

collected all targets achieved
 budget
 value
 94.1% a good place
 tenant satisfaction a good home
 2011 performance
 relets
 turnaround
 vacancies
 %
 bonus completed on time



Staff have given an exceptionally strong performance in very trying conditions, maintaining service 'as normal' while also managing the demanding process of moving tenants from flats scheduled for building works into temporary lodgings then onto settled accommodation

Our modernisation scheme could have been a recipe for chaos. Its extent, covering almost every property we own, has meant upheavals for tenants and a different and more intense work schedule for our housing management and maintenance teams and for front office staff.

It is therefore to the credit of all concerned that our latest survey puts **satisfaction with Ducane's services** at a commendable **93.7%**. Once the programme is complete we hope to see this figure rise still higher.

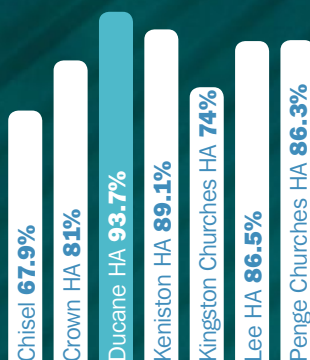
We are one of 14 members of a benchmarking group, the bm320, which represents some of London's smaller housing associations. This allows us to compare our services with landlords providing a similar service. Our 93.7% puts us top of the class among bm320 members for 2011.

"I have stayed with three housing associations in London that house postgraduate students and Ducane beats the other two hands down. Everyone at Ducane genuinely wants to help.

Amitkumar Kakkad, tenant board member, college teacher, private tutor, and consultant doing a PhD in operations management



How we compared: tenants satisfied with landlord's service



"You can't get better than the maintenance team and all the staff are knowledgeable, always polite and courteous. They respect tenants' wishes and cultural sensitivities and, most importantly, keep their promises. In five years I haven't had a single instance of work pending after a promised completion date. We will take away fond memories of the Ducane staff.



We also outperformed our peers on the questions of:

- whether the rent offers **good value for money**, with 86.8% of our tenants agreeing
- satisfaction with the **quality of the home** we provide (90.2%)
- and whether the neighbourhood is **a good place to live**, to which 94.1% of our tenants said yes.

How we compare: tenant satisfaction with quality of home



Rent collection

Housing management staff made extra efforts to help tenants who had fallen into arrears to get back on track, boosting the **collection rate for all rent owed to 101.04%**. The bm320 average for rent collection was 99.9%.

It helped us achieve for the second successive year the lowest level of arrears among bm320 members, with just **0.67% of rent owed still outstanding** at the year end.

How we compare: rent arrears as a percentage of annual rent debit*



This shrinking level of debt is in part thanks to a new policy of 'getting in early' when arrears start to build up. Tenants are encouraged to tell us if they are having any substantial difficulties paying their rent.

Postgraduate students may be affected by late payments by their home government. But a build up of rent arrears can also indicate that a tenant is having personal problems, in which case we can offer appropriate support.

* excluding housing benefit adjustment

Lettings

This was an unusual year in that not all our properties were available for letting, with tenants moving temporarily, block by block, to accommodate the modernisation programme.

We are not like most housing associations in that our tenants usually sign up for a tenancy of limited length that will allow them to further their education in London. Most flats come up for reletting within one to five years, with vacancies and new sign ups mirroring university schedules.

Our average **speed for reletting a flat is 10 days**, which compares well with the bm320 average of **31.5 days**. During that time each flat will be thoroughly cleaned and any necessary repairs carried out.



Inside a family flat: all flats come with furniture, furnishings and essential appliances

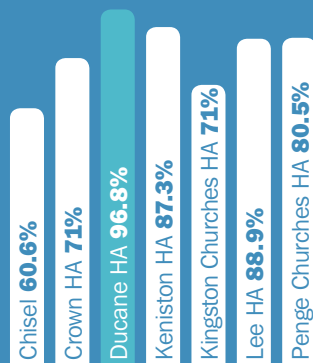
Building works to King House are close to completion and new tenants will be moving in over late summer



Maintaining our homes

This was a difficult year for our repairs team so we are modestly proud to report that satisfaction with our repairs service was for the second year the highest in the bm320.

How we compare: satisfaction with repairs and maintenance



For 12 months after our tenants move into a newly built or modernised flat, responsibility for correcting any defects lies with the contractor. Any repairs needed to our other properties are, as usual, undertaken by our in-house repairs team.

This division of responsibilities is not always easily understood by tenants in the 156 new or upgraded flats, and our contractor's service has not always been up to the very high standard of our in-house team.

Our staff have worked hard to minimise inconvenience for tenants by taking reports of all repairs needed, including defects, passing on those to be done by the contractor and helping to coordinate its response.

How we compare: emergency repairs finished on target in 2011

Emergency repairs:

Ducane 100%
bm320 average 98.3%

Urgent repairs:

Ducane 99%
bm320 average 96.2%

Routine repairs:

Ducane 100%
bm320 average 95.6%



Dr Nasrin Lotfibakhshates, completing a PhD in tissue engineering at Imperial College

“I value most the feeling of safety and relaxation of mind that is helping me build my future career. The maintenance team are very helpful and solve every single problem very quickly. Doreen and Mary are very responsive and really understand tenants’ needs. I will leave Ducane with fond memories and will recommend them to any students who want to study efficiently.”

relets
turnaround
vacancies

%

bonus completed
on time

Our response to what
tenants wanted improved →

There have been problems with local youths damaging the children's play area

We have upgraded the fencing and fitted a locked gate that only tenants can use. The vandalism has stopped

Communication with tenants could be better

We post updates on our website and regularly email important information to tenants

People are parking illegally or are not using their allotted space in the car park

We clamp any cars parked without a valid permit or permission

Our front door security could be better

As part of the modernisation works we have fitted new and more secure front doors. The door now has no window, just a high quality peephole

We need an extra washing machine in the laundry to cater for growing demand

We are negotiating with Circuit Laundry, which owns the machines and runs the service, to install additional machines

Wi-fi internet would be welcome at Vellacott House, to be included in the rent

We are looking into ways to provide this for all 40 rooms. We accept that all students now expect wi-fi as standard

An annual carpet cleaning service would be good

We are trying to find a contractor who could do this at a discounted cost for tenants

CCTV would help deter vandalism to property and cars

This can be very expensive but we are checking out the cost and will consult you to find out if enough of you want it, and are willing to pay for it via your service charges

The bicycle shed could be more secure, with more bike racks to keep it free of clutter

The fire brigade lock on the store is not as secure as we would like. When the modernisation works are finished we plan to use one of our purpose-built locked store rooms for bikes. It will have better locks and more bike ramps

The block doors are not very secure and back and front doors are left open

We are upgrading all main doors and all will soon be by fob entry only, with Vellacott House scheduled for an upgrade next year. Unfortunately, we still have contractors going in and out so we have put up notices asking tenants and contractors to make sure they close doors after themselves

A small ramp near the entrance to Daley House would make it easier to get in with pushchairs or trolleys and for people with mobility problems

We are looking into options for replacing the low steps with a ramp and will report back shortly

Some tenants are persisting in antisocial behaviour, especially over rubbish disposal

We regularly write to all of you about correct use of the bin stores. If we find out who is causing problems, we will caution them. If the problem continues, we will end their tenancy

Getting defects resolved is taking too long

We have set up fortnightly meetings on defects with the contractor to check progress and resolve unjustified delays

Communal areas are very messy, dirty and unsafe because of the building works

We have instructed the contractor to appoint staff whose job will be to clear away debris and hazards at the end of each day

The contractor sometimes doesn't complete the work needed to put right a defect in the new flats

We have asked the contractor to get tenants to sign off completed work, and send us a copy