

Annual Report 2011-2012

Our commitment is 'to provide good quality housing services that meet your needs and are good value for money.'

The annual report shows how we did last year. Figures are based on the financial year April 2011 to March 2012.

Annual report

A traffic light system is used to assess how well we have performed.



a lot of work to do to meet the quality standard

some work to do to meet the standard

doing well, standard met

- The tick says how we are doing
- Figures in brackets represent the performance in 2010/11

This report has been produced with a residents' focus group. We'd like to thank them for their assistance.

Council residents means council tenants, council leaseholders and people living in properties managed by a Resident Management Organisation.

A full copy of our annual report is available at:
www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housingannualreport.



Tenancy

Tenure



Provide either introductory or secure tenancies.

Give new residents a copy of either their tenant or lease agreements and information on what the content means.

Check our homes are occupied legally and take action where they are not.

How have we met the standard?

- **91 per cent** of new tenants said they were satisfied with the helpfulness of staff during their first contact.
- Every new tenant received a copy of the information pack and DVD.
- **83** residents were helped by the tenancy support team.
- Identified **41** (53) illegally occupied properties with legal action being taken to

recover these homes.

- A draft Tenancy and Rent Strategy and Policy was supported at committee level.

What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Set out how the council will let properties on flexible tenancies.
- Look at how we can improve the detection of illegal occupiers.

Rents



Aim to provide an efficient, effective and responsive rent collection service.

Review rents and service charges each year and provide information on how we calculate them.

How have we met the standard?

- **97 per cent** of rent owed was collected.
- There has been a small increase in total rent arrears of £120k, with a total arrears level of **£3.66m** (£3.54m), 3.3 per cent of the total rent collected.
- Reduced the number of tenants with more than seven weeks of arrears from 7.8 per cent to **7.0 per cent**.
- Introduced telephone and internet rent services, so you can check balances and pay online.
- Improved the council's 'Your Rent

Explained' booklet to give clearer information.

- Reported on and reviewed rents and service charges at committee level.

What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Promote and increase the use of self-service payment options.
- Provide more customer focussed debt advice.
- Introduce paperless direct debit.
- Streamline the sign up process for new tenants.

Allocations



Provide information on how we allocate properties and how to apply for housing.

Ensure we are making best use of the housing available to meet a range of housing needs and demands.

How have we met the standard?

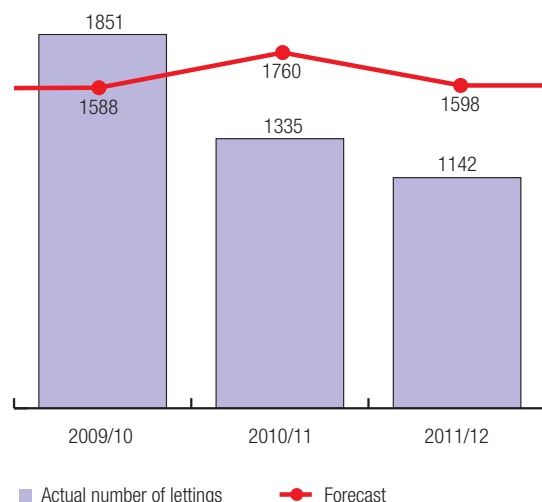
- **1,142** (1,335) applicants were housed.
- **6,531** (6,585) applicants were on the housing queues at the end of March 2012.
- **18** (10) new hidden homes were completed and 38 more were started on Rollo estate.
- Letting turnaround times improved for the fourth year in a row down to **24** days (25) meeting our target time.
- **285** applicants were assisted with buying their homes by the home ownership unit. **39** households purchased their freehold.
- **491** (425) households were in temporary accommodation at the end of the year because of an increase in the number of households requiring assistance.
- **46** (50) applicants transferred through the under occupation scheme, freeing up larger family homes.

What do we need to do next?

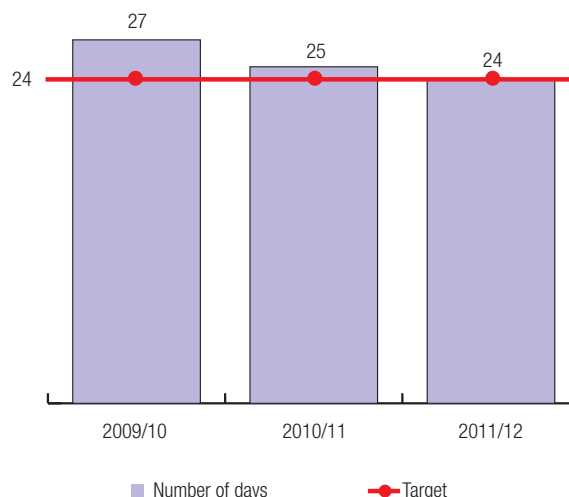
We will:

- Review the housing allocation scheme in light of government's housing reforms with a focus on better meeting local residents' needs.
- Work with registered providers and developers to deliver 330 units of new affordable housing in the borough.
- Increase our efforts to encourage under occupiers to downsize.
- Contain the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation.

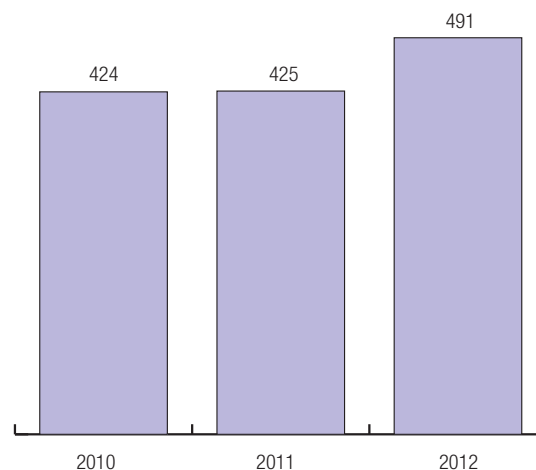
Number of lettings - actual and forecast



Average void turnaround time (days)



Number of households in temporary accommodation



Neighbourhood and community

Local area co-operation



Work with residents to improve local facilities and the environment. Work with other agencies and residents to protect them from risk and prevent harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults. Generally, work to achieve wider borough objectives including improving employment opportunities and prospects.

How have we met the standard?

- Introduced the Housing into Work strategy which aims to improve prospects of employment for our tenants.
- Worked with residents' associations to improve our estates, projects included; opening of remote gardens at Lavender Sweep and landscaping improvements on Patmore estate.
- Improved the processes in relation to harm, risk and protection, particularly in how we deal with 16 and 17-year-olds who are threatened with homelessness.

What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Introduce the council's Housing into Work pilot and apprenticeships for young people.
- Work to support the council's Aspiration agenda that aims to support troubled families and younger people into employment.
- Support the continued delivery of affordable housing by developers by reviewing the borough wide investment plan.

Tackling anti-social behaviour and crime



Work with other services and the police to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB). Take action against offenders and tell residents about the outcomes.

How have we met the standard?

- Been proactive in preventing and taking robust action against ASB.

	2010/11	2011/12
Number of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts	8	16
Number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders	3	2
Number of Notices Seeking Possession	44	44
Evictions for Anti-Social Behaviour	8	11

- **68 per cent** of those surveyed said they were satisfied with the ASB service.

- Received runner-up award from RSPCA for our approach to responsible pet ownership.
- Signed up to the new Respect ASB Charter for Housing that shows our commitment to effectively tackling ASB.

What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Consider developing a young persons' community payback scheme aimed at young people who have committed ASB.
- Improve the way we communicate with those affected by ASB and inform them of action and outcomes.

Neighbourhood management



Make sure estates are maintained to a good standard and improved where possible. Respond to emergencies in a timely manner. Work with other services and the police to keep your communities and estates clean and safe.

How have we met the standard?

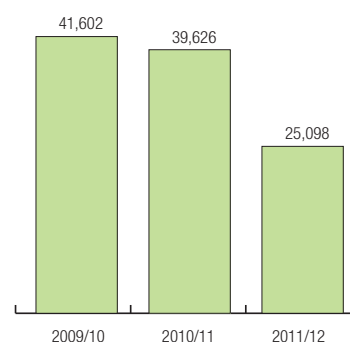
- **33,547** (28,229) emergency calls were handled.
- Regular inspections of communal areas on estates were carried out.
- Continued reductions in the level of graffiti by 14,528m² from 39,626 to **25,098** demonstrating the success of our 'Educating, Erasing and Enforcement' approach.
- Successfully convicted a prolific 'tagger' in the borough resulting in a 27 month jail term and delivered 17 educational sessions during 2011/12.

What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Work with residents to develop and assess regeneration options for Winstanley/York Road and Alton estates.

Graffiti Removal Service - Graffiti removed (m2)



Tenant involvement and empowerment

Customer service, choice and complaints



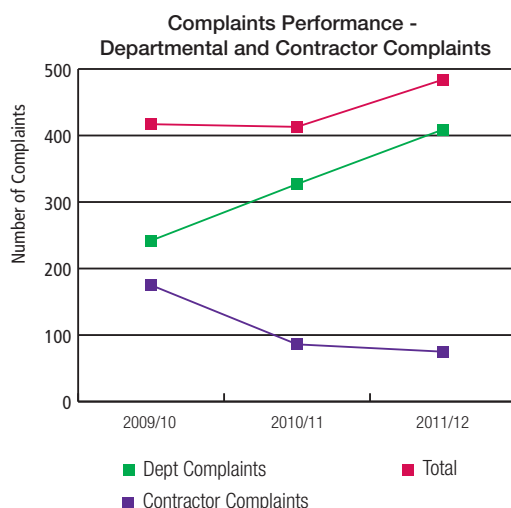
Give residents good quality, up to date information.

Make sure residents know how to complain.

Learn from comments and complaints.

How have we met the standard?

- Dealt with **484** (413) complaints (including those about contractors).
- **96 per cent** (88 per cent) of complaints were responded to within the target time of 10 working days.
- Four independent surveys were carried out (looking at housing management, repairs, anti-social behaviour and new tenants). All indicated high levels of satisfaction with the way we dealt with residents' enquiries.



What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Continue to improve how we learn from resident's complaints.
- Introduce new arrangements in relation to progressing a resident complaint to the ombudsman.

Involvement and empowerment



Encourage resident involvement. Inform residents about services and give them the opportunity to check and challenge how well the department is doing.

How have we met the standard?

- **53** (35) estate inspections have been carried out with residents and councillors.
- Increased the number of accredited residents' associations to **71** (54) covering over 10,000 properties.
- The areas the housing panels and area housing teams cover were changed to improve residents' ability to check our performance.
- **£261,000** (£250,000) spent on community projects that residents told us were a priority.
- Improved how we work with resident management organisations (RMOs). Supported them to manage more effectively within their management agreements and delivered training packages.
- Three resident rewards were awarded to people who assisted in the successful prosecution of those committing ASB.

What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Publish a Resident Management Organisation Strategy, this is a plan which sets out how we will support and work with RMOs.
- Introduce community champions awards to acknowledge individuals who make a positive difference to their local area.

Understanding more and responding to diverse needs



Treat residents with fairness and respect. Make sure services meet a range of needs and are easily accessible to all residents.

How have we met the standard?

- Work started on a single register for older persons' housing.
- Published housing equalities information on the website.
- Improved how we identify properties in our stock that are suitable for those with a disability.
- Delivered **170** (291) disabled adaptations for council and private residents.

What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Continue to review the time it takes to let properties to disabled applicants.

Home

Quality of accommodation



Meet the decent homes standard and where possible decent homes plus standard.

How have we met the standard?

- Continued to meet the decent homes standard by investing a further **£25.4m** (£32m) on the council's housing stock.
- Started **30 major works** projects on estates (including kitchen/bathroom modernisation and communal heating projects).
- Achieved the target to improve 340 non-decent homes in the private sector.
- **88 per cent** (88 per cent) resident satisfaction amongst those who had major works on their estates.

What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Continue to maintain properties to the decent homes standard.
- Identify estate improvement works where funding is available.
- Complete a survey of the condition of council housing stock and develop a Wandsworth housing and estate standard.



Repairs and maintenance



Provide an efficient and cost effective repairs service, which gets the job done right first time. Carry out health and safety checks/inspections.

How have we met the standard?

- **£24.7m** (£24.7m) spent on repairs.
- **95.2 per cent** (95 per cent) repairs were completed within target time.
- Made sure all housing had an up to date fire risk assessment.
- Carried out annual gas servicing to **99.79 per cent** (98.99 per cent) tenanted properties that have gas appliances.

What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Introduce a resident repair plan intended to give increased recognition to those who keep their property in good condition and work with households who are having problems maintaining their property.
- Continue to improve repairs completed within target time.
- Improve how we measure what we and our contractors are doing including measuring if jobs have been done right the first time.

Annual gas servicing completed



Value for money

Neighbourhood management



Consult residents on major works projects and inform them of smaller works, which do not require statutory consultation. Aim to achieve value for money by tendering services where, for instance, contracts have come to an end. Each year, look at our thirty year business plan to check it remains financially viable.

How have we met the standard?

Balancing the books

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is money set aside to spend on council housing. The council has an excellent track record of managing this account.

We continued to make sure that there is enough money to provide high quality housing management services and to maintain housing not just now but into the future.

This year, the council bought out of the HRA subsidy system. It cost us £434m to do this and means that we keep all our rent income rather than giving up some £25m rent per year to help other council landlords maintain their stock.

Key figures:

- The average weekly management cost fell to **£17.82 (£18.97)** making us one of the most competitive providers of housing management services in London.

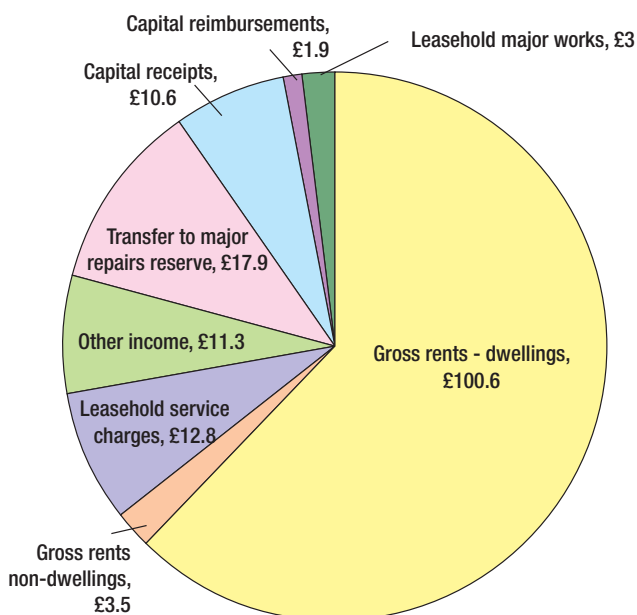
- The average weekly maintenance cost per dwelling fell slightly to **£29.37 (£29.73)**.
- Average weekly rent is **£112.38 (£104.64)** (excluding service charges).
- It took on average **20.7 days (23.7 days)** to process new housing benefit claims.
- **32 (23)** people were convicted for benefit fraud.

What do we need to do next?

We will:

- Make more services and information available online on the council's website.
- Closely monitor how much we spend on temporary accommodation and take action to contain costs where possible.
- Plan for the Government's Welfare Benefit reforms.

Housing revenue account
income 2011/12 (£ millions)



Housing revenue account
expenditure 2011/12 (£ millions)

