

Agenda Item	<b>4</b>
Report No	<b>HP/09/24</b>

**Committee:** Housing & Property Committee

**Date:** 01 May 2024

**Report Title:** Housing Performance Report: 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Housing & Property

### **1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

1.1 This report provides information on how the Housing Service has performed in 2023/24 to 31 March 2024 based on key performance indicators and national benchmarking information.

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 Members are asked to:

- **NOTE** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

### **3. Implications**

3.1 **Resource:** There are no resource implications arising from this report.

3.2 **Legal:** There are no legal implications arising from this report.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural):** There are no equality implications arising from this report.

3.4 **Climate Change/Carbon Clever:** There are no climate change/Carbon Clever implications arising from this report.

3.5 **Risk:** Risk is managed through regular review and reporting to allow corrective action to be taken if necessary.

3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people):** There are no implications arising from this report.

3.7 **Gaelic:** There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

### **4. Background**

4.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has set out the performance indicators that it will use in its scrutiny of landlords.

4.2 This report provides performance information based on the reporting framework recommended by the SHR. Further performance information by Council Ward can be found on the Highland Council Intranet ward reporting pages.

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/info/13/members\\_intranet/37/ward\\_reporting/2](http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/info/13/members_intranet/37/ward_reporting/2)

4.3 In accordance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter guidance, the Repairs, Tenancy Management and Rent Arrears figures are cumulative, while the Homeless Presentations figures are given for each separate quarter.

4.4 Scottish Housing Network (SHN) benchmark information, derived from the performance of all Scottish Landlords, has also been provided.

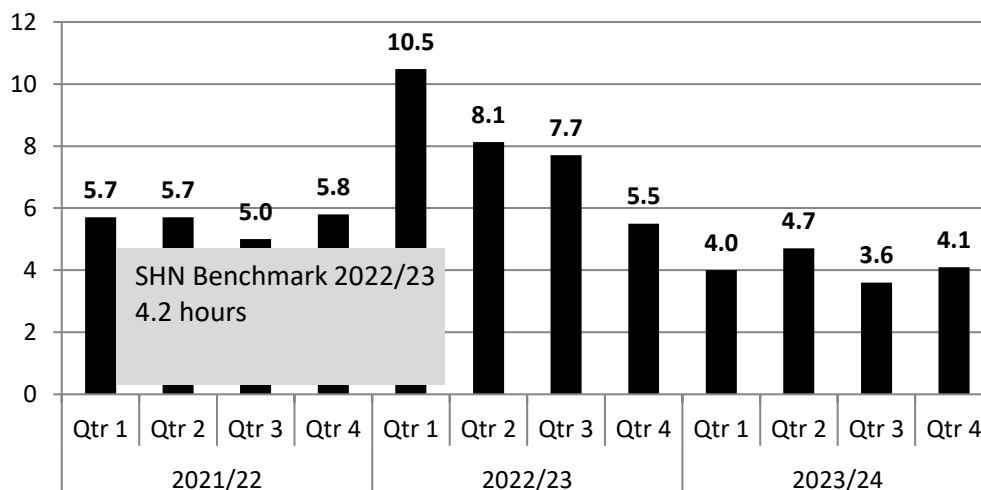
## 5. Housing Repairs

5.1 The key indicators for measuring repairs performance are the average time taken to complete emergency repairs and non-emergency repairs.

5.2 Table 1 details performance on the average time taken to complete emergency repairs and Table 2 details the average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs. Both graphs contain national benchmark figures for these indicators based on published 2022/23 figures. Highland geography needs to be considered when comparing the Highland figures for the national benchmark on completing repairs.

5.3 **Table 1: Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)**  
**Target 12 hours**  
**2022/23 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 4.2 hours**

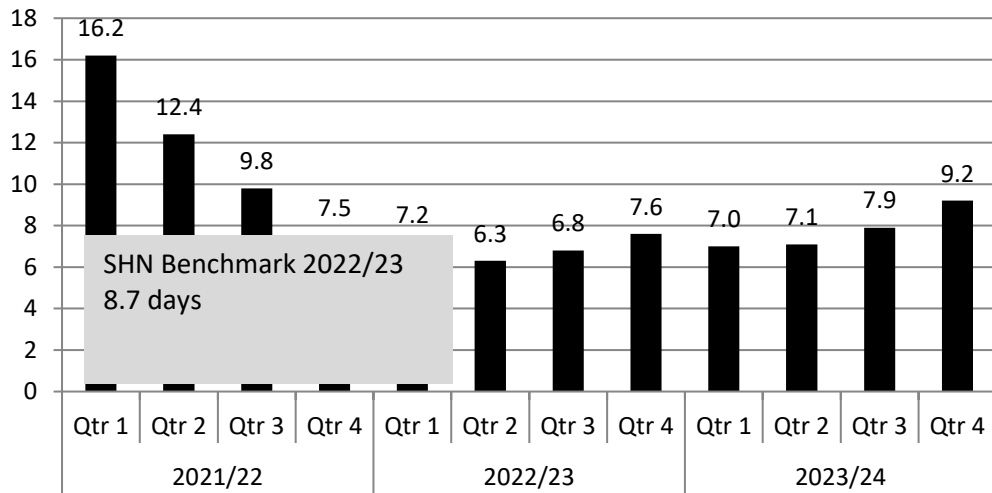
**Avg time to complete Emergency Repairs (hours)**



5.4 The time taken to complete emergency repairs in the last quarter has increased but is still below the national benchmark average and remains significantly below the Highland target of 12 hours.

5.5 **Table 2: Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (days)**  
**Target 8.9 days**  
**2022/23 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 8.7 days**

**Avg time to complete Non-Emergency Repairs (days)**



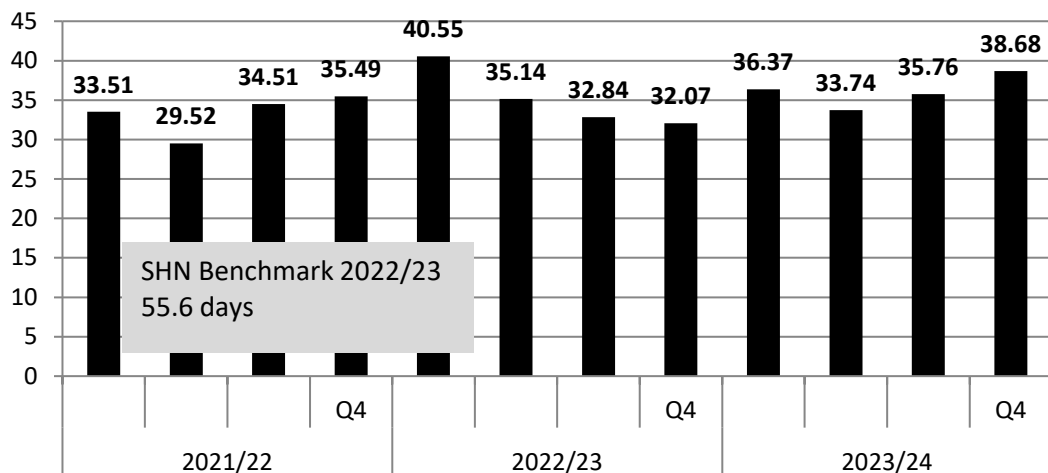
5.6 Average time to complete non-emergency repairs has increased in the last quarter. This increase was expected as a result of efforts to tackle the backlog of low priority repairs, such as external pathways, gutters, gates, and fences. There are approximately 1,500 of these low priority repairs outstanding on 31 March 2024. The increased repairs budget in 2024/25 will allow more of these to be released, however some of these may be included in a future Planned Maintenance Programme to achieve better value for money.

**6. Tenancy Management**

6.1 Table 3 below provides information on the average re-let time showing the trend back 3 years and highlighting the same quarter in previous years for comparison.

6.2 **Table 3: Average re-let time (days) Target 35 days**  
**2022/23 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 55.6 days**

**Average re-let time (days)**

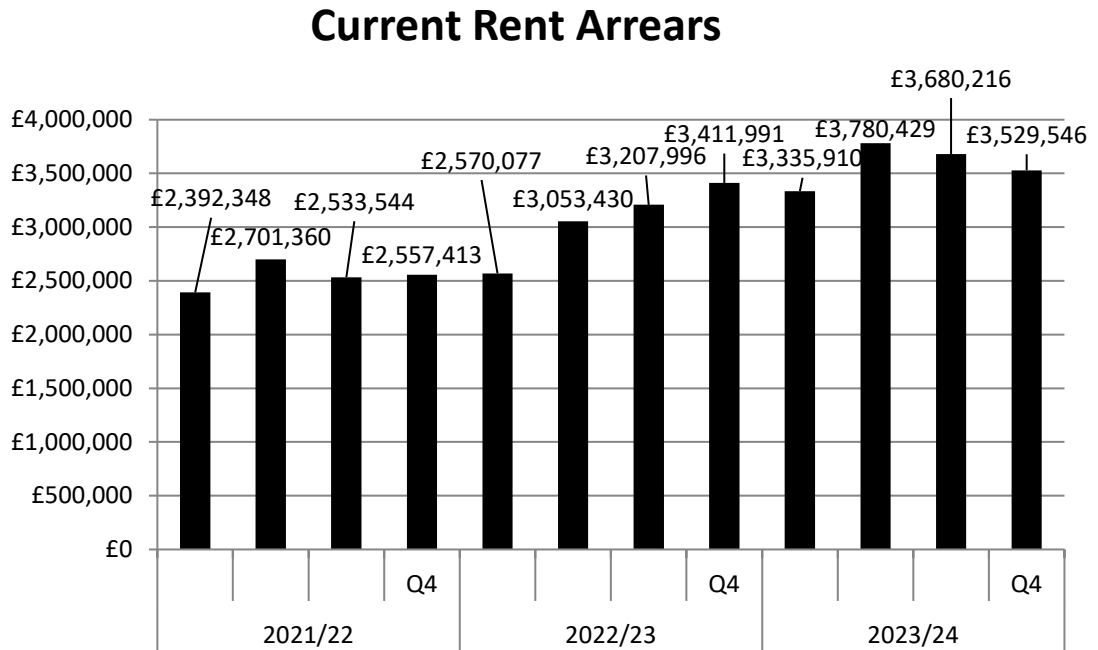


6.3 Performance on reletting times has increased for Quarter 4 but continues to compare very favourably with the national benchmarking figures.

## 7. Rent Arrears

7.1 The key performance indicator for rent arrears is the value of current arrears. Table 4 below provides information on current rent arrears and shows the comparative figure for the same quarter in the previous year.

7.2 **Table 4 – Current Rent Arrears**



7.3 Rent arrears for Q4 have reduced from Q3. The management of rent arrears remains a priority with robust case reviewing and monitoring arrangements in place.

7.4 The Cost of Living (Scotland) Act ended on 31 March 2024. This means that landlords can progress to eviction for cases with arrears below £2,250.

7.5 Officers continue to be supportive and sympathetic to all tenants facing financial hardship at this time and officers continue to signpost tenants to partner services who can provide specialist advice relating to income maximisation and benefits uptake.

7.6 This support includes assistance to tenants in receipt of Universal Credit. Appendix 1 of this report details some changes to the Universal Credit process which will require additional advice and assistance for Highland tenants. It also provides details of statistics on Council tenants in receipt of benefits to assist them to pay their rent.

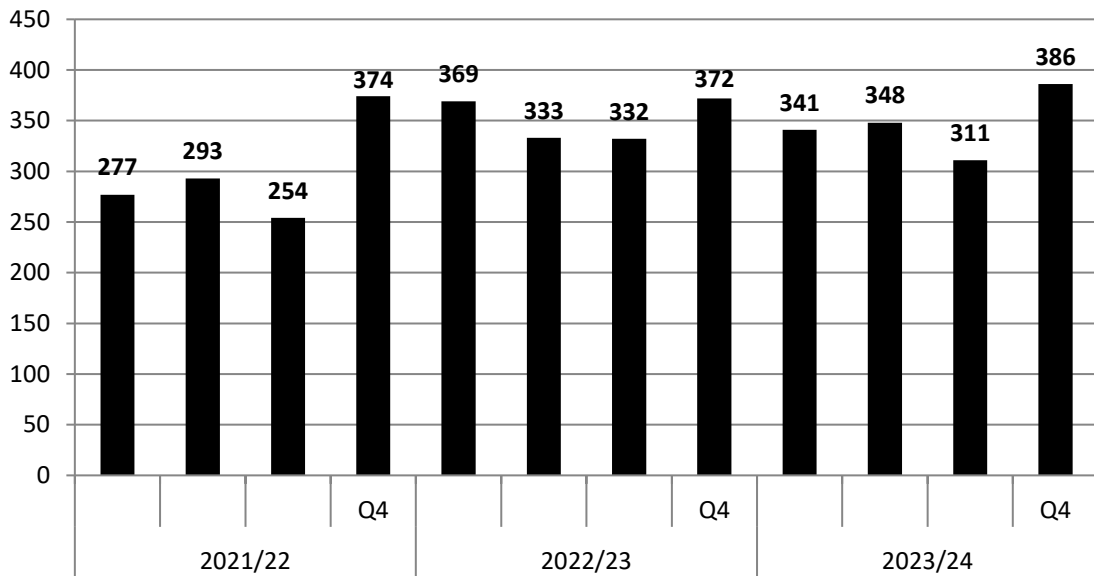
## 8. Homelessness

8.1 Performance information on homelessness is noted in tables 5 and 6.

8.2

**Table 5 - Homeless Presentations per Quarter**

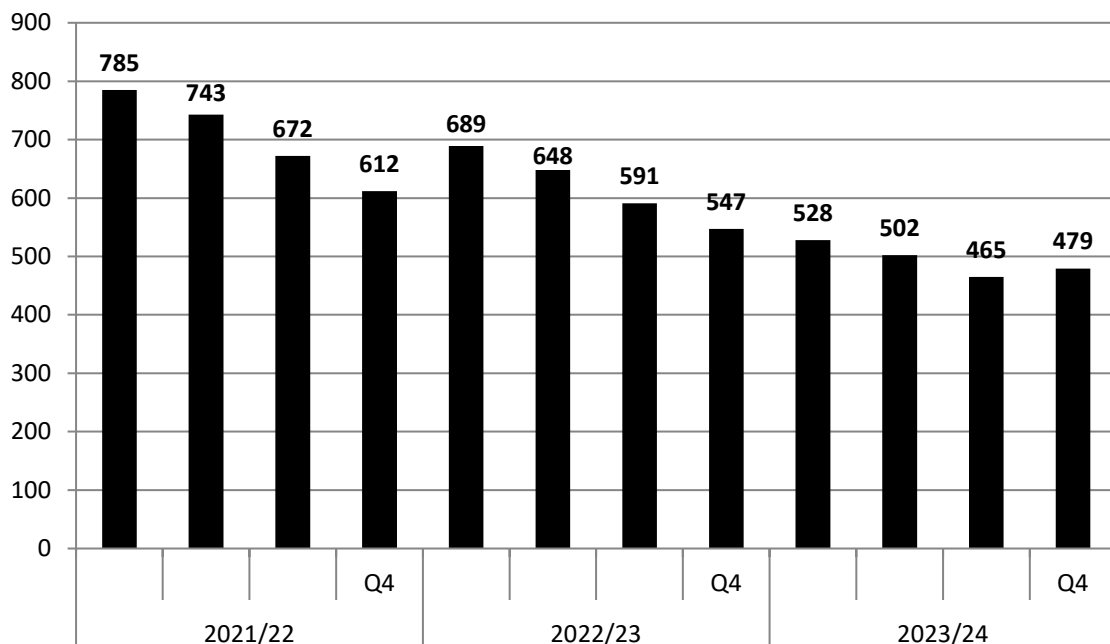
### Homeless Presentations



8.3

**Table 6 – Households in Temporary Accommodation**

### Households in Temporary Accommodation



8.4 Table 5 (above) shows that numbers of homeless presentations have increased since the previous quarter.

8.5 The number of homeless households recorded as living in temporary accommodation has increased slightly from the previous quarter, but due to continued focus on

achieving permanent outcomes for homeless households the number of clients in temporary accommodation has not increased in line with the number of presentations. The age range of homeless applicants and the reason for homelessness is included in Appendix 2 of this report. It should be noted that the format of the information is based on Scottish Government reporting criteria.

- 8.6 For Q4, there has been an increase over many of the reason for homelessness categories. The biggest increases have been in respect of clients being asked to leave accommodation; clients experiencing rent or mortgage arrears; and clients experiencing violent disputes.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Housing & Property

Date: 11 April 2024

Author: Brian Cameron, Interim Head of Housing and Building Maintenance

Background Papers: Scottish Housing Regulator: The Scottish Social Housing Charter: Indicators and Context Information

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Migration to Universal Credit;  
Appendix 2 - Main reason given by household for homeless presentation by age range (1 April 2023-31 March 2024)

## Appendix 1

### Migration to Universal Credit

In April 2022 DWP published [Completing the move to Universal Credit](#) which sets out the strategy for moving remaining legacy benefit and tax credits claimants to Universal Credit. This involves moving those claiming legacy benefits and tax credits to Universal Credit by 31 March 2024. This process began in Highland in February 2024.

Tenants still on legacy benefits were sent a Migration Notice with a process and timescale for them to follow.

There is a dedicated “Move to UC” Helpline which tenants can phone if they have any queries/need assistance – the number was clearly stated on the Migration Notice.

Highland Council was informed which tenants received a Migration Notice. The Council’s intention is to continue to highlight the assistance available to all tenants, both via the helpline and our own Welfare Support Team or local Citizens Advice Bureau using staff contact, information on standard letters, social media and our Internet pages.

### Type of benefit claimed

As at the end of Quarter 4 2023/24, the majority of tenants claiming benefit to help pay their rent were claiming Universal Credit Housing Element (37%). 65% of tenants claimed some sort of benefit to assist with their rent.

<b>Benefit claimed</b>	<b>Number of tenants</b>	<b>%</b>
Universal Credit Housing Element	5,620	37%
Housing Benefit	4,127	28%
Not claiming benefit to help with rent	5,291	35%

## Appendix 2

### Main reason given by household for homeless presentation by age range (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)

Main Reason for Homelessness	16-17	18-25	26-59	Over 60
Asked to leave the accommodation	11	87	144	18
Discharged from prison/hospital/care or other setting		4	35	3
Emergency such as fire/flooding/storm or environmental Health Order			8	2
Fleeing violence from outwith the home (i.e. violence from a neighbour)		3	22	3
Forced division and sale of matrimonial home			7	4
Harassment or other non-violence actions		3	21	1
Loss of service or tied accommodation		11	37	1
Non-Violent Dispute at home (i.e. relationship breakdown)	10	94	246	21
Other action by landlord	1	3	72	24
Other reason	3	15	60	8
Other reason for loss of accommodation	2	16	80	14
Over-crowding		16	19	2
Rent or Mortgage Arrears		6	38	10
Terminated their accommodation (i.e. ended their tenancy)		4	20	
Violent dispute or abuse from within the home	3	41	126	16
<b>Sum:</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>127</b>