



Annual Report 2022-23

A welcome introduction from the chair

The work of Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association is overseen by a small number of volunteer Board members, each bringing their own experience, skills and ideas. We are also always looking to increase our tenants' representation on the Board as tenants of the Association will bring specific customer experience as well as other skills.

Last year we began our focus on improving the energy efficiency of all our existing properties to assist tenants with the challenges of energy costs and reducing our carbon footprint. In line with our 2022 Asset Management strategy these measures will be rolled out at a faster pace as the years progress.

As a Board we are aware that many of our tenants, and all of us, face cost of living challenges. The Board were resolute in endeavouring to keep our rents affordable and last year we were able to limit the rent increase to below inflation.

As well as providing our existing tenants with homes and support we completed 26 new houses and flats. It was very satisfying for all of us to see the continuation of our development in these challenging times.

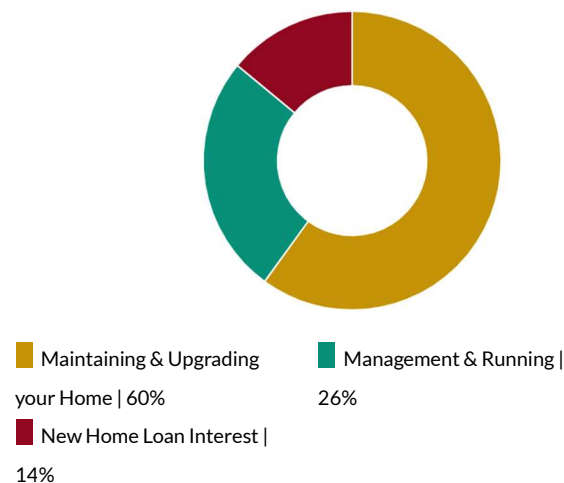
Ian Young

Chair of Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association Board

What is your rent spent on?

We continue to invest the majority of your rent in maintaining and upgrading properties. This has included new heating systems, windows, insulation upgrades, reactive repairs and proactive maintenance to prevent deterioration or damage. Less than a third is spent on running costs and employing staff members. A small amount goes towards building new homes to meet the high demand for housing, which is mainly interest on loans from banks that we must pay back. A lot of grant comes from the Scottish Government to build new affordable housing to keep our costs lower.

Our Spending



Tenancy Support

342 households helped by our advice service and £153,900 additional income secured for our tenants:

Our service continues adapting to support tenants as needs evolve. We're proud to maximize incomes, aid with housing and adaptations, and improve quality of life for our residents.

Most new tenancies initiated this year were sustained through ongoing support. Around 75% of new tenancies received a follow-up visit to ensure tenants were happy with their properties, any issues were followed-up early on and that they had everything they needed to make the best start.

Tenants facing financial hardship continued accessing advice to maximize incomes and meet rent payments. Where health needs evolved, housing adaptations enabled comfortable, independent living.

Moving forward, our focus remains on supplying quality housing, advice and support. By equipping tenants with necessary resources and services, we aim to enhance stability and wellbeing for all residents. Though challenges remain, we are committed to empowering our community.



Development

26 new homes were completed last year:

- 19 properties at MacLennan Place, Broadford in December 2022.
- 2 properties on Staffin Road, Portree in January 2023.
- 5 properties on Georgiana Way, Broadford in March 2023.



Who We Housed

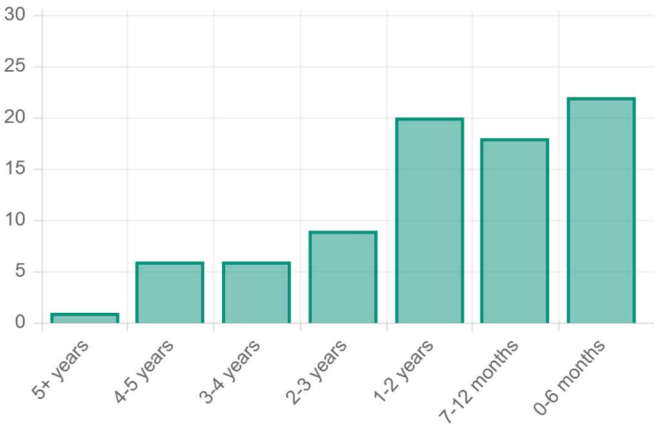
82 households were allocated properties in the 2022-2023 reporting year.

This does not include mutual exchanges or lets to the NHS or The Highland Council.

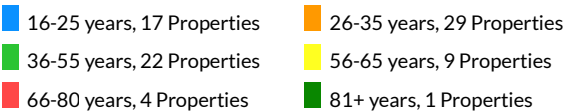
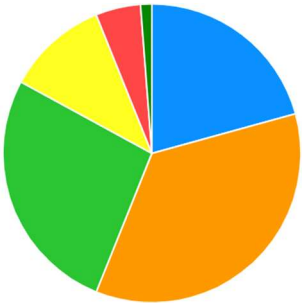
8 of the 17 properties allocated to people in the under 25 age group were in Portree.

Time on Highland Housing Register

This has been calculated from the date the application was received at the holding office to the start date of the tenancy. The average time on the Highland Housing Register this year was: 1 Year 237 Days.

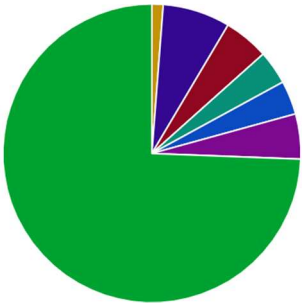


Age Range



Time Living in the Area

Most applicants who were allocated housing this year have lived in the area for 5 or more years (including people who have lived here all their lives). Only one person was 'new', having not lived in the area before.



Voids

LSHA tries to keep the time between one tenant leaving and another moving in as short as possible, to ensure people with a housing need can access a property quickly and to minimise the loss of rental income.

The average number of void days for re-lets increased from 12 days last year to 19 days this year. This was due to delays in electrical inspections being done by external contractors, issues clearing debts on electricity meters, one property was hard to let with multiple refusals (55 days void) and two allocations fell through unfortunately due to an applicant death and a last-minute withdrawal (53 days void).

Despite this, the percentage of rent lost through empty properties was only 0.4% which is excellent performance in comparison to the Scottish average (1.4%) and The Highland Council (0.96%).



Repairs & Maintenance

We aim to complete emergency repairs or make the issue safe within 8 hours. We have worked very hard to meet this target with an average response time of 3.08 hours. This is better than the Scottish average and an improvement on our performance in 2021/2022 which was 3.39 hours.

Completing non-emergency repairs often takes us longer due to the challenges we have with geographical distance and the time it takes to travel between jobs means we can only get so many done in a day and the delivery of supplies to remote/rural locations is often long which can delay completion. This year we have had a dip in performance but have tried to recruit more members of the Technical Services team to ensure we have the capacity and skills to deliver more repairs quicker next year.

We will continue to improve our performance for getting repairs right first time, and aim to keep our targets above the national average.

	% properties meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standard at end of reporting year	Average hours to complete emergency repairs	Average working days to complete non-emergency repairs	% reactive repairs completed right first time	% tenants satisfied with repairs service
Scottish Average	79.02	4.17	8.68	87.8	88.02
LSHA	62.72	3.08	10.69	89.51	87.3
The Highland Council	41.81	5.47	7.59	86.04	Null

Tenancy Sustainment

- 71% new tenancies to existing tenants sustained for more than a year – an improvement of 16% from 2021-2022
- 24% of new tenancies to applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless by the local authority sustained for more than a year
- 97% of new tenancies to applicants from the landlord's housing list sustained for more than a year
- 100% of new tenancies to others sustained for more than a year



Energy Advice

The energy advice team have had another busy year, securing external grant funding to help deliver affordable warmth, find future solutions that will work for LSHA and tenants, rectify concerns with damp, mould, energy suppliers, meters and support peoples heating costs.

Here are some highlights:

- £267,040 grant from Scottish Government was secured to cover 50% of the cost for installing 30 new heating systems; improving energy performance and EPC ratings.
- 100% grant funding secured from Scottish Government Net Zero Fund and the Isle of Skye Renewables Cooperative to cover the cost of consultants 'Power Circle' to research and produce a new Energy Strategy for delivering affordable warmth to tenants through investment programmes in future years.
- Over £62,000 Scottish Federation of Housing Associations funding secured to support more than 180 households in greatest need with heating bills last winter.
- Continued provision of advice, ensuring peoples' billing is accurate, supplying fuel bank vouchers for emergencies and



informing tenants with updates on tariffs and switching options. See our latest guidance on the website homepage or previous versions on the Energy Advice page.

- Dozens of humidity and temperature monitoring assessments completed, with reports and results given to tenants and landlord for making practical improvements and long-term solutions.

Care & Repair Projects

16 applications were approved and completed this year. There were no applications waiting to be completed at the end of the reporting year.

Total cost of adaptations completed in the year, fully funded by grant: £134,655.

The average time to complete adaptations: 81 working days.



Handypersons

2774 jobs were completed by the Handypersons team and all response targets were met.

This has helped many people to continue to live safely and independently at home with additional equipment, telecare and support with small household tasks.



Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

70% of anti-social behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved; 10 cases were reported and 7 were resolved.

Complaints handling is reported quarterly and published on our website under the 'Performance' section. You can see these here for 2023 - 2024 along with the learning outcomes.

	1st stage	2nd stage
Complaints received in the reporting year	2	2
Complaints carried forward from previous reporting year	0	11
All complaints received and carried forward	2	13
Number of complaints responded to in full by the landlord in the reporting year	2	12
Percentage of all complaints responded to in full at stage 1	100%	
Percentage of all complaints responded to in full at stage 2	92.31%	
Average time for a full response at stage 1	6 working days(target 5)	
Average time for a full response at stage 2	60.5 working days (target 20)	

Community Projects

Engagement activities and community projects

Thank you to everyone who has participated in activities this year and taken the time and energy to give your feedback. Your opinions are so valued, and we want to make sure you see positive changes as a result. We have a new Tenant Participation Strategy where you can find out all the different ways to get involved, and our commitments to you. Read it [here](#) or get in touch by emailing wehearyou@lsha.co.uk or text/call 07825410116.

Here is a summary of activities this year:

- Over 160 tenants shared their thoughts on the condition of their homes, their heating systems, preferences for future technology and functionality and energy supply.
- This has all helped to evaluate the impact of grant funding to help lower the cost of heating, and will be taken into account when planning the future Energy Strategy.
- All new tenants gave us valuable information on how they felt the allocations process went, what support or



information could be given to new tenants, any improvements in design features and overall how satisfied they are with their new homes; we continue to feed back this valuable information twice a year to different teams to improve what we do and make good decisions about future house designs.

- A small group of tenants gave us feedback on the Tenant Portal which is being rolled out to enable self-service access to information and requesting repairs, tracking repairs, reporting issues or changes to us.
- For those who had upgrades like heating systems completed in their home this year, we collected satisfaction ratings and comments on how well this was done and suggestions for improving the process of future works.
- The rent consultation had a good response rate of 14% this year, and we followed up on lots of your feedback with one to one conversations or home visits to try and address some of the issues or concerns you raised. The Board took into account your opinions and decided not to increase rent to the maximum level we consulted on. The full results were sent to all tenants and an action plan based on your priorities is on our website and updated as we progress.

- Kilmuir and Plockton housing needs surveys completed to re-assess what type of housing is needed in these areas and the demand levels.
- Factored owner satisfaction survey completed and results shared with the Finance department for review.
- Launched a new outdoor play space in Portree after tenant feedback that there were limited facilities for children and young people/families. The Target Pitch has had great use so far, and thanks to funding from The Highland Council, The National Lottery and Highlife Highland we have been able to supply goal posts and benches for the site. The LSHA grounds maintenance team has helped to cut the grass in this space and thanks for volunteers from the Skye Rugby team, the area has been extended and ground cleared of stones to make the space even better for sports.
- Our contractors have helped to donate materials for small community projects such as: a new seated bench near Airdferry resource centre in Dornie and paving slabs for the creation of an outdoor garden space; wood cut-offs have been reused and recycled for gardening projects in Portree with Viewfield Garden Collective and other initiatives

across the island with Highland Community Waste Partnership projects.

- Based on feedback from tenants and community groups to do more around supporting tenants with mental health challenges, about a third of our staff attend courses run by Samaritans and other mental health charities and working hard to build stronger partnerships with local groups delivering services in the area.

Paying Rent

Average weekly rent – for a full peer group report, you can find this on our website: Performance

Landlord	% average weekly rent increase	2 Apt – Average weekly rent	3 Apt – Average weekly rent	4 Apt - Average weekly rent	5+ Apt - Average weekly rent
Peer group average	5.6	£83.47	£92.89	£101.72	£112.82
LSHA	8	£79.62	£85.62	£94.94	£101.23
The Highland Council	4	£73.44	£81.52	£90.65	£101.33

Our rents remain lower than the average for our peer group (16 other registered social landlords of similar size or geography). The Scottish national average weekly rent increase was 5.14%.

Landlord	% collected of rent due	% gross rent arrears of rent due
Scottish Average	99.03	6.86
LSHA	98.92	4.29
The Highland Council	98.02	7.05