA standards on repairs, maintenance and improvements?

A	Comply with most
B	
C	
D	
E	

Overall, how do we rate the quality of our work on repairs, maintenance and improvements?

A	Between good and very good
B	
C	
D	
E	

Living in your home

What improvements are we planning for the next 12 months?

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- reviewing and improving our approach to tackling anti-social behaviour
- improving how we keep residents informed of developments in anti-social behaviour cases
- always offering you a choice of male or female members of staff
- developing a stronger victim and witness support policy

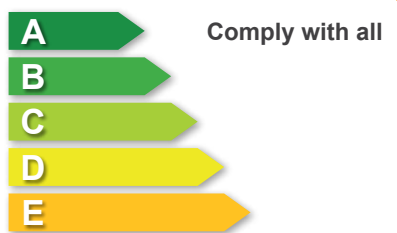
How have we performed against our targets on addressing anti-social behaviour?

Our performance on satisfaction with how reports of anti-social behaviour were dealt with has improved from 41.6% to 49.8% this year. There are no national comparisons available for this figure.

Less anti-social behaviour cases are being reported across the group this year. Figures from our independent annual Status survey indicate that 77% of residents experience anti-social behaviour seldom, rarely or never.

How do we rate our work on addressing anti-social behaviour?

Overall, how well do we think we comply with the TSA standards on anti-social behaviour?



Overall, how do we rate the quality of our work on anti-social behaviour?



Allocating homes

What improvements are we planning for the next 12 months?

This year we have achieved significant improvements in how quickly we let properties, saving over £150,000 across PHA and Tor Homes.

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- developing new fixed-term tenancies of up to seven years. These proposals only affect new lettings – existing tenancies are not affected.
- improving our lettings process to reduce the time that properties are empty between lettings
- considering incentives to encourage residents to move to smaller properties where appropriate
- reviewing the incentives we use to make sure that properties are left in good condition when residents move out
- publishing a policy addressing how we identify and deal with unauthorised occupation of our properties.

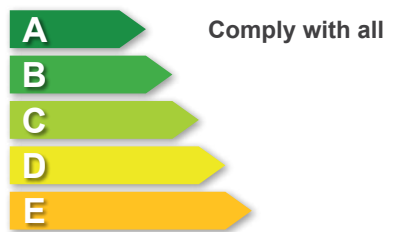
How have we performed against our targets on allocating homes?

We are letting our properties, on average, over 4 days quicker than a year ago, and we are losing less rent due to empty homes since April 2011 compared to the same three months last year.

A housing association performing at the national average would be letting properties in an average of 29.8 days. To achieve our target of being in the top quarter of housing associations, we would need to achieve performance of 23 days, and further improvement is therefore required in this area.

How do we rate our work on allocations and tenure?

Overall, how well do we think we comply with the TSA standards on allocating homes?



Overall, how do we rate the quality of our work on allocating homes?



➔ Paying your rent

What improvements are we planning for the next 12 months?

For existing properties, we follow the government's rent setting formula (based on house values and local average incomes), and we report on this to our boards each year.

From later this year, newly developed properties and some relet properties will be charged a proportion of the market rent, as part of the government's new affordable rent product. The PHA and Tor Homes boards are agreeing how this will work in practice. It is likely that the relet properties with higher rents will be newer homes, which are more cost-efficient for tenants in terms of energy cost. This will be fairer, with residents paying a lower rent in older properties where energy costs are generally higher. These proposals only affect new lettings – existing tenancies are not affected.

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- ➔ **implementing the revised rent frameworks for newly built and relet properties**
- ➔ **reviewing service charge administration across the group.**



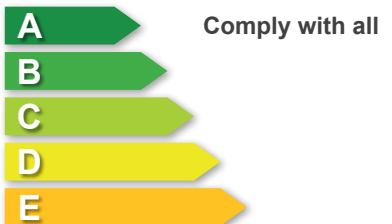
How have we performed on collecting rents?

Over the year our rent arrears have improved from 4.16% to 3.95%.

A housing association performing at the national average would have rent arrears of 3.9%. To achieve our target of being in the top quarter of housing associations, we would need to achieve performance of 2.7%, and further improvement is therefore required in this area.

How do we rate our work on rents?

Overall, how well do we think we comply with the TSA standards on rents?



Overall, how do we rate the quality of our work on rents?



➔ Estate and neighbourhood services

What improvements are we planning for the next 12 months?

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- ➔ **improving our engagement with agencies such as the police**
- ➔ **developing fire safety plans to issue to residents**
- ➔ **developing a consistent group approach on how we carry out neighbourhood inspections with residents**
- ➔ **responding to reports of abandoned vehicles within one day**
- ➔ **making sure we display the cleaning timetable in the lobby of all blocks of flats.**

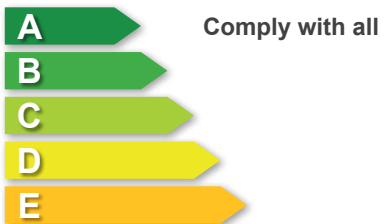
How have we performed on estate and neighbourhood services?

Our performance on resident satisfaction with their neighbourhoods has improved from 81.2% to 84.9% this year.

A housing association performing at the national average for resident satisfaction with neighbourhoods would be achieving 82.1%. Our performance of 84.9% is very close to our target of being in the top quarter of housing associations (85.5%), which is encouraging.

How do we rate our work on estate and neighbourhood services?

Overall, how well do we think we comply with the TSA standards on neighbourhood services?



Overall, how do we rate the quality of our neighbourhood services?



Value for money

Value-for-money achievements this year have included:

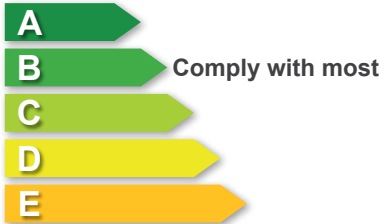
- ➔ simplifying our governance structure through amalgamating DCHA and DCHT and reducing the number of committees within the group
- ➔ savings of over £150,000 from letting properties quicker
- ➔ increased collaborative working between staff in all our subsidiaries
- ➔ improving the Open Door resident magazines by bringing the Tor and PHA editions together into a consistent design, sharing content and saving money
- ➔ increased group procurement of goods and services
- ➔ savings in producing this summary annual report to residents.

Our improvement plans to be delivered this year include:

- ➔ continuing stage two of our amalgamation process
- ➔ continuing resident consultation as we fully implement and improve our group-wide service standards
- ➔ improving feedback to residents on our planning and prioritising
- ➔ a review of service charge processes across PHA and Tor Homes.

How do we rate our work on value for money?

Overall, how well do we think we comply with the TSA standards on value for money?



Overall, how do we rate the quality of work on value for money?



We have considered making a value-for-money assessment here, based on our costs and customer satisfaction levels, comparing them with other similar organisations. We asked a sample of involved residents what they thought, and their views ranged from OK to excellent.

How we have checked our performance

How residents have been involved in scrutinising performance:

- ➔ each area of the national standards has been checked against resident satisfaction, including both our in-house surveys and independent external assessments
- ➔ we've taken account of other sources of customer comments such as mystery shopping, resident audit, service improvement panels and learning from complaints
- ➔ a group of involved residents compared our assessment to their personal experiences of the service delivery they received
- ➔ throughout the full report we have compared our performance to other housing providers.

Our proposals on the new resident scrutiny process, set out earlier in this report, will further enhance how performance is being scrutinised in future.

For information on where we have used external checks, and comparisons with other organisations please see the full report at www.dchgroup.com, or phone using the contact information on the back page.

Next year, this annual performance report will also include:

- ➔ improved performance information against all sections of our service standards
- ➔ a separate report from the new group-wide scrutiny panel, ServiceWatch, reporting on their work so far.

Please let us know if there is any other information you would like to see next year, and if you would like to take part in assessing our performance or producing the report.

We have involved residents in producing the full report and assessing our performance, please let us know if you would like more information.



Contact information



Our group head office is at:

- Paris Street, Exeter EX1 2JZ
- Tel: 0300 123 8080



- 67 Morrab Road, Penzance TR18 2QJ
- Tel: 0300 303 8030
- Kenwyn Street, Truro TR1 3BA
- Tel: 0300 303 8030

PHA offices and phone lines are open Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm



- Tor House, St Peters Quay, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5SH
- Tel: 0800 316 88 39
- Our Totnes office and phone line is open Monday to Thursday 8am - 5pm and Friday 8am - 4.30pm
- 2 Ker Street, Devonport, Plymouth PL1 4GE
- Tel: 0300 123 8080
- Paris Street, Exeter EX1 2JZ
- Tel: 0300 123 8080

Our Plymouth and Exeter offices and phone lines are open Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm



- 2 Ker Street, Devonport, Plymouth PL1 4GE
- Tel: 01752 275276

www.dchgroup.com

If you would like our residents annual report translated, please call 0300 123 8080

إذا كنت تريد نسخة مترجمة من تقريرنا السنوي، رجاءاً قم بالاتصال بـ 0300 123 8080

نهگهر دهتهوت راپورتی سالانهی دانیشتونای خویمان تهرجومه بکهین به کوردی بو تو نکابه تلهفون بکه به زمازی 0300 123 8080

如果您希望将我们的居民年度报告进行翻译，请拨打 0300 123 8080

Je li chcieliby Pa stwo uzyska tłumaczenie naszego corocznego raportu mieszkóców, prosimy zadzwoni pod numer 0300 123 8080

Caso pretenda obter a tradução do nosso relatório anual de residentes, ligue para o 0300 123 8080

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