

Autumn 2016

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Building new affordable homes

In the last few years, we have built a number of new houses to respond to demand for quality social rent, mid-market rent and shared-equity homes. Through the provision of different types of affordable housing, the council and our partners aim to provide different housing options to meet the differing needs of Renfrewshire residents.

We made a pledge to deliver 1,000 affordable houses for rent and for sale by 2020—and are making great progress towards our target.

We are working in partnership with local housing associations and have a number of successful projects to showcase. For example:

- New developments recently completed by Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association at both Braille Crescent in Renfrew (55 homes) and Shortroods in the north of Paisley (86 homes)
- Two new developments recently completed by the Link Group in the heart of Paisley town centre – the site of the former Arnotts building (31 homes) and affordable homes for older people at Abbey Place (38 homes) and Thrushcraigs (70 homes).

If you want to apply for housing you can contact us on **0300 300 0222**. As well as requesting Council housing, you can also ask to be nominated for housing with housing associations in Renfrewshire.

One to watch: Ferguslie Park regeneration plans

Renfrewshire Council is consulting tenants and residents on a regeneration strategy for Ferguslie Park to identify opportunities for investment and redevelopment.

Renfrewshire Council is committed to the regeneration of Ferguslie Park and is developing exciting proposals for regional sports facilities along with housing investment opportunities.

Johnstone Castle Regeneration: the story so far

2014

March 2014

Board agreed to consult on Johnstone Castle regeneration plans for demolition of 288 properties and to build around 100 new ones

Consultation events with local residents took place on March 2014 and follow-up on April 2014.

- Door to door canvassing took place for the affected residents who did not manage to attend the consultation sessions
- A dedicated housing officer was appointed to respond to enquiries
- Dedicated phone line and email address are available for information

2015

Re-housing starts



Demolition starts

The investment will provide great opportunities for employment and access to sport—raising the profile of Renfrewshire and giving young people training facilities to show their potential.

The council's Development and Housing Services team consulted with residents in the Tannahill area over the summer on plans to link the proposed sports village to a housing regeneration programme.

Thanks to all who took part in that—the participation was overwhelming and we are grateful for your involvement and feedback.

Since then we have visited local residents—both tenants and owners—who didn't manage to attend to explain our plans.

We would stress no final decisions have yet been made in terms of the housing regeneration plans.

The outcome of the consultation with tenants and residence will emerge over the next couple of months and we will keep you updated.

If you want to speak to a member of the regeneration team about how the plans for Ferguslie may affect you, contact the Planning and Housing team on 0141 618 6261 or email jennifer.murdoch@renfrewshire.gov.uk



August 2014

Board considered the consultation feedback and agreed to go ahead with the plans

Re-housing options:

- Permanent move: move away from Johnstone Castle
- Temporary move: Move temporarily to another property during regeneration but willing to return back to Johnstone Castle

September 2014

Advice surgeries took place in Johnstone Castle to inform locals of the board decision and to carry out housing options interviews

87% of residents affected by demolition were in agreement with the plans

73% of residents wanted to remain in Johnstone Castle

April 2015

Project Group Johnstone Castle regeneration started. Meetings every six weeks. If you want to join contact Jennifer.murdoch@renfrewshire.gov.uk or call 0141 618 6261.

December 2015

Drop-in sessions at Johnstone Castle community centre started on Wednesdays and Thursdays

2016

Architects were appointed for the new build

April 2016



Community consultation on new-build proposals

"I wasn't sure before I moved but I've found Johnstone Castle a great place to live. I'm staying elsewhere during the demolition phase but I hope to move back to the area once the new flats are complete."

"I was concerned we would not be involved in the process and would just be told what to do. However, I soon realised the process was a journey between the community and the council and I felt informed every step of the way."

"Communication has been great every step of the way—from the housing and the demolition teams. The move hasn't disrupted our routine"

"I had only been a council tenant for three years having previously owned my own home. My initial concerns about moving into a council property quickly disappeared and I love my flat and local community."

A new Tenants and Residents Association was established in Johnstone Castle in May 2016. If you are interested in becoming a member, come and join us when the next meeting takes place, contact Jennifer.murdoch@renfrewshire.gov.uk or call 0141 618 6261, for more information

2017

New-build construction starts

Scottish Social Housing Charter Report to Tenants 2015–2016

How is Renfrewshire Council performing as a landlord?

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the standards and outcomes all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities.

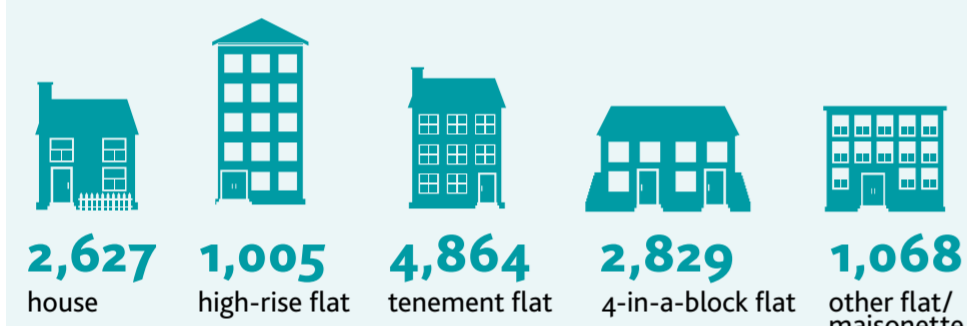
In August 2016 the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) published a report on our performance as a landlord.

It looks at 18 key indicators, such as service satisfaction, repairs performance and rent collection. You can read this online at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk.

To complement that we have produced our third tenants report on the charter where you can see how we are performing on a wide range of measures.

How many houses do we manage?

Renfrewshire Council is landlord to **12,393** properties, made up as follows:



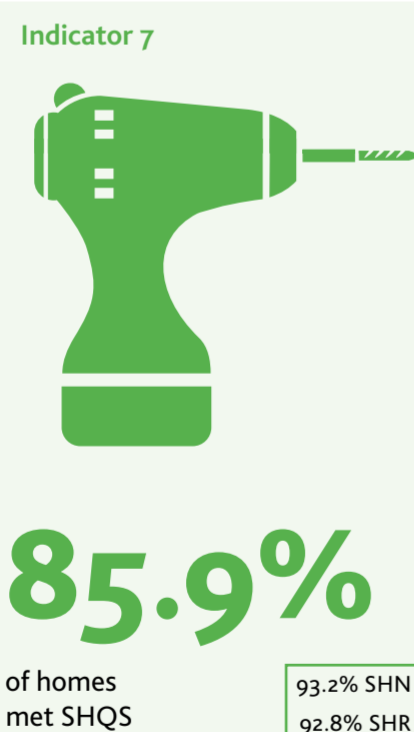
Housing quality

We have continued to increase the number of properties that meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

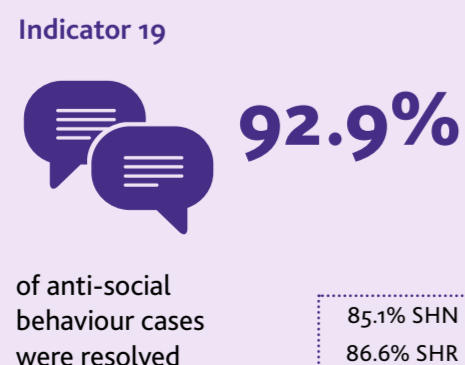
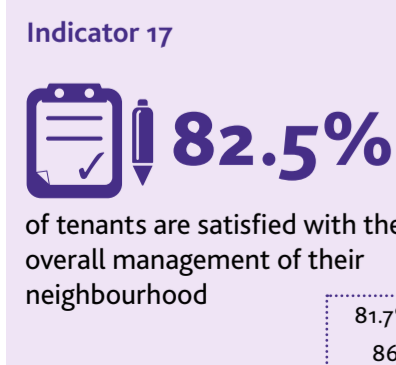
98.5% of properties meet that National Home Energy Rating. Up from last year (97.4%) and better than the national average 96.5%.

Over the year we saw a **12%** (up to 92.3%) point increase of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when they moved in. Better than the national average of 87.7%.

Tenants satisfied with the quality of their home increased from 81.6% to **82.2%**.



Neighbourhood and community

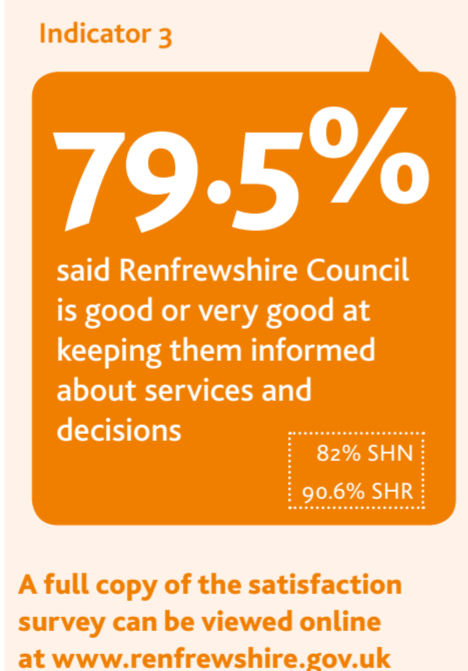
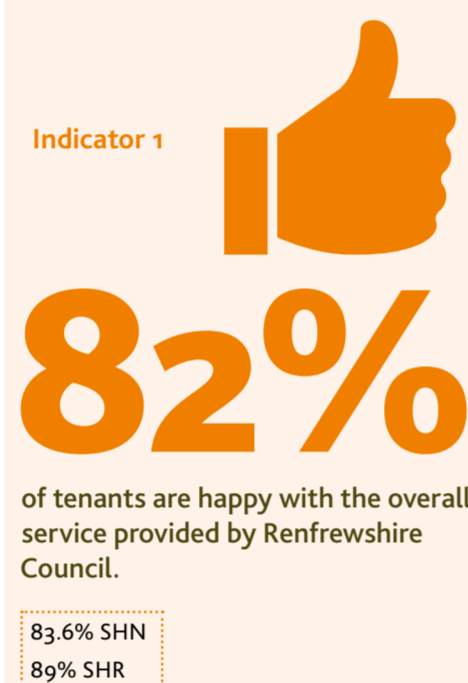


SHN: Scotland's Housing Network, 26 local authority housing services and Glasgow Housing Association

SHR: Scottish Housing Regulator, all RSLs and local authority housing services

Satisfaction

Towards the end of 2015 we carried out our fourth tenant satisfaction survey, which is used to measure some of the charter indicators.



Getting good value for rents

77.2% of tenants told us they felt the rent they pay for the property and services was good value for money.

As with repairs we have improved our performance in managing rent arrears. The amount of money we lose due to voids has also reduced to 1.9%.

House size	Renfrewshire Council	Scottish Average	Difference
1 apartment	£58.65	£65.94	11.1% lower
2 apartment	£66.73	£70.39	5.2% lower
3 apartment	£75.26	£71.55	5.2% higher
4 apartment	£84.26	£77.60	8.6% higher
5 apartment	£90.78	£85.98	5.6% higher

Paying your rent

It is important you pay your rent on time. Your rent pays for the services we provide.

If you are having problems paying your rent, there are several ways we can help. We can:

- Provide advice on the best way to pay your rent, to suit your circumstances
- Refer you to specialist advisors who can assist with a range of services including money advice, employment advice or energy advice to make sure you maximise any income or entitlements due to you.

You can ask for a private interview or home visit.

Call on 0800 085 9126 for more information.



Accessing housing

There is a range of housing options open to people looking for housing in Renfrewshire. Renfrewshire Council offer 'housing options interviews' to people wanting to find out what options are available, affordable and best suit their circumstances.

Our Housing Options team will explain the areas and house types available in Renfrewshire. They will give advice on how to improve the likelihood of getting the house you need in the area you want, including how to apply to Renfrewshire's local and national housing associations or how to access other affordable housing options.

Specialist housing advice is also available for people with a specific housing need. Whether that's a need for wheelchair accessible housing or just some advice on the options available for older people our Housing Options team and Occupational Therapist can help.

Housing options advice is available over the phone or through email for anyone who can't make it into the office for an interview.

How do we manage our lets

10% of all Council houses became available to let during 2015/16, the same percentage as the year before. We remain slightly above the national local authority average of **8%**.

We aim to let houses to people on our waiting list as quickly as possible and last year we reduced the number of days to let available properties from **44 days** during 2014/15 to **42 days** during 2015/16. This improvement brings us almost in line with the national local authority average of **40 days**.

46% of tenancy offers were refused during 2015/16, a marked improvement on the **60%** refused during the previous year and reduces the gap on the national local authority average of **42%** refusals.

Moving into a new home is about more than just the first day you turn the key in the lock. It's important that people can set up their home so they can live in it happily for as long as possible. The standard of a new home is an important factor for all new tenants. During 2015/16, **92%** of new tenants were satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in.

When we carried out our tenant satisfaction survey **64%** of respondents said they didn't require help moving in. However the next three most popular responses were a request for 'assistance with energy suppliers', 'help with benefits' and 'budgeting advice'.

Last year the percentage of people who were still living in their new home 12 months after moving in fell to **85%** from **87%** at 2014/15, this is slightly below the national local authority average of **88%**. The tenant satisfaction survey results will help develop our understanding of how we can improve this.

There are a range of adaptations the Council can carry out to help people with a disability remain in their own home. Last year **96%** of approved applications for medical adaptations were completed during 2015/16 and on average the adaptation was completed in **44 days**. Both of these figures are improvements on the previous year and better than national averages.

Homelessness

We want to help homeless people by giving them prompt and easy access to help and advice. We make every effort to see that they receive suitable, good-quality accommodation and support them in their home.

Last year **832** people presented themselves to the council as homeless which is roughly the same as the previous year. However, we continue to deal with cases in a timely manner, last year we closed cases within 20 weeks on average which is considerably faster than the average for local authorities (33 weeks).

We use a range of housing types for temporary accommodation for people who are homeless but we are pleased to report we do not use bed and breakfast accommodation.

Last year on average the amount of time spent in temporary accommodation was:

- **79** days in local authority accommodation, national average 135 days
 - **39** days in Registered Social Landlord accommodation, national average 212 days
 - **102** days in other accommodation, national average 100 days
- Satisfaction with temporary accommodation has dropped this year from over 90% to **74.5%**. This is below the national average and we will take measures to improve on this over the year.

99.5% of households that required accommodation were made an offer of accommodation.

The refusal rate for temporary accommodation for 2015/16 was **2.1%** against a Scottish average of **7%**.

Indicator 6



84.2%

of tenants are satisfied with the opportunities they have to participate
72.1% SHN
81.3% SHR

Communication

It is important you know what our plans are and how you can respond to them. The percentage of tenants who feel Renfrewshire Council Housing Services is good at keeping them informed has remained fairly stable for the past three years, at **79.5%**.

You can read more about our approach to tenant participation in this edition of Peoples News, But when you are not happy about something, you can complain for us to do something about it.

93.3% of complaints were responded to in full and **44%** responded to within SPSO timescales. We will investigate why our performance has got worse and make improvements.

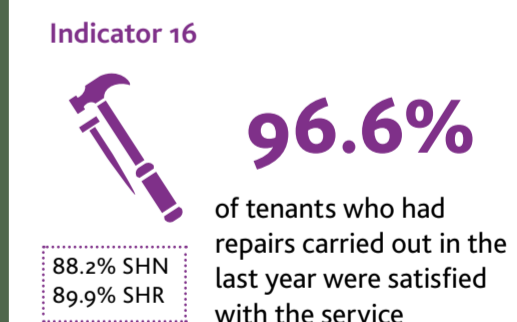
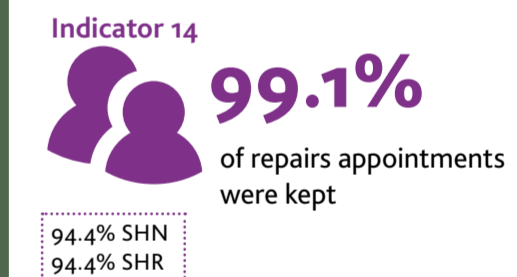
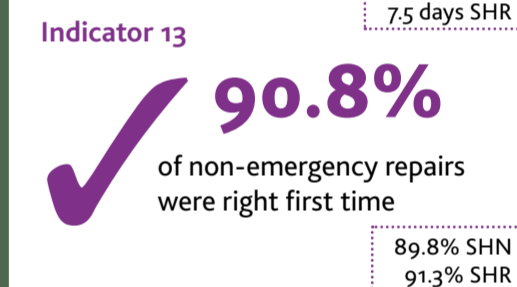
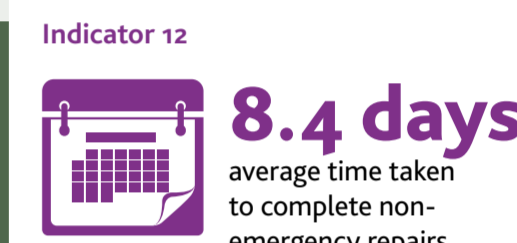
Work has taken place to establish why performance had dropped significantly in 2015/16, where complaints were looked at in detail.

We have provided further guidance for staff about the complaints process and improved our systems in order that complaints can be dealt with more efficiently.

Repairs, maintenance and improvements

- As a landlord, the Council has a legal duty to make sure a gas safety check is carried out in your home each year.
- Our performance for gas-safety certificates slipped slightly but we have improved our processes to make sure we achieve 100%.
- **Please do not ignore gas-safety letters, when you receive one contact us for an appointment.**

We have improved on the following:



Our repairs target times

If your repair is not an emergency we would prefer to carry out repairs at a time at which suits you. You can request an appointment when you order your repair.

Emergency	These will be made safe within 24 hours , where possible we will carry out the full repair.
Urgent	Carried out within five working days of being reported.
Repairs by appointment	Carried out within 15 working days.
Programmed repairs	The length of time to complete these repairs depends on the volume and type of work required. Generally we would hope to complete these within three months .



Gas Safety. It Is Your Duty And Our Responsibility

Gas safety checks are important for your safety and the safety of your neighbours. Do not ignore gas safety letters.

As a landlord, the Council has a legal duty to make sure a gas safety check is carried out in your home each year.

It is important we carry this out every year for both the safety of you and your family—but also for the safety of your neighbours. Before your gas safety check is due we will write to you asking you to make an appointment.

Please do this as soon as you can. If we do not hear from you we will advise you that we can and will force entry into your home to service gas boilers and appliances.

If we have to undertake this extreme measure, you will be responsible for the cost of replacing locks.

Are you looking for something to do? Would you like to meet new people?

Do you want to make a difference?

Then get involved!

Why get involved?

It's a great way to make a difference and influence how services are delivered. You will meet new people, learn new skills and really get to know how we can improve services to tenants together.

Your local Tenants and Residents Association

There are 20 TRAs in Renfrewshire, made up of local people who have an active interest in their area. Council officers regularly meet with these groups to help improve local neighbourhoods.

Quality Circles

These are groups of tenants who, along with council officers, carry out inspections of high-rise blocks and sheltered housing complexes.

They see if areas could be kept cleaner or if there are any repairs issues. We are now looking at starting Quality Circles to cover other aspects of housing services, such as estate management.

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Find out more below.

Consultation Register

Many people just do not have the time to be involved. But from time to time you might wish to have your say. That's fine, we have a register of tenants that are interested in small pieces of consultation. So when such an occasion arises, we may ask your opinion on our services.

If you want more information or would like to get involved give our Tenant Consultation Officer a call on 0141 618 6260 for more information.

Renfrewshire Tenant Scrutiny Panel



Our Tenant Scrutiny Panel was established in 2013 to look at specific areas of service from the tenant's perspective and recommend improvements to that service. To date the scrutiny panel has made suggestions on the re-letting of empty houses, where they highlighted a number of areas for service improvement.

More recently they have completed an exercise on the customer experience in the service centre and contact centre— setting out a number of recommendations that could help improve customer service.

Members of the scrutiny panel gave a presentation to officers and councillors where they highlighted a number of areas that could be improved.

These include:

- Measures to improve privacy in neighbourhood offices;
- Enhancements to the website— many of which have been carried out since our new website went live and;
- Improving communication between the council and tenants

In response we have drawn up an action plan to see through the recommendations made by the panel.

The work of the scrutiny panel helps strengthen the connection between tenants and the service. The service benefits from having real tenant input into how we can improve our service to you and the tenant benefits from being able to influence how services are delivered.

The scrutiny panel is always looking for new tenants to take part. Members meet once a month for a couple of hours. If you are interested please get in touch. Don't worry if you have never been involved in similar activities as we can provide support, training and expenses so that no one is out of pocket.

For more information or to get involved in this exciting venture contact our Tenant Consultation Officer on 0141 618 6260 for more information.



Are You Winter Ready?

Recent years have highlighted the challenges severe weather can cause during the winter months at home and in the community.

Winter weather can lead to people becoming isolated, unable to do some of the things that we might take for granted, such as going to the shops or checking in with neighbours.

With winter approaching, the Council has some useful advice that can help lessen the impact of severe weather.

At Home

A home emergency kit will help you to respond to a range of emergencies all year round. Any kit should be easily accessible and kept in a waterproof bag. Likely contents include:

- Household emergency plan (containing; contact details, meeting places etc)
- Battery operated torch and radio (with spare batteries)
- Any medication, toiletries and a first aid kit
- Bottled water and ready to eat food (that won't go off)
- Copies of important documentation (insurance, birth certificates, etc)
- Pencil & paper
- Spare keys
- Cold weather may cause pipes to burst. Knowing where your stop valve is, how to turn off your water and how to turn off electricity at the mains can help you protect your pipes.

Scottish Water provides more advice on pipe protection at:

www.scottishwater.co.uk/You-And-Your-Home/Be-Prepared-For-Winter

In your community

When clearing paths:

- Avoid using hot water. It melts snow, but could result in black ice (increasing the risk of injury)
- Wear suitable clothing for the task.
- Wear visible clothing that helps traffic see you.
- If shoveling snow, think about where you are going to put it. Make sure it will not cause problems when it melts.
- Clear a path down the middle of the area to be cleared first, providing a safe surface to work on.
- Spread grit on the cleared area to prevent ice forming. Table salt or dishwasher salt will work, but should not be spread on plants or grass.
- Use the sun to your advantage. Removing the top layer of snow allows the sun to melt ice beneath, but you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop refreezing.
- Salt can be washed away by further snow or rain, potentially leaving black ice. If this happens, more salt should be used soon after the rain has stopped and before temperatures reach freezing.

For more on winter preparation, please visit:

www.readyscotland.org/are-you-ready/severe-weather/on-the-move

New Heating for Provost Close Quantum Heating

The old heating system at Provost Close in Johnstone is to be replaced with an advanced electric space heating system called Quantum.

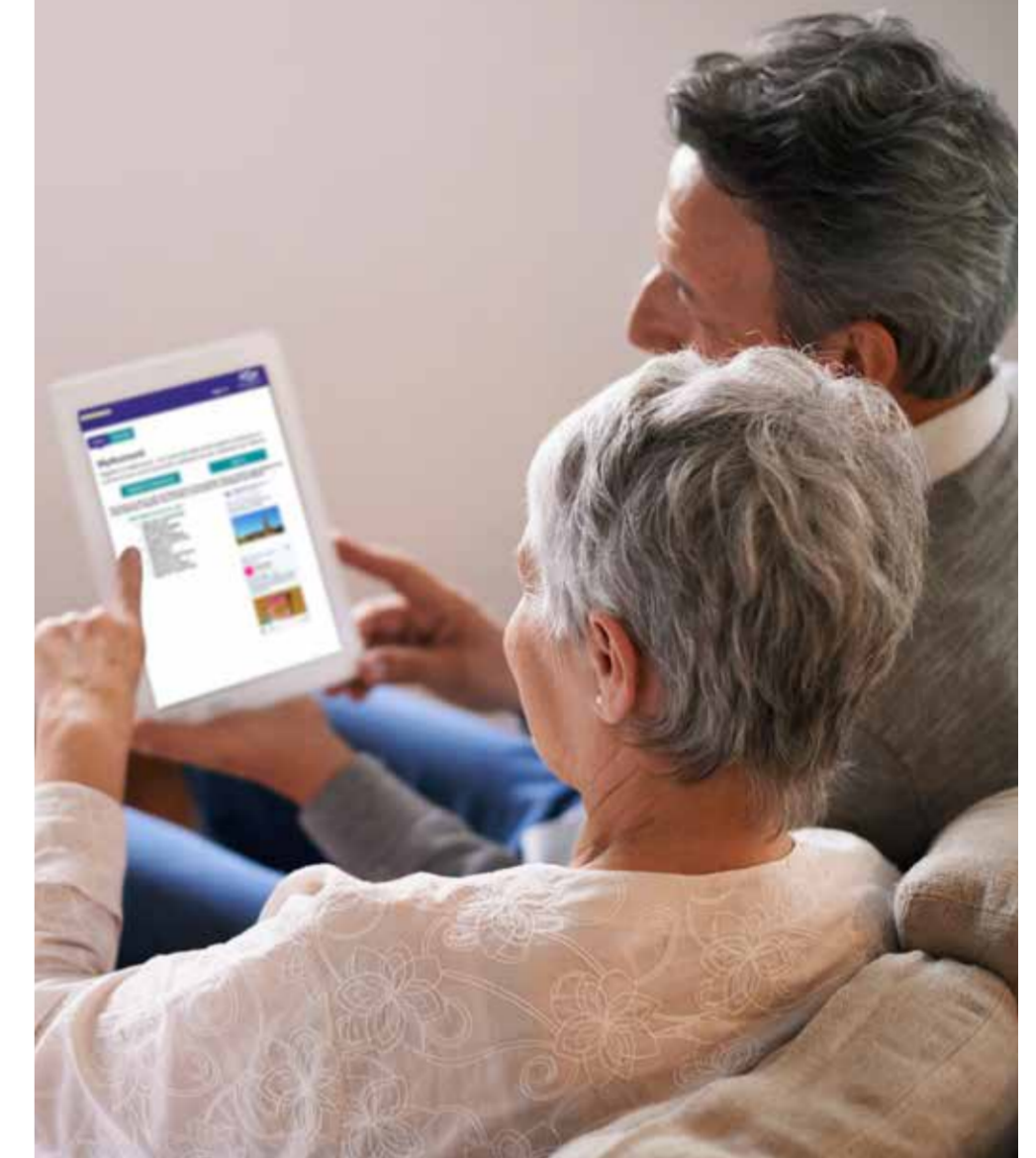
Quantum uses low-cost, off-peak energy which means it is the most economical electric heating system available on the market—it is up to 27% cheaper to run than a standard electric storage heating system.

Quantum is a flexible system that delivers heat only when it's needed

and can be programmed in the same manner as a new gas system.

Staff have worked closely with tenants to ensure residents are aware of the significant benefits of the new system and it is expected the project will be completed by the end of October.

MyAccount



More than 8,000 Renfrewshire residents are already enjoying the benefits of MyAccount—the council's new free digital customer service—and with housing rent accounts available online soon, our council tenants will do too.

If you haven't already signed up to this free service, now is a good time—particularly if you pay online for your rent, council tax or other services. From 26 October 2016, online payment moved to MyAccount which means that if you are making a payment by debit or credit card, you will need your own log-in details to access the secure online payment service in MyAccount.

MyAccount provides a convenient, quick and simple way to access and manage many Renfrewshire Council services securely online. There's no printing, posting or queuing – and you can do most things at the touch of a button without the need to call or visit us.

With MyAccount you can:

- apply for housing benefit and upload your proof online
- apply for Council Tax reduction, discount or exemption
- update a changes in your address, household details or circumstances
- view your account balance information and payment details
- set up or amend your direct debit for Council Tax

It's easy to register for MyAccount on a smartphone, tablet or computer. All you need is an email address. There's a regular prize draw to win a tablet for everyone who has signed up.

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/myaccount

Rent accounts should be available on MyAccount by the end of 2016. You will be able to access your account balance, payments and track any benefits payments contributing to your account. Setting up a direct debit will be easier too— just complete the details online and we will do the rest.

MyAccount is available from any internet-enabled device.

Our libraries offer free wifi and internet access, plus information on local computer-based courses to develop your online skills. Have a look at our Digital Directory at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk or call 0300 300 1188 (libraries) and 01505 382 863 (adult & community learning) to find out more.

Complaints and Significant Performance Failures

Complaint or significant performance failure?

If you are a tenant of a registered social landlord (RSL), such as a housing association or co-operative, or you are a council tenant, and you are unhappy about the services you receive or have concerns about the way your landlord is operating, then you have the right to make a complaint and/or report a significant performance failure.

Making a complaint about a social landlord

If you are unhappy with the service provided by a social landlord, you should make your complaint to the landlord in the first instance. Every landlord should have a complaints policy and you can ask for a copy of it.

You also have the right to complain to the

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman,
4 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS

Phone 0800 377 7330; Fax 0800 377 7331 or email:
ask@spso.org.uk. if you remain dissatisfied.

Significant performance failures

A significant performance failure is something that your landlord does, or fails to do, that puts the interests of its tenants at risk. This is something that does, or could, affect all of your landlord's tenants.

If your landlord does not deal with the failure, you can contact us.

Phone: 0141 305 4199, Fax: 0141 221 5030

Email: spf@scottishhousingregulator.gsi.gov.uk

regulator.gsi.gov.uk

Or write to:

Scottish Housing Regulator, 58 Waterloo Street Glasgow G2 7DA

More information on Complaints and Significant Performance Failures

can be found on the website of the Scottish Housing Regulator

www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/



Reporting a repair

- Call us on 0300 300 0300
- On the Ren Repairs App through your smart phone or tablet
- Email to Repairs@renfrewshire.gov.uk
- Use the Repairs direct phones at any neighbourhood office

Useful numbers

Housing Advice & Homeless Services
0300 300 0222

Housing & Council Tax Benefit (Council Tenants)
0300 300 0204

Housing Services
0300 300 0222

Intervention Team— Rent Enquiries
0800 085 9126

Out of hours emergency Repairs
0300 300 0300

Performance Information
0141 618 6264

Repairs Contact Centre
0300 300 0300 (within office hours)

Social Work Area Office
0300 300 1199

Tenant Consultation Team
0141 618 6260

Adult Protection Renfrewshire
0300 300 1199

Advice Works helpline
0300 300 1238
(Mon to Fri 10am to 4pm)

Antisocial Behaviour Helpline
0300 300 0380

Child Protection
0300 300 1199
0300 343 1505 (evenings and weekends)

Current Benefit entitlement
0300 300 0288 (option 2)

Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre
0808 808 2282

Gas Servicing
0300 300 0300

Graffiti Reporting
0300 300 0380

Greener Renfrewshire
0300 300 0380

Homelessness & Social Work stand by service (24hrs)
0300 300 0222



Find us on the web!

Get The People's News online at
www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/thepeoplesnews

Scan the QR code with your Smartphone (make sure you can see the whole of the code image, and then click) – you'll go directly to The People's News.

Access to information

We are committed to making sure you can get information from us in the way that suits you best. We have recently bought a software package called Dolphin. This allows us to produce information in large print, audio, daisy and Braille. We can also provide information by email.

We have always offered these services to our customers but the new software means we can translate documents in-house, which is faster and more efficient. If you need information in an alternative format, please let us know and we will update your account. This should ensure that all future communications are in a format that best suits what you need.

The People's News can be made available in braille, large print or audio.

If you would like information in another language please ask us.

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

ਜੇ ਸਿਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਸਿਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਵੋ।

Jeżeli chciałoby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

 **0141 618 6150**

 **HousingStrategyQuality.hps@renfrewshire.gov.uk**

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Please recycle after use.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person at any of our offices, or you can:

Phone: 0300 300 0300

Email: complaints@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Write to: Complaints Officer, Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley PA1 1WB.

Online: Complete the online form at our website www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Tell us what you think

Tell us what you think of the People's News, both its format and contents.

Email us at HousingStrategyQuality.hps@renfrewshire.gov.uk or call 0141 618 6264.