



Annual Report to Tenants 2014/15

If you want to know more about the Association's performance, you can contact us directly at 39a Victoria Street, Kirkwall, by phone - 01856 875253, or email enquiries@ohal.org.uk, or visit our website at www.ohal.org.uk. Alternatively, you can visit the Scottish Housing Regulator's website at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Introduction

I am delighted to introduce our Report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter 2014/15 which provides you with information on the Association's annual performance as reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

This Report will provide you with the facts and figures on how we measure up to the requirements of the Charter, comparisons with other landlords and Scotland as a whole.

The Association is committed to working with our residents, listening to their views and improving the services they receive. Overall, our staff have performed well in almost all areas and there is high tenant satisfaction with the services and rent charged.

However, there are areas where improvements can be made and, in conjunction with tenants, we will strive to improve the services provided and ensure that our residents obtain value for money.



I am looking forward to the coming year and seeing continuous improvement in the services provided with increased tenant and customer satisfaction.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Rodwell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Rodwell
Chair of Management Committee



A big thank you to our Residents Panel for all their help in creating this report.

We value feedback so please let us have your comments on this report if you wish to do so.

This document will be provided in different languages and formats on request.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that you can expect from us. Each year we must provide you with information on how we have performed against the Charter. Where possible we have shown how our performance compares with our own for 2013/14 and also with both a Rural Peer Group (RPG) and all Scottish landlords (SLA).

Peer Group

For our RPG we have selected the following social landlords because they are of similar size and operate in similar locations. Where comparative figures for 2013/14 are available, these are also shown.

	<i>Total Number of Properties</i>	<i>Total Rent Due £</i>
Hjaltland HA (Shetland)	602	£2,538,713
Lochaber HA (Fort William)	638	£2,505,636
Pentland HA (Thurso)	492	£1,871,111
Lochalsh & Skye (Skye)	609	£2,247,225
Orkney Islands Council	823	£3,051,991
Rural Peer Group Average	633	£2,442,935
OHAL	698	£2,656,102

Chart and Table Key

OHAL *Orkney Housing Association*
RPG *Rural Peer Group Average*
SLA *Scottish Landlord Average*

13/14
14/15

Overall Satisfaction

The Scottish Housing Regulator requires us to carry out a tenants' satisfaction survey every 3 years. The previous full scale survey was carried by the Association in 2013, so in some cases we are unable to update the previous year's figures. Our next full scale survey is due in 2016/17.

We are pleased to report that over **92%** of our tenants were satisfied with the overall service provided compared to the RPG of 88.6% and the SLA of 88.1%.

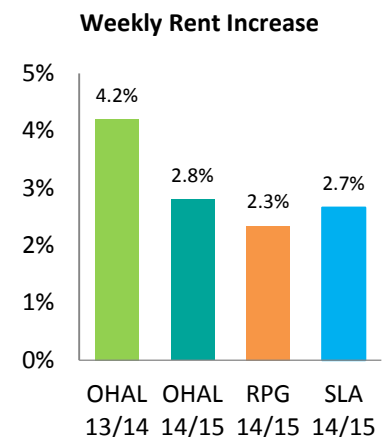
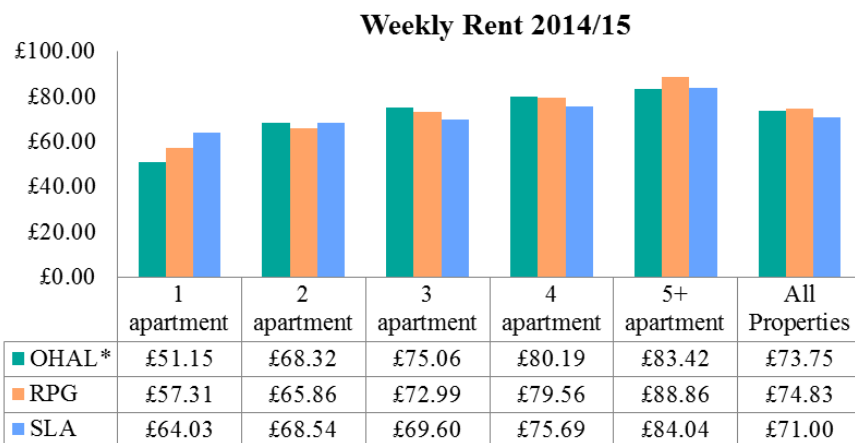
Getting Good Value for Rents and Service Charges

The Standard: a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them. Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

When we set our rents it is important that we take into account what our customers are able to afford and recognise that they want to know how their money is spent.

We provide information about how the rent is spent during the annual consultation with tenants and sharing owners before increasing the rents.

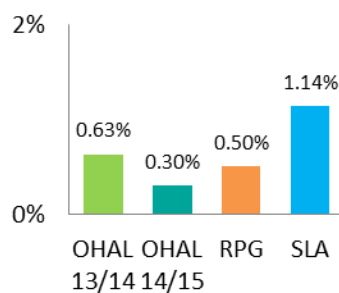
Rent affordability is measured for all new tenancies by the Scottish Government. In 2014/15 our rents were considered to be affordable to 84% of all working households which shows an increase from the 2013/14 figure of 82.2%.



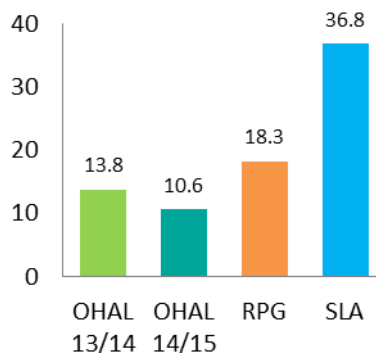
* includes services

We aim to re-let our properties as quickly as possible to ensure we minimise the rent lost due to vacant properties. We also maximise the time spent by Housing Services staff to monitor rent arrears cases to ensure that rent arrears are kept to a minimum.

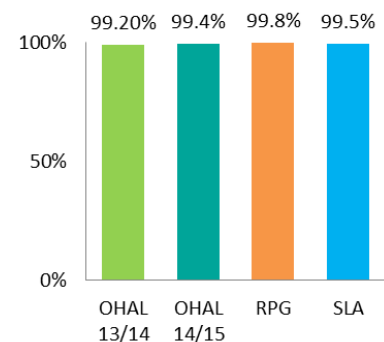
Rent loss due to vacant properties



Average days taken to re-let homes



Rent collected as a %age of the total rent due in the year



We have consulted with you on how the rents are set with the aim being to provide an easier to understand and fairer way of calculating the rent which more accurately reflects the variation in the housing stock.

Value for Money

The Standard: tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money
83.6% of our tenants feel that rents offer good value for money compared to 79.2% for the RPG and 76.8% for the SLA

We will ensure that we continue to manage our rent arrears and former tenant debt effectively.

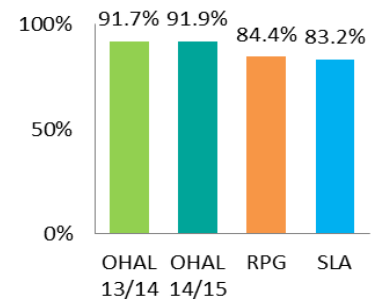
Neighbourhood & Community Estate Management, Anti-Social Behaviour, Neighbour Nuisance & Tenancy Disputes

The Standard: tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

Percentage of anti-social behaviour complaints dealt with on target

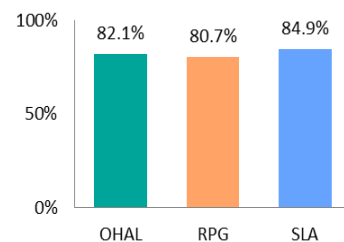
Anti-social behaviour (ASB) can range from noisy parties and dumping rubbish to threatening or criminal behaviour.

During 2014/15 we received 37 complaints of ASB and were able to resolve 34 (91.9%) of these within the agreed timescales.



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of their neighbourhood

We understand that the environment in which people live can have an impact on their health and happiness. In our 2013 Tenant Satisfaction Survey, 82.1% of our tenants told us they were satisfied with the way we manage their neighbourhood. This is below the SLA but higher than the majority of other social landlords in our RPG.



We have listened to our customers and have ensured that at least 2 estate inspections are carried out annually. We have also worked with customers who have stepped up to become a Community Observer and provide us with information on their estates eg quality of garden and grounds maintenance; rubbish, etc.

We will take action to enforce tenancy conditions on estate management and neighbour nuisance and support tenants who are affected. We will work with other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Housing Quality & Maintenance

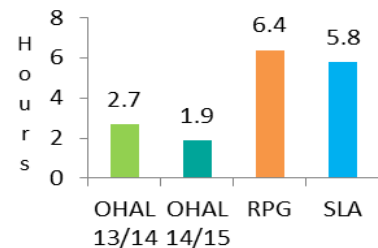
Repairs, maintenance and improvements

The Standard: tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

The repairs and maintenance services should keep your homes in good repair and take into account your needs and preferences when providing these services.

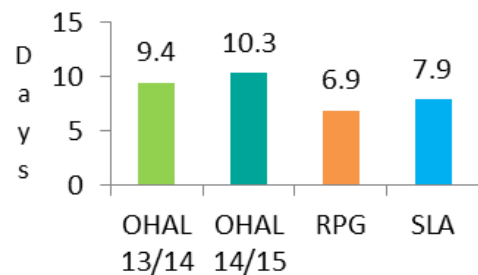
Average number of hours taken to complete emergency repairs

This shows an improvement on the previous year's response times.



Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs

Our current response time falls short of both the RPG and the SLA. We are working towards improving our performance and, as a result, are continually developing our Handyman team to provide our customers with the best possible service. However, our Repairs Standard gives us 20 working days to complete non-emergency repairs.



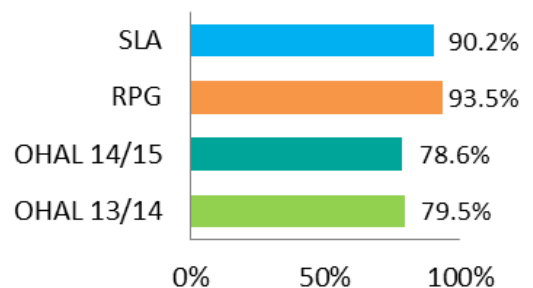
Percentage of repairs appointments kept

We do not offer an appointments system.

Percentage of reactive repairs completed right first time

Completed right first time means the repair was completed in one visit, with no complaints and stayed fixed for more than a year.

We know it is important to our customers that repairs are carried out right first time. We are looking at ways in which we can improve this area.



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repair service

We are pleased that we score highly in this with an average of 91.7% of our tenants satisfied with the repairs service. This is higher than both RPG (89.5%) and the SLA (89.3%).

We are always working towards improving the service. We now have 3 handymen to make sure minor day to day repairs and aids and adaptations are carried out quickly and efficiently.

Quotes from service users:

"Thank you for arranging the door repair which was done by a very helpful Handyman"

"Handyman was polite, tidy and knew exactly what was needed to do the job"

Quality of Housing

The Standard: tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and continue to meet it thereafter and when they are allocated are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair.

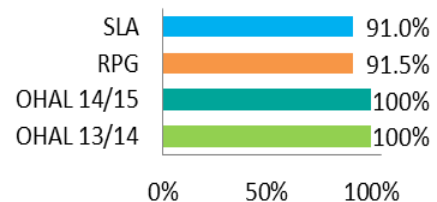
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in

We are pleased to be able to report an improvement on the previous year's satisfaction level from 80% to 88.6%. We believe that this has been achieved through listening to tenants and discussion with tenants.

We have worked with you, our tenants, the Residents Panel and staff, to develop a new Re-let Standard which was launched in April 2015.

Properties meeting the SHQS

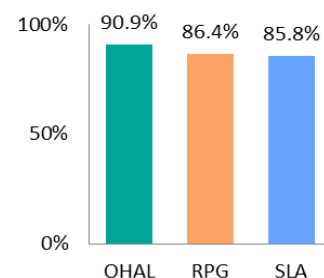
The SHQS is a set of 55 quality standards ranging from energy efficiency targets to the minimum number of sockets in your kitchen. 100% of the Association's housing stock meet the SHQS compared to 91.5% of our RPG and 91% of the SLA.



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their homes

This indicator lets us see what tenants feel about the quality of their home and was last measured in our Tenant Satisfaction Survey in 2013.

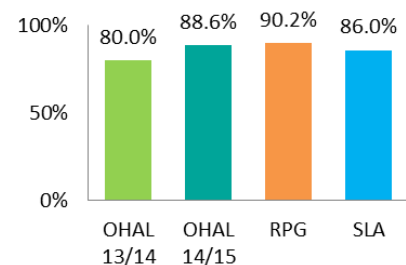
We are pleased that levels of satisfaction are high. However, there is always room for improvement.



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their homes when moving in

We are pleased to report an improvement in satisfaction levels. We have worked on clarifying the expectations for both outgoing and incoming tenants.

We have reviewed our procedures and set standards which has not only clarified this area for the outgoing tenant and incoming tenant but also for staff.



Over the next 12 months we will be undertaking a full Tenant Satisfaction Survey which will provide us with more in depth information on what tenants want and, for example, what they want to see in our planned maintenance programme.

The Customer-Landlord Relationship

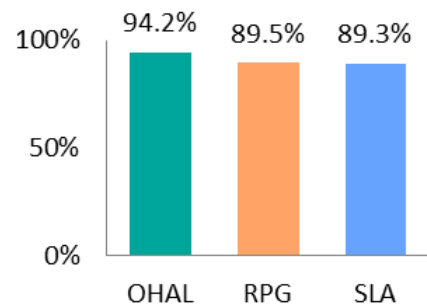
The Standard: tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

We are working towards making it easy for you to contact us, in a way that suits you, to find out what we do and why we are doing it.

Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions

This tells us how well we are doing at things like:-

- Telling you about changes we make as a result of a complaint from you;
- Keeping you informed about new policies or changes to our policies or the way we provide a service;
- Improving communication by making day to day service announcements so you can get the best from our service.



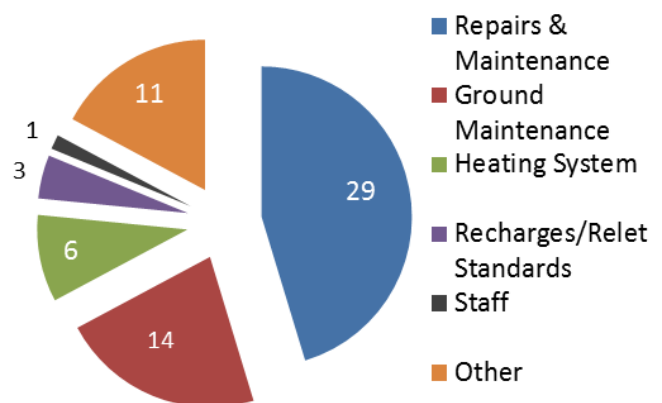
We are working towards improving our communication with you by:-

- Raising our profile and activity in social media, especially our Facebook page. You can visit our page to get up to date information on what we are doing and to get service announcements;
- Redesigning our website making it easier for you to report things, pay your rent, and to access our services and information;
- Upgrading our systems to make better use of text messaging as part of the day to day service.

Percentage of complaints where we found that the service went wrong

We record any expression of dissatisfaction about our service as a complaint.

During the year we dealt with 64 complaints, of which 59% were upheld which is a higher percentage than the RPG (57%). This compared favourably with our 2013/14 figure of 137 complaints. This tells us that we recognise when something has gone wrong with our service. We use this information to identify where we need to improve.



We welcome and record complaints about our service and ensure that it is easy for you to tell us when things go wrong. We do make changes to avoid repeating mistakes. We will keep you informed of such changes through our website and in the newsletter.

Equalities

The Standard: every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

We are committed to promoting equality across all areas of our work. We must work to make sure that our services are accessible to all.

What we are doing to help our customers

We offer information on a range of housing options which includes rented, low cost home ownership and Care & Repair services. We also participate in the Scottish Government's Mortgage to Rent Service.

All our Housing Services staff are trained to the **Scottish National Standards for Information & Advice Providers**.

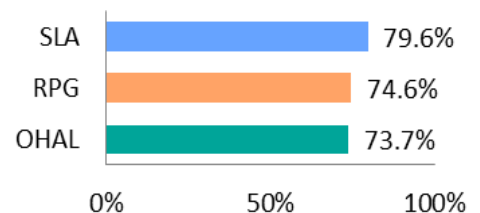
Participation

The Standard: tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

We should offer a range of different options for taking part. We must reduce barriers and include as many people as possible in making decisions about how we provide our services.

Percentage satisfied with the opportunities given to participate in their landlord's decision making

The figures provided are from the 2013 Tenant Satisfaction Survey.



We recognise that we can improve our performance and are working towards this by:-

- Offering a range of ways for tenants to get involved and influence our decisions;
- Publishing a new Tenant Participation Strategy and Action Plan;
- Enabling the Residents Panel to undertake tenant-led inspections in areas of interest;
- Taking part in wider groups and events in order to learn from other organisations' good practice.

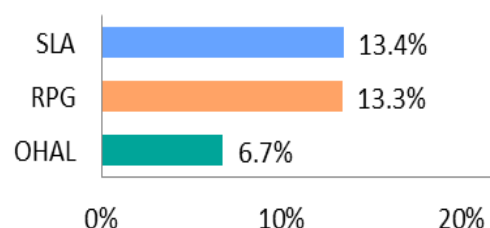
Tenancy Sustainment

The Standard: tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Some tenants may need support to maintain their tenancy. We will work with partners to provide support and advice in areas of concern such as rent arrears and home adaptations.

Percentage of court actions resulting in evictions.

We go to court to repossess a property in cases of serious breach of tenancy. In the last reporting year only one of our court actions resulted in an eviction.

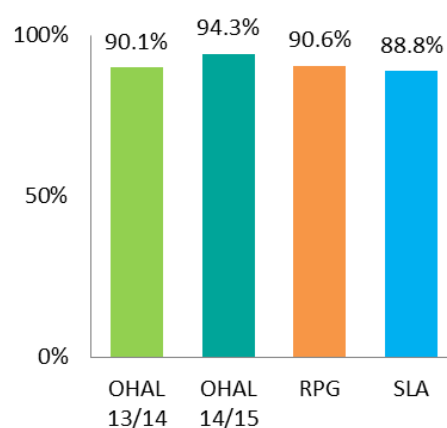


The most common breach of tenancy is rent arrears.

Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year

A successful tenancy is a tenancy that lasts for over 12 months.

94.3% of our new tenancies were successful. We keep under review the reasons for tenancies failing in order to identify where we could make improvements. In the reporting year, of the 7 failed tenancies, one moved into home ownership, one transferred to another OHAL property, one left Orkney and 4 moved into private lets.

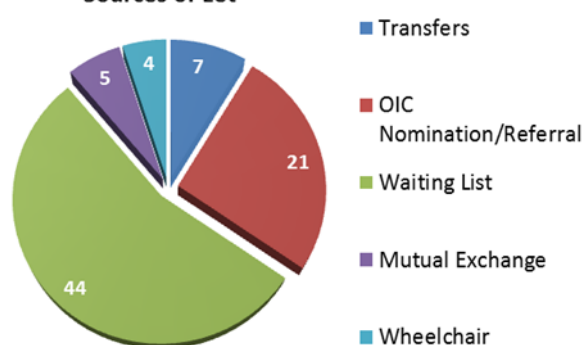


Percentage of re-lets (ie turnover of housing stock)

Stock Turnover



Sources of Let



In the coming year, Housing Services staff will be:-

- Looking for ways to help customers affected by Welfare Reform;
- Working with tenants who are struggling financially to make sure they are claiming the benefits they are entitled to;
- Looking at ways to help tenants reduce fuel poverty;
- Providing housing information and advice to customers.