# Council Tenants Annual Report 2020 – 2021

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## Introduction

The report covers the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

*“Over the past 18 months, we have had to adapt to the challenges presented by the pandemic. As your landlord, we have had to alter and, in some cases, stop services we offer to you as tenants. Extra safety measures have meant tasks have sometimes taken longer and our staff working extra roles.*

*However, we have still delivered services that matter the most to tenants, including completing all emergency repairs, helping vulnerable individuals through our wellbeing service, and providing support to those struggling with matters such as rent arrears.*

*We have also been able to make progress on several much-needed facilities in the city such as De Wint Court extra care facility and the opening of new homes on St Giles.*

*I would also like to thank all our tenants for their patience during this difficult time and we hope to get services fully back up and running as soon as possible.*

*I hope you enjoy reading the report.”*

Portfolio Holder for Housing-Cllr Donald Nannestad.

## Our Priorities for the coming year (2021-2022)

* Completing the setup of the scheduled repairs system, to find out more about scheduled repairs go to [**www.lincoln.gov.uk/council-housing/scheduled-repairs**](http://www.lincoln.gov.uk/council-housing/scheduled-repairs)
* Reviewing how we deal to anti-social behaviour, by improving how we respond and deal with complaints
* Reducing our carbon footprint
* Delivering new affordable homes at the Rookery Lane site
* Opening the De Wint Court Extra Care facility
* Improving the appearance of the estates by tackling fly tipping

## Social Media

**Find us on Facebook**

Follow us on Facebook at

**City of Lincoln Council - Resident Involvement**

to hear about latest service updates, events, and community activities.

## Lincoln Tenants’ Panel

Lincoln Tenants’ Panel (LTP) is a group of tenants and leaseholders from across the city that aim to ensure your views are represented and taken into account when decisions are made. LTP meets every month to discuss current issues that are affecting you and to monitor and review the council’s service delivery and performance.

Throughout the pandemic, they have continued to dedicate their time and adapt, our Chair Mick Barber, tells us how they adapted so they could continue their role.

“*Before Covid-19, myself and LTP members would hold face to face meetings. However, when the regulations came into place, we had to adapt quickly, so we could carry out the panel’s duties.*

*All members took part in training on how to use Microsoft Teams and Zoom, so we could hold virtual meetings. By doing this, it allowed us to undertake our role to represent tenants in a safe and efficient way.*

*I am proud of all the LTP members for the way they coped and all their hard work during the pandemic.”*

***Mick Barber -Chair for Lincoln Tenants' Panel***

Some of the tasks LTP undertook included;

* Assisting in developing the Council Housing Business Plan, to include customer focus and works for tenants.
* Completing the re-organisation of the panel, allowing better representation.
* Reviewing a sample of responses to complaints to give feedback.
* Holding the council to account by monitoring performance.
* Assisting the council in reviewing its complaint policy to make sure it met the new code of complaints handling published by the Housing Ombudsman.
* Taking part in developing building safety engagement plans.

If you would like to apply for a position on the panel or find out more information, please contact **LTP@lincoln.gov.uk** or **01522 873398**.

## New homes

Throughout the pandemic, we have continued to deliver new housing within the city.

In December 2020, five new homes on the site of the former Markham House on Swift Gardens were completed and have now been let.

Building work is still taking place for the new extra care facility, De Wint Court.

We are hoping to have this finished and start welcoming residents to their new homes by the end of 2021.

Works on the Rookery Lane housing scheme are progressing well. The scheme, which includes the delivery of 42 new affordable homes will see the construction of a range of housing types, including 32 two to four bed homes, four two-bedroom bungalows and six one-bedroom flats.

Regular updates on the scheme can be found on our website:

[www.lincoln.gov.uk/council-housing/new-build-housing/3](http://www.lincoln.gov.uk/council-housing/new-build-housing/3)

## Scheduled repairs pilot

As you may be aware, in August we launched Scheduled Repairs, which allows us to work in one area of the city at a time for all non-urgent repairs. To ensure we got this right for customers we first carried out scheduled repairs on a pilot system.

During the pilot we wanted to get feedback from customers on the new repair system, to do this we attempted to speak to every tenant who had a repair carried out during the first phase of the pilot. In total this amounted to over a 1,000 phone calls and 471 surveys being completed. This gave us a good understanding of how residents found the new system.

The findings showed that residents found scheduled repairs to be:

* Less disruptive as more repairs could be completed in one visit.
* More flexible for appointments.
* Overall satisfied with the new system.

From the feedback and the data gathered in the pilot we will make further improvements, we will:

* Look into creating more flexibility in appointment timeslots and how we keep you informed of appointments.

If you need to report a repair you can use our online repair request form which can be found at **l**[**incoln.gov.uk/report-repair**](http://www.lincoln.gov.uk/report-repair) or by calling **01522 873333**.

## A day in the life of a repair’s operative

To find out more about the vital services that we provide and how they have been affected by the pandemic, we spoke to Dean Cockett who is one of our operative within your Housing Repairs Service.

***What does a typical workday look like for an operative?***

*My workday begins at 8am, when I get my job sheet. I then use it to double check I have all the materials I need for the day in the van and then off I go to my first job.*

*I undertake a variety of jobs from converting a bathroom into a wet room for a disabled tenant under the Aids and Adapts programme, to repairing empty properties ready to be relet. Last year we relet 455 homes.*

***How have the Housing Repairs Services helped the community during the pandemic?***

*During the pandemic, the Housing Repairs Service helped to support communities by using our vans to deliver daily emergency parcels to vulnerable residents.*

***What motivates you the most during your working day?***

*Providing a quality service and repairs for tenants that makes their lives easier, for example fitting grab rails can make a resident’s life easier and help to improve their mobility to move around their home.*

If you would like to work for the Housing Repairs Service, keep an eye on our website for vacancies [**www.lincoln.gov.uk/jobs**](https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/jobs) or if you are looking for an apprenticeship search [**www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk**](http://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **KPI** | **Performance in 2018/19** | **Performance in 2019/20** | **Performance in 20/21** | **Target** |
| Emergency repairs carried out on time  | 100% | 100% | 100% | 99.5% |
| Getting repairs right first time | 93.68% | 94.07% | 92% | 90% |

## Tenancy services

**A day in the life of a Housing Officer**

Tenancy services are responsible for managing tenancies, we spoke to Mark Lovely to find out what it’s like to be a housing officer.

***What does a typical day look like for a housing officer?***

*The role involves all aspects of managing a tenancy, so on a typical day we deal with supporting tenants who have fallen into rent arrears to, investigating anti-social behaviour complaints and dealing with tenancy breaches.*

***What is one thing that you would want residents to know about your role the most?***

*As Housing Officers, we work hard to sustain tenancies the best we can, If tenants have any issues or concerns relating to their tenancies, please speak to your Housing Officer. It is always best to discuss problems at an early stage rather than leaving them or ignoring them. Whilst we may not be carrying out many visits at present, we are contactable by phone and email.*

***What is your proudest moment during your role?***

*I am proud of achieving my degree in Housing Practice with the Chartered Institute of Housing.*

***What motivates you the most during your working day?***

*I am motivated by challenges of the role and ensuring that I provide a good service by being approachable to tenants.*

***What are the biggest challenges/changes you have encountered?***

*There are always challenges to overcome in my job role, although I feel the pandemic has had a major impact and added pressures on rent collection.*

*Many households have been furloughed or unable to work due to “Covid 19.” To alleviate this issue, we offer a Discretionary Rental Hardship Payment scheme. This is for tenants if they are struggling to meet rent payments and their income has been affected by the pandemic. In total £70,421.43 were awarded and 268 applications approved.*

*Tenants transferring from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit is also a big challenge, but we’ve worked hard to ensure tenants are supported through this transition and to minimise the effect on rent arrears.*

If you need to discuss a tenancy matter, you can reach your housing officer by calling **01522 873333** or emailing **TenancyLandlordServices@lincoln.gov.uk**. You can find out who your Housing Officer is by going to [**www.lincoln.gov.uk/online/find-housing-officer/1**](http://www.lincoln.gov.uk/online/find-housing-officer/1).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Key Performance Indicator** | **Performance in 2018/19** | **Performance in 2019/2020** | **Performance in 2020/2021** | **Target** |
| Percentage of ASB cases resolved | 98.25% | 97.12% | 97.81% | 94% |
| Average number of days to resolve ASB cases | 64 days | 52 days | 51 Days | 70 days |
| Rent collected against rent due | 99.24% | 100% | 99.46% | 97% |
| Rent arrears as a % of the debit | 2.66% | 2.87% |  3.74% | 3.65% |

## Improvements across the city

Every year we carry out many improvements to homes and areas of the city to make sure that they are up to a high standard. Last year was no different, despite the pandemic, our Investment team worked tirelessly to still complete necessary improvements.

2020/21 was the final year of our partnership with Kier Services to deliver planned improvements to our homes.

Work was halted during the initial lockdown in 2020, although once restrictions eased, we managed to deliver:

* 109 bathrooms.
* 62 showers.
* 137 kitchens.
* 115 doors.
* 38 windows.
* 64 fences.
* Five rewires.
* Major roofline projects on Cannon Street and St Bololphs Court.
* Communal lighting upgrades and Fire compartmentation improvements at Derek Miller Court.
* Communal toilet refurbishment at Broomhill Court.

*Gas Servicing and Boiler replacements*

Despite challenges from the pandemic, through our partners Aaron Services, we were able to complete 7,533 boiler services and 462 boiler replacements. In total 96% of our gas appliances had safety certificates completed.

*Garage site on Asterby Close*

Asterby Close previously had six small garages that had fallen into poor condition. The result of our redevelopment has:

* Replaced the garages with five larger concrete units that can now be used to house today’s modern (larger) cars.
* Opened the site by removing two storage blocks adjacent which were not in use and had been attracting anti-social behaviour.
* Resurfaced the whole areas including improvements to the drainage on the site.
* Installed modern bin storage facilities to reduce the fly-tipping and improve waste management.

If you are interested in renting a garage from the City of Lincoln Council, you can apply online by visiting [**www.lincoln.gov.uk/online/apply-council-garage**](http://www.lincoln.gov.uk/online/apply-council-garage).

## Improving complaint processes by Michael Asher

*“As a member of the Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) we get to work in partnership with members of The City Council. One of the good things is that we are chosen to work on the strengths we bring to the group with mine being on the White Papers from the Government.*

*I was asked to work on the Complaints Procedure by LTP with the Government bringing out a white paper on complaints giving the Ombudsman more power.*

*I was asked to join this committee sharing a tenants' view with officers from the council Complaints Team, looking at the complaints procedure which was in place at the time. I gave my feedback, which they used to improve the current procedure. Throughout the process, I formed a good working relationship with staff members.*

*As an LTP member my main aim was to ensure tenants opinions were taking into consideration. The amended complaints procedure has now been adopted, taking my feedback into account.*

*I will be scrutinising how this reformed complaint procedure is working to ensure that it is working as we need it to.*

*Since completing this, I have been chosen from 1000s of applicants to join the Housing Ombudsman Resident Panel. Giving me the opportunity to give direct feedback on the complaint’s procedure, representing Lincoln tenants and City of Lincoln Council. Recently, I have taken the Housing Ombudsman Dispute Resolution module and passed with a 92.86% score.*

*The Ombudsman Resident panel, gives me the opportunity to talk directly to the Housing Ombudsman, letting him know how the ruling of the White Paper is working both for the resident and City of Lincoln Council.”*

***Michael Asher-***

***Lincoln Tenants' Panel and Housing Ombudsman Resident Panel Member***

## LinCare Control Centre

The LinCare Control Centre is responsible for managing a range of services that help support you or a loved one to continue living independently.

This includes their monitoring service where through a Lifeline System and pendant or additional sensors around the home, staff carry out calls to help support individuals through a whole range of situations. During the pandemic, staff worked extremely hard to ensure that this service was effectively managed, ensuring individuals were supported 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To do this, plans were put in place to ensure staff were able to attend work safely and enabling remote working. LinCare staff also trained up staff members in other roles within the council to ensure that if any members of staff were unwell the service would be unaffected which is crucial.

Furthermore, the LinCare service is updating to make sure that it meets the needs of its customers. This includes:

* The Lifeline System and Pendant currently only works around your home and the pendant works 50m outside of it and therefore you or a loved one can purchase a Lifeline GO which is a new equipment which allows the customer to get support easily from anywhere.
* For anyone who has the Lifeline System and Pendant or Lifeline GO they can receive medication reminders and welfare checks through a call for additional costs.
* There is a new Lincolnshire pill dispenser and filling service which has been created by LinCare, Pivotell and East Midlands Pharmacy.

To find out more about LinCare services go to www.lincoln.gov.uk/lincare, call 0300 303 4430 or email LinCare@lincoln.gov.uk.

97.37% of Lincare calls were answered within 60 Seconds

## Rough Sleeper team

Our Rough Sleeping Team has remained working throughout Covid-19, helping those most at need within Lincoln. Fortunately, due to more funding from Central Government, they have been able to offer more services.

This has included offering accommodation for everyone who presents themselves at risk of rough sleeping as well as funding for severe weather placements. Team members are currently working in bubbles to protect the continuity of the workforce, and ensuring the team is always available

The only changes for the team, like some other services, is that half the team is working remotely with the other half working from the office as well as team members working in pairs (rather than the usual 3) when out in the field to be COVID-19 secure. This has not affected the service the customer gets and is testament to the hard work of the team, minimising the impact they may feel from changes in process behind the scenes. One impact has been that Hostels have not always been able to admit new rough sleepers. Little is expected to change as lockdown eases.

What should you do if you see someone sleeping rough? P3 run a street outreach team so if you see someone sleeping rough, please ring **0808 2810280** or email **streetoutreach@p3charity.org**.