



RAISING THE BAR

ANNUAL REPORT

2011  
2012



Scottish Housing  
BEST VALUE NETWORK

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## Governance

The current financial climate has meant that SHBVN members once again faced significant challenges in 2011/12. The board of trustees provides the Network's strategic governance to support the SHBVN team and network members deliver services in these difficult times.

### SHBVN's Board for 2011/12 has been

Francine Abercrombie	Clackmannanshire Council	Chair
Peter Smith	Glasgow Housing Association	Vice Chair
John Wolstencroft	Dundee City Council	Member
Robert Laley	Falkirk Council	Member
Karen Finlayson	East Dunbartonshire Council	Member
Morag Boyter	Fife Council	Member
Sheila Barclay	South Ayrshire Council	Member
Jim Butler	Angus Council	Member

### The SHBVN Team

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www.shbvn.org (member site, password protected)

“Raising the Bar” may suggest homage to a certain 2012 summer sports fest. However the title is more than apt for a Network whose core business is performance improvement. “Raising the Bar” is also an important adage for reflecting on how SHBVN continues to improve services and seeks to innovate in the way these are delivered.



Although the main business changes were completed at the time of the 2011 Annual Report, embedding these has continued in 2012. This Annual Report reflects on the progress made in business developments, Network achievements and the resulting benefits for members.

SHBVN core business is about performance improvement, so it is good to be able to highlight how members (with SHBVN support) have raised the bar over the past two years. This short table highlights headline performance improvements between 2010/11 (in brackets) and 2011/12.

Core Members	RSL Members
Our members built 1188 new homes (up from 855)	Our members built 2026 new homes (up from 1618)
Average days to let non low demand 34 days (down from 37 days)	Average days to let non low demand 23 days (down from 37 days)
All repairs on time 93% (up from 92.6%)	95% of all repairs completed on time (up from 94%)
Meeting SHQS 66% (up from 54%)	Meeting SHQS up 86% (up from 76%)
Rent arrears 6.4% (down from 6.5%)	Rent arrears 2.4% (down from 3.5%)
Satisfaction with overall service 87% (up from 83%)	Satisfaction with overall service 91% – no change

## 2011/12 – the year in figures

- SHBVN has 32 core members
- There are 51 Housing Association members
- As landlords, SHBVN member organisations manage nearly half a million social housing units in Scotland
- Our 5 stock transfer authority members retain key strategic housing functions and homelessness duties
- Members benchmarked and compared performance in 12 different housing functions in the annual exercise
- 5 key service areas were benchmarked quarterly

## 2011/12 – summary of achievements

- Increased membership - Core and RSL
- Expanded services to RSL members
- Full involvement in Charter development
- New customer satisfaction benchmarking services piloted (CSMT)
- New results services fully implemented
- Expanded set of benchmarking indicators (annual and quarterly) developed to reflect members' priorities
- Single access member's website launched
- Web based Self Assessment toolkits developed and support work provided
- Increased outward focus with membership of/ participation in national projects

I hope you will enjoy reading this report and finding out how your involvement in SHBVN makes us what we are and gives us the capacity for continuously “Raising the Bar”.

*M. Abercrombie*

# Core Services: Performance Improvement

## Benchmarking

Benchmarking performance information is at the heart of what we do. The service has continued to develop now that it is managed in-house.

Achievements	Resulting benefits
All benchmarking exercises and development fully managed in house	Flexibility on updating and developing new indicators, and analysing the information e.g. on trends provided
New indicators introduced	Provides members with: a reflection of performance against new legislative frameworks (Housing Support) national drivers (Housing Options) VFM
Robust validation processes carried out	Published information is more accurate for organisational comparisons
Early publication of annual results	Information is now available from July, months before it would be available publicly
Summary bulletins produced on annual performance	Members can compare headline performance against their own
Increased analysis, correlations between different indicator groups	Provides members with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>early evidence of performance measured against Charter outcomes</li> <li>wider stock and homelessness/housing options</li> </ul>
Visits made to member organisations	Continue to offer members the opportunity to reflect on their performance – critically but supportively

## Self assessment

The web based toolkits were launched earlier this month. The work over the last year or so to get this ready has included:

- finalising formats of self assessment workbook;
- mapping processes with other performance indicators including the Social Housing Charter, Customer Satisfaction Measurement Tool (CSMT), Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR), Public Sector Improvement Framework (PSIF)
- creating/testing web spaces.

As well as web developments:

- a Service Coordinator has supported two authorities to conduct self assessments in Void Management and Tenant Participation;
- self assessment is promoted in regular liaison meetings with the Improvement Service;
- a new Self Assessment Standard work plan has been produced;
- ongoing evaluations of self assessment work were reported on.

The benefits from self assessment activities are

- members continue to play a key role in SHBVN service improvements;
- an increased self assessment framework to support continuous improvement;
- access to a wide range of robust web toolkits to measure service performance;
- increased visibility of linkages between SHBVN self assessments and other scrutiny criteria;
- organisations are better informed about the resources required and the format of self assessment processes are more transparent.

Another of SHBVN's core activities in 2011/12 was delivering a programme of events. With tight budgets commonplace, these free topic based practice exchanges offered opportunities to members for personal development, showcasing their local practice achievements and meeting national stakeholders.

In 2011/12, SHBVN officers facilitated 36 events:

- 18 core practice exchange forums;
- 4 RSL seminars;
- 2 Benchmarking training sessions (1 for Core and 1 for RSLs);
- 5 Private Sector Group forums;
- 6 ALACHO meetings;
- 2011 AGM.

Over 600 members attended these events (an increase of over 100 since 2010/11). Over 30 guest presenters participated in these events.

## Other events

SHBVN officers are also frequently involved in external events:

- presentations were delivered at TIS, TPAS, CIH conferences;
- workshop facilitation at Shelter conference and CIH seminars;
- co-facilitation of two Charter events (attracting over 70 delegates each time);
- delivered a regional housing HUB event (attended by over 100 delegates).

## Communications

Newsletters were produced more frequently than in the previous year and provided to all members. SHBVN had promotional stalls at CIH annual conference, regional housing options event and the SFHA annual conference. We also delivered even more practice exchange outputs for on going learning and networking.

The benefits from these activities are:

- members' needs and interests are met;
- increased knowledge and skills (individual and organisational);
- learn from each other and other expert stakeholders;
- personal development is integral to Networking activities;
- cost/resource effectiveness for organisations;
- inform national policy decisions through access to national consultations;
- members are part of a learning organisation.

## Practice Exchange Forums: Key Outputs

Forums are a place of lively discussions so SHBVN records and publishes forum reports for its wider membership. It considers these outputs as key for benefitting learning across the Network and for individual practitioners. As well as presentations (guest and members), outputs include: event reports; topic summaries/guides; update monitors; practice pointers. These are available for members on SHBVN website [www.shbvn.org](http://www.shbvn.org). The following list provides a flavour of some of the topics highlighted in outputs:

### Asset Management Group

- "In the Spotlight", Kitchen and Bathroom schedules;
- "In the Spotlight", Customer Engagement practice pointers;
- Asset Management benchmarking indicators booklet;
- Asset Management and Equal Opportunities booklets.

### Homelessness and Housing Support Group

- topic report covering supported accommodation and reaching 2012;
- "In the Spotlight", Flat Mates discussion points;
- "In the Spotlight", Housing First discussion points;
- Homelessness and Housing Support Benchmarking Analysis.

### Housing Management

- forum report: Changing Consumer Behaviour to Achieve Energy Efficiency;
- presentation: Using gap analysis to deliver housing improvements;
- presentation: Green Deal, ECO and Climate Change Standard;
- presentation: National retrofit/sustainable housing strategy and impact on Housing Management.

### Local Housing Strategy Group

- reshaping Care and Joint Commissioning;
- potential for Mid-Market Renting in Glasgow;
- policy and consultation updates from ALACHO;
- refreshing Housing Needs and Demands Analysis (HNDAs).

### Service Improvement and Scrutiny Group

- focus on customer satisfaction monitoring;
- guide on customer satisfaction published;
- focus on planning and preparing for the Social Housing Charter;
- focus on self assessment and quality assessment methods.

## Service Feature

### Supporting Housing Associations and Co-operatives

Supporting Housing Associations and Co-operatives

2011/12 has seen many developments in the RSL benchmarking service. A **dedicated service for housing associations and co-operatives was introduced** and RSL membership continued to grow. Twelve new housing associations were welcomed thus strengthening the existing peer groups to enable more robust benchmarking and opening further opportunities for our members to exchange practice.

Developments in the RSL **benchmarking** services continued with revised benchmarking indicators and the launch of a **quarterly indicators collection**.

We will also introduce a national standard for social landlords called **Customer Satisfaction Measurement Tool**. If adopted across the sector CSMT will, for the first time, provide a common framework across Scotland for benchmarking customer satisfaction. This standard offers robustness and consistency and like quarterly benchmarking, members have an option of using this tool on line.

Housing development programmes have been

slashed and there is continued pressure on public resources. A focus group consisting of housing association and local authority development staff was set up to formulate **Development Indicators**. This will ensure that in future our members will be able to benchmark developments they complete. This will provide a unique opportunity for new housing to be benchmarked across the whole of the social housing sector.

During 2012 we ran three **practice exchange forums** during which we discussed issues relating to performance improvement in housing management, maintenance and development. Each meeting attracted high quality speakers from amongst SHVBN membership as well as EVH, CIH and the Scottish Government.

#### In summary, the key improvements/achievements in 2011/12

- twelve new members from the RSL sector joined;
- introduction of quarterly benchmarking;
- development indicators working group set up and pilot project soon to begin;
- successful, well attended and highly rated practice exchange forums were held.

## Special Projects

### Private Sector Service

Scottish Government funding for this post stopped in 2011/12. However, the Network recognised the value

and achievements of this group by "self funding" the continuation of the work this year.

The Private Sector Forum has focused on

- Property Factor legislation;
- the Code of Conduct for Property Factors;
- the impact of welfare reform on passported benefits.

Newsletters and other reports summarising the group's activities and the key topics discussed have also been published providing another source for Network learning.

### Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO)

Along with Policy Manager, Jim Hayton, SHVBN has continued to provide support to ALACHO ensured the effective delivery of the organisation's objectives. In terms of tackling issues the close working arrangements that exist between both organisations

have been instrumental in helping to shape housing policy, guidance and legislation in Scotland. In particular

ALACHO and SHVBN have:

- responded jointly to a number of consultations;
- provided formal and informal views on the content of a range of national guidance and policy documents;
- held jointly run events to share good practice and innovation;
- participated in a number of Scottish Government and SHR Working Groups.

Both organisations are fully committed to continue working closely to maximise their impact on shaping the future of social housing in Scotland, and in improving good practice among social landlords.

The coming year will also see SHVBN continue to provide a number of services for ALACHO including:

- continued hosting of the ALACHO members web pages;
- development of a new public facing website;
- provision of treasurer management function.

## The Social Housing Charter

SHBVN's role in Charter activities has been intensive

- representation on a group (with ALACHO) set up by the Regulator to explore the measures that will be adopted to assess landlords achievement of the charter outcomes;
- SHBVN and ALACHO jointly responded to the indicator consultation exercise;
- Charter Toolkit development (with CIH, ALACHO, HouseMark). This is designed to help landlords assess the range of existing evidence sources available when considering reporting on achievement of the Charter outcomes;
- delivery of national Charter events (jointly with CIH and others TPAS and TIS) The two events provided an update on the Charter; examined the evidence sources and highlighted the role that tenant scrutiny activities play.

The benefits for members from these activities are

- they (and their interests) are represented throughout the development process of a significant national performance strategy;
- they have "up to the minute information" about processes that impact on local performance monitoring management frameworks;
- how to support tenants in at early developments;
- they can see existing performance linked to charter indicators.

## Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman

- Carried out pilot work with SPSO on their Model complaints process which helped members to prepare for implementation of new approach to complaints

## Scottish Government Housing Options Programme

SHBVN supported the work of the Tayside Fife and Central Housing Options Hub to

- secure continuation funding;

- commission and deliver welfare reform training (CPAG);
- commission (CIH) training/learning needs analysis (including those of partner organisations);
- deliver a regional/national event – attended by over 100 delegates.

The benefits for members from these Housing Options activities are that

- the work is recognised nationally;
- their interests inform key national policy drivers;
- they have increased access to national policy discussions/practice exchanges;
- they get support in developing local practice changes;
- they are offered greater networking opportunities.

## HouseMark

In November 2011 we signed a partnership agreement with the UK wide benchmarking organisation HouseMark. As a national benchmarking club with over 800 members we are keen to work with HouseMark to develop services and further support our members to achieve best value.

We are specifically working with HouseMark and the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to develop a comprehensive suite of complaints benchmarking indicators. We have also produced a Charter Toolkit along with HouseMark and CIH. We will also introduce HouseMark's tool for large scale tenants and residents survey's called STAR to standardise this activity in Scotland and develop a benchmarking framework.

## Looking Ahead

We have set out our 3 year strategy in the form of a business plan. In the year ahead we will face a number of challenges as will our members. We will continue to develop and fine tune the business and the services we deliver to ensure they meet our members' needs but also where necessary, reflect the regulatory framework in Scotland.

In terms of business planning we aim to:

- fully embed our new legal and financial responsibilities;
- review of governance framework to ensure it is fit for purpose;
- improve our internal monitoring and reporting structures.

The most significant challenge faced by our members in the coming year will be the impact of Welfare Reform. This impacts hugely on the sector as a whole in terms of the long term future of new house provision but also on individual landlords financial viability due to reduced income and mounting debts. To support landlords deal with Welfare Reform and the other challenges that exist we will:

- provide analysis of the benchmarking results highlighting the potential or actual impacts of Welfare Reform;
- develop improved website functionality to allow members to produce more sophisticated analysis of performance;
- develop or self assessment tools to support and encourage a robust and challenging approach.

All our activities are being reviewed to connect where necessary with the Social Housing Charter and the new Regulatory Framework in Scotland.

### Financial Activities

09.06.11–31.03.12  
£

<b>CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>	
Services to members	
Activities undertaken directly	
Staff costs - Wages & Salaries	153
AGM costs	2,225
Forum and conference costs	6,009
Printing and stationery	280
Staff training	555
	<u>9,222</u>
Support costs	
Staff costs - Wages & Salaries	58,889
Staff costs - Employer's NIC	5,695
Staff costs - Pension costs	3,819
Establishment - Rent	6,910
Establishment - Insurance	482
Establishment - Other	520
Motor and travel costs - Other	435
Legal & professional - Other	5,975
Office expenses - Telephone	360
Office expenses - Other	607
Depreciation	787
Bank charges and interest	35
Staff training and recruitment	1,300
Marketing	960
Sundry expenses	1,195
	<u>87,969</u>
	<u>97,191</u>
Management and consultancy services	
Activities undertaken directly	
Sundry costs	358
	<u>97,549</u>

## Vision Statement

The overarching objective of SHBVN is to support social landlords in Scotland to deliver customer focused, efficient and effective services. In particular, we have 4 key aims as detailed below.

- to drive up the standard of housing services across Scotland by identifying and sharing good practice through robust and routine cost and performance benchmarking;
- to facilitate and support co-operation between members to enable the exchange of performance results and good practice;

- to provide direct support to members to achieve continuous improvement and best value through training and facilitation of self assessment, peer review and inspection support activities;
- to promote the activities of the Network nationally to ensure the key challenges facing members are recognised and if possible addressed.

Source: Scottish Housing Best Value Network Business Plan 2012-2015

Scottish Housing Best Value Network is a Scottish charity registered under charity number: SCO42381