

For North Kesteven District Council Tenants

ANNUAL 20 REPORT 20



**Annual Performance Review for Housing
& Property Service customers 2019-20**



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Are you safe?

Where to get help during the Covid-19 Pandemic

We know that COVID-19 (Coronavirus) will have a serious impact on the lives of women, children and men who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Fears over jobs, financial pressure, school closures, working from home and all the other current changes to our day to day lives are likely to result in an increase in domestic abuse incidents.

If you're already living with domestic abuse, then the restrictions put in place while the government tries to slow the spread of the virus have probably left you fearful of being isolated in the house with your abuser and as if there is nowhere to go for help.

You may not be able to see the friends and family who usually support you, and some of the places where you go for help or treatment may be closed or offering a reduced service.

Please remember that you can still call 999 if you or someone else is in danger. While some domestic abuse support services are not able to offer face to face meetings at this time, there is still help and advice available online and over the phone. These local and national organisations are working hard to ensure they can still support you.

- EDAN Lincolnshire 01522 510041 www.edanlincs.org.uk
- Worried about somebody else's safety? Report this to Lincolnshire County Council; call 01522 782111 if you are worried about a child, or 01522 782155 if you are worried about an adult. www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding/report-concern
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247 www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Men's Advice Line 0808 801 0327 www.mensadviceline.org.uk
- National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 999 5428 www.galop.org.uk
- If you are a child or young person and domestic abuse is happening in your home or relationship, then call Childline on 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

**CALL YOUR
LOCAL
POLICE**



101

**IN AN
EMERGENCY
ALWAYS
CALL 999**

FOR NON-URGENT INCIDENTS, REPORT ONLINE
www.lincs.police.uk/online-reporting




**Lincolnshire
POLICE**
policing with **PRIDE**

WELCOME



**Councillor
Ian Carrington,
Executive Board
Member with special
interest in Housing**

It's been another busy year for the Housing and Property Service, and it is great to see that you, our tenants, remain satisfied with the overall service.

In our latest annual Survey of Tenants and Residents, 95% of respondents say they are satisfied with the service provided. We are incredibly proud of this achievement, but we don't take it for granted and continue to consult with you on how to improve the service.

We are committed to providing high quality, safe, secure, and increasingly environmentally-responsive, homes for you and continually look for ways to improve the existing housing stock.

In the 100th anniversary year of the first council homes being built in North Kesteven, the Housing Roadshows highlighted just how far the Council has come in building and developing a stock of properties for people of the District to make their homes.

During the past year, work was completed to regenerate a unique, Grade-II listed school in Sleaford. The old school was transformed into six spectacular homes and a further three new family homes within the grounds.

The Council continues to replace the homes lost through the Right to Buy and remains one of the best housebuilding authorities in the country. In total 21 new properties were added to the stock whilst plans were put in place for around 60 more to be built in the months ahead.

In the spring we added the 300th property to our stocks since the Council began building again in 2009 – 228 of these for Council rent and 72 for private rentals through Lafford Homes. Looking ahead over the next decade we aim to invest just over £64.1m in more council homes as well as £42.2m on improvements to the existing stock.

This Annual Report shows you how the Council is investing in your homes; how they set out to support you throughout the year and in the face of the coronavirus pandemic; how they continue to supply houses for people in need of housing in the area; and how they continue to look for ways to make your homes cheaper to run. It's this level of commitment that won the property team a top national award for the quality of its design and repairs programmes.

The success of the service is also down to you, our tenants, letting us know what you like and what you don't. I hope, like me, you reflect on this report as a series of achievements for the team who support, provide and improve your homes and reflect on your own positive contribution in that relationship too.

CONTENTS

04	Our priorities
05	Future priorities
06	Customer satisfaction
07	Complaints
08	How your rent is spent
09	How does NK compare
10	Housing, what next?
11	Case study Disabled adaptations
12	Preparing for Winter
14	Repairing homes
15	Improving homes
16	Building homes
17	Case study Quarrington School
18	Managing estates
19	Letting homes
20	Tenancy and support services
21	Money matters
22	Tenant involvement
23	Case study Tenancy sustainment

Each year North Kesteven District Council produces a report about how the Housing and Property Service is working to meet the needs of its tenants and leaseholders. This report tells you how the Council performed over the 2019/20 financial year and what needs to be improved.

The information is based on satisfaction surveys you have returned to us and statistics and information we gather throughout the year. This includes information given by tenants when we visit them, from meetings; and by analysing the complaints that have been received.

OUR PRIORITIES

Our Vision - Together We Put The Meaning of Home in Housing

The Housing business plan is the document that sets out the priorities for the Housing and Property Service over a five year period. The progress on these priorities is outlined in the table below.

REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING HOUSING STANDARDS	ACTIONS THAT WE ARE WORKING ON BASED ON YOUR FEEDBACK	PROGRESS
Home Ensures decent homes and a good repairs service that meets customers' needs, offers choices and maintains the quality of homes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review NK Home standard life time of components 2. Improving energy efficiency and heating 3. Review and replace remaining external wooden doors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asset surveyors have completed 1906 surveys. These have identified a number of improvements required. Work has begun on concrete guttering the others will be programmed into the new business plan 2. We continue to install the most efficient heating systems when replacing them 3. In 2017/18 a 3 year accelerated replacement door programme was introduced following tenants concerns. Over 3 years 157 door will have been replaced
Neighbourhood & Community Keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas clean, tidy and safe, preventing and tackling incidents of anti-social behaviour and supporting tenants who experience it	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving community spaces (e.g. parking, paving, lighting and communal facilities) 2. Improving grounds maintenance to community areas (e.g. grass cutting, weed clearing, gardening) 3. Re-evaluate parking programme 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Estate works have been carried out in Bracebridge Heath to address an estate rated as poor after inspections last year 2. There is now a full time general handyman/gardener post to look after Council estates 3. Tenants Investigating Services have scrutinised parking in Council house areas. This has instigated a review of car parking across the District
Involvement & Empowerment The information, communication and choice provided by the housing service and what residents can do if they are not satisfied	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greater opportunity for communication through face-to-face contact 2. Investigate alternative communications with residents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of tenants communicating through Facebook is increasing 2. Increased communications capacity through email and texting 3. Seven roadshows were held across the District for tenants to meet officers.
Tenancy How the Council allocates houses and ensures tenants have the information and support they need to maintain their tenancy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving the information when allocating properties 2. Ensure greater support for elderly and vulnerable residents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is now a 'While you wait – Frequently Asked Questions' for people awaiting allocation 2. There are now 6 Tenancy Support Officer posts to support tenants where there is an identified need
Value for Money Giving tenants high quality services for a reasonable cost and giving them the chance to influence services and be involved in setting any charges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to ensure tenants get value for their rent 2. Raise awareness of money advice, & affordable warmth help for residents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NK compares its services against up to 84 other landlords to ensure value for money 2. We continue to support tenants to provide money advice and domestic energy advice. Tenants can influence services by returning surveys, becoming a Tenant Representative, or giving us feedback.

FUTURE PRIORITIES



Provide high quality housing services across NK



Maintain & improve housing in NK



Increase the supply of housing in NK



The Surveys of Tenants and Residents provide views, trends and comments from tenants for the forthcoming Housing Business Plan to ensure tenants get the service they need. The business plan will also take into account the home improvement programme, asset surveys, and health and safety measures to ensure that your homes are up-to-date, safe and secure.

YOU SAID:

When considering our landlord services overall, the most important priorities to consider are;

- More support for vulnerable people
- Greater opportunity for communication through face to face contact
- Keeping you informed while getting a repair completed

YOU SAID:

When investing in the Council's homes, the most important priorities to consider are;

- Modern facilities (e.g. new kitchen, bathroom, heating)
- Improving the energy efficiency of homes through retrofitting (i.e. fitting existing properties with newer technology and/or other energy efficiency measures)
- A whole house refurbishment including the above, plus windows, internal doors, plasterwork, skirting, etc

YOU SAID:

When building new homes, the most important priorities to consider are;

- Energy efficiency of the new home
- Parking provision for the new home
- Availability of public transport

YOU SAID:

You think the Council should prioritise;

- Helping to reduce electricity bills (e.g. solar)
- Protecting the environment and reducing carbon footprint
- Replacing external doors

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (STAR RESULTS)

NK provides landlord services to 3842 properties.

The Survey of Tenants and Residents was sent out to 3797 tenants. A second reminder letter was not sent out this year to cut the overall cost of the survey.

1175
1033 (89%)
54
92

tenants completed the survey
were satisfied with the landlord services provided
tenants (4.7%) were dissatisfied with the service
10.7% tenants felt that the Council does not listen and act on their views

STAR SURVEY RESULTS	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
The overall service provided by Housing and Property Service	89% (n1033)	95% (n 1463)	93%
The overall quality of your home	84% (n 979)	91% (n 1408)	90%
Your neighbourhood as a place to live	87% (n 1018)	92% (n 1427)	92%
That your rent provides value for money	87% (n 894)	95% (n 1294)	95%
The way NKDC deals with repairs and maintenance	84% (n 995)	92% (n 1417)	90%
That NKDC listens to your views and acts upon them	72% (n 625)	84% (n 1003)	86%

'n' is the number of satisfied respondents

All results are down on last year due, in part, to a difference in the way the data was collected. However the Housing and Property Service will be looking at the results to see how these results can be improved over the coming year.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Following the Grenfell fire there are many things that have changed with regard to health and safety of Council housing stock. The Housing Department now has a Health and Safety Regulatory Compliance Officer who has overviewed six key areas in all Council housing stock to ensure that all current health and safety legislation is complied with. Safety work already completed to blocks of flats include fire compartmentation in roof space, new door entry systems and new fire doors to 119 flats.

Any further actions required will be programmed for completion as soon as possible. The six key regulated areas include:

- Asbestos
- Electrical Safety
- Fire
- Gas/Heating
- Mechanical Lifts
- Water Hygiene

COMPLAINTS

Tell us when we've got it wrong. Your feedback helps us to try and put the problem right. If we don't know – how can we work with you to solve your problem? If we can't help we can give you an explanation as to why, on this occasion, we can't help. Formal complaints help the Council to understand how the service has failed you. Then to make sure it doesn't happen to others in the same situation.

In 2019/20 there have been:

8 complaints closed in partial favour of the tenant and the Council, highlighting that whilst the Council acted correctly it could have done so in a more appropriate way

9 complaints closed in favour of the tenant

42 new complaints

3 new appeals against officer decisions, of which 3 held in favour of the tenant

24 complaints did not close in favour of the tenant

8 complaints went to a stage two complaint. No complaints were taken to the Housing Ombudsman



Area of complaint were:

Repairs **16**

Neighbourhood Services **12**

Housing Options **8**

Property Services **5**

Income Management **1**

Housing Policy & Systems **1**

Learning from complaints

We continue to visit those tenants who have said they are very dissatisfied with the overall service to find out the reasons they are not happy and work to correct issues where we can. A complaint about collection of rent arrears lead to the amendment of procedure to include greater explanation in the letters sent to former tenants.

HOW YOUR RENT IS SPENT



Repairs and
Maintenance
£3,795,400



Supervision and
Management
£3,178,200



Loan Principal
Repayment and
interest charges
£4,163,900



Other service
expenditure
including
appropriations
£918,300



Contribution to
fund component
replacements
and New Build
Programme
£3,450,200

£15,506,000 TOTAL EXPENDITURE

£15,506,000 TOTAL INCOME



£15,047,100
House rents



£144,200
Garage rents



£129,700
Service
charges



£51,700
Rental income
including ground
rent and service
charges



£51,200
Other non-
rental income



£49,900
Shed rents



£32,200
Interest and
investment
income

WEEKLY RENT COMPARISON 2019/20

	3 BED HOUSE	2 BED BUNGALOW	1 BED FLAT
Social rent	£79.61	£73.27	£58.15
Affordable rent	£114.35	£95.91	£71.46
Private rent	£164.27	£161.50	£101.00

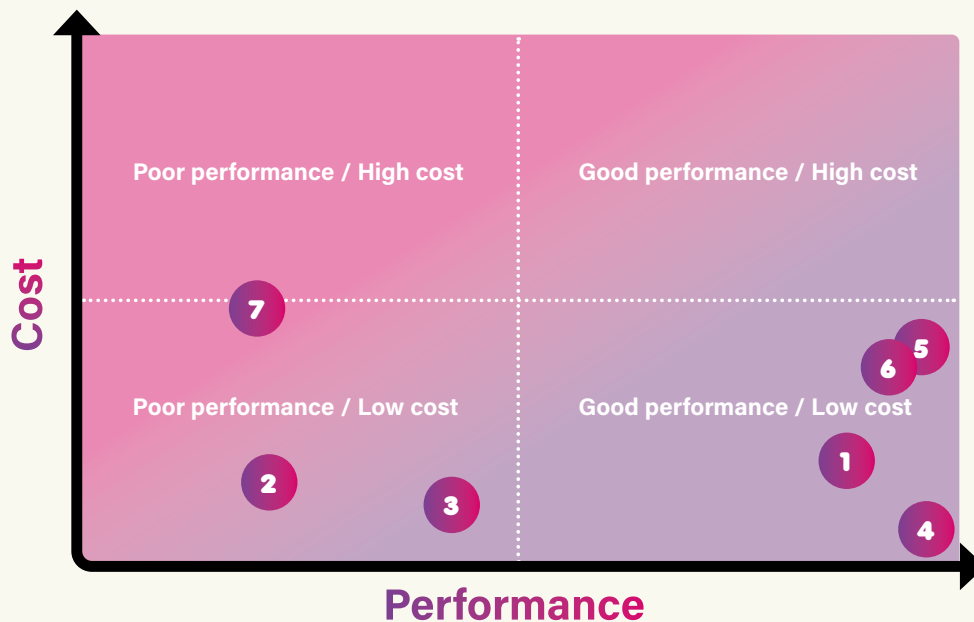
HOW DOES NK COMPARE



To ensure tenants are getting value for the rent they pay, the Council compares its landlord services with 84 landlords (57 in 2017/18) who have similar stock size (2500 and 5000) to North Kesteven. (The figures submitted here are for 2018/19)



VALUE FOR MONEY



This table shows you how NKDC compares against the 84 landlords for cost and performance in the seven key areas listed below.

- 1 Responsive repairs
- 2 Voids and lettings
- 3 Rent arrears and collection
- 4 Tenancy management
- 5 Resident engagement
- 6 Neighbourhood management
- 7 Community investment

HOUSING – WHAT NEXT?

The Housing Business Plan is due to be published in April 2021. This document will contain all the priorities for NKs Landlord Services. It will take account of:

- Any new health and safety requirements
- Tenants priorities according to the responses from the Survey of Tenants and Residents
- The findings from the asset surveys being carried out in Council homes across the District
- The planned programme of improvements
- The needs of NK residents for new, affordable accommodation
- The available finances to deliver the above

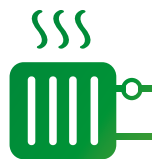


We know that one of the most important things for tenants is the quality of the house you live in. We know you want a modern and well maintained house to call home.

We asked 'When considering investment in the Councils homes, what are the most important priorities to consider?' The top three responses were:



- 1.** Modern facilities (e.g. new kitchen, bathroom, heating)



- 2.** Improving the energy efficiency of homes through retrofitting (i.e. fitting existing properties with newer technology and/or other energy efficiency measures)



- 3.** A whole house refurbishment including the above, plus windows, internal doors, plasterwork, skirting, etc



The enclosed questionnaire is to check that following the STAR survey we have interpreted the information into the correct priorities for our tenants. We would appreciate your feedback to ensure we have got them right.

CASE STUDY DISABLED ADAPTATIONS



Sometimes it is not always possible to make the adaptations required to a house in order to make it suitable for the needs of the household. This was the case for Fiona, who in order to accommodate the middle of her three sons, Leith aged 3 who has cerebral palsy, had to move house. I caught up with Fiona after the move.

Early in Leith's life, Fiona knew that the property they lived in didn't have a future for her family. Access into and around the house was difficult and this would only get worse as Leith grew.

Fiona said, "I knew I had to do something about it, and I wanted to sort it out before my eldest son had to start school."

She self-referred to Occupational Therapy and was quickly referred to the Council's Disabled Adaptations team. After a visit to the property, Housing Renewal Officer, Joe saw that things could be done to improve the situation for the family, however, a safe solution for access to the house was not feasible and he suggested a move.

An online application was made and although she was not eligible for a bungalow, Joe visited the houses that Fiona wanted to bid on to see if they would be suitable for adaptation.

A house in Branston was settled on and although the garden poses problems, Fiona is saving up to have a ramp built in due course.

After moving into the property, and just before lock down, the front ramp and railings, stair lift and wet room had all been completed.

Fiona said, "I was absolutely dreading having to refer us into the system; nervous about moving house; and, how long everything was going to take. But I was really surprised how much support there has been and how quickly everything moved along. A lot quicker and easier than I'd expected. Everybody who has helped me has been very helpful and friendly."

Six months later Fiona and her boys have settled in and are making the house their home. "This has to be a home for the long term and the doors will eventually need to be widened to accommodate Leith's wheelchair," Fiona told me.

Lock down has been hard as it has for many, but a local community chat group was set up and this has helped Fiona make friends with other young families in the street creating a support network that she hopes to strengthen in the years to come.

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR WINTER?

As the year rolls on and autumn turns into winter, the crisp cold days and darker nights means we will all spend more time indoors. Are you prepared and, just as important, is your home ready?

On these centre pages you will find information that will help you to prepare your home to be warm and comfortable as winter draws in.

Before it gets cold



Check your heating works well BEFORE you need it to keep you warm. If you encounter problems report it to the repairs contractors Kier Services for electrical heating and Aaron Services for all other types of heating



Check you have enough oil in the tank to last you through the winter? If you run out completely this creates air locks and your heating may not work even when you refill the tank



Are all of your outside water taps and pipes well protected and lagged to prevent them freezing up and potentially bursting. Turn off stop taps to outside toilets if they are not in use



Make sure your home contents are insured in case of floods, leaks or any other problems. The Council is not responsible for the contents and your personal belongings in your property



Get your chimney swept to make sure that it is clear and doesn't pose a threat to the safety of you and your family? You can find a registered chimney sweep at: www.nacs.org.uk or telephone 01785 336555. The sweeps can advise you on the best fuel to use, reducing fuel waste to save money and will issue a Certificate of Chimney Sweeping



If you are worried about the cost of heating your home through winter? You can make an appointment with the NK Domestic Energy Officer for help and advice. See page 13.

During Winter



If you are going away for a few days – can you ask a neighbour to keep an eye on your house and /or leave emergency contact details? Leave your heating on a low setting to stop systems freezing up and flooding



If you are going to be away for 30 days or more contact the Council repairs team for advice



If your heating isn't working try turning the thermostat up first to see if it comes on before calling for repairs



If you have solid fuel heating make sure you regularly clean your fire out including clearing the 'throat plate'



Don't be left in the cold. Between 1st October and 31st March both of the repairs contractors can offer you a temporary heating solution if your heating breaks down. If you are not offered this facility contact the appropriate contractor.

PREPARING FOR WINTER

Stay Warm, Save Money

A FREE independent service to help you find out if you can save money on your gas, electricity and water. Domestic Energy Officer, Brenda Walukiewicz can help if you need to:

- Find cheaper energy tariffs
- Switch your energy supplier or find a new one
- Make sure you are on the right water tariff

Whether you use, electricity, gas or oil, all you need is at least one of your energy bills to hand. Brenda will call energy suppliers and help to set up the best deal or will give you advice for you to do-it-yourself.

Telephone: **07816 294646**
(Monday – Thursday)

Email: Brenda_Walukiewicz@n-kesteven.gov.uk

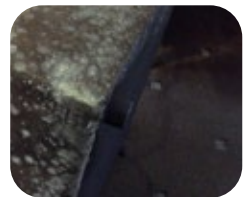


Condensation, Mould & Damp

Living in our homes and everyday activities within the home, such as cooking and washing and drying clothes, produce and release moisture into the air. In order to reduce condensation and the risk of mould you need to;

- Reduce the amount of moisture produced in the home
- Increase ventilation/air circulation
- Keep your house warm

For your copy of the condensation, mould and damp leaflet contact the Council and ask for the repairs team or go to www.n-kesteven.gov.uk and search 'condensation' for more information.



North Kesteven District Council does not clear paths or roads of snow.

Lincolnshire County Council carries out gritting and salting on 1,917 miles of Lincolnshire's roads. Only major routes are cleared of snow. Full details can be found in the Winter Maintenance Plan available, at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk, public libraries or Divisional Highway Offices.

For local travel information please tune your radio to:

- BBC Lincolnshire 94.7 - 104.7FM
- Lincs FM 102.2FM

Support and advice if you need it

If you have any problems; or you are struggling during the winter or a period of snowy weather; or if you are worried about any of the above; please contact the Community Engagement Team for support on **01529 414155**.



REPAIRING HOMES

Kier Services and Aaron Services operatives have carried out 12,739 repairs, including emergency repairs, between them in 2019/20



Empty Properties

Dealing with empty properties is a big part of Housing and Property Service work and involves all departments. It is important that we re-let properties as quickly as possible. Some voids ('Policy voids') are unable to be relet in the usual way in the case of, for example, properties awaiting redevelopment

£148,967



Total rent lost due to voids

£2040.92



Average cost of each empty property

20.14 days



Average length of time properties were empty

IMPROVING HOMES

At the end of 2019/20 the number of properties that don't meet the NK Home standard is 177 (last year 172).

580 properties had some kind of improvement over the past year. There was an 80% satisfaction rate for improvements carried out.

Number of properties improved over the year (excluding Newfield properties)



Bathrooms

33



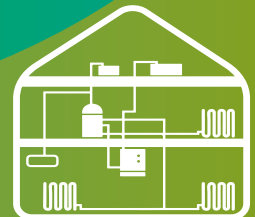
Kitchens

70



External door replacements

34



Heating systems and boiler replacements

114

- For a number of reasons, tenants sometimes refuse to have improvement works undertaken. This means that the property doesn't come up to the NK Home standard. A new tenant can request the refused works to be completed and will go on a waiting list for first come first served basis as finances allow.
- The backlog improvements completed in 2019/20 was, 3 bathrooms, 5 kitchens and 14 heating systems but during the year the number of refusals is more than the number of improvements completed

BUILDING HOMES

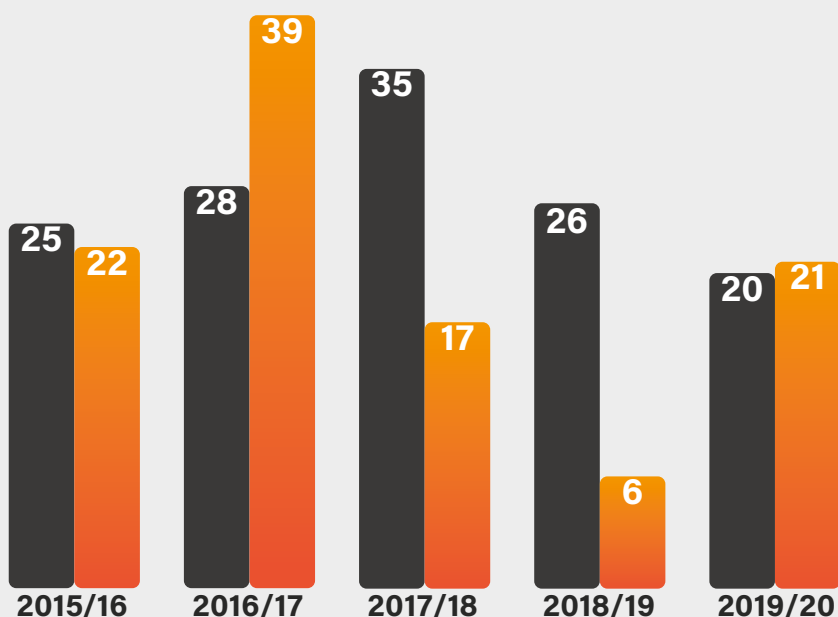
The Council aims to provide as many homes or more than those bought through the right to buy. There were 21 new build properties and another one acquired in 2019/20.

- 2 x 1** bed bungalows Newfield Road, Sleaford
- 1 x 2** bed house Newfield Road, Sleaford
- 3 x 3** bed house Newfield Road, Sleaford
- 5 x 2** bed house Poppyfield Lane, Sleaford
- 2 x 3** bed house Playground Court, Sleaford
- 4 x 2** bed house Playground Court, Sleaford
- 3 x 1** bed house Playground Court, Sleaford
- 1 x 4** bed bungalow Springfield Estate, Scopwick



Number of existing properties sold

Number of new properties delivered by NK



Lafford Homes

Lafford Homes continues to expand its portfolio of private rental properties to help meet housing need in NK. There were 72 units of which 13 are affordable rent units. Turnover in 2019/20 was £457,000 (Last year £250,000). This earned the Housing Revenue Account £31,018 through the service level agreement.

www.laffordhomes.co.uk
or call 01529 308131



CASE STUDY QUARRINGTON SCHOOL

In 2019/20 the former Quarrington School in Sleaford was converted into new Council properties. The school, originally built in 1867, played an important role in the life of Sleaford residents over many generations. It closed in 2002 and had been subjected to vandalism and decay.

The school buildings including the old schoolmaster's house and grounds have been transformed into 9 unique new homes including:

- Building three new homes in the grounds
- dividing the original school building into six, one and two bedroom units

The renovations had to make the best use of the space and conserve the characteristic architecture of the Grade 2-listed building. Many of the original features of the school were kept, including the font in the old chapel, floor tiles, doors, roof tiles and the school bell. The aim was to restore the building back to

its original form while dividing the building so that the divisions could be removed without damaging the fabric of the building.

The Council worked in partnership with Sankate Homes, which originally bought the site and developed the plans. They worked closely with NKDC and delivered an excellent quality build and finishing whilst accommodating design changes to ensure that the homes met the needs of the future residents.

The overall cost of the scheme, including land purchase, was £1.25 million and was funded by NKDC and a generous grant of £400,000 from Homes England.

The environment was considered at all stages and the new build properties were designed around a number of protected mature trees on the site and included the construction of a no-dig, permeable, access road for the site.



MANAGING ESTATES

169 Council estates were inspected by Neighbourhood officers in 2019/20

Inspections are based on set criteria agreed by Tenant Liaison Panel to rate estates as good, fair or poor. The results in **2019/20** were:



Last year (156 inspected) Good 130 Fair 30 Poor 7

Where estates have fared poor the Council will be looking at what needs to be improved to bring them up to fair/good

Talking Point

Following estate inspections St Johns Square, Bracebridge Heath received a number of environmental improvements. Tenants were consulted and a number of issues were noted. Security for the laundry area; the square tidied up and resurfaced; bike shelter and benches added; The project made the square a pleasant place to spend time outdoors.

'It's brought the community together we now spend time outside it's been ideal during lock down' said resident, Jennifer.



LETTING HOMES



335

NK properties let in 2019/20

1946

Households registered with Lincs Homefinder for accommodation including 88 transfer applications

4

Evictions

(3 for rent arrears 1 for tenancy issues)

Of the 335 allocations during 2019/20

283

Housing register lets

52

Transfer lets

18

Number of homeless household lets to designated homeless units

94

Successful nominations to other housing providers

Housing regulation requires landlords to make the best use of their available stock and allocations are made under strict Government guidelines. Properties are allocated to those in most need first and that makes best use of the type and size of property available.

In 2019/20

27 from Band 1

147 from Band 2

60 from Band 3

101 from Band 4

Tenancy Sustainment Officers

The team of Tenancy Sustainment Officers work to help tenants who find it difficult, for all sorts of reasons, to maintain their tenancies.

332 referrals were made to the six Tenancy Sustainment Officers (TSO)

£7,000 funding was obtained from charities by the TSOs to help and support tenants in need

Case 1: £1520 of the money secured cleared a tenants full rent arrears, council tax arrears and bought a pair of new glasses.



Case 2: At Christmas NKDC registered with the Christmas sacks appeal for families struggling at Christmas and got one tenant two huge bags of brand new toys for their 6 children and two bags of Christmas food.

Did you know?

The Handyman completed 374 various household jobs for eligible tenants needing assistance. The most requested jobs were fitting new toilet seats, and changing light bulbs.



Disabled grants

Staying independent is important to many people. When people find themselves needing adaptations to remain independent in their own home the Council may be able to help fund some eligible tenants' disabled adaptations to their Council house. We work with you and Occupational Therapist to find the most straightforward and cost effective way of adapting your home. In 2019/20 the following adaptations made for tenants included

2019/20



Level access showers



Over bath showers



Ramps



Stair lifts



Change of heating



Kitchen adaptations



Driveways



Miscellaneous

If you would like to know more contact the Council and ask for the Housing Renewal Officer.

£254,838 net rent arrears

98.14% of rent collected during the year

1429 tenants pay their rent by Direct Debit



Money advice service

The Money Advice Service offers a crucial lifeline to people struggling financially. The service is sometimes people's last resort, however, it is important to deal with financial problems early when they are easier to deal with. The team offer something simple such as advice over the phone, from Benefits advice, to helping with complicated application forms, to full debt casework.

104 people referred by NK to Money Advice service 65% of these were Council tenants.

16 NK residents referred themselves and contacted the money advice directly

535 food vouchers for food banks were issued

£17,193 was the total amount of additional weekly income for NK money advice customers

£202,441 was the total of lump sums awarded to NK customers

The Money Advice Service offers a free, independent and confidential service and is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Domestic Energy Officer

Everybody wants value for money and our Domestic Energy Officer has been helping tenants to find better energy deals for their households throughout the year. She has increased total savings for tenants by almost £10,000 from the previous year.

156 New customers visited

153 Revisits to existing customers

37 Water tariff switches with Anglia Water Authority

£27,042 Total savings

Please note that within the appointments figures above 5 were telephone appointments at the onset of the lockdown period.



Case study:

Mr M aged 87 was assisted with a claim for Attendance Allowance. He was awarded £87.65 per week, with a backdated lump sum payment of £1227.10. This also increased his Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support by £42.80 per week and £11.87 per week respectively. As well as getting backdated awards this gentleman had an increase in his annual income of £7,400.

TENANT INVOLVEMENT



7

Services changed as a result of tenant involvement

5

Tenant Representatives have received some training

7

Tenants volunteer as Tenant Representatives

TENANT REPRESENTATIVES

In 2019/20 the Tenant Representatives have been involved with reviewing the NK Home standard including the finances that governs what the service is or is not able to provide. They have reviewed parking in Council estates across the district and made recommendations for improvements.

HAVING YOUR SAY

Talk to us when you need to. If you need to remind us about something; haven't heard from us when you're expecting to; or you just want to have a say about housing issues.

Make a complaint if you feel you need to. Complaints often highlight issues that housing officers don't know about and can sometimes be rectified quickly.

Join us on Facebook, search for 'NKDC Housing'. From here you can private message us quickly and easily.

ROAD SHOWS

In September and October 2019 we ran a series of 7 roadshows across the District and despite tenants telling us that they want more face-to-face contact with officers, just 60 tenants attended them. However, talking to those people attending the roadshows were useful to both the tenant and the Council.



CASE STUDY TENANCY SUSTAINMENT

Geoff was referred to the Tenancy Sustainment Officers (TSO) to help him deal with some rent arrears as his Housing Benefit had stopped.

The first thing TSO, Susie, noticed was that Geoff was entitled to Attendance Allowance. As soon as this was being paid he was then entitled him to pension credit and Housing Benefit which Susie was able to sort out too.

It soon became apparent that following his stroke, Geoff couldn't manage in the house he was in. He was isolated and he needed a bungalow to improve his quality of life. Susie applied to Lincs Homefinder and bid on properties for him as he doesn't use the internet or have much contact with his family. A bungalow in North Hykeham was secured. "It didn't take long either," said Geoff.

A repayment schedule was organised with DWP and the charity, BEN, was identified to help settle the rest of Geoff's arrears. They paid for removal costs and provided carpets for the bungalow. Another charity, Friends of

the Elderly, was able to provide white goods for him.

Geoff said "I was dubious about the move and very nervous on the day." Susie was able to support Geoff throughout. She was able to assist on move day and helped him to settle into his new home, including setting up utilities.

Once moved they worked with Social Services to get a personal care package and The Stroke Association was able to provide a mobility scooter. This helps Geoff get to nearby shops and facilities or get a haircut. In his former home Geoff was unable to do any of this. His quality of life has improved greatly and after four months Geoff has settled into his new home.

Geoff said "The bungalow is much nicer and more manageable. It's very quiet here but I'm getting used to it now. I have trouble walking so the scooter helps me to get to the shops."



COUNCIL ENQUIRIES



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

ASK FOR THE DEPARTMENT YOU REQUIRE



Phone: **01529 414155**

Emergency out of hours: **01529 308308**

Address: North Kesteven District Council
District Council Offices,
Kesteven Street, Sleaford,
Lincolnshire NG34 7EF

Website: www.n-kesteven.gov.uk

Email: customer_services@n-kesteven.gov.uk

Repairs Team:

- Handyman
- For repair problems

Duty Neighbourhood Officer:

- Your rent
- Tenancy issues
- Gardening Scheme
- Improvements to your home

Income Management Team:

- Affordable Warmth Officer
- High level rent arrears
- Rent arrears from former tenancies
- Collection of other Housing related charges

Community Safety Team:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Community Safety Advice

Community Engagement:

- Getting involved
- Become a Tenant Representative
- At Home magazine

Complaints:

Contact any officer and let them know you wish to make a complaint

Housing options:

- Housing Advice
- Homelessness
- LincsHomefinder Housing Register
- Allocations

Property Services:

- Improvement works
- Capital works liaison
- Decorating Scheme

Housing Admin Team:

- Renting a Garage
- Booking a communal room
- Parking permits

Benefits and Money advice:

- Council Tax
- DHPS

Customer Services

- Grass cutting/grounds maintenance
- Dustbins/Collections/Missed bins

Wellbeing Service:

- Support for over 18s

REPAIRS

Kier Services 01529 416399

For general building repairs, brickwork, joinery, plumbing or electrical including electrical heating.

Aaron Services 01205 591979

For all other heating repairs and appliance servicing.

Are you on Facebook?

We are getting social!

NKDC now has a Housing Facebook page. This page is available for NKDC tenants only.

The NKDC Housing Facebook page serves as an additional communication tool where we can share information, respond to queries, highlight events and signpost you to relevant agencies. It's also a place where we share pictures, videos, quick polls, questionnaires and other housing information.

The group is for Tenants only, it is hoped that this opportunity will allow us to further improve communication between NKDC tenants and the Council.

Join our group!

Search for "NKDC Housing"

and get chatting with us about all things housing/tenancy related. You will need to ask to join the group and an administrator will check your details and approve your request.

