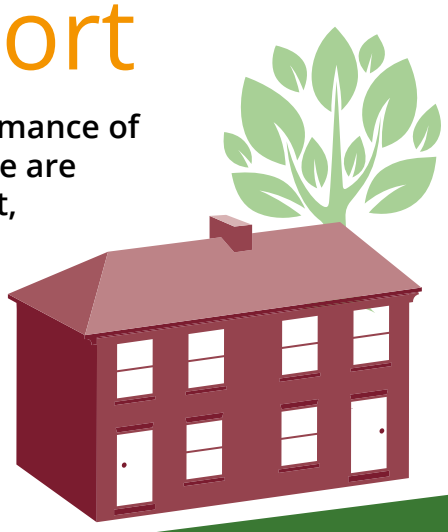
Our Homes

Annual report for Chesterfield Borough Council tenants

Welcome to the 2019/20 housing annual report



The annual report is a summary for tenants on the performance of their landlord. In this report, you'll find updates on how we are doing in all our service areas to make sure we are efficient, effective and we meet your needs. This report is designed to show the key areas of our performance under the different standards set out by our regulator 'Homes England'.

The report sets out what we have done and what we are going to do to make services better in the year ahead.

If you want to find out more about the different regulatory standards referred to in the annual report please visit: **www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards**

"It's been a busy year for us in which we've made real progress in the provision of high-quality housing services and we are proud to see the results of our projects to improve our existing homes and environments.

"As you know in March 2020, things changed following the Covid-19 outbreak. This has impacted on how we are delivering our services as well as our priorities for the future.

"We are investing in technology to ensure we can keep connected with tenants and make sure our services are more flexible and efficient. Partnership working is also being prioritised to ensure tenants impacted by the health and socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 get the support they need. We will also focus on the availablity of housing by creating more affordable homes across the borough.

"I'm very proud that our team continued to deliver responsive and quality services throughout lockdown. The council has been actively engaged in delivering Derbyshire's response to the Government's "Everyone In" initiative, a national effort to house all rough sleepers following the outbreak of Covid-19. Following the success of the 'Everyone In' initiative the council and its partners are now working on 'Keeping Everyone In' to ensure that all rough sleepers have an offer of suitable, permanent accommodation and wrap-around support services to give them the very best chance of re-building their lives.

"Stay and keep safe and we are looking forward to continuing to work closely with you during the year to come."

Cllr Chris Ludlow
cabinet member for housing

CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Autumn 2020

Chesterfield estate benefits from major facelift

A £4.4m regeneration project to improve the look and feel of the Grangewood estate has been completed - see photos below.

As part of the project, flats on the estate have had many internal and external improvements. This included fully redecorating the communal areas (*see hallway below*), upgrading lighting and electrical installations to make the areas lighter and brighter for residents, fitting new secure entrance doors to all blocks, and the installation of new fire rated doors to each individual flat.

The external render and roof coverings on each block of flats have also been replaced and concrete repairs have been carried out on communal stairwells.

As the council is committed to ensuring that its existing housing stock is as energy efficient as possible the windows and insulation in each property and all communal areas have also been upgraded to improve the thermal efficiency of these homes.

Landscaping works have been completed across the whole estate with existing footpaths being renewed to help improve access around the estate and to each property. Fencing has been installed to enclose each of the outside communal areas to ensure that local families have an outdoor space that they can enjoy safely.

Markham Court

Markham Court is the latest of the council's older person's accommodation to benefit from a facelift.

As part of the project, 21 self-contained one and two-bedroom contemporary flats have been remodelled, with each property benefitting from new open plan kitchens and living areas. All flats have also received a full rewire, new heating system and new bathrooms with level access showers.

The communal areas have also been remodelled to make more efficient use of the space and now include a new scooter store for the residents, a laundry room, as well as an open plan communal kitchen area for all residents to use and enjoy.

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Tenant involvement and empowerment

Chesterfield Borough Council is committed to engaging and working with tenants to improve their quality of life as well as ensuring that they have the opportunity to play an active role in shaping what we do, and how do it.

During 2019/20 we:

- Worked with a tenant challenge panel and key staff from across the council to review our tenant involvement arrangements to help us meet government regulatory standards.
- Recruited an additional 16 members to our Chesterfield Active Tenants (ChAT) database - we now have 126 tenants on our ChAT database who work closely with us so we can make sure everything that we do meets the needs of tenants.
- Distributed 25 litter picking kits to community groups, schools and individuals who are committed to helping keep Chesterfield litter free.
- Organised one-off litter picks with groups in areas who requested our help, as well as supporting a regular litter picking group in the Racecourse area.

- Worked with the tenant challenge panel to complete reviews of the anti-social behaviour service and the arrangements for involving tenants
- Organised fun days to introduce new services into local areas and help improve community spirit across the borough.
- Set up focus groups with tenants to identify how we could make improvements to the council's website pages and identify ways we could enhance return rates of our satisfaction surveys.
- Supported community groups with tree planting on estates, wildflower sowing and developing community gardens.

- Attended events with our partner agencies as part of health and wellbeing initiatives
- Facilitated consultation events using the mobile office at Grangewood and Staveley to enable residents to have their say on proposed environmental improvements in these areas.

Our team are committed to finding new innovative ways of working so that we can continue to engage with our tenants and local communities using digital and virtual methods.

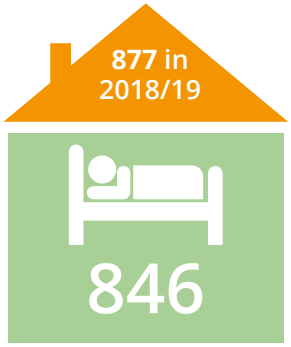
If you are interested in working with us, please contact the tenant participation team by emailing: **tpenquiries@chester ield.gov.uk,** calling **01246 345147** or visiting: www.chesterfield.gov.uk/get-involved

Tenancy standard

This standard looks at how we allocate our properties and support our tenants.

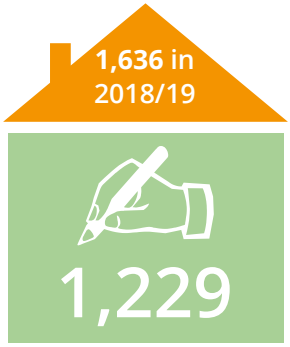
2019/20 figures 2018/19 figures

8,968 total number of properties managed

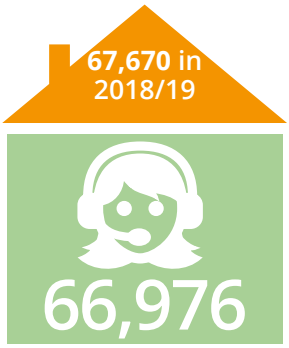


846 properties that have been let

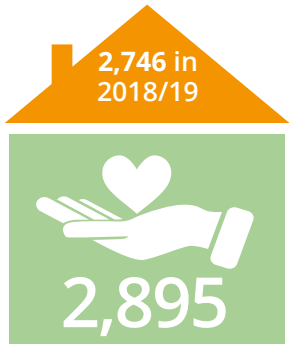
242 number of empty homes



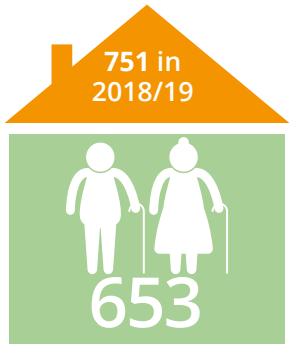
1,229 number of households on the housing register



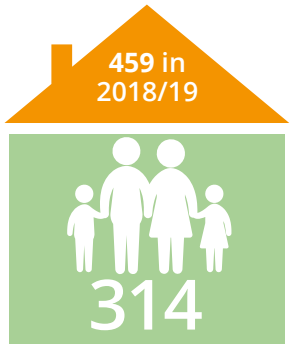
66,976 number of calls to Careline



2,895 emergency calls - (uninjured people) who had fallen and were lifted by Careline team



653 number of older people supported in their homes



314 people supported by Tenancy Sustainment services

63.3 days to re-let empty properties (61 days last year).

Satisfaction with Chesterfield Borough Council as a landlord 86.4%.

Over 90% of tenants remain in tenancies one year after support starts.

The number of properties that are recorded as empty continued to be higher during 2019/20 due to a number of them being held back for tenants from our sheltered housing schemes to move into temporarily while refurbishment work was carried out.

In addition, the council joined the Home Options Partnership last year and implemented a new allocations policy and IT system to deliver the lettings service. This resulted in slight delays in allocating properties which caused an increase in the number that are empty on a short-term basis. However, the new allocations policy has made a number of improvements and enables the council to manage the lettings process in accordance with applicant's needs.

Effective management of our empty homes is a key priority for us and we have launched a customer process improvement project to reduce the time taken to get properties ready for letting and ensure new tenants receive timely positive offers.

Tenancy sustainment team - here to help

Our tenancy sustainment officers are on hand to help tenants claim the housing element of their Universal Credit and help them make their claims, so their rent and benefits do not get stopped. We also give other support to tenants and provide an essential link with service providers such as for benefits and pensions, social care, mental health and dealing with drug and alcohol issues.

Although other services in the council can help with Universal Credit claims, the tenancy sustainment team provide support for those who are most at risk of losing their homes because they may struggle with money, claiming benefits and may have an illness or disability.

We can help with requests for backdating housing benefit, challenging sanctions on universal credit claims, and help tenants claim discretionary housing payments to reduce their rent arrears. We support tenants to budget and make responsible choices relating to money.

We help hundreds of vulnerable tenants to keep their tenancies each year, preventing higher rent arrears and resulting in considerable improvements to rent accounts. Last year, over 90% of people were still in their homes a year after receiving our support. The costs involved when tenancies end can be very high, so the service saves a lot of money which helps keep rents as low as possible.

If you think you would benefit from this kind of support or know someone who does, please call 01246 959560.

Neighbourhood and community standard

This standard sets out how we should work with other agencies to manage estates and tackle anti-social behaviour.

Number of:

Over 79% of tenants are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

This standard looks at how we maintain your homes

Carried out	Average number of days to complete a responsive repair
34,096 responsive repairs - up from 32,940 in 2018/19	**7 days**
8,865 properties required a gas service	Overall repair satisfaction
100% completed	**74.2%**

Amount of spending to maintain Decent Homes Standard

£14.56m on property mantenance

£2.47m sheltered home conversions

£3.01m on new build homes and acquisitions

Decent Homes spend - £20.04m

Number of properties with replacement:	
Heating systems	233
Roofs	290
Kitchens	309
Bathrooms	120
Major adaptations	98
Satisfaction with home	80%

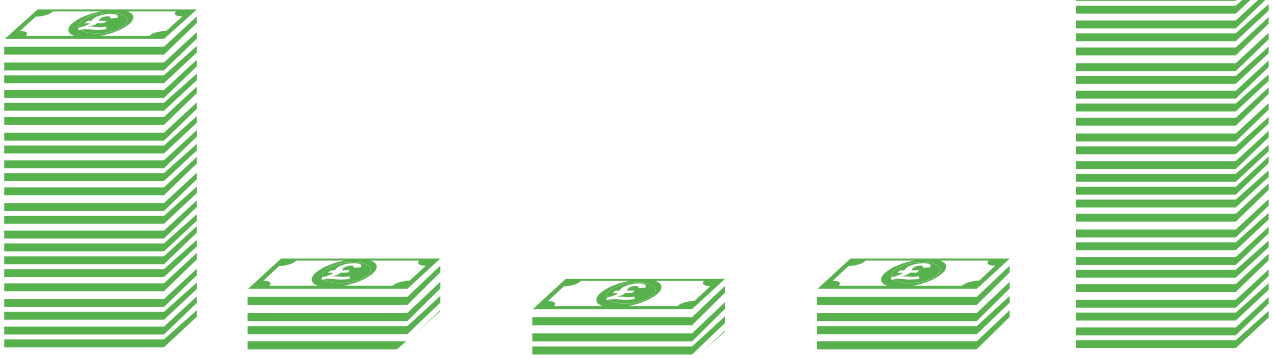
100% of our housing stock is of Decent Homes Standard

Value for money

This standard looks at how we spend money collected in rent

Average 52 week rent - £77.53 (up from £76.65 in 2018/19)

Rent collection rate - 99.1 per cent (up from 98.5 per cent in 2018/19)



Rent £35.5m | Garage rents £0.85m | Service charges £0.4m | Other £0.5m | Total £37.3m

How much we spent

Area of expenditure	Average cost per property	For every £1 in rent
Maintaining properties (total cost) of which:	**£3,007**	**76p**
Major works and cyclical work	£2,351	59.4p
Responsive repairs and void works	£656	16.6 p
Housing management (total cost) of which:	**£314**	**7.9p**
Rent collection	£86	2.2p
Letting homes	£58	1.5p
Tenant participation	£20	0.5p
Tackling anti-social behaviour	£53	1.3p
Tenancy management	£97	2.5p
Maintaining estates	£97	2.5p
Supported housing for elderly tenants	£97	2.5p
Other costs (IT, offices, HR, finance)	£441	11.1p
Total cost per property	**£3,956**	**£1**

Priorities for 2020/21

- Transforming tenant engagement
- Transforming housing management services
- Improving supported housing and Careline services for older people

Invest in the council's ICT systems to become more effective and efficient and improve service to tenants

Delivering new and modernised quality homes in Staveley

Chesterfield Borough Council is investing £7.1m to undertake significant modernisation programmes to homes in Staveley as part of its continued commitment to deliver excellent quality homes that meet needs of the local people.

As part of the modernisation programmes, homes at Pullman Close, Mallard Court, Leander Court and Aston Court in Staveley will benefit from extensive internal and external improvements.

Homes at Pullman Close are the first to undergo a facelift and works started on site in mid-June 2020. The homes will benefit from having new doors and windows installed that will help create a fresh and modernised look, as well as providing tenants with more secure homes and additional environmental benefits.

The refurbishment plans for Mallard Court and Leander Court will allow the council to provide affordable, modern and attractive housing for older people in Staveley.

Each home will benefit from a newly renovated kitchen and lounge area. Each bathroom will be converted into a wet room with a level access shower. The communal areas and outdoor spaces will also be restored, creating brighter open spaces for residents to get together, socialise and combat loneliness.

The proposed refurbishment at Aston Court will see high quality homes delivered for people in the area and also includes plans to build an additional four new town houses, increasing the supply of council homes in Staveley.

The designs for Mallard Court and Leander Court are almost complete and the modernisation programme has started.

The council is also currently in consultation with residents to ensure the individual needs of each resident can be met and permanent or temporary moves will be provided while the works are completed.

Discretionary Housing Payments

It is possible that you may be able to get extra help towards your rent through the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme.

Discretionary Housing Payments are payments we can make to people in exceptional hardship, who need extra help with their housing costs

You can apply for Discretionary Housing Payments if you receive Housing Benefit or the housing costs element of Universal Credit.

For more information or if you wish to make a claim, please visit: **www.chesterfield.gov.uk/dhp or phone 01246 345484 or call in to our customer service centre.**

The council is committed to making sure that our residents are not missing out on the money they are entitled to. That's why our benefits advisors are on hand to help you find out more about other grants available to you and help you with the application process.

More information is available at: www.chesterfield.gov.uk/benefits-and-advice/benefits-advice

Supporting our vulnerable residents

The council's Careline and Support Services have continued to support over 4,000 older and vulnerable residents throughout the Covid-19 outbreak.

Careline allows people to maintain their independence in their own home, by providing services which meet their needs whilst also delivering essential preventative actions in support of social care, GPs and primary care, and more acute NHS services.

Between 23 March and 26 April 2020, the Careline Monitoring and Response Centre received 6,160 non-emergency calls and 487 emergency calls. Of these emergency calls, the team were able to visit and directly assist 131 people who had fallen in their home, whilst 72 of the calls resulted in referrals to the ambulance service for emergency health issues.

Councillor Chris Ludlow, cabinet member for housing, said: "Careline is a critical service and at this unprecedented time it has proved to be an essential lifeline for many older members of our community. Throughout the Covid-19 outbreak, our dedicated team have been working around the clock to answer calls and ensure everyone gets the support they need.

"By providing advice and responding to falls, the team also helped to reduce pressure on the emergency services, as well as providing reassurance for the most vulnerable and their families."

If you or a family member live in Chesterfield Borough and could benefit from the Careline service, you can find out more information and how to register by calling 0300 3230076 or visiting: **www.chesterfield.gov.uk/living-here/people-and-families/vulnerable-elderly-disabled-people/careline-and-support-service/careline-and-response**