

Tenant Annual Report 2020/21



**NEWARK &
SHERWOOD**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Overview of the housing service during 2020/21

Last year was dominated by our response to COVID-19. We:

- changed our services to help those vulnerable or shielding by delivering vital medicine and food parcels
- made 173 calls at the start of the pandemic to tenants who would usually leave their home to pay their rent to advise them to stay home as we would not be chasing non-payments
- contacted more than 4,100 residents who we thought might be isolated and in need of additional support
- maintained our key services including completing emergency repairs, supporting tenants in debt, providing advice to those at risk of homelessness, allocating homes and managing the Careline service
- brought our grounds maintenance service back into the Council to improve the quality of our land while also offering a better value for money service (this means we can provide more services for the same price!)

We would like to give a big thank you to all tenants who gave us access to their homes last year to carry out gas services. As landlords, we are required to give all gas appliances an annual safety check.

It is really important that we regularly talk to and listen to our tenants. We have a strong independent tenant's forum, made up of tenants who help us shape and develop the services we deliver. In addition to the forum, we consult with tenants by way of surveys sent randomly to a number of tenants annually, through to follow up satisfaction questionnaires after you have received a service from us. There are lots of opportunities to get involved and give us your feedback. The more feedback we have, the better! More information on this is available on [our website](#).

Our next steps

Over the next few years, we have a number of investment decisions to make around ensuring homes and communal areas remain safe and secure, building new homes and investing in new technologies to make homes 'greener' and more energy efficient.

The UK government also launched the 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents', which sets out their expectations about what we, as a social housing landlord, are expected to implement over the next few years. We are taking this opportunity to review our services and how we engage and act on your views to make us a better and more tenant engaging landlord.

We also want to ensure that you are receiving the best quality service you can from us. We remain committed to gathering your feedback and developing our service over the next year.



How are we performing?

In 2021, a total of 545 tenants took part in our Survey of Tenants and Residents (a telephone survey to a number of tenants at random). The results showed us how happy you are with our services and where we needed to improve. Overall satisfaction levels were at 87.5% but we will continually try to strive for better. Full details of our tenant satisfaction surveys are available on [our website](#).

Complaints

In January 2021, we simplified our complaints process to two stages. Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, 91 complaints were received from residents regarding our housing services. 87 of these completed the complaints process and have been closed down. The remaining 5 were still ongoing as of 31 March 2021 but have subsequently been completed and closed down. 10 of these complaints were escalated to Stage 2 of the complaints process, which involved an independent senior manager considering the complaint.

Level of complaint	Average time taken to respond to complaints	Target to respond to complaints
Overall	10.11 days	N/A
Stage 1	10.3 days	10 days
Stage 2	8.2 days	15 days

The graph below shows a breakdown of these complaints and includes all complaints that occurred twice or more:

Asset investment service (planned kitchens, bathrooms, rewires, roofing, windows and doors) – 25

Compensation requested – 4

Condition of the home following repairs completed when empty – 3

Damp / mould – 3

Kitchen / bathroom heating upgrades – 5

Repairs service in general – 6

Tenancy management services (dealing with any issues about your tenancy) – 13

Unhappy with repair – 5

Unhappy with staff / service – 4

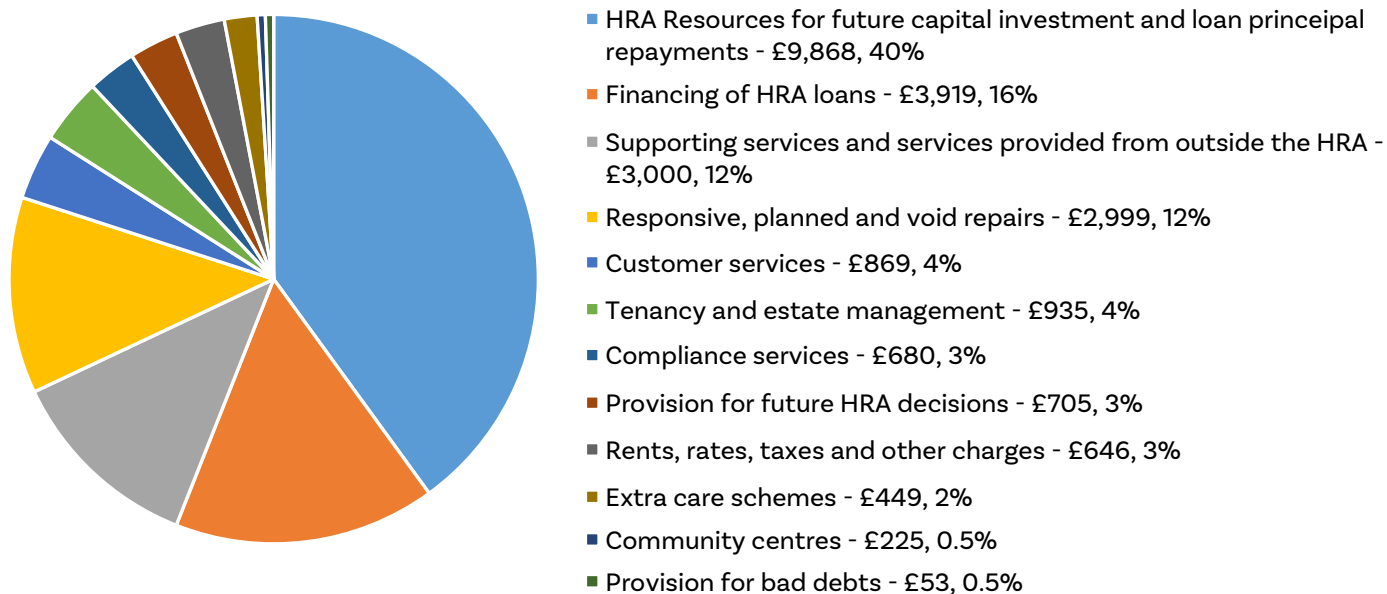
How are we responding and improving following these complaints?

- We have simplified our repairs process
- If a repair cannot be completed first time, we create a “follow on” repair visit (made during the first visit)
- We are reviewing our out of hours “make safe” repair service
- We are providing refresher training for emergency repairs call handlers
- We will improve our explanations regarding repairs timescales and seek to get as much information on the first contact as possible, to support the repair being completed first time
- We will complete a monthly sweep of the Winston Court car park in autumn to prevent a build-up of leaves
- We will have additional monitoring visits to ensure our contractors do what they should

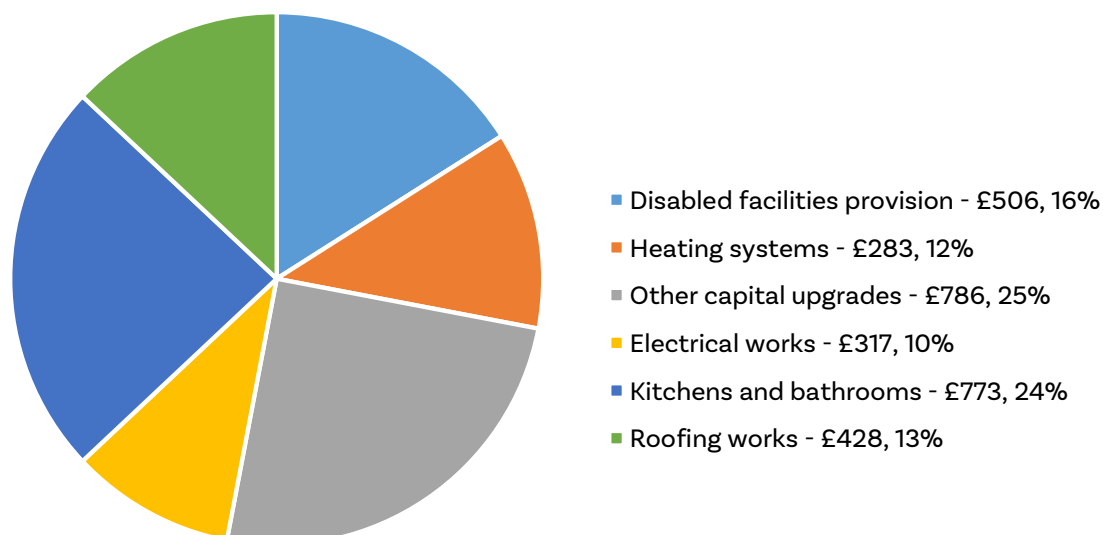
Your rent

How is your rent spent?

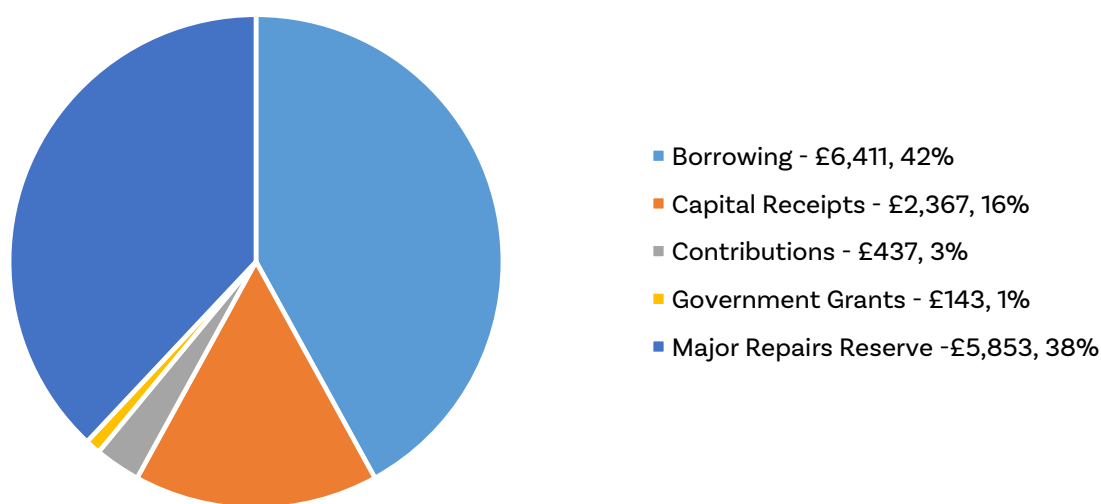
The chart below provides a breakdown of the money spent on delivering housing services for 2020-2021:



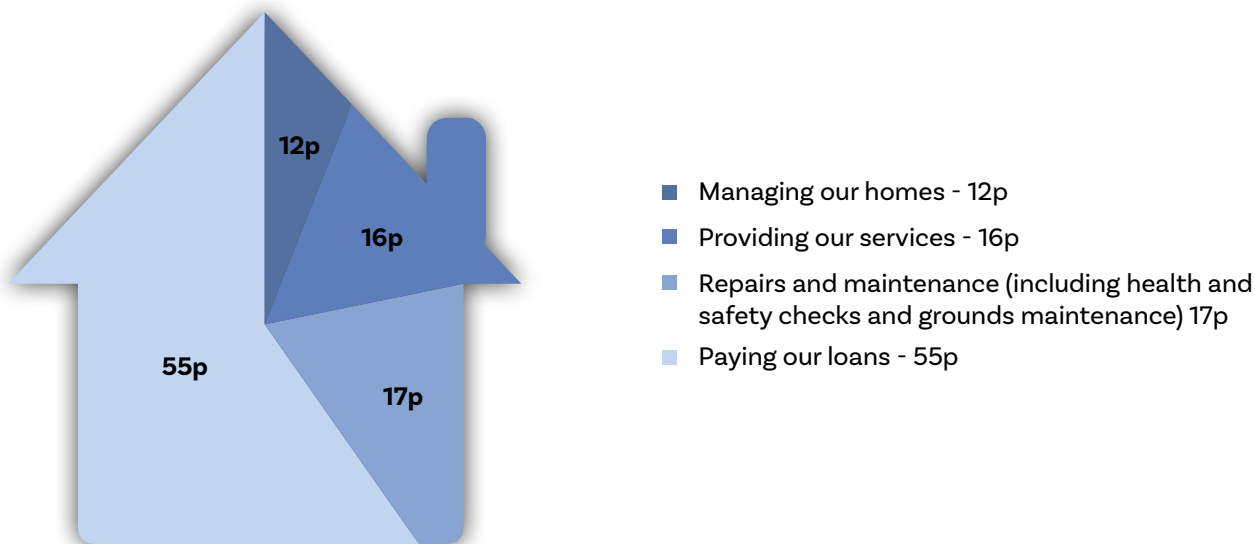
During 2020-2021 a total of £12,000,018 was invested into our new build programme. In addition, the chart below shows how we have invested in our existing homes:



The chart below shows how our investment in existing and new homes was funded in 2020-2021:



The diagram below shows how we spent every £1 that we collected in rent and service charges in 2020-2021:



Rent levels

The average weekly rent for a Newark and Sherwood District Council home is **£77.62**. This is based on a 52 week social rent* total.

*Social rent is calculated based on a formula set out by the government which takes into account factors such as local property prices and wages. An affordable rent is calculated at up to 80% of the market rent in the area.

How our rent charges compare with the private sector in Newark and Sherwood

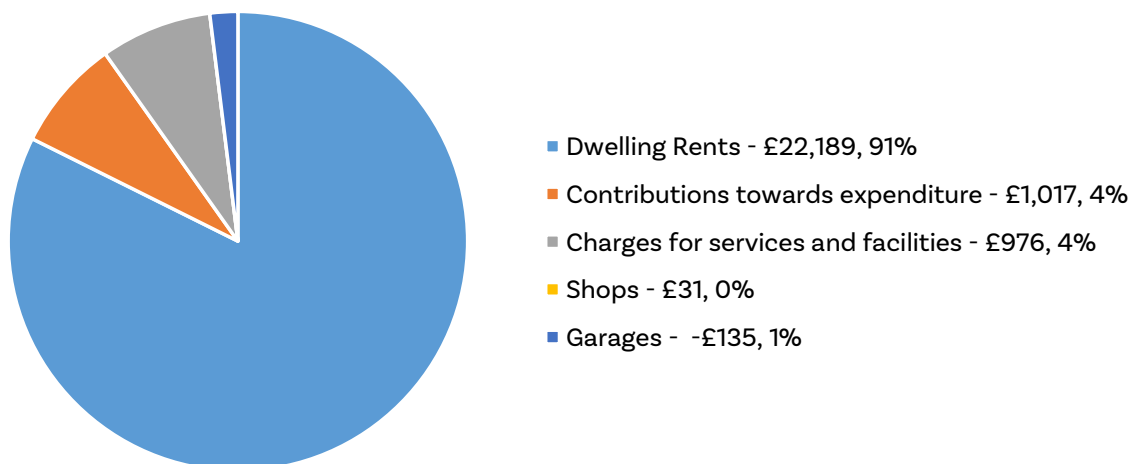
Size of Property	Newark and Sherwood District Council average weekly rent (social rent)	Newark and Sherwood average weekly rent (private sector)
1 bed home	£69.62	£98.07
2 bed home	£76.63	£121.15
3 bed home	£82.86	£137.31
4 bed home	£89.78	£206.54

Rent collection

100.27%* of rent was collected from tenants during 2020/21, equalling a total of around £23m.

*We collected more rent than has been charged for this year due to the collection of arrears from the previous year. The amount of current arrears as a percentage of annual rent charges is 1.93%, which is £444,210 in unpaid rent.

Where do we collect our rent from?



Our homes

Re-letting our homes

The average re-let time for our homes was 31.8 days against our target of 16 days. The impact of COVID-19 meant that for three months we were not able to let homes unless it was an emergency allocation. After guidance changed and we could recommence our services, we were required to send our teams in one at a time to complete repairs safely. This is why our performance is affected here, but we still let 346 homes in total.

How many homes do we own?

The below table shows how many homes the Council owns:

	Flats	Maisonettes	Bungalows	Houses	Total
1 Bed	867		488	9	1,364
2 Bed	552	119	1,287	195	2,153
3 Bed	20	65	98	1729	1,912
4 Bed +	1		1	120	122
	1,440	184	1,874	2,053	5,551

We have 5,033 applicants on our housing register. We will be contacting all current applicants this year to see if they still need to remain on our register.

Building new homes

During 2020/2021 27 new homes were built across the district, with funding support of £380,000 from Homes England. Our development programme enables us to build homes that the district needs – 11 of the 27 homes built this year were bungalows, which are in high demand. As of July 2021, we have built 206 additional new Council homes within the district in total and had 73 new Council homes currently under construction, with a further 48 progressing through the planning stages.



Health and safety of your home

Safety checks

In order to ensure your home is safe, we carry out a number of checks each year which includes fire safety, asbestos, gas and other fuel safety checks. In addition asbestos and electrical checks are completed every five years. Finally, a range of other safety checks are also carried out including legionella (water pipe checks), general block inspections, play park inspections and passenger and goods lift servicing.

All but two checks we completed last year were 100% compliant. The first check not compliant was from the annual gas safety inspections where we achieved 99.87% of checks (out of a total 5,196 inspections). The second was a solid fuel heating safety inspection where we achieved 91.67% of checks (out of a total 24 inspections). We did not achieve 100% in these two checks because tenants didn't give us access to their homes. Despite continuing to try and gain access, in the end we had to take legal action to access the property. In 2020/21, we served 10 gas access injunctions because we couldn't gain access to do these checks.

Managing your estates and communal areas

We organise walkabouts around the district which aim to bring tenants together with officers and agencies interested in keeping our estates safe and clean. During the pandemic these walkabouts couldn't go ahead as planned but instead we did our own inspections to ensure all was as it should be. Your satisfaction within your neighbourhoods was at 90% this year.

Our response to anti-social behaviour (ASB) and breaches of tenancy

During 2020/21 we received 200 reports of ASB and breaches of tenancy. Here's a breakdown by type for all those that have received five or more complaints:

Description	Number of cases
Alcohol related nuisance	5
Animal nuisance	11
Drug/substance misuse/dealing	17
Garden breach	8
Noise nuisance	113
Verbal harassment/abuse	36

Here's the actions we took:

- Extended 26 introductory tenancies from 12 to 18 months as the tenancy was not breach free
- Served 18 notices for abandonment or suspected abandonment of a property
- Served 63 warning notices for breaches of tenancy
- Served 10 gas access injunctions
- Served four possession orders: one on an introductory tenancy and three on secure tenancies. These orders were served for ASB, drug use and condition of property.

We will be reviewing this service in the next 12 months. If you want to get involved let us know!

Responsive repairs

From feedback received last year, 46% of you said repairs is the most valued service we offer. 90% of you said you were satisfied with the ease of reporting repairs.

Simplification of our repairs priorities

Previously we operated on a six priority system which was confusing and not flexible, especially when dealing with emergencies. We now have three priority categories and have increased the type of repairs we will complete as an emergency, providing a faster service for those repairs that need fixing more quickly. emergency out of hours service still operates a 'make safe' service, with a full repair being made the next working day.

Number of repairs we completed for you

During 2020/21 we completed 17,555 responsive repairs, made up of:

- 4,756 emergency repairs (Priority 1)
- 11,002 routine repairs (Priority 2)
- 1,797 planned repairs (Priority 3)

Even though we were operating in lockdown and had to delay various routine and planned repairs due to restrictions, we still managed to complete 91.31% of all repairs within the set timescales. We also managed to complete 95.5% of repairs to meet our "right first time" promise. We will continue to improve this year.

New pilot scheme to increase quality of homes we let

From feedback received last year, the decoration of a newly let property is important to you and as a new tenant you would like a better experience when moving into your new home. This year we are using efficiency savings to pilot a new and improved lettings standard as part of providing better services to you. The pilot (which will run for six months) will improve your experience when moving into one of our homes.



Investing in your home

We have a long term plan that sets out when we may need to replace key elements of your home based on the expected lifespan of the fixture:

What to replace	When to replace it
Kitchens	After 20 years
Bathrooms	After 30 years
Electrical rewires	After 30 years (but tested every five years)
Boilers	After 15 years (but serviced annually)
Heating distribution systems (gas, oil coal and electrical heating systems)	After 30 years (but serviced annually)
Doors and windows	After 30 years
External repairs / painting	Every six years

During 2020/21 we spent £1,651,050 completing:

- 169 kitchen and bathroom replacements (£685,878)
- 126 electrical upgrades (£299,578)
- 140 new boilers or full heating systems (£374,066)
- 980 external repairs and painting jobs (£216,282)
- 131 properties fitted with replacement doors and/or windows (£75,246)

In 2020/21 we spent:

- £424,343 on 205 major adaptations to support tenants to stay in their homes, for example bedroom/ bathroom extensions or the installation of a stair-lift or hoists
- £26,975 on 269 minor adaptations to support tenants to live safely in their homes, for example installing key safes and grab rails

Right to buy

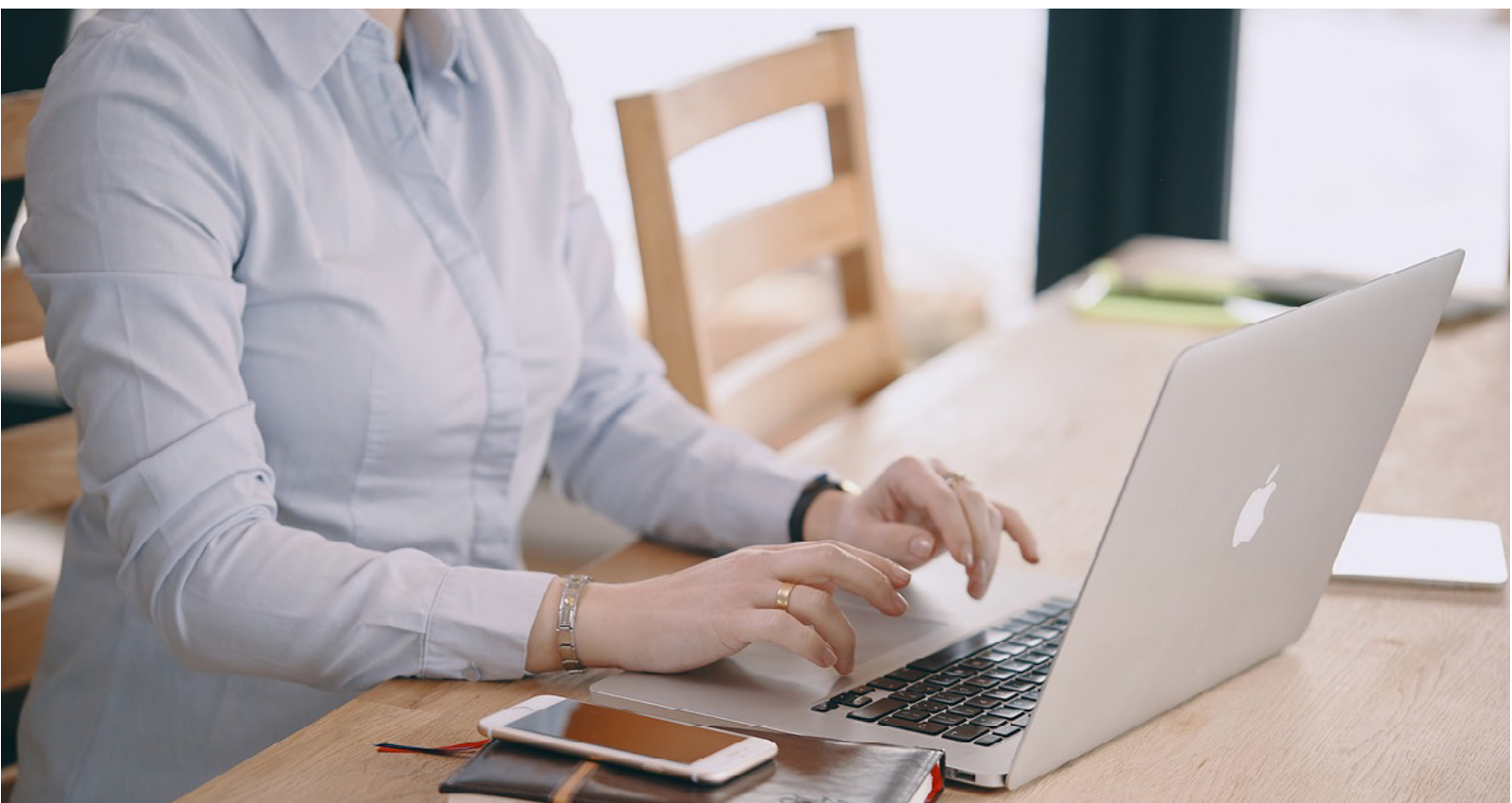
During the last financial year we received 50 applications from tenants to buy their home. We refused two applications and approved 28*. The average discount of £68,179 per property was provided to buyers.

*The remaining applications either lapsed or a decision was not made within the financial year.



What you can do?

- Keep communal areas outside your home clear of belongings to ensure that in the event of a fire, you can leave your home quickly and safely. Usable larger items like furniture can be collected free of charge by the Furniture Project (01623 836 410). We can collect unusable items - book a bulky waste collection online!
- Keep your tenancy breach free and you'll have a secure home for life.
- Make improvements to your home (contact us to discuss first!)
- Report repairs to us by calling 0800 561 0010, reporting via MyAccount online or by emailing cas@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk.
- Respond to our questionnaires so we can ensure we deliver the service you want and need.
- Let us know if your tenancy doesn't suit your needs anymore.
- Give us your feedback via our Customer Feedback page on our website! We need to know what we are doing well but also what we aren't quite getting right.
- Give us access to your homes to carry out safety checks.
- If you have any feedback on this report, or think it is missing any information, let us know by emailing customerservices@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
- Join our active tenant engagement forum. Find out more information on our [website](#) or by emailing getinvolved@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk.



Investing in your home

As a landlord, we want to listen to your views and ensure we know how best to communicate with you and guarantee your accommodation meets your needs. So, over the next two years we will be coming to see you. These visits will be carried out by your local tenancy officer or assistant - we will be in touch when we are planning to come and look forward to seeing you soon!



This tenant annual report is really important as it shows what we, as your landlord, have been doing over the past year, including our performance, how we use your rent to deliver and improve services and how we have responded to your feedback and complaints. If you have any feedback on this report, or think it is missing any information, let us know by emailing customerservices@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk.



Contact Us

Our residents, tenants and businesses can contact us in a number of ways.

Telephone: 01636 650000 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) **Email:** customerservices@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

In person: Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts, NG24 1BY (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
Ollerton Advice Office, New Ollerton, Newark, Notts, NG22 9PS (9am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday)

Most of our services are also available on our website, including a web chat service during office hours: www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

Social media:



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