

Clydesdale Housing Association
inspection report

SEPTEMBER 2007



Ensuring decent housing
and strong communities across Scotland

Communities
Scotland 

Contents

	Pages
1. Introduction	1
2(a). Context	3
2(b). Progress against improvement plan	5
3. Housing management	6
4. Property maintenance	28
5. Governance and financial management	43
6. Areas for improvement action	54
7. Next steps	55
Appendix 1 Sources of evidence	56
Appendix 2 Examples of positive practice	58
Glossary	59

1. Introduction

About this re-inspection

1.1 This re-inspection was carried out by Communities Scotland under section 69 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 on behalf of Scottish Ministers. Our purpose in inspection is to provide an independent external assessment of the effectiveness of housing service delivery and make recommendations to help improvement. Inspections are conducted within a published framework of Performance Standards*. Clydesdale Housing Association was awarded “D” or “Poor” grades in Housing Management and Property Maintenance following our inspection in November 2004. In line with our guidance and procedures we carried out this re-inspection to assess the Association’s progress against its improvement plan. We have carried out a full re-inspection of services because of the poor grades in both of the main functions in our 2004 inspection.

How we assessed performance

1.2 Our inspectors asked two key questions:

- How good are the services we have inspected?
- How well are these services being managed for improvement?

1.3 In order to answer these questions inspectors:

- spoke to tenants, staff and members of the governing body;
- asked other partner organisations for their views;
- visited homes and local areas;
- saw and tested first hand how well services were being delivered;
- examined key policies, publications, information and the organisation’s self-assessment submitted for this inspection; and
- analysed published performance and financial information.

1.4 We have awarded grades for housing management and property maintenance.

This is what our grades mean:

* see glossary

A	Excellent	Major strengths.
B	Good	Many strengths and some areas where improvement is needed.
C	Fair	Some strengths, but with many areas where improvement is required or with a small number of significant weaknesses.
D	Poor	Major areas where improvement is needed or where a number of very significant weaknesses are found.

The inspection team

1.5 The re-inspection was managed by John Jenkins, Inspection Manager, supported by Robbie Fraser and Scott Crossley, Inspectors, Carolynne Watson and Heather Smith, Inspection Officers, and Luise Siekman, Financial Analyst. We were on site between 30 April and 11 May 2007. We would like to thank everyone involved in the re-inspection for their time and co-operation.

Responding to this re-inspection

1.6 We expect all inspected bodies to make the summary of this report available to anyone that wants it, report our findings to tenants and other stakeholders* and respond to the issues raised in this report. We require that the summary of this report is issued to all tenants.

* See glossary

2(a). Context

About the organisation

- 2.1 Clydesdale Housing Association was registered with Scottish Homes in 1987. It is an Industrial and Provident Society and a Registered Charity and its main purpose is to provide housing for the benefit of the local community. The Association's office is located in Lanark. It owns 667 houses which are dispersed throughout the rural areas of South Lanarkshire and the Clyde Valley. This presents some challenges in ensuring that the organisation's housing stock is effectively and efficiently managed. Of its 667 houses, 528 (76%) have been built since 1982 and 502 (73%) are either detached, semi-detached houses or cottage flats, with the remainder tenemental flats.
- 2.2 The Annual Performance and Statistical Return* asks Registered Social Landlords* (RSLs) to select a peer group* which best describes their organisation. Clydesdale selected the group described as RSLs that operate in rural areas that have more than 150 houses. This is the group we use to compare Clydesdale's performance.
- 2.3 The Association is governed by a voluntary management committee elected annually at its Annual General Meeting. Clydesdale currently has 11 management committee members, 4 of whom are tenants of the Association and 1 who is a sharing owner. There is a mix between members who have been in place for some time and newer recruits to the committee.
- 2.4 The Association faces a number of challenges these include:
- the membership of the Association has been gradually reducing over the last four years at an average rate of seven members per year; and
 - the Local Housing Strategy does not prioritise Clydesdale for significant new build investment for the social rented sector.

* See glossary

- 2.5 Clydesdale is continuing to build a limited number of new houses and directly manages its development activities. In Carluke there are 25 homes currently under construction with an anticipated completion date in October 2007. The Association also provides factoring services to 50 owner occupiers and management services to 24 sharing owners.
- 2.6 In 2005 Clydesdale restructured its senior staff team by introducing posts of Chief Executive and Depute Chief Executive. In an effort to reduce staff operating costs and improve the link between design and maintenance functions it also merged its Maintenance and Development functions into a Technical Services Department.

Key Facts

- 2.7 The table below presents a summary of key information for Clydesdale Housing Association showing trends over the last three financial years.

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Houses owned	664	668	667
Employees	11.4	11.8	11.8
Annual turnover (£'000)	1,612	1,744	1,807**
Total possible rental income (£'000)	1,622	1,744	1,804
Rental income from housing benefit	48.3%	48.2%	48.9%
Average weekly rent (£)	46.33	47.36	49.07
Average rent increase	3.4%	4.3%	3.8%
Houses re-let*	72	72	40
Responsive repairs carried out	1614	1778	1824
Maintenance spend per house (£)	820.92	941.00	520.00
Right To Buy sales	6	6	3

Source: Inspection Submission and 2006/07 APSR return

** Projected to 31/3/07

* See glossary

2(b). Progress against Improvement Plan

- 2.8 Following our original inspection in November 2004 Communities Scotland published its inspection report on the housing services provided by Clydesdale Housing Association. At that time, the Association received “D” or “Poor” grades for both its Housing Management and Property Maintenance services. Following publication of our original inspection report in April 2005, the Association developed and agreed with us a comprehensive and detailed Improvement Plan. Clydesdale’s plan outlined the actions which the Association intended to undertake in an effort to address the weaknesses highlighted. Progress against the Improvement Plan has been closely monitored by the Association’s management committee members and senior staff.
- 2.9 While we have subjected the Association to a full and comprehensive re-inspection, this report has been structured in order to highlight the Association’s progress against the individual areas for improvement identified in the original inspection.
- 2.10 The Association has reacted positively to the key areas for improvement action identified in our previous inspection report. Over the last two years Clydesdale has achieved significant success in tackling the issues identified by our previous report. This progress is described in greater detail over the following sections of this report.

3. Housing management

3.1 The grade awarded for housing management is:

B	Good	Many strengths and some areas where improvement is needed.
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We explain at the end of this section how the assessments and judgements we have made result in this grade.

How good is the service?

Access

Social landlords should provide open, fair and equal access to their housing lists and should work with partners to simplify and maximise access to housing.

- 3.2 Our last inspection report identified the following key areas for improvement relating to applicants' access to the Association's housing. These were that Clydesdale should:
- *minimise delays in processing of housing applications;*
 - *actively manage its housing list; and*
 - *change its use of suspensions to ensure that it provides full and open access to its houses.*
- 3.3 The Association advertises its housing by displaying copies of its allocations policy in the local office of South Lanarkshire Council, the local library, Clydesdale Citizens' Advice Bureau and on its website. Its associated leaflet provides clear, concise information on how to apply for housing. The Association maintains a list for its housing and has a nominations agreement with South Lanarkshire Council for 50% of its re-lets* and new build properties. Performance against this target is monitored and for the year 2006/07 nominations accounted for 42.86%. The Association also operates a mutual exchange register.

* See glossary

- 3.4 Clydesdale has been involved in the development of the South Lanarkshire Common Housing Register* (CHR). The CHR is expected to start operating in April 2008.
- 3.5 The Association accepts applications for housing at any time from people aged 16 and above. It provides an interview service to assist applicants complete the application form. Clydesdale has a target of three days for processing applications for housing. From the case reviews carried out, we saw that this target is being consistently met and performance is often better than the target time. Performance against this target is reported to the Management Committee on a monthly basis. Applications are quality control checked on an individual basis. In addition, random samples of applications are reviewed by the Housing Manager each month to ensure consistency. The housing list is reviewed at least once a year and customer feedback is gathered from applicants on the management of the housing list. The results of this feedback were included in a recent newsletter to housing applicants. This newsletter also included useful updated information on the location of and turnover in Clydesdale's housing.
- 3.6 Clydesdale has significantly improved its performance for completing the assessment of applications for housing. It has a target of five days to add new applicants to its housing list* and in the cases we reviewed we saw that it regularly achieves this. In 2006/07 the Association took an average of 2.3 days to add applicants to the housing list. This period included a formal response to the applicant which indicated their prospects of being housed.
- 3.7 Our last inspection was critical of the number of suspensions* and the length of time applicants were suspended from receiving offers of housing. At the time of our re-inspection, the Association had suspended seven applicants. It had informed these applicants in writing of the reasons for their suspension, the period of the suspension, their right of appeal and provided details of local support agencies. All suspensions are authorised by the Housing Manager on an individual basis and the suspensions list is monitored and regularly reviewed.

* See glossary

We found that Clydesdale is adopting a pro-active approach to suspensions. It is setting a six month suspension period in the majority of cases, rather than the twelve month maximum suspension referred to in its Suspension Policy.

- 3.8 Clydesdale gathers equality and diversity information from its applicants. It reports this information annually to the Management Committee, although in the case of joint applications, this data is gathered from first named applicants only. The Association immediately amended its procedures to include details of all joint applicants while we were on site. The information is used for monitoring purposes and to promote access to the housing list among under-represented groups. In response to criticisms in our earlier report, the Association has developed and maintains an Equality and Diversity Action Plan. It can arrange for the translation of key documents and leaflets into a selection of languages and formats. Interpreting services are also provided through an agreement with South Lanarkshire Council.
- 3.9 Clydesdale has taken appropriate steps to address the areas for improvement highlighted by the previous inspection report.
- 3.10 In summary, the Association is providing good access to its housing.

Meeting need and maximising choice

Social landlords should meet housing need through lettings and should maximise choice for applicants.

- 3.11 Our last inspection identified one area for improvement in relation to meeting need and maximising choice for applicants. This was that Clydesdale should:
- *always demonstrate transparently how and why it allocates its houses.*
- 3.12 Clydesdale prioritises its allocations on the basis of the housing needs, outlined by the statutory reasonable preference categories*. All of the allocations we reviewed were to people with one or more of these housing needs. Over

* See glossary

- 2006/07, the Association allocated 42 houses, of which 2 were first lets of new houses and 40 were re-lets.
- 3.13 In November 2005, Clydesdale agreed a protocol with South Lanarkshire Council to manage referrals under section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001^{*}. During 2006/07, the Association housed all five of the households referred to it by the Council under section 5. Our case reviews confirmed that the Association is also making a positive contribution to alleviating homelessness by housing a significant number of homeless applicants from its housing list.
- 3.14 Clydesdale has improved its mechanisms for the control and monitoring of the quality of decision making throughout the allocation process. The Association checks the details of each applicant to ensure these are up to date before making an offer of property. The Housing Manager approves each allocation individually and in each of the cases we reviewed, we found that the Association's records were clear and transparent.
- 3.15 The Association records and monitors its allocations and produces an annual outcome report. This is part of a Policy Objective report which is circulated to the Management Committee each year.
- 3.16 Clydesdale does not restrict applicants' choice of area and does not restrict applicants to a set number of offers. It provides applicants with details of their housing points total and a breakdown of these points. The Association also provides clear detail on the applicant's right to appeal. This is a good approach to maximising choice.
- 3.17 Clydesdale has addressed the area for improvement identified in the previous inspection report with regard to meeting need and maximising choice. It is now allocating its houses clearly and transparently.

^{*} See glossary

3.18 In summary, we found that Clydesdale is good at meeting need and maximising choice for applicants. It is also working well with the Council to achieve good outcomes for homeless people.

Sustaining tenancies and preventing homelessness

Social landlords should maximise security of tenure for all residents of their accommodation, and should work to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness through their delivery of housing management services.

- 3.19 Our last inspection report identified two key areas for improvement relating to sustaining tenancies and preventing homelessness. These were that:
- *it should establish a clear and consistent approach to its use of legal action to enforce tenancy conditions, including how it manages occupation after it has obtained decree; and*
 - *it should improve the range and quality of information it gives to tenants, and how it gets them support, to help maintain their tenancies.*
- 3.20 Clydesdale has signed all but two of its tenants to Scottish Secure Tenancy* (SST) agreements.
- 3.21 The Association currently leases accommodation to Women's Aid providing a refuge for women and children fleeing domestic violence. It also leases two properties to South Lanarkshire Council to provide temporary accommodation for homeless people.
- 3.22 The provision of good information and access to appropriate support are important ways in which landlords can help to sustain tenancies. Clydesdale gives tenants a good range of information at tenancy sign-up. This includes a tenant handbook, as well as leaflets on rent arrears and being a good neighbour. We found the tenant handbook comprehensive and easy to read. Clydesdale also uses its regular tenant newsletters to give advice and information in relation to rent arrears and anti-social behaviour.

* See glossary

- 3.23 Clydesdale carries out settling in visits within one month of new tenants moving in. It uses these to check if new tenants are having any difficulties with regard to their tenancy.
- 3.24 Housing staff aim to visit the Association's estates on a regular basis in order to maximise opportunities for personal contact with tenants. Staff liaise with support agencies when problems are occurring with tenancies. Clydesdale is in the early stages of developing a formal referral agreement with the local Citizens' Advice Bureau. Clydesdale works well with partner agencies and asks all new tenants to sign a release form which allows it to make referrals quickly.
- 3.25 Clydesdale provides tenants with clear advice and information about paying rent and offers help with Housing Benefit applications. In all its rent arrears letters and notices to tenants, the Association includes details of organisations that can help with money, benefit or debt problems.
- 3.26 There were five abandonments in 2004/05. In 2005/06 there were six. Four of these were as a result of Clydesdale obtaining decree for repossession and two for other reasons. This represents 0.9% of its properties. This was more than its peer group average* of 0.6% but less than the national median* of 1.1%. The level of abandonments has decreased over 2006/07. Clydesdale has had only one abandonment in this period, representing 0.15% of its properties.
- 3.27 Clydesdale issued 85 Notices of Proceedings* (NOPs) in 2005/06 and 72 NOPs in 2006/07. The majority were in respect of rent arrears. However, 20 cases were in respect of antisocial behaviour and 1 was in respect of other breaches of tenancy conditions. It initiated court actions against 34, (5.1%) of its tenants in 2005/06 and against 14, (2.1%) of its tenants in 2006/07.
- 3.28 The Association has used a high proportion of NOPs and court actions and this reflects past weaknesses in managing rent arrears. In 2005/06 it served 85 NOPs which equals 12.7% of its tenants. This has decreased to 10.8% in 2006/07. The number of arrears cases in excess of £1,000 has also reduced

* See glossary

from 4.0% of tenants in 2004/05 to 3.4% in 2005/06. In the period 2006/07 this had decreased further to 0.75%. This is below its peer group average for 2006/07, 4.3%, and the national median of 3.9%. The number of court actions has also reduced.

- 3.29 Clydesdale satisfaction survey of tenants in rent arrears has identified that tenants felt that earlier contact by telephone would be beneficial. The Association intends to build this into its review of rent arrears procedures, planned for summer 2007.
- 3.30 In response to the previous report we found that Clydesdale has developed a consistently fair and reasonable approach to managing its rent arrears. This includes:
- providing good, clear advice and information to tenants in arrears;
 - a programme of early intervention and sustained contact with tenants in arrears;
 - personal contact through telephone calls and home visits; and
 - offering realistic repayment arrangements to tenants in rent arrears.
- 3.31 We looked at a range of rent arrears cases and found that the Association takes proportionate action and initiates legal action appropriately. There is clear guidance for staff and close monitoring by the Housing Manager at every stage of the process. We found some cases where Clydesdale did not notify the Social Work Department when serving Notice of Proceedings. However we saw that the Association's own monitoring systems had identified this and it had taken early action to remedy this weakness.
- 3.32 We found that Clydesdale is working to minimise evictions. It was awarded five decrees for recovery of possession in 2005/06. None of these resulted in recovery of possession. In 2006/07, it was awarded three decrees and has carried out one eviction. The Housing Manager approves court actions and the Management Committee authorise any proposed evictions. The Housing Manger also carries out random checks on a number of individual cases. This is

a good way of ensuring a consistent approach and checking that all possible courses of action have been explored.

3.33 Clydesdale has successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in their previous inspection report.

3.34 In summary, Clydesdale has good procedures which result in a consistent approach to dealing with rent arrears. It is good at maximising security of tenure and is working well to sustain tenancies.

Quality of neighbourhoods

Social landlords should deliver services to ensure that neighbourhoods are attractive, well maintained and safe places to live. They should deal appropriately with antisocial behaviour.

3.35 Our last inspection report identified one key area for improvement in relation to antisocial behaviour. This was that:

- *the Association should manage its neighbourhoods more actively and have a clear approach to how it will tackle antisocial behaviour.*

3.36 Clydesdale Housing Association owns a combination of newly built homes and older properties located in 37 villages and small towns spread throughout rural South Lanarkshire. It has houses in mixed tenure areas that include owner occupied former local authority houses as well as shared ownership dwellings. Many of the older properties were acquired as part of a number of stock transfers from Scottish Homes and are situated in Carluke, Lanark, Kirkmuirhill and Rigside. The Association's houses are generally in high demand with the exception of one small development in Lesmahagow.

3.37 The neighbourhoods that we visited were well maintained and had no evidence of graffiti. However, we saw signs of some vandalism and low levels of litter around one of the blocks of flats as well as a number of poorly maintained gardens in Carluke and Rigside.

- 3.38 In the Association's 2004 Tenant Satisfaction Survey, 82% of tenants felt that their neighbourhood was either a very good or fairly good place to live. Customer questionnaires are available to allow service user feedback on a range of issues. In April 2007 the Association introduced feedback questionnaires for tenants who report incidents of antisocial behaviour. At the time of our inspection no questionnaires had as yet been returned to the Association.
- 3.39 Housing officers have a target to carry out a minimum of two estate inspections each year. They record any problems they find along with the actions they have taken in response. We saw that in a number of estates staff had carried out more than the minimum target number of visits. We saw that while this happens more frequently in some areas, Clydesdale has yet to effectively manage and target their available resources.
- 3.40 Clydesdale checks the quality of the work carried out by its contractor for grounds maintenance. Staff arrange for a local tenant to "sign off" the contractor's work as well as the housing officer's inspection report. Clydesdale has tackled some of the problems in its estates. We saw that it had carried out environmental improvements in its Bakers Brae development in Lesmahagow as a direct result of tenant feedback. The Association reports on its performance to the Management Committee on a monthly and quarterly basis.
- 3.41 The Association dealt with 79 cases of neighbour nuisance or antisocial behaviour in the period between March 2006 and March 2007. While this is a relatively high level, the majority of these (69) were low level incidents about noise, neighbour disputes and children playing. However, we saw that a number were of a more serious nature.
- 3.42 We have found that Clydesdale now has clear policies and procedures in place. It has target response times and these are part of the wider Estate Management Policy. This contains a workable definition of what would be considered antisocial behaviour, who the policy will be applied to and the target response times involved for the different priority categories.

- 3.43 The Association gives tenants good advice and information about nuisance and antisocial behaviour in its Good Neighbour Guide, residents' meetings and in its tenant newsletters. When it receives a request for service, it first looks to resolve the situation informally. If the matter is not resolved there is a clear escalation process to follow. We saw that all members of the community are encouraged not to tolerate any behaviour which could be considered antisocial and to make use of Clydesdale's revised policy and associated procedures.
- 3.44 The Association recognises the need for flexibility in its approach to tackling antisocial behaviour. Clydesdale will use mediation and liaise with the Police, Social Services and the South Lanarkshire Anti Social Behaviour Unit. The Association will also use acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs)* as well as Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)*. Clydesdale has considered eviction in one very serious case, as a last resort. It also has a separate policy for dealing with racial harassment.
- 3.45 We found that the majority of antisocial behaviour cases were investigated and resolved promptly. Most cases recorded on the Association's register were processed within the target timescales set down. However, we saw that in one of the five cases we looked at, the register had not been updated to account for new occurrences. This means that Clydesdale cannot always identify trends or patterns in incidents. The Association reports on its performance in this area to the management committee on a monthly basis.
- 3.46 Clydesdale has addressed the area for improvement highlighted in our last inspection report.
- 3.47 In summary, the quality of neighbourhoods provided is good. Clydesdale generally provides homes in well-maintained areas. It has developed its policy and procedures, has a range of methods for tackling antisocial behaviour and a clear escalation process. However, it does not always achieve its target timescales and its records are not always up to date.

* See glossary

Responsiveness to tenants

Social landlords should place the people they serve at the heart of their work, treat them with respect and be responsive to their views and priorities. They should ensure that tenants are informed of and involved in decisions that affect the service they receive.

3.48 Our last inspection report highlighted one key area for improvement in relation to responsiveness to tenants. This was that:

- *the Association put in place a range of effective ways for tenants and residents to influence its governance and delivery of services.*

3.49 Clydesdale is required by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to publish a tenant consultation strategy. The act also requires landlords to inform and consult tenants about changes to its services and take tenants' views into account when making decisions that will affect them. Clydesdale has met its statutory obligation to publish a strategy. We looked at Clydesdale's approach to consulting tenants on proposed policy and service changes. We also reviewed the decision papers presented to committee and found that information on tenants' views was considered when decisions about changes to the service were made. The Act also requires the Association to maintain a public register of tenants' organisations. Clydesdale has two registered tenants' organisations (RTOs). We found that the register was up to date and available to the public on Clydesdale's website with details on display in the reception area.

3.50 The Association's last tenant satisfaction survey was carried out in 2004. Our earlier inspection report criticised the Association for not routinely collecting and analysing feedback from users of its housing management services. In response, Clydesdale is introducing a more focused, routine approach to gathering levels of satisfaction among tenants with its housing management services. At the time of our inspection this was still to be fully implemented. However, we saw some evidence of early reporting to Committee on specific areas of the service. This included how it dealt with tenants in arrears, applicants for its houses and customer care. As a result of this new approach, the Association has revised the cycle of comprehensive tenant satisfaction surveys to five years. It now plans to carry out its next comprehensive tenant survey in 2009.

- 3.51 Reported levels of satisfaction among tenants across the range of housing management services are generally high. However, some of the sample sizes are small and Clydesdale needs to ensure that it collects enough information to accurately reflect service users' views.
- 3.52 Clydesdale consults with tenants on rent and service charge increases through its regular newsletters. It provides good levels of information including:
- the reasons for the increase;
 - details of the proposed rent increase;
 - a rent comparison with other similar housing associations;
 - how the rental income collected will be used; and
 - a timescale for tenants to respond to the Association.
- 3.53 However, no tenants replied to the 2007/08 rent increase consultation exercise held by the Association. Clydesdale then consulted directly with the RTOs who thought the rent increase was reasonable. The Association is aware that it needs to improve its approach and intends to discuss with both RTOs how best to consult with tenants over the proposed 2007/08 rent increase.
- 3.54 While we were on site Clydesdale sought formal feedback from both of the RTOs on its achievements to date against the Tenant Participation Strategy Activity Statement. Using the Association's own grading system, both groups independently graded Clydesdale's progress as "B" or "Good" in this area. Clydesdale intends to publish these results in its early summer newsletter to tenants.
- 3.55 The Association is good at gathering service users' views on other aspects of its housing management service. This includes applicants for housing on its housing list. It uses its newsletter to inform tenants about policies and strategies that it is developing or intending to review in future.
- 3.56 Clydesdale is committed to tenant participation and is working to develop ways in which its tenants can participate in a more meaningful way. Following their last

- inspection Clydesdale established a number of focus groups* to gather tenants' views on a range of new policies and procedures which were being developed. As part of its current review of the allocations policy it has held an awareness session for tenants. This forms part of a programme to involve tenants in the formulation of the revised policy. In Lesmahagow as result of tenant feedback, the Association surveyed all the tenants in its Bakers Brae estate. The result of this survey formed the basis of the back court improvement works subsequently carried out.
- 3.57 In September 2006 Clydesdale held its second tenant conference which was attended by 49, or just over 7%, of its tenants. The Association arranges free transport and provides crèche facilities for those attending. The 2006 conference was organised to follow on from the Association's AGM. In order to promote higher attendance levels at its proposed 2007 conference, Clydesdale is investigating other methods of encouraging tenants to attend.
- 3.58 As part of the Tenant Participation Activity Statement, Clydesdale proposes to hold three public and open governing body meetings this year. These will take place in venues other than Lanark, with the first being planned for Carluke in June 2007.
- 3.59 Clydesdale revised its Complaints Policy and Procedure in 2006. As part of the review process the opinions of the Scottish Public Ombudsman Service* were sought and incorporated in the final document. There are clear policy objectives which are specific and measurable. The complaints policy includes an early informal stage and staff are encouraged to resolve issues early in the process.
- 3.60 The process has a clear escalation path involving senior staff. Written correspondence clearly states how complainants can appeal the outcome and move on to the next stage. Clydesdale advertises how to make complaints in its tenant newsletters, on its website, in its office and every new tenant is provided with a copy of the complaints leaflet which clearly sets out the Association's approach to complaints.

* See glossary

- 3.61 Clydesdale reports on and publishes the number and types of complaints in its annual report. However this does not include details of what the Association has done to improve services as a result of the complaint.
- 3.62 At the time of our inspection there had been only one complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman* for 2006/07 and this was still currently under investigation.
- 3.63 We found that Clydesdale responds effectively to complaints about its services and uses feedback from its complaints to improve services. However, we saw that in one case the Association did not always meet its target timescales for responding to complainants.
- 3.64 Clydesdale's office has been adapted to improve its accessibility to people with physical disabilities. There is a hearing loop to assist service users with hearing difficulties. The Association can make information available in alternative formats and this is well advertised in its reception area. However, it does not publicise this service routinely in its newsletters or on its website. The contact details for the RTOs on the reception area notice board are in small print, which may prove difficult for service users with visual impairments. We also saw that there was no external signage to indicate how and where people with mobility issues could access the Association's office building. Clydesdale is aware of this and at the time of our inspection was negotiating with its landlord to erect an appropriate sign.
- 3.65 Clydesdale has addressed the area for improvement on responsiveness to tenants highlighted by our previous inspection.
- 3.66 In summary, Clydesdale is a responsive landlord and we saw evidence of its commitment to involve tenants in all areas of its operations. Tenants we spoke to thought that Clydesdale was generally approachable and responsive to their needs. The Association has started to engage with tenants on policy formulation

* See glossary

and it has a high degree of awareness of where improvements can still be made. However, it has not always achieved the targets it has set itself in the Tenant Participation Activity Statement. It does not always meet the target timescales for responding to complaints and it requires to make a number of improvements to ensure equality of access to its services.

Is the service managed for improvement?

Resource management and efficiency

Social landlords should maximise their income in a way that is fair to service users, and manage costs effectively.

3.67 Our last inspection identified two areas for improvement on the management of resources. These were that the Association should:

- *improve its performance in collecting rent, particularly around how it communicates and works with tenants in arrears: and*
- *improve its performance in managing empty houses, particularly in how efficiently it lets houses.*

3.68 In the 2004 tenant survey, 95% of respondents considered the available methods for paying rent convenient. Options include standing order, cash, cheque or Girobank payments. The majority of tenants use standing order arrangements. Clydesdale is currently exploring the use of Allpay and direct debits as methods of payment. However, recent feedback results from tenants in arrears indicate that 83.33% of people did not think additional rent payment methods would have prevented them from falling into arrears.

3.69 Clydesdale's performance in collecting rent arrears is shown in the table below.

	At March 2005	At March 2006			At March 2007***
	Landlord	Landlord	Peer group	National median	Landlord
Total arrears as % of total gross rental income	7.14%	5.43%	4.9%	5.2%	4.78%
Total current arrears as % of total gross rental income	6.67%	4.59%	3.5%	4.0%	4.18%
Current arrears (non technical) as % of total gross rental income	4.06%	2.1%	2.5%	2.8%	1.55%
Current arrears (technical) as % of total gross rental income	2.61%	2.5%	1.0%	0.08%	2.63%
% of current tenants in serious arrears**	4.0%	3.44%	4.3%	3.9%	0.90%
Total former tenant arrears	£7,665	£14,613	-	-	£10,731
As % of total gross rental income	0.47%	0.84%	1.4%	1.0%	0.59%
Rent arrears written off	£5,115	£12,771	-	-	£6245

**Owing more than 13 weeks rent and >£250

Source: APSR 2004/06

*** 2006/07 APSR return .

3.70 Clydesdale's total arrears as a percentage of its total rental income reduced from 7.14% in 2004/05 to 5.43% in 2005/06. The 2005/06 figure was 7th of the 17 RSLs in its peer group*. This is an improvement on 2004/05 when it was ranked 15th out of 16 in its peer group*. The figure for 2006/07 period continued to reduce to 4.78%.

3.71 Clydesdale's current non technical arrears* have improved, reducing from 4.06% in 2004/05, to 2.1% in 2005/06. The Association's figure was 8th of the 17 in the Association's peer group* in 2005/06 and Clydesdale's performance the third

* See glossary

most improved amongst its peers. Its current non technical arrears for the period 2006/07 continued to reduce to 1.55%.

- 3.72 The levels of Clydesdale's current technical arrears have not changed significantly over the last two years and remain above both their peer group average and national median. The Association's staff and Management Committee are aware of the factors contributing to their reported performance in this area.
- 3.73 In 2005 we made a specific criticism of the methodology used for the collection of rent arrears purchased from Scottish Homes as part of the stock transfer process in Carlisle. In response Clydesdale has addressed these criticisms and has fully explained and sought agreement from its affected tenants on the arrangements for the repayment of these older debts.
- 3.74 The proportion of Clydesdale's tenants owing more than thirteen weeks' rent has reduced marginally from 4.08% of tenants in 2004/05 to 3.9% in 2005/06. However, there has been a further significant decrease in 2006/07 to 0.90% of tenants. Former tenant arrears increased from 0.47% in 2004/05 to 0.84% in 2005/06 but decreased to 0.59% in 2006/07. These levels of former tenant rent arrears are lower than both the peer and national average* figures.
- 3.75 Clydesdale recognised it needed to improve its performance in recovering rent arrears. It introduced a comprehensive guidance manual for staff which covered all aspects of rent arrears control. The Association also introduced a quality control system where the Housing Manager checks a random sample of rent arrears cases every month to ensure that the actions taken are consistent with the Association's procedures.

3.76 Clydesdale's performance in re-letting its empty houses is shown in the table below.

	2004-05	2005-06			2006-07**
		Landlord	Peer Group	National Median	Landlord
Rental income lost due to empty houses (£)	18,957	9,157	-	-	3,230
As % of total rental income	1.17%	0.53%	1.0%	0.8%	0.18%
Total no. of re-lets*	72	72	-	-	40
% re-let in <2 weeks	38.9%	63.9%	38.6	36.5	77.50%
% re-let in 2 - 4 weeks	23.6%	25%	25.4	27.0	12.50%
% re-let in >4 weeks	37.5%	11.1%	36.0	37.1	10.00%
Average time to re-let (days)	36.0	14.0	36.8	25.0	11.0

** 2006/07 APSR return

Source: APSR 2004/06

3.77 In 2005/06 Clydesdale lost 0.53% of its rental income due to empty houses. This is better than both its peer group average* of 1.0% and the national median* of 0.85%. The average time to re-let* empty houses in 2005/06 was 14 days and this has improved in 2006/07 to 11 days. This was shorter than the national median re-let time of 25 days in 2005/06. Clydesdale now performs very well in letting empty properties. Its approach is focused and is supported by good internal procedures and detailed monitoring and reporting.

3.78 Clydesdale has only one estate that it has difficulty in letting its properties and is currently working on initiatives including improvements to the common close to make it more attractive. Following these works, the Association plans to develop a marketing strategy for these properties. When it has identified that there is lower demand for individual properties Clydesdale arranges open viewings* or advertises these through the local newspaper in an attempt to re-let the property quickly.

* See glossary

- 3.79 We found that the main reasons for Clydesdale's improved performance in managing its empty houses were:
- it has improved the way in which it manages its housing list^{*};
 - where ever possible it carries out pre termination visits to make sure tenants are aware of how the property should be left;
 - identifying prospective new tenants early and making maximum use of pre-allocation where possible;
 - improved communication with South Lanarkshire Council in relation to the nomination agreement;
 - improvements in the contractors' performance in carrying our empty house repairs;
 - the introduction of a weekly void meeting to improve communication between the Housing Management, Technical Services and Corporate Services Teams; and
 - closely monitoring its performance in this area.
- 3.80 Clydesdale's costs for delivering its housing management services were £477.65 per house in 2004/05. These costs increased to £742 for 2005/06 due to a number of "one-off" charges which were incurred that year. This was higher than the peer average for 2005/06 of £600. The Association has reduced these costs for the 2006/07 period to £594 per house.
- 3.81 Clydesdale has addressed both of the areas for improvement on managing resources highlighted in our last inspection report.
- 3.82 In summary, the Association has improved its performance since the last inspection in recovering rent arrears. It is now letting its empty houses quickly in order to minimise rent loss. This is now an area of strength.

* See glossary

Performance management

Social landlords should have clear objectives, standards and targets for housing management services, should monitor achievement of those and should work to continuously improve services

- 3.83 Our last inspection report included one area for improvement in relation to performance management. It was that the Association should:
- *tackle the weaknesses in its corporate and service planning and performance management frameworks, to help it make improvements in its delivery of services and to establish an effective performance culture.*
- 3.84 Clydesdale set out its strategic objectives in its Internal Management Plan (IMP)*. These then form the basis for the development of specific service delivery priorities. The Association aims to achieve these through its five year service delivery plan currently covering the period 2005-2010. These plans form the basis for service delivery and incorporate SMART* objectives for housing management services. Clydesdale has now achieved the majority of the objectives for its first plan and is aware that some of the targets are now not particularly challenging. It has developed these further by putting in place devolved budgets for its housing staff although, at present, these are capable of further development.
- 3.85 The housing management staff team meet weekly to discuss void levels, and on a more formal basis monthly, to discuss performance and service improvements. In addition, staff are also encouraged to feedback on what is working and openly discuss how to deal with areas where performance needs to improve.
- 3.86 Clydesdale's approach to performance monitoring and reporting is good. The Committee gets a wide range of reports on its on housing management service and regular reports on performance against targets.
- 3.87 These reports contain clear trend information, benchmark the Association's performance against that of its peer group and include supporting narrative. At the time of inspection Clydesdale was more than half away through the "roll out"

* See glossary

of a programme to seek user satisfaction on all areas of the Housing Management service. We saw that it has started to regularly report service user satisfaction to Committee, where this is available. In response to our previous report, Clydesdale's staff now also use more frequent and detailed reports to monitor performance.

3.88 Clydesdale reports its performance quarterly to its RTOs and provides regular updates to service users on its performance in its newsletters and annual report.

3.89 In 2005 we said that Clydesdale did not have policies and procedures for all areas of its housing management services. The Association has now developed a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to support service delivery.

3.90 Clydesdale has addressed the areas for improvement on performance management in our last inspection report. However, it still has some work to do for the recommendations to be met in full.

3.91 In summary, Clydesdale is committed to improving its service delivery and has a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses and where improvement is needed. It has shown a clear ability to deliver improvements particularly around its success in reducing arrears and how quickly it lets empty houses. We saw a small number of examples of where the new performance culture in its housing management services had not fully bedded in. However, we also saw that Clydesdale's new procedures had identified these problems and the Association had taken early action to resolve them.

Grade and overall assessment of housing management

3.92 Clydesdale has worked hard to improve its housing management service since our last inspection. The Association has been effective in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the last report and has plans in place for further improvement. It has also shown a willingness to tackle any weaknesses that we identified during the course of this re-inspection.

3.93 Our overall assessment of Clydesdale is that its housing management service is good. It has many strengths and some areas where improvement is needed. It has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has demonstrated an ability to carry out improvements. We set out below the key factors we have taken into account in coming to our overall assessment.

3.94 Clydesdale's key strengths are:

- it places people quickly and efficiently on its housing list;
- it is meeting need and maximising access to its housing;
- maximising security of tenure and sustaining tenancies;
- very good performance in reducing rent arrears and voids;
- it is responsive to its customers; and
- an effective performance management framework for its housing management service.

3.95 Along with these strengths we found some areas for improvement in Clydesdale's housing management service. These include:

- ensuring equality of access to its services;
- achieving its targets in relation to tenant participation;
- ensuring that its new performance management culture is fully embedded;
and
- ensuring that its records are always comprehensive for antisocial behaviour cases.

4. Property maintenance

4.1 The grade awarded for property maintenance is:

B	Good	Many strengths and some areas where improvement is needed.
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We explain at the end of this section how the assessments and judgements we have made result in this grade.

Access to the repairs service

Social landlords should have arrangements in place that make it easy for tenants to report repairs and to have them carried out.

4.2 Our last inspection report highlighted one key area for improvement relating to access. This was:

- *the Association's provision of information on its out of hours repairs service.*

4.3 Clydesdale's tenants can report repairs by phone, in writing, by email or by calling in person at the Association's offices in Lanark. Most tenants contact the Association by phone. The responsive repairs service is publicised through features in the Association's regular newsletters, repairs leaflet and tenant handbook. In its ongoing survey of tenants who had repairs carried out, in the period June 2006 to February 2007, 98% of respondents said that they found it easy to report repairs. In our telephone survey of ten tenants, two told us they were confused by the call centre style phone options used to direct tenant contact.

4.4 The Association has recently agreed to provide at no cost, some additional repair services to vulnerable tenants. These repairs would normally be the tenant's responsibility. Clydesdale has not yet compiled a list of tenants who could potentially benefit from this service. The Association cannot therefore be sure that it is always appropriately offering this enhanced service. The Association began to compile its list of eligible tenants while we were on site.

4.5 Clydesdale issues copies of work orders to tenants who have reported a repair. These contain the contractor's name and address, the repair priority and target

- completion date. Staff at the Association also provide all this information verbally to tenants. However, the target time is not recorded on emergency works orders. This was immediately rectified by the Association while we were on site.
- 4.6 The Association only offers a formal appointments system for their Women's Aid project. For all other non-emergency repairs the Association passes the tenant's contact details on to its contractors. This allows them to directly arrange access with tenants. Around 80% of tenants who replied to the Association's surveys over 2006/07 said contractors had contacted them in this way. Our own telephone survey of ten tenants confirmed that tenants felt this was an effective arrangement.
- 4.7 Clydesdale was criticised in our previous report for not monitoring or providing guidance to tenants on how to access its out of hours service. The Association now provides a useful leaflet to new tenants explaining how to access the out of hours service. This information is also contained in the tenant handbook and a poster displayed in the Association's office reception area. The out of hours repairs service has also been regularly advertised in Association's tenant newsletters.
- 4.8 The Association requests and monitors tenant feedback on its out of hours work in the same way it does other categories of repairs. Clydesdale has not however specifically identified and analysed feedback in this area of the responsive repairs service. The Association appreciates it needs to do more to harness tenants views on the out of hours service and to understand the quality of and tenant satisfaction with this area of the repairs service. While we were on site the Association took measures to increase the sample survey size for tenant feedback on the out of hours repairs service.
- 4.9 Clydesdale has addressed the area for improvement relating to its out of hours service contained in our last report. The Association has begun to monitor its out of hours service but could do more to understand its performance in this area of the repairs service.

4.10 In summary, the Association's performance in providing access to its repair service is good. It is aware of the tasks still to be carried out around identifying vulnerable tenants and completing its analysis of access to and quality of its out of hours repairs service.

Speed and quality of response repairs service

Social landlords should set challenging targets for completing repairs, strive to achieve them and ensure repairs are completed to a high quality.

4.11 Our last inspection report pointed out significant weaknesses in two areas of the Association's work around speed and quality of repairs. The Association:

- *did not effectively control repairs that tenants report when its office is closed; and*
- *was not yet fully meeting its statutory obligations on the Right to Repair*.*

4.12 The Association reduced its target timescale for emergency repairs from 24 hours to 12 hours in June 2006. This target is to complete or make safe the repair. This compares with the national median target of six hours for completion. Clydesdale includes its out of hours service in its analysis of emergency repairs. Its target for the completion of urgent repairs is two working days, one day less than the national median. The Association's target of 10 working days for routine repairs mirrors the national median figure. Clydesdale has two further responsive repair categories, "Right to Repair*" and "routine (minor works)". Both categories are separately reported to its management committee. However "routine (minor works)" are not identified or covered in the Association's repairs and maintenance policy.

* See glossary

	HA'S TARGET RESPONSE TIME	PERFORMANCE				
		Clydesdale HA			National median 2005/06	RSL peer group *2005/06
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07**		
Emergency Repairs #	24 hours*	93.8%	100%	100%	98.8%	92.9%
Urgent Repairs	2 working days	86.9%	96.6%	98.8%	96.6%	89.7%
Routine Repairs	10 working days	87.3%	94.9%	95.6%	95.5%	88.3%
Right to Repair*	1, 3 and 7 days	94.9%	98.9%	100%	n/a	n/a
Routine Repairs (Minor works)	20 working days	20.0%	63.6%	89.8%	n/a	n/a

*source APSR

** 2006/07 APSR return

CHA changed this target timescale to 12 hours in June 2006

4.13 Clydesdale has improved its reported performance in all categories of repair over the last three years. Its recorded performance now compares well with its peer group members. However, its targets are less challenging in emergency repairs than some of its peers. The number of “routine (minor works)” repairs is very low; 48 in 2006/07.

4.14 Pre and post inspections are important tools for ensuring repairs are targeted accurately and carried out to a high standard. The Association carries out some limited numbers of pre and post inspections*. Clydesdale has a comprehensive procedure for selecting and carrying out the inspections. However, the Association’s target of 10% pre inspection* and 10% post inspection* includes all void houses. This means that Clydesdale pre-inspects around 5% of reactive repairs and post inspects around the same percentage. The Association discusses performance and outcomes from pre and post inspection with contractors at monthly performance meetings. Reports are thereafter routinely provided to the Association’s Management Committee.

* See glossary

- 4.15 The Association is not always targeting these inspection tools effectively. For example, it inspected only 1 out of hours repair from 53 during a 2 month period. Clydesdale told us they will, in future, use inspections to focus on particular repair types.
- 4.16 Clydesdale's performance in delivering the statutory Right to Repair* scheme has improved. The Association now provides tenants with a helpful leaflet on the scheme. It also provides information in their tenant handbook. It publicises the scheme annually in its tenant newsletter. However, Clydesdale advises tenants to contact the Association in the event that the original contractor fails to complete the repair on time.
- 4.17 Over 2006/07 Clydesdale identified 336 qualifying repairs. This represents a significant improvement on the previous year's performance, 2005/06, when the Association only identified 88 qualifying repairs. Clydesdale advised us that it had re-trained staff on the provisions of the scheme, particularly around what constitutes a qualifying repair. However, we found that it has still not identified all qualifying repairs. The Association has wrongly categorised some as emergency repairs and we found one categorised as an urgent repair. However, we found that all repairs were completed within the appropriate Right to Repair timescale.
- 4.18 Clydesdale has made good progress towards improving those areas for improvement highlighted in our last report.
- 4.19 In summary, the Association's performance on the speed and quality of its repairs service is good and represents a significant improvement on previous performance. Targeting of its inspection regime could be used more effectively. The Association is still not yet appropriately identifying all repairs that qualify under the Right to Repair*.

* See glossary

Physical quality of houses

Social landlords should have good information about the condition of their houses and should deliver effective maintenance programmes that take account of housing quality and home safety needs.

4.20 Our previous report identified the following key areas for improvement around the physical quality of the Association's houses. Clydesdale:-

- *had not carried out gas safety checks in all of its houses that had gas appliances, and had not achieved appropriate certification;*
- *did not have an asbestos management plan;*
- *did not have a re-let standard or collect the views of prospective tenants on the condition of its homes; and*
- *had not always delivered its major and cyclical repair work as planned.*

4.21 Scottish ministers have set a target that all social landlords' houses should meet the new Scottish Housing Quality Standard* (SHQS) by 2015. Social landlords were required to prepare and submit a plan to Communities Scotland showing how they would achieve this. The Association submitted their Standard Delivery Plan* in late 2006. Clydesdale's plan has identified some challenges around energy efficiency and mixed tenure blocks which affect a small number of its properties. The Association is continuing to work closely with Communities Scotland in an effort to resolve these matters. It plans to meet the other requirements of the SHQS* in these properties and all the requirements in all their other remaining properties.

4.22 Clydesdale hired consultants to conduct a partial stock condition survey in 2006. This exercise provided stock condition information for 32% of the Association's stock. The Association has a target to carry out stock condition surveys on 80% of its houses by 2011. The original survey formed part of the base information along with life cycle costing* which contributed to the Association's Standard Delivery Plan* for SHQS*. Clydesdale is currently developing a computerised asset management system. This will allow it the flexibility to plan its future asset management strategy through SHQS* and beyond.

* See glossary

- 4.23 The Association now has in place a five year programme for planned and cyclical maintenance*. It includes gutter cleaning, external painterwork in addition to internal works such as replacing kitchens and bathrooms in some of its properties. The Association's recent window replacement project was due to be completed in May 2006. By January 2007 the project had still not been completed to the satisfaction of the Association.
- 4.24 The Association's houses all have smoke alarms fitted. Clydesdale proposes to replace any battery operated alarms with mains wired models this year. The Association's common close entries to flatted blocks all have door entry systems. There are no lead pipes serving any of the Association's homes. Clydesdale insists that new build homes, built on its behalf, comply with "Secure by Design" standards and where possible, comply with "Housing for Varying Needs" standards.
- 4.25 Clydesdale is required to carry out safety checks every 12 months on all gas appliances and flues which it provides for tenants' use. The Association currently reports that it has appropriate certification for all its houses served by gas. While on site, we checked 10 houses for certification and found that they all complied with the requirements of the gas safety regulations. The Association has changed its procedures around gas servicing and has an excellent gas safety regime. This improved approach includes a qualified third party post inspection audit of the work carried out.

* See glossary

	December 2006	
	Number of houses	%
Houses with gas appliances	217	100
Houses with current gas safety certificates	217	100
Houses where safety check was carried out within 12 months of previous check	217	100
Houses where safety check was up to 1 month late	0	0
Houses where safety check was between 1 and 3 months late	0	0
Houses where safety check was more than 3 months late	0	0

- 4.26 The Association has introduced a formal asbestos management plan to cover internal works in its houses. It does not require the plan as part of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations. Clydesdale has however noted the risk that asbestos can pose to tenants, employees and contractors and has produced its plan in response to this. The Association's asbestos survey of some of its houses has identified the presence of asbestos in two estates. It has applied two different control methods to them. In one area, it assumes all the properties contain asbestos in walls and ceilings. In the other area, it assumes that asbestos is not present. The second procedure makes clear that contractors should report suspected asbestos to the Association.
- 4.27 Clydesdale has introduced a formal re-let standard. The Association's staff apply this standard during inspections of empty properties. It has recorded the reasons for prospective tenants refusing its houses available for letting. None of the replies received to date indicate house condition as the reason for refusal.
- 4.28 The Association has successfully re-visited and fully met the areas for improvement identified in our previous report.
- 4.29 In summary, Clydesdale's houses are in good condition and its systems to protect and improve its stock are good. The Association's current commitment to

introducing an asset management system is a positive step, central to its plans to meet the SHQS by 2015.

Responsiveness to tenants

Social landlords should place the people they serve at the heart of their work, treat them with respect and be responsive to their views and priorities.

- 4.30 Our last inspection report commented that the Association had been:
- *slow to develop tenant involvement in its property maintenance services although there were early signs of improvement; and*
 - *did not routinely include information on the right to appeal or complain in its correspondence.*
- 4.31 Clydesdale has improved the way it collects tenants feedback on maintenance issues by:
- introducing a tenant survey for all repairs, either by phone or by letter. This reveals a satisfaction rating of 95.26% among respondents;
 - ensuring tenants “sign off” post inspections to record their satisfaction with work carried out; and
 - introducing a revised complaints procedure.
- 4.32 The Association carried out its last full tenants survey in 2004. Clydesdale has scheduled its next comprehensive survey of tenants for 2009. The Association has added other routine methods of collecting tenant feedback noted previously at 4.31 above. However, in some categories, the amount of feedback generated is comparatively low. The tenant’s repairs survey is based on a sample of 190 repairs of which the out of hours survey sample size is 1. The Association’s methods of collecting feedback all reveal high levels of tenant satisfaction with the responsive repairs service.
- 4.33 We conducted our own small telephone survey of eight tenants who had recently had repairs carried out by the Association. We found tenants surveyed were generally satisfied with the repair service offered by Clydesdale and that the Association’s staff were helpful. One of the tenants in our sample survey said

the Association had taken longer to complete their repair than it formally recorded.

- 4.34 Clydesdale has a good approach to including tenants in discussions surrounding the development of its property maintenance service. The Association has:
- consulted tenants through a focus group to determine key areas of tenant concern prior to the development of the Association's 5 year service plan;
 - consulted four focus groups to discuss changes to the repairs and maintenance policy; and
 - written to contractors and other partners to establish their views on policy issues.
- 4.35 Clydesdale's complaints policy, revised in 2006, is clear and straightforward. Anyone can raise a complaint and the Association tries to resolve it informally. The Association informs people who have informally complained about the formal system, its appeals process and how to escalate their complaint if they are unhappy with the outcome. Clydesdale recorded nine informal complaints, in repairs and planned maintenance. One recharge repair was the subject of a formal complaint. All of these complaints were resolved within target timescales and in line with the Association's policy.
- 4.36 The Association has continued the early improvement in its responsiveness to tenants identified in our 2004 report. It now includes information on appeals and complaints in all its correspondence with tenants.
- 4.37 In summary, Clydesdale is now responsive to tenants and places them at the centre of its policy development. The Association is inclusive in policy development and has a good range of feedback mechanisms in place for service users.

Is the service managed for improvement?

Resource management and efficiency

Social landlords should manage the cost of their services effectively and procure repairs and maintenance services in a way that takes account of quality.

- 4.38 Our previous report identified the following key areas for improvement around resource management and efficiency. We found:
- *Clydesdale's performance in recovering the costs of rechargeable repairs was weak.*
- 4.39 Clydesdale's cost for delivering its property maintenance service increased over the last two years by almost a third to £372 in 2006/07.
- 4.40 The cost of both reactive repairs and void repairs has reduced in 2006/07. The Association has had fewer void houses in 2006/07 and we would therefore expect to see a fall in the cost attributed to this aspect of the service. However, Clydesdale has reduced costs on its reactive repairs while carrying out a comparable number of repairs. In 2006/07 the Association carried out 1946 repairs. 1924 were carried out in 2005/06. Costs for 2006/07 were £121,000 below the 2005/06 figure. The Association has clearly improved value for money in this area. Clydesdale attributes this potential saving to the introduction of quality control measures last year which resulted in the procurement of a more cost effective electrical sub-contractor.
- 4.41 Clydesdale changed the way it procured its repairs service in 2007/08. Previously the Association had appointed individual trade contractors through competitive tendering. The Association, following a benchmarking exercise with other RSLs, decided to introduce a preferred contractor model. Clydesdale sought interested contractors and selected a prioritised list of tenderers. Work will be directed to the successful preferred contractor, provided their performance level is maintained. The Association can place work with other contractors from their approved contractor list if, in the event, their initial preferred contractor does not provide the level of service specified. The Association believes this will result

- in improved value for money when compared to a more traditional contracting relationship. Although early signs are very encouraging, it is too early to confirm the effectiveness of this new arrangement.
- 4.42 Clydesdale recharges current and former tenants for repairs carried out on their behalf, which are not the Association's responsibility. In 2006/07 the Association had identified 81 rechargeable repairs*. This represents an increase on the previous years figure. However, during our inspection we found one recharge repair* with nominal value, that had not been correctly identified. The Association had invoiced 74 of the 76 identified repairs. For 2006/07 Clydesdale had a recovery rate of 49% for these invoices – 46.9% of cases were cleared in full and a further 37% were adhering to repayment arrangements. The Association's new rechargeable repair policy has led to a strong improvement in performance when compared to previous years.
- 4.43 Although Clydesdale has in the past recovered the cost of rechargeable repairs from owners in one instance for their share of repair costs, it has no system in place to ensure that all such cases are identified and processed. The Association has not covered this category of recharge repairs in its policy and procedures and this represents a weakness.
- 4.44 Clydesdale has addressed in part the area for improvement identified in our earlier report. The Association's performance in recovering the cost of rechargeable repairs* has shown strong improvement in tenant recharges. However Clydesdale needs to put in place a system to identify and thereafter recharge owners for their share of common works carried out under reactive repairs.
- 4.45 In summary, the Association's approach to managing its resources is good. The cost of running the service has increased but the Association can point to significant improvements in value for money around the procurement* and cost of reactive repairs. The Association has a good approach to recharging tenant repairs. However Clydesdale should establish a system to ensure that owners

* See glossary

contributions for common works carried out through responsive repairs are identified and recharged.

Performance management

Social landlords should have clear objectives, standards and targets for property maintenance services, should monitor achievement of these, and should work to continuously improve services.

4.46 In our last inspection report, we criticised the Association's performance management system. The last report highlighted the following weaknesses. The Association:

- *did not have clear objectives, standards and targets for its property maintenance service;*
- *did not report on the quality of service outcomes and there was little evidence of more routine and systematic monitoring of performance;*
- *did not have policies and procedures for all areas of its property management services; and*
- *reviews of procedures have been superficial.*

4.47 Clydesdale's approach to managing its property management service is good. The Association now has a performance management policy based on its five year service plan. This is supported by performance management procedures designed to aid the implementation of the policy and achievement of service plans. The Association's objectives are clear and its target setting process is straightforward using historical performance information and peer group averages.

4.48 The Association has a good system in place for monitoring performance in repairs. This includes regular monthly meetings with contractors where performance and quality of service are discussed. Clydesdale splits its performance management information in repairs into two tiers. Its ICT *system delivers the first tier information electronically and this includes key performance indicators. Operational officers gather the second tier information and it is used to monitor daily performance. Staff discuss this performance information at

- monthly meetings and a key performance indicator report is presented to committee each month. This also includes a commentary based on the second tier information. While we were on site, the Association had some difficulty with its electronic retrieval system but was able to employ manual techniques to provide the performance results.
- 4.49 Clydesdale has improved the coverage and quality of its policies and procedures. It consulted with tenants around the development of its repairs and maintenance policy. We saw evidence that the Association's staff were following procedures in areas such as re-let standards, pre and post inspections, asbestos identification and rechargeable repairs. We found gaps in the Association's procedures around recharging the cost of common repairs to owners.
- 4.50 The Association told us they would use performance information to improve services to tenants and would use tenant feedback as a component of this. We saw examples where Clydesdale could have used different sources of available performance information to increase its understanding of the service provided. For example by increasing post inspection on out of hours repairs where tenant feedback responses are low.
- 4.51 Clydesdale has addressed all the areas of weakness highlighted in our last report.
- 4.52 In summary, the Association now has a good approach to performance management in repairs. It has introduced a comprehensive performance system which provides good information to staff and committee members about the property maintenance service.

Grade and overall assessment of property maintenance

- 4.53 Our overall assessment is that Clydesdale's property maintenance service is good. Clydesdale has many strengths in its property maintenance service and some areas where improvement is still needed.

4.54 In coming to our overall assessment we have taken account of the strong improvement of the Association against almost every weakness identified in our 2004 inspection. Clydesdale now provides good, and in the case of gas safety, excellent services to tenants. The use of tenant feedback and comprehensive performance information is good.

4.55 The Association still needs to:

- introduce a rechargeable repairs* system for owners;
- continue to improve the service tenants receive through the Right to Repair*;
- ensure systems are in place to identify vulnerable tenants eligible for enhanced services; and
- improve the targeting of its pre and post inspections.

* See glossary

5. Governance and financial management

Leadership and direction

A clear vision or purpose and an inclusive, well-informed planning process are key to effectively delivering the services that tenants want.

- 5.1 Our last inspection found that Clydesdale made only limited use of objective setting within its Internal Management Plan (IMP), and those it did have were not SMART*. It did not translate its broad aims and objectives into specific objectives, standards and targets for all of its activities. These weaknesses made it difficult for the Association to set clear direction and guidance for staff. They also impacted on its ability to measure or quantify its effectiveness in achieving its aims and objectives.
- 5.2 In response to these comments, the Association has continued with the introduction of the strategic planning framework mentioned in the previous report. This now includes a number of key elements. The Association presents its future plans through its IMP, which currently covers a three year period. Clydesdale is planning to extend this to five years following its regular review in 2007. This will allow the IMP timescale to coincide with both the Service Plan and medium-term financial planning periods.
- 5.3 Supported by the Association's detailed 5 Year Service Plan, operational targets, SHQS Standard Delivery Plan and Strategy and Development Funding Plan (SDFP), the IMP sets out both short and medium-term objectives for the organisation. Clydesdale's Strategy Sub-Committee, made up from committee members and senior members of staff, meets regularly throughout the year to review the IMP. Progress against objectives is routinely monitored and reported to the Management Committee quarterly.
- 5.4 In 2005 Clydesdale introduced its five year Service Plan which covers both housing management and property maintenance functions. Many of the key elements of the plan relate to the recommendations and improvement plan

* See glossary

flowing from the 2005 inspection report. The document links with corporate objectives and priorities and targets to be achieved. The Association holds weekly staff meetings to discuss a variety of issues relating to its key service delivery functions, including performance against its targets.

- 5.5 As a result of achieving most of the elements of the current Service Plan, Clydesdale intends to review the plan in advance of the 2010 date set for this exercise.
- 5.6 Clydesdale temporarily suspended its staff performance appraisal system in 2005/06 in order to focus available resources on the implementation of its Inspection Improvement Plan. This was subsequently reintroduced in April 2007. Despite suspending the appraisal system, Clydesdale has maintained regular work review meetings with staff. It is aware that all staff should have clear objectives which contribute towards the achievement of the corporate objectives and has recently discussed with staff the setting and review of individual performance targets. It also recognises the importance of ensuring that it meets the training needs of its staff and has sought to ensure that where these are identified, they are always met.
- 5.7 The Association has in place a comprehensive policy review process which has given priority to risk and meeting its statutory requirements. The process is regularly monitored and reported to the Committee. Where appropriate, the Association seeks tenants' views on the review of policies and we saw examples of feedback from tenants impacting upon their agreed policies. As part of the current review of its Allocations policy, Clydesdale has started to work with tenants and other customers on the formulation of the policy and this is a good approach.
- 5.8 Clydesdale has successfully responded to our comments in this section of our last inspection report.
- 5.9 In summary, Clydesdale has developed a good approach to strategic planning and has a clear vision of the future direction of the organisation.

Clear functions and proper control

Social landlords should be clear about the functions of the governing body, and take informed, transparent decisions within a framework of controls

- 5.10 Our last inspection report said that Clydesdale's corporate approach to performance monitoring and reporting was weak.
- 5.11 Clydesdale's committee has a clear view of its role in setting its strategic direction, taking overall policy decisions and exercising control. The Committee works well with the Association's staff and ensures that they are well supported in order to carry out their duties.
- 5.12 Clydesdale has responded to our comments and the Committee now receives regular and comprehensive reports on its performance in key areas. These provide a wide range of information on performance as well as supporting narrative. These reports include good information on trends and comparison with peers.
- 5.13 We also previously reported that the Association's senior staff relied solely on committee reports to manage performance. Since the last inspection the Association has introduced a range of reports on performance reporting. The Association now has a performance management framework which allows it to monitor and analyse performance every month. Departmental Managers analyse Key Performance Indicators* (KPIs) and discuss these with their staff with a view to identifying further measures in order to improve performance. The results of these discussions are reported to the Depute Chief Executive who in turn meets with the Chief Executive to discuss operational performance issues.
- 5.14 The Depute Chief Executive prepares a monthly report for Committee which compares monthly and year to date performance against targets across a range of KPIs*.

* See glossary

- 5.15 More detailed performance indicators have recently been introduced which provide further performance information. Managers use this detailed information to further inform their analysis of the KPI* results. Clydesdale uses these “2nd Tier Performance Figures* ” to set performance targets for individual officers.
- 5.16 The Association has responded to all of our comments from the previous report.
- 5.17 In summary, Clydesdale has a good approach to reporting on its performance.

Developing capacity

Social landlords should ensure their governing bodies have the skills and experience they need to perform well, develop their capacity and evaluate their performance.

- 5.18 Our last inspection report commented on a number of early positive steps taken by the Association at the time to help the committee in its role:
- it was looking at ways of using succession planning to minimise risks in the turnover of key office bearers;
 - it had completed job descriptions for the office bearers; and
 - it reviewed the overall committee performance and had started to make changes to improve its performance.
- 5.19 Clydesdale has built on these early steps and there are good procedures in place to develop the capacity of its governing body members. These include:
- an initial meeting with the Chief Executive for new members to provide an introduction to the Association, the role of a Committee member and the commitment required from volunteers;
 - the provision of a comprehensive information pack;
 - Committee member list and contact details;
 - potential recruits to the Committee are invited to attend several meetings as an observer in order to allow them the opportunity to experience the work of Committee before reaching a decision about standing for election or co-option;
 - new Committee members are invited to attend pre-meetings held with the Chairperson and Association staff prior to attending Committee meetings;

- following election or co-option, the Chief Executive meets with new members to discuss training and development needs; and
 - the Association also offers mentor support to new Committee members.
- 5.20 Newer members of the Committee we talked to were appreciative of these arrangements.
- 5.21 The Committee carry out a Training Needs Assessment* (TNA) at least once every two years against the Committee Job Description and Knowledge, Skills and Attitude profile*. A Committee Training Plan is then developed by the Chief Executive, approved by Committee and thereafter implemented.
- 5.22 In summary, the Association performs well in this area. It has a strong governing body and has effective arrangements in place to ensure that new Committee members settle in quickly to their role.

Accountability

Engaging stakeholders, public reporting and making accountability real.

- 5.23 Our last inspection report made no recommendations in relation to Clydesdale's performance in this area.
- 5.24 A strong membership and good levels of participation at Annual General Meetings (AGMs) are important ways for a landlord to demonstrate accountability. The Association's membership continues to decline. At the time of our inspection membership stood at 160, representing 91% of 2004/05 levels. In March 2007 the Association's Management Committee approved a committee and membership recruitment plan for 2007/08. This will include a mail-shot to all non-member tenants, a poster campaign and adverts in the local press and the Association's quarterly tenant newsletter. These measures will be in addition to the Association's routine promotion of membership during the new tenant sign-up process, in the Tenant Handbook, in its reception area and on its website.

* See glossary

- 5.25 Clydesdale allows a broad range of people to become members of the Association and has carried out its own analysis of the composition of Management Committee. This identified a number of imbalances when compared to the Rural South Lanarkshire 2001 Census results and the Association's own membership profile. We saw that Clydesdale was taking a number of measures to address these imbalances.
- 5.26 Clydesdale recognises that the dispersed nature of its properties poses a challenge in encouraging tenants to attend its AGM. Attendance at the AGM has increased over the last 2 years with 24 members attending the 2006 AGM. This represented an increase of 4 on the 2005 AGM attendance.
- 5.27 The Association publicises the AGM via its newsletter, a mail-shot, posters and telephone canvassing. Free transport and crèche facilities are provided by the Association for members wishing to attend.
- 5.28 Social landlords should place people they serve at the heart of their work and be responsive to their views and priorities. We found that Clydesdale is committed to involving its tenants. The Association has two Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs). The Chairperson of one of the RTOs is also the Chairperson of the Association. The Chairperson of the other RTO has recently joined the Management Committee. While we were on site we met with both RTOs. The RTO's were asked by the Association to grade Clydesdale's performance against the Tenant Participation Strategy Activity Statement. The RTOs both graded Clydesdale as "B" or "Good". Clydesdale intends to publish these results in its early summer tenant newsletter. Both organisations commented on the Association's failure to achieve the targets contained in the previous year's Tenant Participation Activity Statement. Clydesdale did not:
- publish their annual programme for proposed tenant consultation on revisions and amendments to their policies; and
 - hold their proposed three open public Management Committee meetings.

- 5.29 Social landlords should give stakeholders* the information that they need about the organisation and its plans, services and performance. We found that the Clydesdale dealt sensitively with confidential and personal information. The Association provides good levels of information to its tenants and partners through the annual report, quarterly newsletters and through its website. This includes Information on the Association's performance across a range of key indicators. In 2007 Clydesdale introduced a separate newsletter for applicants on its housing list.
- 5.30 The 2004 Tenant Survey results indicate that 52% of respondents consider that Clydesdale is good at taking account of their views over matters which concern them. Since then Clydesdale has revised its processes and tenants we spoke to told us that they thought the Association generally had a good approach to taking their views into account.
- 5.31 In summary, the Association is committed and has a good approach to involving its tenants in the running of the organisation. However, it should ensure that it achieves the targets carried over from the previous year's Tenant Participation Activity Statement and that it addresses declining membership levels.

Ethical Standards

Staff and governing body members should promote values that underpin good governance and should act with honesty and integrity, focusing on the best interests of the organisation and its service users.

- 5.32 The previous inspection made no recommendations relating to the Association's approach to ethical standards. We found that the Association is fully aware of the need for Committee members to maintain the highest of ethical standards.
- 5.33 It has adopted a comprehensive Code of Conduct for Committee members and staff. Committee members and staff annually declare any potential conflicts of interest. Clydesdale asks Committee members and staff to declare conflicts at the beginning of every meeting and to be aware of conflicts that may arise during meetings.

* see glossary

5.34 The Association is aware of the requirements of Part 1 of Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001*. A senior member of staff advises Committee on any potential issues as they arise. Since the last inspection it has had two Schedule 7 issues to deal with both of which were handled appropriately. Training on Schedule 7 is included as part of the Committee Training Needs Assessment and Training Plan for 2006/07 and it has identified a training need for some members.

Managing risk

Social landlords should be aware of all the risks they face and put in place robust arrangements to minimise these risks and to deal with them if they do occur.

5.35 Our last inspection report made one recommendation relating to the Association's approach to managing risk. This was that:

- *Clydesdale should strengthen its risk management systems to ensure that all activities are covered and all risks are appropriately managed.*

5.36 The Association has developed a good approach to risk management. The revised Risk Management policy was published in March 2007. Clydesdale's Strategy Sub-Committee assesses the Association's exposure to both operational and strategic risks on an annual basis. The Sub-Committee assesses the level of each risk and plots them on two Risk Maps, one 'Operational', the other 'Strategic', based on the impact of each risk and the probability of that event occurring.

5.37 The Association's Chief Executive then prepares a Risk Management Log for presentation to Management Committee. This identifies the appropriate management strategy for each risk and the controls to be introduced to minimise their impact or eliminate them entirely. This Risk Management Strategy is then incorporated into the Association's strategic planning process through the IMP.

* See glossary

- 5.38 Risks are re-assessed on a monthly basis by staff who will also identify new risks facing the organisation. This is then reported quarterly to the Association's Management Committee.
- 5.39 Clydesdale has an ongoing and regular internal audit programme carried out by an external consultant. In April 2007 it entered into the final year of a three year internal audit programme.
- 5.40 Clydesdale's Management Committee receives quarterly progress reports regarding implementation of the internal auditor's recommendations. It also receives reports directly from the internal auditor following each on-site visit. The Association has introduced a system of monthly quality control checks by departmental managers. These checks ensure that internal policies and procedures are being consistently applied and implemented.
- 5.41 The Association has successfully implemented the recommendations relating to this section of our last inspection report. Overall, Clydesdale now has a good approach to managing risk.
- 5.42 In summary, the Association's governance of the organisation is good. It has been successful in implementing the recommendations relating to governance in our last inspection report. Clydesdale has developed a sound approach to strategic planning and it has put in place structures which allow it to exercise proper control over its activities. It has a strong Management Committee and is committed to involving its tenants and service users wherever possible.

Financial viability and management

Social landlords should be financially viable in the medium term and sustainable in the longer term and should have a robust financial management framework.

- 5.43 Our last inspection report highlighted one area for improvement relating to Clydesdale's approach to financial viability and management. This was that the Association:

- *put in place a sound financial planning framework including robust medium term financial plans.*

5.44 The Association has successfully addressed the weaknesses relating to this section of our last inspection report. Clydesdale Housing Association now has in place medium term financial plans and it has also finalised its longer-term cash flows.

5.45 Its five year financial plans indicate that the Association is viable over the medium term but that it has exposure to financial risk, particularly in relation to its falling stock numbers. To help reduce this risk the Association is presently constructing an additional 25 new homes for rent. Clydesdale updates its five year financial projections annually in line with Communities Scotland guidance.

5.46 The Association finalised its longer term cash flows in June 2006 and work is currently being carried out to revise them. These suggest that Clydesdale is sustainable in the longer term. However the Committee was also presented with a number of different cash flow scenarios which indicate that the Association may be vulnerable to changes in circumstances.

5.47 The table below indicates that the Association's turnover is increasing, which may be partially due to a significant decrease in the amount of money it loses through empty houses. It has also reported levels of surplus which generally have been comparable with the housing sector as a whole.

Financial performance	2003/04 (Actual)	2004/05 (Actual)	2005/06 (Actual)	2006/07 (Forecast)
Turnover - £000s	1,626	1,613	1,745	1,820
Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)- %	20.9	26.1	12.2	33.8
Net Surplus/(Deficit) - %	13.4	22.4	9.9	28.1

- 5.48 As well as implementing the recommendation made in the last inspection report, the Association has made improvements in other areas. Clydesdale monitors its financial performance monthly by comparing actual costs to budgeted costs. This process is carried out after the end of each month. Any differences are highlighted and explanations sought from the member of staff responsible the particular budget heading. This allows the Association to quickly take corrective action. This monthly monitoring is in addition to the quarterly financial reports which continue to be provided to the Management Committee.
- 5.49 Clydesdale believes that it can meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard* and has included all associated costs in both its medium and longer term forecasts.
- 5.50 In summary, the Association now has in place financial projections which show it to be viable in the medium term and sustainable in the longer term.

* See glossary

6 Areas for Improvement Action

These are the key areas that need to be targeted for improvement action. They are broadly in order of priority within each of the key service areas.

In governance and financial management, the Association should:

- address declining membership levels.

In housing management, the Association should:

- improve its administration around antisocial behaviour recording.

In property maintenance, the Association should:

- introduce a rechargeable repairs* system for owners; and
- continue to improve the service tenants receive through the Right to Repair*

7. Next Steps

This report highlights our findings following this housing services re-inspection. We expect all organisations to respond effectively to our recommendations using their own improvement planning processes.

Sources of Evidence

Groups and third parties consulted

- Communities Scotland Area Team
- Communities Scotland Tenant Participation Team
- Communities Scotland Investment Team
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Clydesdale CAB
- Rigside Tenants and Residents Association
- Clydesdale Tenants and Residents Group

Interviews / meetings

- Members of the RSL's Management Committee
- Chief Executive
- Depute Chief Executive
- Housing Manager
- Technical Services Manager
- Finance manager
- Frontline housing and property maintenance staff
- Discussions with a range of tenants and service users

Reality checks

- Review of gas safety documents
- Review of complaints
- Review of responsive repairs
- Review of housing list applications and allocations
- Review of void re-let standard
- Review of information for applicants and tenants
- Shadowing* repairs post-inspection
- Shadowing* repairs pre inspection
- Shadowing* tenancy sign-up
- Shadowing* void inspection

Key documents reviewed

- Inspection submission
- Internal Management Plan
- Tenants handbook
- Internal Audit Progress Report
- Allocations policy
- Allocations suspensions policy
- Complaints policy

- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Planned Maintenance programme
- Right to Repair policy
- Gas Safety Procedure
- Asbestos Management Policy & Procedure
- Rechargeable Repairs policy
- Equality and Diversity Action Plan and Policy
- Annual performance and statistical returns to Communities Scotland
- Performance monitoring reports for arrears, allocation and repairs response times
- Tenant Newsletters
- Annual accounts for year ending 2005/06
- Rents and Service Charges consultation documentation

Examples of Positive Practice

These are areas we would highlight as working particularly well, taking account of the organisation's operating context.

Clydesdale has adopted an innovative approach to annually consulting with its Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs). The RTO's were asked by the Association to grade Clydesdale's performance against the Tenant Participation Strategy Activity Statement for 2006/07. Both graded Clydesdale as "B" or "Good". Clydesdale published these results in its summer tenant newsletter, along a commitment to look at how it could do better next year. Clydesdale has demonstrated that it is committed to and has a good approach to involving its tenants in the running of the Association.

Glossary

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts - ABCs	A voluntary agreement between the perpetrator of anti-social behaviour (and in the case of a young person, his or her parent or guardian) and one or more local agencies charges with preventing such behaviour. Examples of these are the police and social landlords.
Annual Performance and Statistical Return (APSR)	Annual questionnaire completed by RSLs and sent to Communities Scotland. Used to keep the Register of Social Landlords up to date and to track the performance of RSLs.
Average	The arithmetic mean – the sum of all the values divided by the number of values.
Common Housing Register (CHR)	A register of all applicants for social housing used by two or more landlords within an area.
Cyclical maintenance	Planned programme of work to deal with predictable deterioration of building components, for example regular painting of window frames.
Focus group	A group of people brought together to have a structured discussion on a specific subject or set of subjects.
Housing list	A list of applicants for housing which is used by the RSL to allocate its housing stock.
ICT	A landlord's information communication technology system.
Inspection submission	Documents submitted by the landlord at the start of the inspection to provide information on its performance, context and how it is structured.
Internal Management Plan (IMP)	Strategic plan which sets out what the organisation aims and objectives are as well as outlining how it will achieve them.
Life cycle costing	A method of calculating the cost and timing of the repairs to, and replacement of, major building components.
National median	The central value of the ordered performance of all Scottish RSLs.
Non Technical Arrears	Rental charges owed to a landlord after any outstanding Housing Benefit claims or payments have been taken

account of.

Notice of proceedings (NOP)	Documentation required to be served by a landlord advising the tenant(s) of the landlords intention to raise an action in the courts to end the tenancy.
Partnering	A structured contract management approach to improve efficiency and reduce confrontation between the RSL and its consultants and contractors. Partnering requires formalised objectives, agreed problem solving methods and an active search for continued measurable improvements.
Peer group	A group of organisations facing similar tasks and challenges with which comparisons can be made. RSLs choose which peer group they belong to when they submit their APSRs.
Performance indicator	A measure of how a RSL is achieving its objectives. Performance Indicators can be compared with a pre-set standard (a benchmark) or with other organisations.
Performance Standards	Housing standards for all social landlords in Scotland.
Planned maintenance	The planned renewal or maintenance of key property components.
Post Inspection	Inspection by a member of the landlords staff to check the on the quality or deal with a complaint concerning a response repair.
Pre inspection	Inspection by a member of the landlords staff to check the on the exact nature of the work required before ordering a response repair.
Procurement	The way an organisation obtains services or materials from other organisations or agents.
Quartile	The range represented by one quarter of the ordered performance of all Scottish RSLs. So for example, the upper quartile is the top 25% of RSLs.
Rechargeable repairs	Work that is the responsibility of the tenant but has been done by the landlord.
Registered social landlord (RSL) Re-lets	A landlord providing social rented housing that is registered and regulated by Communities Scotland. Lets made to the second or subsequent tenant. Distinguished from new lets that are made when the property is first built or modernised.
Response repairs	Day to day repairs carried out on a reactive basis,

distinguishable from planned, capital or cyclical maintenance.

Right to Repair

Statutory scheme which sets out timescales for some repairs and actions which can be taken if timescales exceeded.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

The independent body appointed to investigate individual complaints against public service bodies including Registered Social Landlords (RSL).

Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)

Was brought into to ensure minimum quality standards across all of Scotland's homes and is to be achieved by 2015.

Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 establishes the as the tenancy for all tenants of social landlords in Scotland.

Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

Defines how those involved with RSLs (governing body members and staff) do not benefit in an inappropriate fashion.

Section 5 referral

Under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 a local authority can request a registered social landlord which has accommodation in its area to provide accommodation to homeless people. This request is known as a Section 5 referral.

Shadowing

An inspection technique that involves accompanying and observing staff while they carried out their day-to-day tasks.

SMART

Performance management acronym for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound.

Stakeholder(s)

Any person organisation who obtains a service from the landlord or is effected by the landlords actions.

Statutory reasonable preference categories

People who have one of these housing needs: homelessness, overcrowding, large families, living in below tolerable standard housing or unsatisfactory living conditions.

Suspension or Suspension Policy

Policy by which a landlord may temporarily suspend an applicant from receiving offers from its housing list as defined in the 1987 Housing (Scotland) Act and amended in the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act.

Tenant Assessor

Tenant assessors are trained lay people (tenants) who are part of the inspection team. They are involved in the preparation for the inspection, reading landlord materials and on-site visits as well as talking to tenants.

**Training Needs
Assessment (TNA)**

Performance management acronym for: Training Needs
Assessment

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