

ORKNEY HOUSING
ASSOCIATION LIMITED



Annual Report

2022-2023



CHAIR'S REPORT

I'd really like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and recognise the fantastic commitment from both the volunteers on the Management Committee, who offer their time and skills to ensure the Association continues to improve the lives of our tenants and wider communities, and the staff who, without their hard work and dedication we simply could not function.

I'd like especially to thank our current Vice Chair Bill Wallace who is leaving us for pastures new. Bill has been a dedicated member of our committee for the last 7 years, Chair of our performance and Resources committee for the last 5 and a great support to me in my time as Chair.

The committee welcomed 2 new members and a co-optee at the last AGM boosting the numbers of the team, however we were deeply saddened by the loss of Linda Forbes who had been such a valued member of the board for 8 years. Dave Dawson also retired after 10 years' service to the Committee.

The past 12 months have seen new challenges in the form of Cost of Living, placing pressures on household incomes and increasing costs of everything from energy to food. I have been delighted with the Association's success in securing funding through the Scottish Housing Fuel Support Fund which allowed us to



*Fiona Lettice,
Chair*

distribute funds to every tenant to help relieve some of the financial burdens being faced during the winter. In addition to this support, the Committee agreed to continue the Tenancy Sustainment Fund for another year in recognition of the difficulties being faced by the most vulnerable in our communities.

We have seen an increase in demand for all our services, with more tenants seeking advice on managing during these difficult times. The staff completed another round of tenant welfare calls providing help and guidance to access different funds available to help with the increasing cost of living. Additionally, the Housing Officers were able to offer one to one advice and support to individual households in the greatest need of great customer service.



Supporting Sustainable Communities

Going the Extra Mile to Help with the Cost of Living

We have all felt the pressure of rising prices of energy and everyday items and at the Association we are aware of the need for some extra support for our tenants, to help them through these difficult times. In the past year we have been working closely with tenants, to see if there is a need for extra support and in February, we managed to secure funding from the Scottish Housing Fuel Support Fund. This enabled us to give £125 to every tenant, either as a direct payment or a credit to their rent account.

Staff at the Association took part in another round of tenant welfare calls. The Association began these in 2020 due to COVID restrictions and it proved to be an excellent way to engage with our tenants to see how they were managing. It also provided opportunities to offer additional support and advice for those needing it, as well as a great chance to get to know our tenants better. We intend to build on these contacts to further enhance our communication with tenants.

In November, the Communications & Engagement Officer worked alongside local partners to offer a hybrid event around the cost of living and getting the most from your budget. Orkney Islands Council, Citizens Advice and Social Security Scotland presented lots of valuable information on benefits and maximising income.

Another of our services in high demand is the 1:1 energy advice from our dedicated Energy Officer, examining individual circumstances and delivering improvements to households, making sure that the heating systems are being used efficiently, helping with energy debt and accessing extra financial support.

Our website now has a section dedicated to providing information to help ease the pressures of the cost of living and can be found at Orkney Housing Association Limited (OHAL) — Help to Navigate the Rising Cost of Living.

Developing the Young Workforce

Young people are the future of our communities, and we welcome every opportunity to engage with our future employees and tenants. Staff members attending Developing the Young Workforce careers fairs at Picky Centre, Kirkwall and Stromness Academy, discussed the many routes to various careers in Housing. We also provided advice, hints and tips on seeking employment in general eg, how to complete application forms and prepare for interviews.



The Association was proud to sponsor Orkney College's **Annual Carpentry & Joinery Apprentice of the Year Award** which

was presented to Conor Coburn, pictured with Management Committee Member, John White at the Graduation ceremony in September.



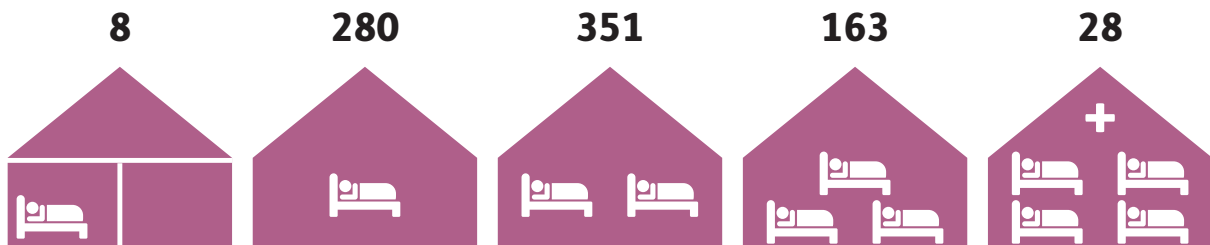
How we've delivered

This year we have decided to combine our traditional Annual Report to members – which showcases some of our highlights from the past year – with our Annual Report to Tenants, that contains lots of information on how we have performed over the past year. We hope that you enjoy this new format, and we welcome any comments, suggestions, or feedback that you may have.

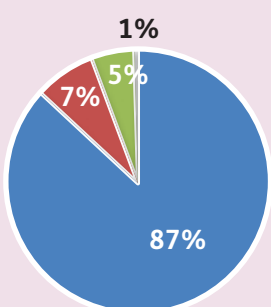
As part of this fresh style report, we will be comparing our performance as submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) with the overall Scottish National average as well as our Rural Peer Group (RPG) average, based on landlords of a comparable size operating in remote and rural locations. The landlords that the Association compares with are: Hjaltland HA, Lochaber HA, Lochalsh & Skye, and Orkney Islands Council.

Type	OHAL Average Rent	Scottish Average Rent	RPG
Bedsit	£64.73	£78.26	£68.04
1 Bed	£87.44	£83.46	£82.94
2 Bed	£96.09	£86.28	£93.25
3 Bed	£102.75	£93.96	£99.30
4 Bed +	£111.82	£103.72	£110.42

Total number of rented properties

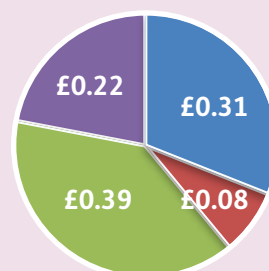


OHAL Average Rent



Where the money comes from:

- Rent
- Shared Ownership occupancy charge
- Services & factoring
- Other



Where the money goes (per £1 of rent):

- Cost of running the organisation
- Services & factoring
- Repairing & improving homes
- Net interest payable

Letting and managing our homes

Relets

Relets by source	
(i) the number of lets to existing tenants	10
(ii) the number of lets to housing list applicants	48
(iii) the number of mutual exchanges	3
(iv) the number of lets from other sources:	0
• section 5 referrals (RSLs)	18
• nominations from the local authority	0
• other	0
(vii) The number of other nominations from local authorities	0
Total number of lets excluding exchanges	76

New Tenancies sustained for more than a year, by source of let	
Existing tenants	100%
Applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless by the local authority	100%
Applicants from landlord's housing list	90.2%
Nominations from local authority	N/A
Others	100%

Relets increased from **65** during 2021/22 to **76** in 2022/23. Demand for housing here in Orkney continues to grow and at the end of March 2023 there were **1093** households on the waiting list of which **873** were assessed to have some housing need.

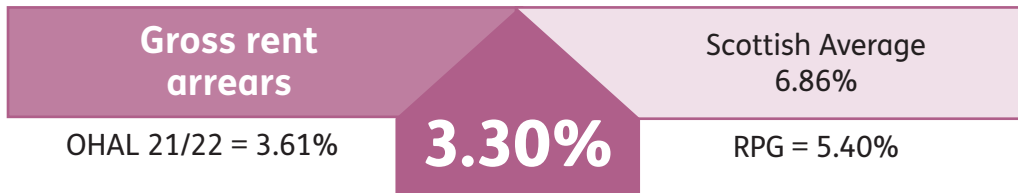
Tenants that think our rents offer value for money	OHAL 21/22	OHAL 22/23	Scottish Average	RPG
	87.30%	76.97%	81.79%	80.24%

Average length of time to relet properties	OHAL 21/22 = 9.46 Days	12.67 days	Scottish Average 55.61 Days	RPG = 21.80 Days
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Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant	OHAL 21/22	OHAL 22/23	Scottish Average	RPG
	7.55%	8.97%	7.42%	7.91%

Rent due lost through properties being empty	OHAL 21/22 = 0.21%	0.33%	Scottish Average 1.4%	RPG = 0.48%
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Rent collected as percentage of total rent due	OHAL 21/22	OHAL 22/23	Scottish Average	RPG
		100.32%	99.30%	99.03%



Developments

The Association remains dedicated to doing what we can to develop and build new homes. The past year has seen an increase in the price of materials, above already high inflation, as well as a shortage of labour to keep up with the demand, all of which have led to challenges in the financing of new projects. However, fourteen new homes were completed this year with a total of 8 properties in Kirkwall for rent.

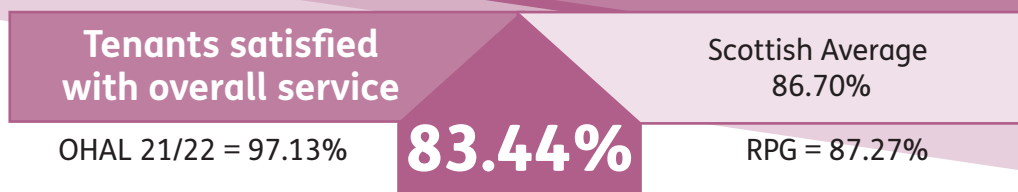
In addition to providing homes for rent, the Association also looks at other routes to homeownership. In November, 6 properties, consisting of 4 x 2 bedrooms and 2 x 3 bedrooms, were completed for sale as part of the New Supply Shared Equity scheme, which enables interested parties to purchase a percentage of these properties.

The Association is committed to providing quality, affordable homes here in Orkney and our Management Committee regularly monitor and maintain this delicate balance of keeping our rents affordable, making improvements to our homes and when possible, investing in new homes.



Liberator Close

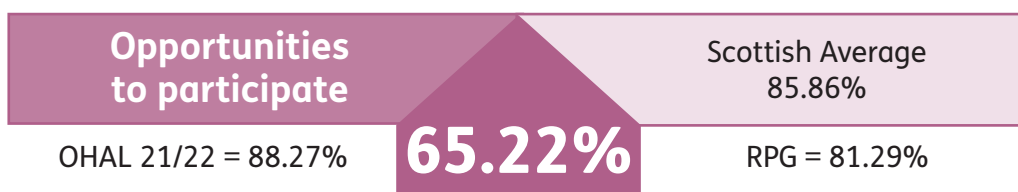
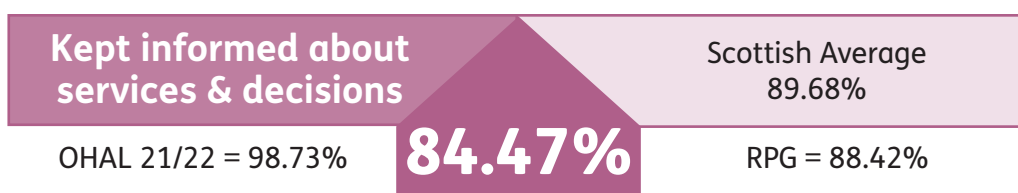
Satisfaction with services



One of the key satisfaction indicators asks tenants how satisfied they are with the overall service they receive from their landlord. In the most recent survey, we have seen a drop in satisfaction; we see this very much as a reflection of feedback we have had from tenants relating to the Garden & Grounds maintenance service.

As a responsive landlord, we listened to the feedback from our tenants and carried out a major service review, exploring multiple options and seeking input from our tenants to how they would like to see any future services.

As many as half of our tenants suggested they would like the option of either opting in or out of the grass cutting. We decided to trial this in some areas, closely monitoring the impact on these estates and tenant satisfaction with the service provided.



Complaints

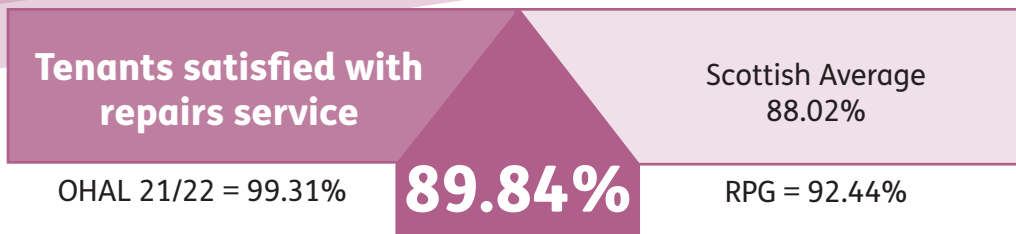
Average days taken to complete	Target days	OHAL 21/22	OHAL 22/23	Scottish Average	RPG
Stage 1	5	4.41	4.57	5.75	4.40
Stage 2	20	25.75	19.33	19.34	34.98

Management of neighbourhood

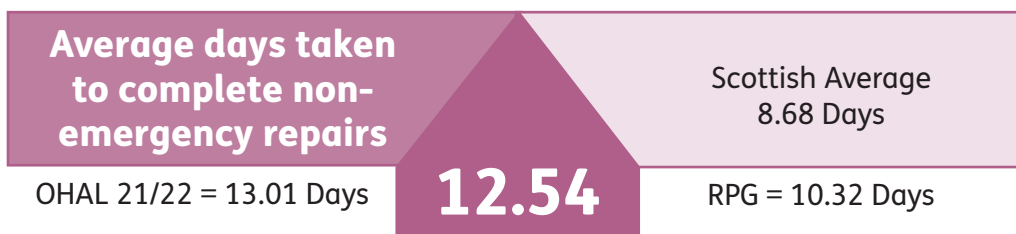
Satisfaction with landlords contribution to management of neighbourhood	OHAL 21/22	OHAL 22/23	Scottish Average	RPG
	87.54%	68.49%	84.30%	80.21%

Anti-social behaviour cases reported which were resolved	OHAL 21/22	OHAL 22/23	Scottish Average	RPG
	95%	97.96%	94.21%	93.59%

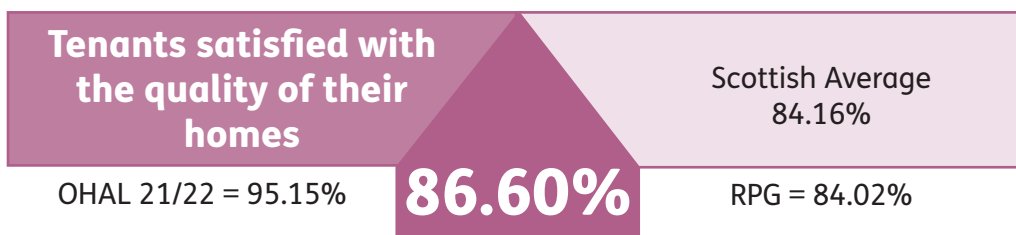
Repairs



Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (in hours)	OHAL 21/22	OHAL 22/23	Scottish Average	RPG
	2.17	3.76	4.17	4.14



Percentage of reactive repairs carried out and completed right first time	OHAL 21/22	OHAL 22/23	Scottish Average	RPG
	90.79%	82.78%	87.80%	87.01%



Although we see a dip in satisfaction levels here this is largely due to an increase in respondents selecting the 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' option.

Properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	OHAL 21/22	OHAL 22/23	Scottish Average	RPG
	61.77%	97.95%	79.02%	82.13%

In order to meet the SHQS, we are required by law to carry out electrical safety inspections every 5 years. The purpose being to ensure the safety of our tenants in their homes. However, this can sometimes present challenges with accessing certain properties. Staff work with tenants to clearly communicate our aims and as a result we are seeing an improvement in the number of inspections carried out each year.

Planned maintenance

14 Kitchens were replaced

30 homes received new sets of **Windows**

13 properties had renewed **Fascias** and **Rainwater goods**

14 new **Doors** were fitted

16 homes had their **Storage Heating** upgraded

84 Properties had their external **paintwork** refreshed.

The planned maintenance programme is an important part of the service offered by the Association, helping to keep tenants' homes efficient to run as well as meeting the standards set by the Scottish Government and our tenants' expectations. In the past year, costs have significantly increased, and this was highlighted to tenants in the 2023/24 rent consultation. Our Management Committee presented multiple options to tenants, giving them a chance to decide their priorities relating to planned maintenance, developing new homes and keeping rents affordable. The results showed that the majority of respondents preferred to postpone some of the planned maintenance to keep the level of rent increase affordable.



Finance Key Performance Indicators

Management & Maintenance admin cost	Target: less than £1,450	Actual: £1,388	✓
Reactive maintenance cost	Target: less than £675	Actual: £720	X
Interest Cover	Target: more than 110%	Actual: 271%	✓
Debt to net worth	Target: less than 40%	Actual: 20%	✓



Staffing Key Performance Indicators

Staff absence	Target: 2.7% or less	Actual: 2.56%	✓
Staff training and development	Target: 75%	Actual: 75%	✓

Care & Repair Service

The Association delivers the Orkney Care & Repair Service for the Local Authority, providing critical adaptations and small repairs to those private home owners or tenants in need of help.

Major Works

Advice only completions 379

Works complete 206

Disabled adaptations and major repairs – total spend £373,990

Small Repairs Service

Cases complete 1114

Total cost of works £61,835

Average cost per repair £55.51



Key Performance Indicators

Hospital Discharges completed by target	90% or more	100%
Client Satisfaction	95% or more	100%

Smoke Alarms: our local Care and Repair team fitted out 122 privately owned homes with the new interlinked heat and smoke detectors – with grants from Scottish Government – via Care and Repair Scotland.

Cosy Home Packs: with funding from Community-led Local Development, we were able to distribute packs to 80 of our most vulnerable customers.



Client feedback:

“I am so delighted to receive it all....”

“...so cosy and will definitely help me save electricity.....”

In response to the question – was there anything in the pack that you felt was missing – one reply was

“..... can't think of anything... A DRAM!! But that would be greedy!!.....”

“...many thanks for all your kindness.....!”

Staff Development & Achievements

Modern Apprentices

One of our first Modern Apprentices, Leanne Omand, left us to take up a role with another housing association in April 2022. Leanne joined the Association in 2015 and during her time with us she completed SVQs level 2 & 3 in Business Admin as well as CIH Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice.



Another of our Modern Apprentice success stories was Aimee Leask. During her time at the Association she achieved SVQ level 5 in Business Admin, CIH Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice and began a graduate apprenticeship. She left to pursue a project role with another local employer in March 2023. We were proud to see both Aimee and Leanne moving on to progress their careers. We will recruit a new Modern Apprentice in 2023/24.



Long Service

Mhairi Hughes reached the milestone of 25 years service at the Association in July 2022; what a fantastic achievement and we wish to thank Mhairi for her many years of hard work. As always, we were able to enjoy some cake to celebrate these successes.



Retirements

Sandy Dennison, Finance Manager for a little over 20 years with the Association, decided it was time to hang up his calculator and take his well-earned retirement. Members of his team commissioned musician Fiona Driver to compose a special piece to mark the occasion, which we got to hear played by Sandy himself.



Karen Kiluk, Admin Assistant with Orkney Care & Repair, retired after 18 years' service. We celebrated in the usual style with cake and Karen was presented with a beautiful Orkney

"creepie" in a wooden box engraved with the Care & Repair logo, kindly made by a colleague.



Staff Training & Development

During the year, Cat Browne, Senior Finance Assistant, began studying towards a Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting and Donna Wilson, Housing Services Officer, commenced her Chartered Institute of Housing, Level 4 Certificate in Housing Practice. In addition to this, training was delivered on a wide range of topics covering for example, health and safety, supporting tenants with budgeting & arrears management, employment law, factoring, cyber security, fuel poverty, mental health, managing damp and mould, energy efficiency, anti-social behaviour and first aid.

SUMMARY FINANCES 2022/23

Income and Expenditure		
21/22		22/23
£'000		£'000
5,014	Income from lettings etc	5,195
390	Other income	644
98	Surplus on property sales	68
9	Investment income	38
(1,339)	Repairs and maintenance	(1,225)
(85)	Improvements & adaptations	(51)
0	Irrecoverable rents	(2)
(1,320)	Other operating costs	(1,748)
(605)	Mortgage interest etc	(667)
(1,038)	Property depreciation	(1,075)
1,124	Net surplus	1,177
334	Pension deficit adjustment	(207)
1,458	Surplus for year	970

Balance Sheet		
21/22		22/23
£'000		£'000
89,321	Housing properties etc	89,439
3,440	Net current assets	2,554
(62,571)	Capital grants	(61,555)
(18,485)	Long term loans	(17,627)
(41)	Pension deficit creditor	(177)
11,664	Net assets	12,634
11,664	Capital & reserves	12,634

OHAL Contact Details:

Orkney Housing Association Limited

39a Victoria Street, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1DN

Tel: 01856 875253

Email: enquiries@ohal.org.uk

www.ohal.org.uk

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