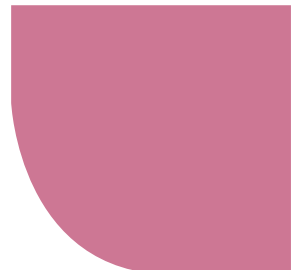
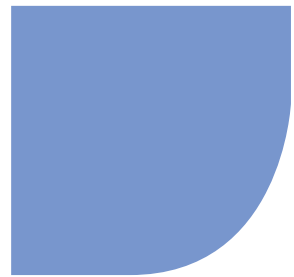
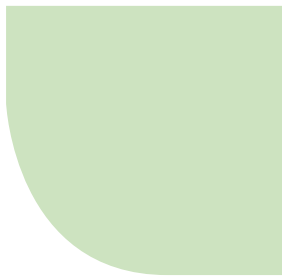


Tenants' Annual Report 2024-25

...community, connecting, and collaboration



Empowering People Inspiring Communities...



Contents

Welcome	5
About Us	9
Our Corporate Plan	10
EPIC in the Community	12
Charity Funding	12
Tenancy Sustainment Fund & Campaigns	12
Partnership Working.....	13
Tenant Influence.....	15
Housing Perks	16
Community Voice.....	17
Looking after your home	19
Gas Safety.....	20
Electrical Safety.....	20
Repairs & Maintenance	21
Damp & Mould	22
Allocations	24
Rent (and arrears).....	25
Average Property Costs.....	27
Tenant Satisfaction Measures.....	28
Building Safety.....	28
Anti-Social Behaviour	28
Decent Homes Standard and Repairs	29
Complaints	29
Tenant Perception Measures	30
ASB & Tenancy Breach Information	31
Access to Services & Customer Care	32
Customer Experience Pledge	33
Complaints	34
Business Running Costs	37
The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.....	38
Ways to Stay Informed.....	39



Welcome

Chief Executive, Tracey Johnson

Welcome to the 2024/25 Tenant Annual Report. As we reflect on the past year, I want to begin by thanking each of you for being a valued part of our community. Your voices, experiences, and feedback continue to shape how we evolve – and it is your trust in all that we do that inspires the work that we do each day. This year has brought with it both challenges and progress. We continue to face the realities of a cost-of-living crisis, rising energy prices and continued pressure on essential services. But with these challenges came opportunities for us to listen more deeply and strengthen our commitment to safe and affordable homes.

This year's annual report shows the progress we have made and the impact your voice has had.

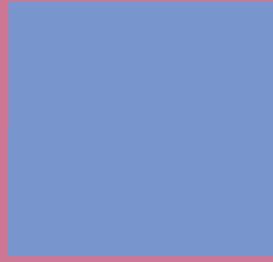
There is still work to be done. We know that issues around communication, and timely repairs remain top concerns for many of you. We're listening and acting. Looking ahead, we're committed to even greater transparency, tenant-led decision making, and building communities that aren't just places to live, but places to thrive.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Warm regards.

Tracey





Welcome from the Tenant Ambassadors

Welcome to the Tenants Annual Report for April 2024 to March 2025.

The report shows the work that we've been involved in alongside staff at EPIC – as well as all the other engagement work that has been done throughout the year.

It's been a great year for us in terms of championing the voice of the tenant, we've learned a lot about how EPIC works, the pressures and regulation faced and what goes on behind the scenes.

We've been able to help shape services to suit tenants' needs – including how the Community Voice sessions are delivered, reintroducing the Estate Walks, helping to direct other engagement opportunities, and having input into this Annual Report to ensure that it shows everything that EPIC does that affects everyone in day-to-day lives.

We've been involved in partnership working with the City Council's Tenant Voice to see how EPIC compare and have had opportunities to go to housing conferences to look at what EPIC does against other housing providers and learn how others meet their tenants' needs.

No matter how much we achieve, there will always be more work to do – if you want to learn more about getting involved, influencing and shaping the services that EPIC provide, and have your voice heard - please check out the "Tenant Influence" section on page 15.

Thanks, and we hope you'll take up the opportunity to join us in working alongside EPIC to make things better for everyone!

Bernice Dawson (Hanley)
Chris Giannasi (Bentilee)
Maureen Kearns (Bentilee)
Jill Heath (Meir)
Karl Clowes (Bentilee)
Jemma Richards (Bentilee)

The Tenant Ambassadors



About us

Empowering People Inspiring Communities (EPIC) is a not-for-profit registered provider of social housing, with charitable status.

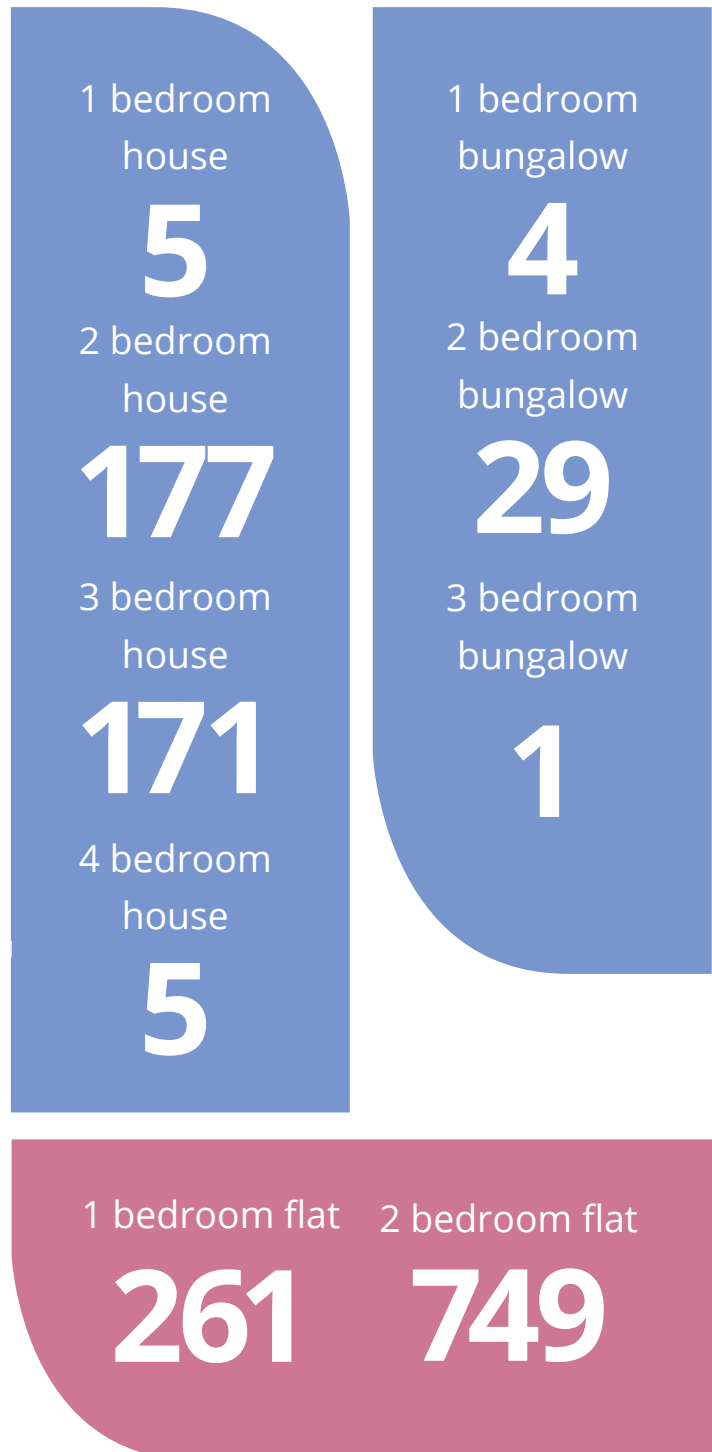
We own just over 1,400 homes across North Staffordshire, with the highest portion of these located in Stoke on Trent (concentrated in Bentilee, Meir and Hanley), with other homes in Newcastle-under-Lyme and the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Around 25% of our properties are made up of family sized homes and we offer a mix of houses, flats and bungalows.

We work closely with local authorities and partners to ensure that tenants' homes meet their needs. All our homes are either social, affordable or intermediate rents.

Around 25% of our properties are made up of family sized homes and we offer a mix of houses, flats and bungalows.

The split of all the homes we manage is as follows:



Our Corporate Plan 2024-2027

In April 2024 we launched our new Corporate Plan which sets out our ambitions over three years. We recognise that we are not always best placed to meet the needs of tenants beyond housing, and through this refreshed corporate plan, our focus remains on continuing to improve the services we deliver to our tenants, the maintenance of their homes, and working in collaboration with partners and stakeholders to do more for the benefit of tenants and the wider communities.

Our Vision

Our vision is to empower our tenants with the resources and support they need to thrive, while also making a positive impact on the wider community.

Our Mission

In order to deliver our vision, we will ensure that every home is safe and that the needs of our tenants are reflected in the services we provide. We will work closely with partners and agencies to enable people to access other services to live a full and good life; developing relationships that are transparent and responsive to the needs of our tenants.

Our Strategic Objectives



Tenants

Work alongside our tenants, ensuring that their tenancy with EPIC is sustainable, supported, and enjoyable.



Tenants' Homes

Ensure that tenants' homes are accessible, right size, safe, and well maintained and there is clear and timely communication in place for replacing key components e.g., kitchen, bathroom.



Communities

Make the most of our geography and place in the community for the benefit of all. This will be driven by having deep knowledge of every tenant, their community, and other organisations in the area.



Information

Make the best use of technology available and be confident in the integrity of the data held to inform decision-making.



People

Develop our culture to enable a great employee experience and opportunities to fulfil everyone's potential, for the benefit of the individual and our tenants.

Some of the key deliverables for the year first year of the Corporate Plan are:

- Stronger partnerships and relationships with key organisations that ultimately provide additional support to tenants, including Moneyline and Alice Charity.
- Greater visibility in the community and with tenants, including extension to opening times at the Ubberrley office.
- Campaigns to support tenants, particularly in relation to the cost-of-living crisis, including the winter school coat and school shoe campaign.
- Expand our knowledge of tenants homes in relation to energy efficiency to build the financial capacity for tenants to live in warm and well-ventilated homes
- Availability of an online resource tool that details services near to tenants, which can be found here epichousing.co.uk/community/services-near-you/
- Expand the number of ways in which tenants can share their voice around the services from EPIC, including Community Voice, Tenant Ambassadors and policies that matter to tenants.
- Capture of tenant information to better inform decision-making and the shape of services.



EPIC in the Community

Charity Funding

In 2024 we received £3,000 from EEM (Energy East Midlands) to support local voluntary organisations and charities who play a vital role in the community and offer help to all residents.

Through tenant choice, the following local groups were selected for a share of the funding:

- New Era Domestic Violence Support – offering support to victims of domestic violence and helping perpetrators to break the cycle of offending.
- Lifeworks – support children and families with ADHD, Autism, and other learning difficulties.
- Friends Of Hanley Park – a local voluntary group who help to manage Hanley Park, and hold events open to all residents across the city; and
- Windmills Acute Bereavement Care – providing support to children and young adults who have lost someone close to them or have a family member with a terminal illness.

The Alice Charity was identified as our Charity Of The Year for 2024/25 and we supported them in promoting their work, becoming a food distribution hub for the Bentilee estate, and also raised £1,000 through our own fundraising efforts to support their cause.

Tenancy Sustainment Fund & Campaigns

Throughout the year, EPIC sets funding aside to support tenants who are vulnerable or going through difficult times. EPIC ran a number of campaigns, including the purchase of items for children of school age. Our Tenancy Sustainment Budget can be used to help tenants with things like food or energy vouchers, or one-off support in emergency situations.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we helped 149 households with a range of support, including:

- Provision of furniture and white goods for a family fleeing domestic violence;
- Extra security measures for a tenant wanting to remain in their home, but suffering from targeted Anti-Social Behaviour;
- Enhanced fire warning systems for a tenant with hearing difficulties;
- Changing the locks on a tenant's home following a relationship breakdown; and
- Fitting a stair rail to a communal staircase, for a tenant with sight and mobility issues.



In August 2024 we ran a School Shoes campaign in partnership with Hankinson Whittle Ltd, who carry out our empty homes works. Jointly, we issued 77 vouchers worth £20 each to families with children aged between 4 and 16, to help with the expense of back-to-school costs ready for the start of the new school year.

Partnership Working

EPIC continues to engage, and develop closer links, with partner agencies, both to provide tenants with links to help, advice and support that we cannot provide, and to ensure that we can support our local communities wherever we can. This includes:

- Continuing to support the Community Lounge held in Bentilee Neighbourhood Centre, providing tenants with more ways to access our services.
- Taking part and supporting local community events at the Discovery Academy, Breathe Church, and St Stephens Church.
- Holding a monthly Morning Cafe from our offices on Bordeaux Road in Meir.
- Engaging with the Making Great Places campaign, working alongside Stoke on Trent City Council, Staffordshire Police and other partners to address anti-social behaviour and environmental issues in the Bentilee area.
- Adopting the National Housing Federations' "Together with Tenants" charter, to show our commitment to involving tenants in the decisions that will affect their tenancies and the services we provide
- Opening a Resource Room at our offices in Bentilee, which is available for any tenant to use to access the internet for job searches, benefit application and similar, and is also used by partner agencies to provide drop-in advice sessions available to all residents.
- Holding a partnership stakeholder event in September 2024, to bring together a number of partner agencies to explore how we could all work better together and support each other in achieving shared objectives.
- Holding a Home Safety Day in April 2024 in partnership with AICO (Home Life Safety organisation), Staffs Police and Staffs Fire and Rescue Service, to help show tenants how to stay safe in their homes and answer any questions about fire safety and home security.
- Creating our support directory, available on our website, to help tenants find help that they need with their day-to-day lives.
- Working closely with New Era (Domestic Violence support) to provide training to front-line staff to be able to better support tenants when needed.
- Obtaining Partner Status with the Illegal Money Lending Team, by working with them to provide specialist training around spotting victims of loan sharks and understanding what support is available to victims.



Tenant Influence

2024-25 was a great year for listening, hearing and acting on what tenants were telling us.

Our Tenant Ambassadors group helped to:

- Agree the range of activities on offer, for tenants to get involved in;
- Agree our Customer Experience Pledge;
- Sign off the content for the 2023/24 Tenant Annual Report (and this years' too!);
- Give feedback on the set-up, frequency, timing and content of our Community Voice meetings; and
- Start joint working with Stoke on Trent City Council's Tenant Voice group to share and collaborate on good ideas on engaging tenants in influencing services.

We held two Community Voice meetings in November 2024 and February 2025, in Meir and Bentilee. More information on these is included on page 17.

Surveys sent directly to tenants have meant a direct influence on:

- Colour schemes for the communal areas in the blocks of 6 flats in Bentilee;
- Options for new bathroom flooring offered when bathrooms are replaced;
- Which charities we supported with our external funding from Energy East Midlands; and
- Selecting our Charity Of The Year for 2025-26 – the charity that we will support through our own fundraising and events - Bentilee Volunteers.



Our annual Tenant Engagement Survey in Summer 2024 identified a number of improvements tenants asked us to make, including:

- The extension of our office and phone open hours – now open Monday to Friday, 9 am to 4 pm;
- Internal stairwells being painted in the 6-block of flats in Bentilee.
- The introduction of a cleaning service to the communal spaces in the 6-block of flats in Bentilee; and
- Closer relationships with our grounds maintenance contractors to ensure improvements to standard of work.

In November 2024 with tenants' support EPIC adopted the National Housing Federations' "Together With Tenants" charter, to show our commitment to working collaboratively to review the services we provide and make improvement based on tenants views, influencing the decisions we make across the whole organisation.

To find out more about the Charter and what it means for tenants and EPIC, please visit epichousing.co.uk/together-with-tenants-charter/

Housing Perks ■

EPIC tenants can use the Housing Perks app to purchase shopping vouchers at a discounted rate.

The retailers that can be accessed using the app range from everyday supermarkets, home improvement stores, sports, fashion and jewellery, electronics, and even holidays and experience days. The app itself is free to download – although you do have to pay to purchase the vouchers, so check it out and soon you too could be saving money on everything from sandwiches and salad to Swarovski jewellery.

Just download the app from the app store – you'll need the code "EPIC" and your rent reference number to sign in. More information is available through our website epichousing.co.uk/housing-perks/ or you can contact our reception team.

Throughout the year tenants saved a combined total of over £2,800 on Housing Perks, with the biggest saving being spread around the main supermarkets, home improvement and fashion stores.



Community Voice

If you follow us on social media, or read our newsletters and emails, you'll have seen that we now hold open Community Voice meetings. These are held on a Wednesday evening or Saturday morning.

Community Voice meetings allow us to share with tenants upcoming changes, proposals, performance, and provide the opportunity to tell us about anything that is going on in the area, any support or help required, or question our performance across the organisation. Each meeting is supported by a member of the EPIC Board and the Chief Executive and are a great way to talk directly to the leadership of EPIC about the services we provide, what we do well and where we could improve.

Our first Community Voice session was held in November 2024 where we presented the feedback from the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (2024/25), and at our February 2025 session we spoke about the changes we've made to our services and our data capture exercise. At both of these sessions, tenants told us about their own experiences and we were able to support on a number of individual issues.

The sessions are a great way to find out more information about what we are doing and what we have planned and get more information about the different ways you can get involved and use your experiences to improve our services to tenants.

Please keep an eye out for future sessions in Bentilee and Meir or contact our reception team to find out more. They can be contacted on **01782 252575** or email reception@epichousing.co.uk.





Looking after your home

The table below shows the number of new kitchens, bathrooms and boilers replaced throughout 2024-25.

	Voids (empty properties)	Improvements	Total
Kitchens	21	60	81
Bathrooms	17	19	36
Boilers	0	52	52

To help reduce damp and mould issues in 2024/25 we installed 620 humidity fans across 335 properties. We have also installed 86 hard-wired smoke and carbon monoxide alarm systems to keep tenants safe in their homes.

We also trialled AICO smart link sensors in 11 of our homes for long term data collection of humidity, carbon monoxide and temperature. This will highlight the increased likelihood of damp and mould being prevalent and any indicators, which can help inform interventions. It is our intention to introduce these across a wider number of homes in the future.

Through the Annual Tenant Engagement survey (2024/25) 107 tenants told us about damp and mould issues in their homes. Everyone who contacted us received a phone call – and an at-home inspection if needed – to help identify and fix the causes of the issue and make sure tenants' homes are safe and warm.

”

We're so very pleased with our new bathroom. We were apprehensive at first about having builders in our home but they have been great and the job looks 'the business'!

”

Gas Safety

Our target is to complete 100% of our gas servicing obligations every year, but that is only possible with tenants' support and co-operation.

On occasions, some tenants fail to allow us access for gas servicing works. This poses a significant risk to the tenant, and we continue to work extremely hard to ensure that we can gain access to carry out this vital work.

For 2024-25, we achieved 99.93% of our gas servicing obligations.

At the end of March 2025, 1 home did not have a valid Gas Safety Certificate due to access not being provided for contractors to complete the safety check. This was completed in April 2025.

Gas Safety Checks are required by law and are vital for us to ensure that tenants homes are safe and compliant with the law. Where there are cases of no access, we use every option available to us to gain access and will only resort to legal action as a last resort.

All other required safety checks were at 100%, which shows our commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of our tenants.

For 2024/25
we achieved:

99.93%

of our gas
servicing
obligations



Electrical Safety

Our current electrical safety policy states that all homes are required to have an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) at intervals of no more than 5 years, to be carried out by a qualified and competent person. Our target is to ensure 100% completion.

As with gas safety work, we continue to work alongside tenants to ensure that we can gain access to carry out these checks.

In 2024-25, we achieved 100% completion of EICR's.

For 2024/25
we achieved:

100%

completion
of EICRs



Repairs & Maintenance

Brenden Fern continue to provide our repairs and maintenance service to all tenants' homes. Tenants can contact Brenden Fern directly, at any time, to report a repair. We have continued to work closely with Brenden Fern to gain a better understanding of trends in repairs, so that we can identify and resolve issues pro-actively. We meet with them regularly to discuss performance issues to ensure that we can continuously explore ways to improve this vital service.

Completed

4,424

repairs



Completed

95.05%

repairs on time*



Kept

97.75%

appointments



Completed

148

damp and
mould jobs



Completed

81

damp and
mould
surveys



Completed repairs
and upgrades to

100

empty
properties



* Made up of Non-urgent – 4,000 out of 4,219 (94.8%); Urgent 205 out of 205 (100%).

We will continue to monitor our performance on repairs and planned maintenance to ensure a high standard of service.

We have a calendar of regular meetings with our contractors to monitor these figures and how services are delivered and will continue to work together with them to resolve any concerns.

”

I want to pass on my thanks to Simon for attending my property and providing help after a leak in the flat upstairs affected my electrics.

”

Damp & Mould

We are committed to ensuring all tenants homes are safe and suitable for their needs, and free from damp, mould and other health-related issues.

Between September and November 2024, we contacted 107 tenants who used the Annual Tenant Engagement survey to tell us they had damp and mould problems in their home. We contacted each tenant directly and where needed, visited their homes to inspect the problem and book remedial works. This included external works (such as roofing and pointing), internal works (including increased ventilation and treatments), and offering advice to tenants regarding using their heating and ventilating rooms.

All tenants who reported damp and mould issues outside of the Annual Tenant Engagement survey also received a swift response, with surveys conducted, repairs booked and advice offered to ensure that tenants' homes remain free from damp and mould.

If you think you have damp and mould in your home, please get in touch so that we can help. Call our repairs line on 01782 252575 (select option 1 for repairs) or contact Brenden Fern directly on 01782 818577.



”

Also while I'm emailing I also want to say the contractors that were sent to repair the roof above the kitchen were the best contractors I've seen. They were clean and efficient and they did an amazing job and left the property clean and tidy at all times.

”



Allocations

Between April 2024 to March 2025, our average time to let an empty property to a new tenant was 27.17 days. This figure is slightly increased on previous years averages of 26.43 days, but still within our target of 28 days. One of the primary reasons as to the length of time taken is that a small number of homes required significant work that takes a little longer, therefore pushing the average up.

	Number of new tenancies	Turnover
2024/25	103	7.46%
2023/24	98	6.97%
2022/23	140	9.95%
2021/22	85	6.03%
2020/21	121	9.73%

At the end of August 2024, we took the difficult decision to pause our waiting list for new applications. At the time of pausing the waiting list had over 1,000 applicants on it, which has now reduced to under 500. We did this by making direct contact with every applicant to see if they were still interested in a home with EPIC.

We are currently reviewing our Allocations Policy to ensure that we can continue to meet applicants' needs in a fair and timely manner. Feedback on the draft Allocations Policy was sought in June and July 2025 and we received 12 responses.

”

Thank you to Vicki L for the support provided during the application and sign-up process – I have never had help like this.

”

Rent (and arrears)

EPIC's annual income from rent and service charges throughout 2024-25 was around £6.6 million. This income is used to provide services to tenants, including repairs, planned maintenance, and support to tenants in need.

We know that the ongoing financial pressures have continued to affect tenants, and we've worked hard to provide support, referrals and advice for tenants who are struggling financially. Further information on this can be found on pages 12-13 (Tenancy Sustainment Fund).

The figures below show our arrears (unpaid rent) as of 31 March 2025, compared to previous years.

	Arrears 31 March 2021	Arrears 31 March 2022	Arrears 31 March 2023	Arrears 31 March 2024	Arrears 31 March 2025
Current Tenant Arrears	2.05% £96,606	2.54% £136,871	3.31% £188,873	2.81% £170,071	2.08% £138,298
Former Tenant Arrears (increase since previous year)	0.45% £21,194	0.61% £32,661	0.77% £44,082	0.66% £40,247	0.45% £29,763

(Figures shown represent a percentage of the year's total collectable rent)

10 tenants lost their homes, through eviction between April 2024 and March 2025 (5 due to rent arrears, 3 due to anti-social behaviour, 2 due as a combination of rent arrears and anti-social behaviour).

We will always work alongside tenants who are struggling financially and provide support to help anyone in need. If you are struggling to make your payments, please contact us as soon as possible.

”

I suffered a stroke last year and fell into rent arrears. I cannot thank Vicky S enough for her compassion and support during the visit where we managed to make an affordable rent payment plan and was offered other financial support.

”



Average Property Costs

The table below shows our average weekly rent (not including service charges, where applicable) for the different types of homes. Most of EPIC's rent continued to be below the Local Housing Allowance Rate for those in receipt of housing-associated benefits, meaning that most EPIC tenants in receipt of any housing-related benefit would not have had to make up any shortfall of rent, as this was covered entirely by benefits.

Property Type	2022/23 Average	2023/24 Average	2024/25 Average	Local Housing Allowance Rate 2024/25
1-bedroom flat	£64.42	£68.98	£74.29	£97.81
2-bedroom flat	£71.45	£76.44	£82.32	£110.47
1-bedroom house	£83.05	£88.86	£100.18	£97.81
2-bedroom house	£94.87	£102.07	£110.32	£110.47
3-bedroom house	£100.53	£108.16	£117.75	£136.93
4-bedroom house	£110.67	£118.41	£127.53	£184.11
1-bedroom bungalow	£79.12	£84.66	£91.18	£97.81
2-bedroom bungalow	£94.02	£100.60	£108.28	£110.47
3-bedroom bungalow	£145.02	£155.17	£167.12	£136.93



Tenant Satisfaction Measures

We carried out our Annual Tenant Engagement survey in Summer 2024. This survey captured the outcomes of the 12 Tenant Satisfaction Perception Measures that all Registered Housing Providers are required to publish, alongside the 10 management information measures.

Landlords are formally required to publish information on all these measures, so that tenants can see how their landlord is performing.

The following sections show how EPIC has performed in all these core areas.

Building Safety

Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	99.93%
Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out	100%
Proportion of homes for which all required electrical safety checks have been carried out	100%
Proportion of homes for which all asbestos management checks have been carried out	100%
Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	100%

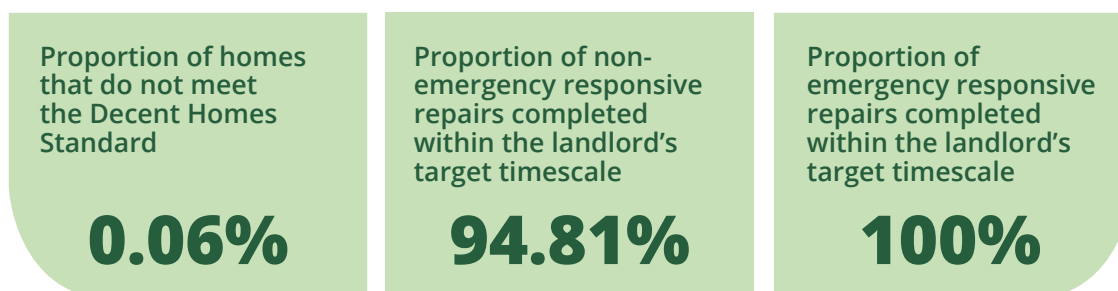
- EPIC does not own any properties with passenger lifts and that measure is therefore not applicable to us, although it must still be reported.
- EPIC values the safety and wellbeing of tenants above all else. In addition to the measures reported here we regularly contact tenants to discuss issues and work closely with partner agencies where appropriate to offer extra support and advice (e.g. Staffs Fire & Rescue Service, and Disability Solutions).
- Further information on our Building Safety performance can be found on pages 19-22.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Number of Anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1,000 homes	31.25	43 in total
Number of Anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes	0.73	1 case in total

More information on our commitment to dealing with anti-social behaviour can be found on page 31.

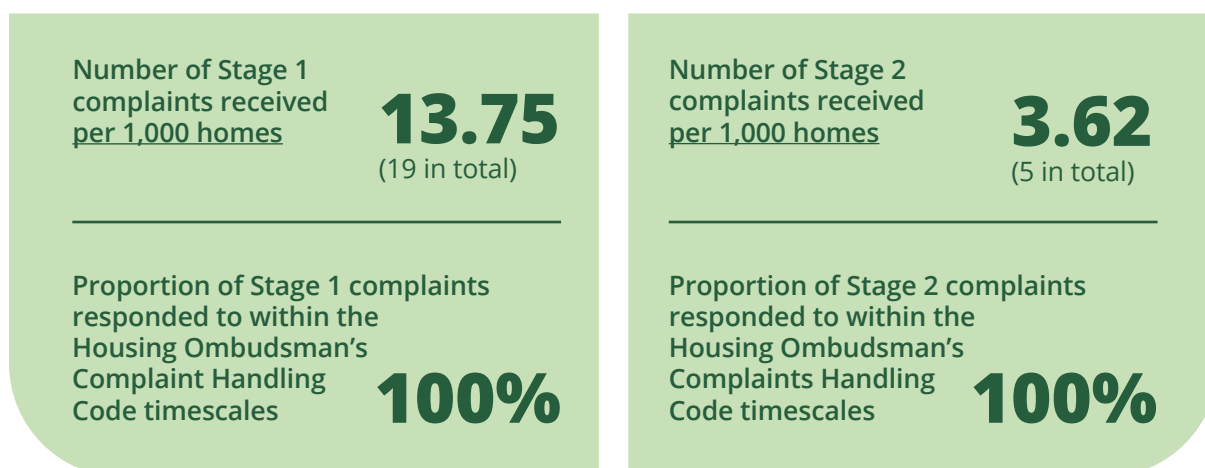
Decent Homes Standard and Repairs



On 31 March 2025, we had one home that did not meet the Decent Homes standard – this was due to one tenant who did not want the disruption of works to be carried out but changed their mind just before the end of the reporting period.

We have continued with a programme of Stock Condition Surveys, which will allow us to ensure that the condition of homes is compliant with, or exceeds, the Decent Homes standard. These surveys will also help us to identify any health and safety issues and ensure that we respond to them in a timely fashion.

Complaints



Our Tenant Perception Measures on complaints (shown on page 30) indicate a drop in satisfaction with complaints handling. However, only 7% of respondents to this question had actually raised a formal complaint; the remaining respondents had contacted us about a service request.

A service request is when a tenant asks us to take action on something – it could be telling us that a neighbour is playing their music too loud or that something in your home has broken and needs to be fixed. Many of these types of contacts will use the word “complaint” - for example “I want to complain about my neighbour” or “I have a complaint because my tap is broken”.

A complaint is when you are dissatisfied with something that we have done – for example, you might have a service request about a noisy neighbour, that becomes a complaint if we do not deal with the issue properly or keep you informed about what we've done; or you have told us about a leaky tap and our contractors did not turn up for the appointment to fix it.

Further information on our Complaints performance can be found on page 34.

Tenant Perception Measures

Each year, every social housing provider in the country is required to ask tenants for their thoughts on how their landlord is performing. These are called the “Tenant Perception Measures” and they help us to see where we can improve performance on issues like complaints handling, responding to anti-social behaviour, keeping tenants informed, and repairs and maintenance. These combine with other reporting information to make up our full suite of Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

The below figures were collected in Summer 2024 and therefore represent the 12 months prior to these dates. We have also provided the figures collected in Summer 2023 for comparison.

The figures are based on 525 responses from our tenants (520 tenants and 5 from other tenures), which represents 38% of all tenants.

10 tenants who completed the survey were randomly chosen to win a £25 shopping voucher.

Measure	2023 Return	2024 Return	Change
Proportion of tenants who report that they are satisfied with the overall service from their landlord	81%	81%	0%
Proportion of respondents who have received a repair within the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service	81%	82%	+1%
Proportion of respondents who have received a repair within the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair	80%	81%	+1%
Proportion of respondents who report that their home is well maintained	76%	80%	+4%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is safe	79%	81%	+2%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord listens to tenants' views and acts upon them	67%	70%	+3%
Proportion of respondents who report that their landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them	75%	83%	+8%
Proportion of respondents who report that they agree that their landlord treats them fairly and with respect	81%	85%	+4%
Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint within the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling	54%	42%	-12%
Proportion of respondents with communal areas who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps the communal areas clean and well maintained	71%	71%	0%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood	70%	75%	+5%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	65%	68%	+3%

While overall satisfaction is generally high, and in most cases equal to or improved upon the previous years' satisfaction, there is room for improvement in many areas.

One way that we are trying to improve satisfaction with surveys is by working directly with groups of tenants to ask about the things that matter the most. This offers tenants the opportunity to guide and influence what we do and the services we provide, ensuring that they meet your needs and expectations. Tenants can find out more about getting involved and give feedback online at epichousing.co.uk and going to the "Getting Involved" page.

We are working hard to make sure that the voice of tenants' is heard and tenants can see the changes we are making to benefit them and the wider community as a whole. We provide regular updates through newsletters, social media (follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram – search "EPIC Housing") and regular email updates so tenants can stay informed about the things we're doing to provide the best services and support. If you do not receive these regular emails, please contact our reception team and we will sign you up to our mailing list.

ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) & Tenancy Breach Information

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we dealt with 82 tenancy breaches, ranging from untidy gardens and noise nuisance to threatening and anti-social behaviour. We also evicted 5 tenants due to ongoing anti-social behaviour.

We want tenants to be able to live their lives peacefully and therefore we take reports of anti-social behaviour seriously. We will pursue every option available to us, from support to enforcement, to ensure that reports of anti-social behaviour are responded to quickly and effectively.

Some cases of anti-social behaviour are more serious than others and require close working with other agencies, such as Staffordshire Police or the local Council's ASB team, to resolve. We will always work hard to ensure that the action we take is effective and proportionate to each individual case.

Where there is ongoing, serious anti-social behaviour, and all reasonable attempts to resolve the matter have been exhausted, we will seek to evict tenants with the support of the courts.

Throughout 2024-25 we worked alongside Stoke on Trent City Council, Staffordshire Police, and other partners, to help deliver the "Making Great Places" campaign that encourages joint working to tackle issues such as untidy estates, anti-social behaviour and nuisance motorbikes. These events are led by Stoke on Trent City Council and we hope to be able to use similar events in other areas where we have tenants, should the need arise.

We encourage all tenants to report any instances of anti-social behaviour so that it can be investigated – please do not assume that someone else who is affected has reported the problem. All reports will be dealt with swiftly and in confidence, so you can talk to us about issues without worrying about being identified by the perpetrators you are reporting.

Access to Services & Customer Care ■

We provide a number of ways for tenants to contact us, including phone, email, website and in person.

In September 2024, we listened to tenant feedback around our availability and extended our opening hours; our reception and phone lines are now open Monday to Friday, between 9 am and 4 pm.

Our Housing Officers are available at the Meir office every Tuesday – increased from every other Tuesday in 2023-24 – and details are available on the noticeboard outside the Meir office.

Our drop-in session in our Meir office have also grown into a monthly Morning Cafe, on the last Wednesday of every month, between 9.30 and 11.30 am.



Customer Experience Pledge

Our commitment to tenants is that we will:

- Call you back within two working days if you try to contact a member of staff and they are unavailable.
- Respond to enquiries made on our website within two working days.
- Respond to voicemail within two working days.
- Acknowledge written and emailed correspondence within 3 working days.
- Acknowledge written and emailed complaint correspondence within five working days, and we aim to provide a full response within ten working days of acknowledging the complaint.
- Respond quickly and effectively to reports of anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse within at least one working day.
- Respect your individual needs and take them into consideration when responding to you.
- Where requested, visit you at home at a mutually convenient time.
- Ensure that tenant information is easy to read and understand.
- Offer support to ensure you understand the information provided to you.
- Continue to develop our digital methods of communication whilst continuing to cater for tenants with specific requirements.

In 2025 we will be reviewing and refreshing our Customer Experience Pledge. If you would like to be involved, please contact us on 01782 252575 or email mailbox@epichousing.co.uk

Complaints

We will always encourage tenants to contact us when they are not happy with a service we have provided and we can usually respond to any problems quickly and easily, and to the tenants' satisfaction.

When tenants do complain about a service, we will always deal with it in a fair and impartial way, and tenants who complain will not be treated any differently.

We aim to resolve all complaints promptly and fairly, and in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code. All of our complaints in 2024-25 were resolved within the timescales set out in the Complaints Handling Code.

In November 2024 we provided all staff with training around complaints, our obligations and expectations in meeting tenants needs.

Between April 2024 to March 2025, we received:

19 Stage 1 complaints

10 upheld
9 not upheld,

We received the same number of Stage 1 complaints as we did in 2023-24, and upheld the same number of stage 1 complaints (10)

5 Stage 2 complaints

1 upheld
4 not upheld

We received 3 more Stage 2 complaints than we did in 2023-24, an increase of 60%. We upheld 1 Stage 2 complaint – 20%, versus 50% of Stage 2 complaints in 2023-24

- 100% of all complaints were responded to within the timescales set in the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code
- Between April 2024 to March 2025, one complaint was escalated to the Housing Ombudsman Service. At the time of writing this report, the outcome of their investigation is outstanding.
- We also received 30 compliments throughout the year, covering a range of services provided by our staff and contractors. Thank you to everyone who got in touch to tell us when we'd done something right!

- We continue to work with our Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), to review our responses to complaints to ensure that they are fair, and that we are applying any learning identified from these complaints. Our MRC also supported us with monitoring trends in complaints and improving our own internal recording and reporting of complaints, to ensure transparency in our responses. The MRC is a member of our Board who oversees our complaints performance to ensure that we act in a fair and transparent manner when responding to complaints. More information about our MRC can be found on our website under the section about our Board Members.
- In May 2024, an independent partner organisation conducted an audit into our complaints and tenant engagement work. We achieved a “reasonable assurance” rating, meaning that whilst there was room for improvement, there was adequate and effective governance and processes in this area. All of the recommendations for improvements have been carried out since we received the report detailing these findings.
- In October and November 2024, we provided all staff with training around complaints, our obligations and expectations in meeting tenants needs.

As part of our complaints handling process, we place great emphasis on learning from complaints. Some of the changes we have made as a result of complaints throughout 2024-25 are:

- Changes to our arrears monitoring processes, to identify potential issues sooner and be able to offer support at an earlier point in the process;
- Changes to our call-back procedures following dissatisfaction with a repair, to ensure that they are carried out to the required standard;
- Where practical and possible, we will notify tenants of works to communal areas that may affect their enjoyment and use of their homes;
- Clearer, written communication with tenants regarding our repair obligations, and their rights to carry out works to their own homes;
- Changes to our own recording of complaints, and changes to our response templates to highlight opportunities to get involved.

Further information regarding our complaints process, our policy, and our annual self-assessment against the standard set by the Regulator for Social Housing, can be found on our website at epichousing.co.uk

We deal with complaints in line with the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints Handling Code:

- A complaint is defined by the Housing Ombudsman as “an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by an organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents”
- A service request is when a tenant asks a landlord to act e.g. to carry out a repair, to investigate anti-social behaviour, or to provide a service that they are entitled to.
- An appeal is when a tenant asks a landlord to reconsider a decision that has been made that affects them.



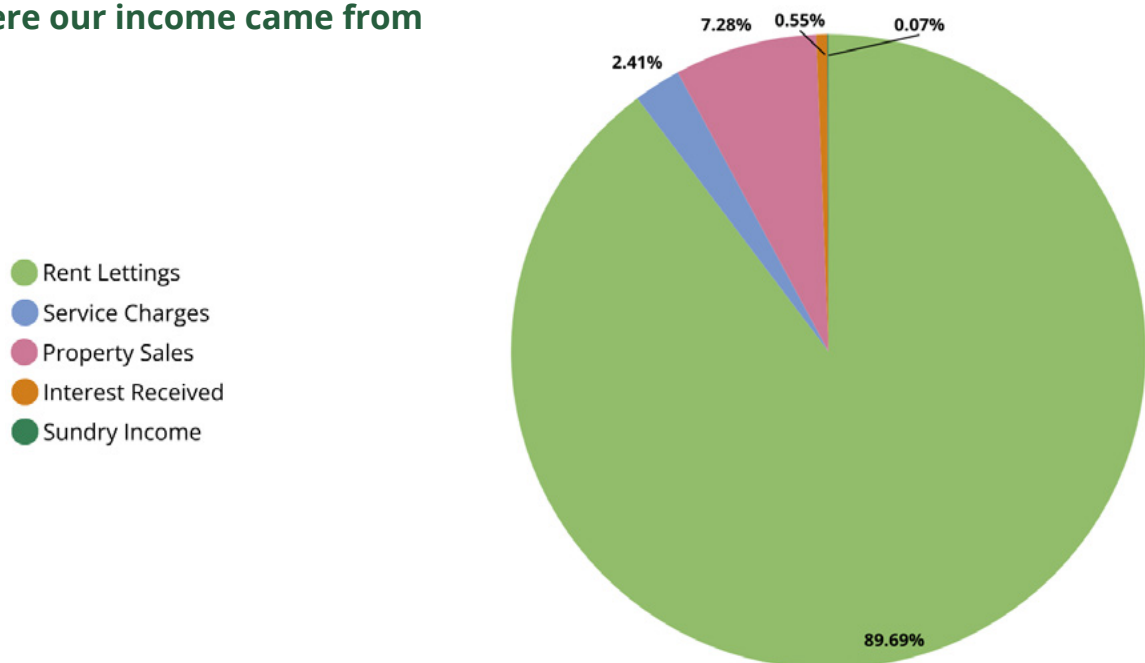
Business Running Costs

Our main income sources come from the rent we receive and a small amount of service charges. Additionally, we receive some charitable donations from our contractors, which has been spent on supporting local community groups and tenants.

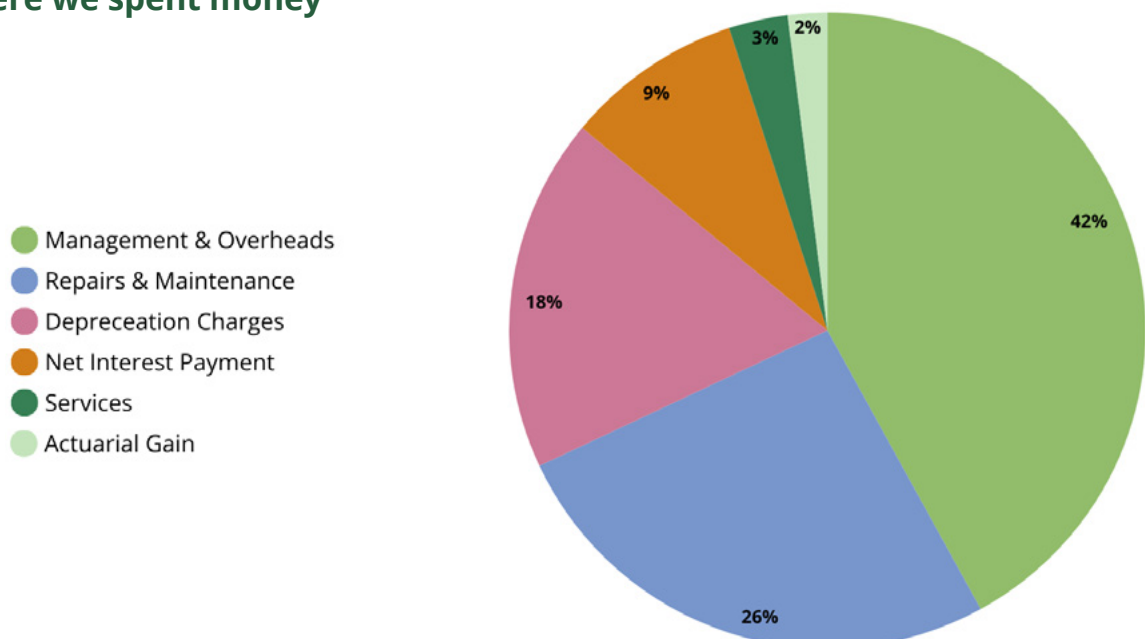
The illustrations below show where our income comes from, and where that money is spent in delivering services. This shows our commitment to maintaining homes and supporting tenants effectively.

A full set of financial statements for the year end 31st March 2025 are available on our website or by post on request.

Where our income came from



Where we spent money



The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 ■

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 sets out what every social housing tenant should be able to expect from their landlord:

1. To be safe in your home. We will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
2. To know how your landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
4. To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board. The government will provide help, if you want it, to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

This act guides everything that we do at EPIC, and we continually strive to improve upon the services we provide and the relationships we have with our tenants and communities. We are always open to suggestions from our tenants about how we can put things right when they have gone wrong or improve upon the services we provide.



Ways to Stay Informed



Online

www.epichousing.co.uk – our website contains all the information you need about our services and how to access them – you will also find the latest news about what we're doing, and a contact form if needed.



Email

mailbox@epichousing.co.uk – if you provide us with your email address, we will also use this to send you information about any issues that affect your tenancy, in a timely manner. We will also send surveys from time to time to give you the opportunity to tell us what you think. You can opt out of receiving emails at any time.



EPIC News

We publish a quarterly newsletter to keep tenants up to date and informed about our services and performance.



Telephone

You can call us with any enquiries on 01782 252575, Monday to Friday, 9 am to 2.30 pm. This phone line is also available 24 hours a day to report repairs.



Social media

Follow us on:

- Facebook at facebook.com/EPICHousingAssociation
- Instagram at instagram.com/epic.housing/
- LinkedIn at linkedin.com/company/epic-housing



In person

Our reception area at Ubbberley is open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. Our offices at Meir continue to have Housing Officer presence every other Tuesday – details on noticeboard at Meir.

As a social landlord, EPIC is subject to regulation by the Regulator of Social Housing.

...community, connecting, and collaboration



If you have any comments, suggestions, or questions about the content of this Annual Report, please contact:

Cindy Gleghorn, Director of Housing Management or Mark Bourne, Customer Services & Resident Involvement Team Leader

In writing:
EPIC Housing,
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ST2 0EF

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Via email: mailbox@epichousing.co.uk