

CHECK LIST



Dover District Council

# Annual Report to Tenants

2023/24

HOUSING  
SERVICES



# Foreword

As another year comes to a close, we have driven forward in our desire to continue to ensure the health and safety of our residents by prioritising gas safety, asbestos surveys, damp and mould inspections, amongst others.

Thank you for all our tenants who have given us access to complete these essential checks.

Our Repairs team have been working to write and prepare for procurement of the new repairs contract, which will start on 1st April 2025. This is the biggest contract in Housing at DDC and forms a crucial part of the service we provide and is key to maintaining and improving the condition of our housing properties. Work will now be carried out in the coming year to choose the contractor and start the period of mobilisation.

This annual report shows you how the Council is investing in your homes and building on the service we provide for residents and once again we wanted to thank you for your wonderful

cooperation and feedback. The positive relationship that we have with you, our customers, will continue to remain at the heart of our housing service.



**Cllr Pamela Brivio**  
Housing Portfolio Holder



**Nadeem Aziz**  
Chief Executive

## Our housing stock

The Council current has a housing stock of 4,844 units, which comprises of:

- 3928 general needs properties at social rent
- 44 General needs properties at affordable rent
- 133 Temporary housing properties
- 288 sheltered properties
- 34 Shared ownership properties
- 424 Total Leasehold properties

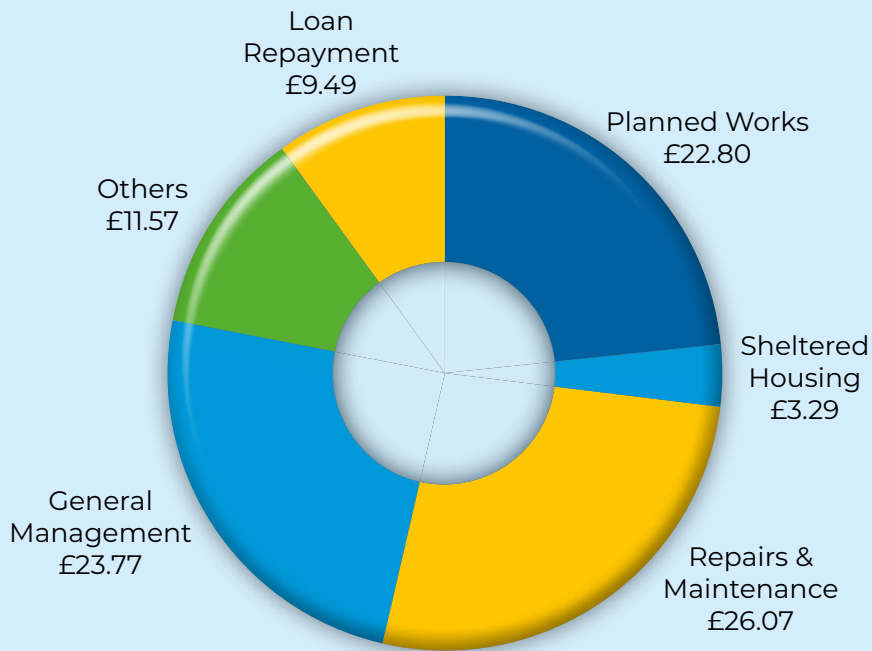


These are the property type and sizes our rented properties (not including leasehold, which do not include houses or bungalows)	Size property	Flat	House	Bungalow	Maisonette
	Studio	47			
	One bed	637	42	309	1
	Two bed	951	658	260	58
	Three bed	25	1320	3	25
	Four bed	5	79		1
Five bed			6		




# Rents and value for money

## How we spend your rent



Out of the average weekly rent of £96.99.

## How are we doing?

 **Benefit and Money advisors helped 1069 households,** compared to 1214 in 2022/3

 **£22,880,298** in collectable rent, compared to £21,027,972 in 2022/3

**1.08%** of rent is in arrears, compared to 1.42% in 2022/3

# Repairs and maintenance

- £2.7m total spend on repairs in the year 2023/4, compared to £2.3 million in 2022/3
- 99.3% number of emergency repairs completed on time, 92.14% of non-emergency repairs on time.
- 12,469 number of routine repairs completed in the year
- 89.75% satisfaction with repairs
- 16.00 average number of days taken to complete routine repairs.


## Improving your homes

Dover District Council is taking a comprehensive approach to ensuring the longevity, comfort, and sustainability of our housing

stock. Our commitment to providing safe and good quality homes is reflected in our meticulously planned

maintenance initiatives and drive to help tackle issues around damp and mould.


 Insulation 81

 Asbestos work 584 surveys, 466 removals

 Bathrooms replaced 105

 Windows replaced in 11 properties

 Roof replaced 70

 Kitchens replaced 81

 Door Entry System installations 11

 New Boilers 576

 External Decorations 422 properties.

## Safe homes

During 2023/24 we continued to carry out all the essential checks to ensure your homes were safe. The dedicated Compliance Team have established new risk assessment schedules and action plans to ensure that we continue to meet all property safety requirements.



## Damp and mould

We realise that following the very sad news of the death of the young child, Awaab Ishak many of you will be worried about problems with damp and mould.

### To help we:

- arrange for all reported cases of mould and damp to be inspected by one of our property team and will work with you to find a solution to any problems we come across. This includes a follow up inspection to make sure that any work we undertake is successful
- wrote to all tenants encouraging them to tell us about any issues of damp and mould they are experiencing
- have updated the information on our website about mould and damp
- have created special leaflets and mould and damp packs to hand out to tenants
- In the year 2023/4 151 properties had damp and mould cases reported each receiving 1st initial diagnosis and work ordered, however 28 were reported but we could not gain access.
- All cases we accessed have had their 1st diagnosis inspection and work ordered.
- 151 works orders have been completed.
- The total cost of work ordered up until 31 March 2024 is **£319,397**.

If you have any issues with excess moisture, please search 'damp' on our website for helpful tips.



## Disabled adaptations

Dover District Council offers a disabled adaptations service for our tenants and wherever possible we will try to make adjustments to the home that mean that our tenant can remain living there and enjoy a better quality of life.

Type of work	Numbers completed	Type of work	Numbers completed
Level Access Shower	4	Ramp Access	17
Drop Down Rails	6	Grab/Hand/Bannister Rails	166
Stairlift	13	Flush Floor Shower	43
Through Floor Lift	1	Overbath Showers	5

# Allocations and lettings



Empty homes are advertised through a choice-based lettings scheme called HomeChoice. It allows you to bid for the properties you want so that you can make choices about where you want to live.

In the summer of 2023, we moved to a new choice based letting system called HUUME. If you are registered on the list to move you will have received details about how to log in and bid for properties in the new system.

The Council receives many enquiries from people looking to rent a home in the district each year. At 31 March 2024 there were 1913 households on the register, with 1344 being homeseekers

and 569 being transfers. The applications on our housing register and the average time

they waited for properties is set out below from October 1st 2023 to 1st April 2024.

Type / Size	No. of Lets	Shortest wait	Longest wait	Average wait
Sheltered accomm.	25	3 months	27 years	3 years
Studio general needs	4	1 year	7 years	2 ½ years
1-bed general needs	50	7 weeks	6 years	2 years
2-bed flat or maisonette	44	4 months	4 years	1 year
2-bed house	35	3 months	12 years	2 years
3-bed flat or maisonette	0			
3-bed house	24	6 months	8 years	3 years
4-bed	7	7 months	11 years	5 years
5-bed	0			

*Numbers are rounded to the nearest whole figure.*

## Mutual exchange

A Mutual Exchange is a way that tenants can move home by 'swapping' their property with someone else.



Approved exchanges can take place between tenants with council houses or housing association properties anywhere in the UK. Dover District Council is a member of HomeSwapper

which provides a popular way for our customers to find a suitable exchange. More information about HomeSwapper can be found at: [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk).

Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 we helped 32 households exchange homes

## Reletting empty homes

For the period of 2023/24 the council let 354 properties.

The average number of days to re-let a property was 47.78 days - this is an improvement from the

previous year, which was 57.82 days.

## Tenancy types and increasing housing supply

DDC has three developments on site, 2 plots available for self-build in Aycliffe, 10 homes on Mongeham road, in deal, with a further 7 coming forwards in

Sholden. DDC have a further total 130 homes approved for development all across the district.

Over the year we have also purchased 27 homes to be used as homelessness accommodation.

## Leasehold services

Dover District Council's dedicated Homeownership Officer supports our leaseholders and shared owners by acting as a first point of contact for queries in regards

to service charges, leasehold/ landlord responsibilities and payment issues.

The Homeownership Officer also works closely with Property Services to ensure that, in the

event of new contracts or major planned works, leaseholders are consulted under the Section 20 process. Estimate service charges for our leasehold flats amounted to £371,454 in 2023/4.



# Estate management

**The Assistant Housing Officers who cover the Estates continue to work hard to ensure our Housing estates are clean, tidy, and safe.**

They completed 46 inspections from March-October 2023 on estates across the whole district, highlighting any outstanding

repairs and maintenance, cleaning issues and waste issues. The Officers work closely with other departments, such as Waste

Services, Property Services, Parks and Open Spaces and external contractors to ensure the blocks are up to the required standards.

## Housing management

Housing Officers have continued to support our tenants during the year: setting up new tenancies, helping tenants move, dealing with general issues and supporting people. The team are continuing a regular schedule of Estate Walkabouts to identify is-

suues, defects and improvements required which were then raised for the Housing Property team to address. They have carried out a programme of block inspections, to ensure compliance for fire and other risks in more than 70% of our blocks. We have also

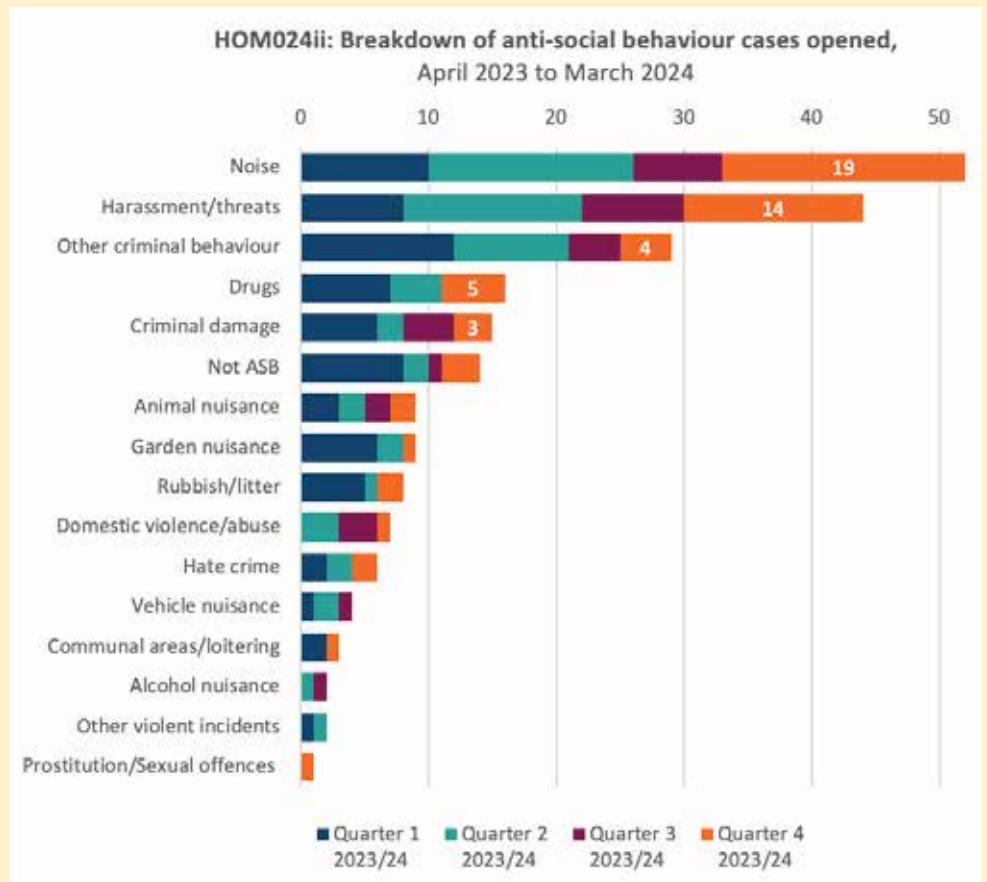
continued our annual tenancy checks to visit some households and assess the condition of the tenancy and property, to ensure properties are being managed well and in line with the tenancy agreement.

## Tackling anti social behaviour (ASB)

The housing team have dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) housing officers who respond promptly to enquiries and, in cases where they are not the lead investigator, refer these to appropriate agencies and close the case.

We have investigated numerous types of complaints this quarter, with the top five categories being noise (19 cases), harassment/threats (14 cases), drugs (5 cases), other criminal behaviour (4 cases), criminal damage (3 cases). Over the year (April 2023 to March 2024), the team has investigated 221 ASB cases. A breakdown is provided in the chart.

Enforcement action during the quarter includes two notices of seeking possession/suspended possession orders. The Tenancy Support team work closely with Tenant to help enable them to sustain their tenancy and cause little disturbance to their community. Please see the breakdown of the ASB cases opened in the last year:



## Customer service

### Communications

We handled this year since the 31st of march handled 2230 calls a month, with 6,072 website hits.

- Created an online form for tenants to contact their Housing Officer with enquiries and requests for service.
- Launched an online form to use to report issues of mould and damp with our property team.
- Improved the information we have about the housing service online.



### Measuring performance

We try to find a range of ways in which we can let you know how we are doing. This report is one of those ways but others include:

- Sending you a biannual tenant newsletter with information in about our performance
- Keeping our web site up to date with information about our performance
- Answering your specific enquiries when you contact us

# Ways to get involved



**13**  
Community events within our Estates



**17**  
Formal meetings



**1**  
Policy scrutinised

**Tenants are at the heart of what we do at Dover District Council and we work closely with them to improve services and make sure we are providing an opportunity of independent Scrutiny.**

Tenants were given the exciting opportunity this year to be part of the Repairs Focus Group and feed into the new multi-million pound contract for Responsive Repairs. The Tenants thoroughly enjoyed this process and Neil Drakley said "We were given the

opportunity to tell DDC exactly what we wanted to see in the new Contract, and we thank the team for keeping us informed and involved throughout the process. We are looking forward to help choose the new contractor in 2024/25"

In 2024/25 we plan to take all new Policies to be scrutinised by the Dover District Tenants' Consultative Group following great feedback from the group in 2023/24.

## Transparency, influence and accountability

**From April 2023 to March 2024, we:**

- Received an average of 4 stage 1 complaints per month for Housing Management and 8 Housing Assets
- Housing Management responded to 87.75% of all stage 1 complaints within the 10 working day standard
- DDC handled 5 escalated complaints at stage 2 of our complaints process for Housing Management, of which none were upheld
- DDC responded to 91.2% of all Properties Stage 1 complaints (Responsive Repairs, Capital Works, Voids, Assets and Compliance) within the prescribed 10 working days
- DDC upheld 31.54% of complaints made at stage 1 (where we accepted fault, apologised and fixed the issue)
- DDC handled 14 escalated complaints at stage 2 of our complaints process for Housing Repairs of which 29% were upheld
- A total of 3 Housing Ombudsman cases were investigated.

## Tenant Satisfaction Measures

**Tenant Satisfaction Measures are a recent regulatory mandate imposed by the Regulator of Social Housing, in which DDC must conform.**

The primary objective is to empower social housing tenants in holding their landlords to account.

Since April 1, 2023, organisations providing social housing, including us, have been obligated to commence the collection of performance data in critical areas like maintenance, safety inspections, and

complaint handling. This data will be gathered through our normal performance gathering method and also new tenant perception surveys to gauge tenants' experiences.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures can be traced back to the government's 2020 Social Housing White Paper, specifically the Charter for

Social Housing Residents. The enforcement of these standards falls under the purview of the Regulator of Social Housing

For the 2023/24 results, please see our website: [www.dover.gov.uk/Housing/Housing-for-Tenants/Transparency/Tenant-Satisfaction-Measures-2023-24.aspx](http://www.dover.gov.uk/Housing/Housing-for-Tenants/Transparency/Tenant-Satisfaction-Measures-2023-24.aspx)