

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
HOUSING SERVICES**

Annual Charter Performance Report for Tenants and other Customers 2023/24





Foreword



Welcome to our Annual Charter Performance Report, which outlines how we performed during 2023/24 against the Outcomes and Standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The content and the style of the report was agreed following a consultation with

tenants and covers those areas that tenants have said are the most important to them and I hope that it is received as positively as previous reports have been.

This past year has been a challenging period across housing and homelessness services. We face unprecedented pressures on our ability to meet housing need, reduce waiting lists and reduce the number of households experiencing homelessness. Following a reduction of Scottish Government funding for our new build programme for 2024/25, the Council declared a housing emergency in West Dunbartonshire in May 2024.

A range of measures to tackle the emergency have been outlined in a comprehensive action plan, including reviewing budgets and funding models to enable more homes to be built, increasing the Buy Back scheme and continuing to lobby the Scottish Government to increase funding for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme. Tackling homelessness will remain a key priority with a clear focus on prevention and reducing the length of time households spend living in temporary accommodation.

Whilst we face significant challenges, there have been key achievements over the past year including a reduction in offers of housing being refused, an increased number of lets to those in housing need and maintaining a consistently high rate of tenancy sustainability against the background of a cost of living and energy crisis.

There has also been a reduction in the overall number of empty homes, a reduction in the number of

outstanding active repairs and a substantial improvement in the time taken to carry out medical adaptations which helps enable tenants to remain living independently in their homes.

We also continue to invest in our housing stock and alongside our existing improvement programmes, over the past year we have introduced a more pro-active approach to preventing damp and mould developing in tenants' homes with the roll out of environmental sensors which help detect a risk of damp and mould developing. Our enhanced standard for multi storey living also includes significant investment in current CCTV coverage, a development strongly supported by our tenants.

We remain committed to strengthening the tenant voice across housing services, increasing opportunities to participate and influence the provision of services. We are rightly proud of our relationship with the many tenant groups that we have and how effective they are in representing their communities and getting involved in decision making. This relationship has been recognised by TPAS Scotland (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) who twice now have awarded the Council Gold Accreditation for Excellence in Tenant Participation.

We recognise that there are areas where we can improve and this report sets out some of the actions we will be taking during 2024/25 in order to respond positively to the challenges we face and ensure that we achieve our goal of being a top performing landlord.

Peter Barry

Chief Officer, Housing and Employability



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Introduction

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the outcomes and standards that the Scottish Government expects landlords to be delivering for their tenants and other customers.

All social landlords are expected to assess their performance against these Charter outcomes on an annual basis and produce a report based on this assessment, which includes actions being taken to address any areas of weakness.

This report outlines how Housing Services performed during 2023/24. It focuses on the areas that tenants have said are the most important to them and each outcome includes key measures of performance, whether this performance has improved or not since the previous year and how this performance compares to other landlords.

Tenant involvement in this report

The Scottish Social Housing Charter expects landlords to fully involve tenants in assessing and reporting their performance. In August and



September 2019, tenants were involved in reviewing the content, style and format of this report.

Lots of valuable feedback was provided and all of the changes asked for by tenants were made and have been included in subsequent reports.

Another key task of the review was to consider the best group of landlords to compare our performance against. There are many “peer groups” that can be used, each with some benefits and drawbacks. In the end, tenants have asked that the report shows how our performance compares with that of all the other local authorities in Scotland that have housing stock.

This comparison is shown using symbols, which again have been reviewed, are used consistently throughout the report and are explained below.

We do not carry out a tenant satisfaction survey every year and the last one carried out was in 2022. Most of the measurements of customer satisfaction in this report will therefore show no change in the value reported for 2022/23 and the value reported for 2023/24.

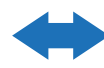
Comparison with the previous year



Better



Poorer



No change

Comparison with other landlords



Top quarter



Second quarter



Third quarter



Bottom quarter



Outcomes 2 & 3

Communication and Participation



Aims:

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides. Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

To support our key principles of being a listening, accessible, responsive and open Council, we are committed to continue to strengthen the tenant voice across housing services, increasing opportunities to participate and influence the provision and improvement of services. These aims are at the core of [“Involving You”](#), the Council’s Tenant Participation which was developed in conjunction with tenants.

During 2023/24 we implemented Year 3 of this strategy and key achievements included:

- Successfully including tenants early in the annual rent setting process with 1,724 tenants participating, equating to 17.4% of all tenants
- Holding a successful tenant event in Clydebank Town Hall in May 2024 which included a presentation on our Enhanced Standard for Multi-storey Living
- Continued tenant involvement in shaping and improving housing services, examples of the variety of opportunities to participate are outlined at Tenant Involvement on page 14.

Performance indicator	2022/23	2023/24	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services	75.8%	75.8%	↔	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to participate in decision making	69.2%	69.2%	↔	

Communication with tenants is really important to us and in the tenant satisfaction survey carried out in 2022, of the 600 respondents, 85% said that they read the Housing News to obtain information about Housing Services.

This remains a vital way for us to keep tenants updated about what’s happening, promote different ways of getting involved and will continue to be produced and delivered to all tenants four times a year and be available on the Council’s website.

During 2023/24 there was a significant improvement in complaints response times and feedback from the complaints we received and from tenant surveys, was used to improve service delivery and informed a “You said, We did” article published in the autumn edition of Housing News.

We also developed the Council’s self-service portal where tenants can now manage their tenancy online and log repairs and make rent payments. Tenants can register to use this service at <https://my.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/>

Performance indicator	2022/23	2023/24	Trend	Comparison
Average time in working days to respond to a Stage 1 complaint	10.36 days	5.98 days	↑	
Average time in working days to respond to a Stage 2 complaint	34.9 days	22.8 days	↑	

What we are doing in 2024/25:

- We will develop a new Tenant Participation Strategy for the period 2025 to 2028.
- We will take action to further develop the self-service portal.



Outcome 4

Quality of Housing

Aims:



Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

Tenants' homes, as a minimum, when they are allocated are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and any other building quality standard in place throughout the tenancy; and also meet the relevant Energy Efficiency and Zero Emission Heat Standard.

Our "More Homes, Better Homes West Dunbartonshire" approach aims to ensure that our new and existing homes in West Dunbartonshire meet the needs of our tenants and future tenants.

The Council's Better Homes Project Board has been strengthened to ensure all our homes meet the best possible standards including energy efficiency standards.

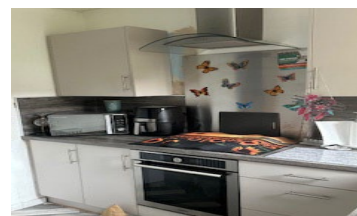
Some programmes affected by wider global issues have not fully recovered and this has impacted on our level of compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. We have increased our capacity to carry out Electrical Installation Condition Reports and aim for this initial programme to be completed in the first half of 2025.

Performance indicator	2022/23	2023/24	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	62.7%	62.7%	↔	
Percentage of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	32.2%	51.2%	↑	

We continue to strengthen the alignment between our investment plans and tenant priorities. Tenant representatives were involved in developing our Enhanced Housing Capital Investment Programme, which includes an investment of £750,000 to upgrade and increase our existing CCTV provision.

Over the period of 2024/25, we are investing around £32 million in existing homes including:

- Improving 630 homes with new heating systems
- Improving 450 homes with new external insulated render
- Improving 250 homes with new roof coverings
- Improving 600 homes with window/door renewals
- Improving 400 homes with kitchen renewals
- Improving 125 homes with bathroom renewals
- Improving 100 homes with new electrical showers
- Fitting over 1000 homes with environmental sensors to prevent future damp or mould issues



In terms of future investment plans, we are aware that additional focus is required in terms of planning our approach to meeting climate change targets to deliver our ambition of increased satisfaction with the quality of our homes.

What are we doing in 2024/25:

- We will deliver our Capital Investment Programme for 2024/25.
- We will continue to develop and implement our Multi Story Enhanced Living Strategy including improving heating systems.
- We will continue the roll out of environmental sensors to proactively identify the risk of damp and mould eventually covering all Council homes.



Outcome 5

Repairs and Maintenance

Aim:

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

Tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

Whilst performance in relation to repairs and maintenance during 2023/24 saw the average time to complete both emergency and non-emergency repairs increase slightly from the previous year, all annual gas safety checks were carried out within the 12 month target date and the percentage of tenants saying they are satisfied with the service has increased.

During 2023/24 we fully implemented our revised approach to tackling damp and mould in tenants' homes. This is ensuring quicker response times to carry out inspections and repair work when this is required. We have also invested in the installation of environmental sensors in tenants' homes to help detect where there is a risk of damp and mould developing, allowing action to be taken to prevent this.

Performance indicator	2022/23	2023/24	Trend	Comparison
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	4.5 hours	5.1 hours	↓	
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	9.31 days	10.94 days	↓	
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out completed right first time	85.7%	85.6%	↓	
Number of times in the reporting year we did not meet our statutory obligation to complete a gas safety check within 12 months of a gas appliance being fitted or last checked	0	0	↔	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	83.7%	94.8%	↑	

We recognise there are areas where we can get better and plans are in place aimed at improving the service experienced by tenants. A key development will be a revised repairs policy which will provide clear information around the type of repairs the Council is responsible for and the repairs that tenants are responsible for, provide clearer definitions of our different repairs categories so that they are easier to understand and outline the level of service tenants can expect around repair appointments and improved communication via text and email.

What we are doing in 2024/25:

- We will develop and new repairs policy based on consultation with tenants.
- We will take action to reduce the number of repair cancellations.
- We will reduce the level of follow on work required when completing repairs, improving the number completed Right First Time.



Outcome 6

Estate Management and Anti-Social Behaviour

Aim:



Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that:

Tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

Ensuring that tenants live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe is a key objective and the number of resolved cases of anti-social behaviour remains high.

During 2023/24, we launched the first stage of new mobile app technology for Housing Staff to support real time working in communities and continued to contribute to community safety improvements via a range of partnership initiatives, including a Deliberate Fire Reduction Group and contributing to a youth disorder joint action plan.

We also developed a new Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy in conjunction with key partners including Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The aim of this strategy is to deliver better outcomes for all our residents by demonstrating how we will work towards reducing anti-social behaviour, take enforcement action where appropriate and prevent anti-social behaviour from occurring in the first place.

Performance indicator	2022/23	2023/24	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	62.7%	62.7%	↔	
Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases resolved	97.1%	98.08%	↑	

What are we doing in 2024/25:

- We will continue to increase awareness of how to report anti-social behaviour.
- We will complete the planned upgrade and expansion of our CCTV network.
- We will promote estate walkabout programmes with tenants to address local issues.



Outcome 10



Access to Housing




Aim:
Social landlords ensure that:

People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

We are committed to ensuring that people find it easy to apply for the widest choice of housing available which meets their needs. In addition to being given information about prospects of being housed by the council, we can provide information and advice about the range of housing options that are available.

During 2023/24 we improved online access to the housing waiting list and we also carried out a full review of the waiting list, which has helped reduce the number of tenancy offers that were refused.

Performance indicator	2022/23	2023/24	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of tenancy offers refused	51.7%	46.6%		

Local performance indicator	2022/23	2023/24	Trend
Average time to assess housing applications	1.3 days	4.3 days	
Percentage of housing applications suspended	2.5%	2.7%	
Percentage of medical applications assessed within 28 day target	55%	23%	

	2022/23	2023/24
Total number of properties	10,422	10,444
Total number of lets in the year	797	873
Total number on waiting list	5635	5564

As outlined in the Foreword to this report, meeting the needs of those households that seek rehousing remains challenging. Whilst the number of lets made in 2023/24 increased by 8% from the previous year, over 5500 households remain on the housing waiting lists, including households experiencing homelessness and living in temporary accommodation.

The cut made to the Affordable Housing Supply Programme has also severely impacted the delivery of new, much-needed homes in West Dunbartonshire. A range of measures to tackle the housing emergency in West Dunbartonshire have been outlined in a comprehensive action plan. Four main themes are identified within the action plan which focus on the delivery and maintenance of homes; making the best use of existing stock; enhancing housing access and preventing homelessness; and strengthening the financial viability of existing housing budgets.

What we are doing 2024/25:

- We will implement the housing emergency action plan.
- We will carry out a review of the Housing Allocations Policy.



Outcome 11

Tenancy Sustainment

Aim:
Social landlords ensure that:



Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

Providing advice and support to those who need it to remain in their homes is a key priority and we will continue to develop initiatives to ensure that tenants are provided with the help they need to maintain their tenancy.

We have reviewed and updated our approach to carrying out new tenant visits and the number of these being carried out continues to rise. We have also taken action to increase the number of visits carried out when a tenant submits a tenancy termination notice, aimed at offering support to tenants facing difficulties maintaining their tenancy.

During 2023/24 we were also able to appoint a further dedicated officer from the Working4U service, to provide advice and assistance around benefit and debt issues and employment and learning opportunities specifically to Council tenants.

It is also important that tenants who need their home adapted due to age, disability, or caring responsibilities are provided with a quick and efficient service. We have seen significant improvements in this area, with the average time taken to complete medical adaptation reducing to 45 days, from 73 days in the previous year. Whilst the tenancy sustainment rate in 2023/24 dropped slightly from the previous year, it remains high and above the Scottish average compared to our peer group.

Performance indicator	2022/23	2023/24	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of all new tenants housed, who were still in their tenancy 12 months later	94.1%	92.8%	↓	
Average time taken to complete medical adaptations	73 days	45 days	↑	

What are we doing in 2024/25:

- We will continue to monitor closely the time taken to carry out medical adaptations with the aim of sustaining improvements made.
- We will continue to develop our mobile app across other areas of the housing service, including pre-termination visits.



Outcome 12

Homeless People

Aim:

Local councils perform their duties on homelessness so that:









People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness get prompt and easy access to help, advice and information; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

Our approach to homelessness is outlined in our 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, aimed at ensuring that people who have experienced homelessness reach a settled housing solution as quickly as possible, rather than spending long periods of time in temporary accommodation.

During 2023/24 we continued to ensure that decisions on all homeless applications were made promptly and efficiently and that appropriate support is provided to help people maintain their own home and that repeat instances of repeat homelessness are minimised.

However, real pressures exist within the system with 1095 new homelessness presentations received during the year and high numbers of households, including households with children, living in temporary accommodation for longer periods of time waiting to be rehoused.

The Council has been forced to use unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation to meet its legal obligations and the number of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order has risen significantly as a result.

Performance indicator	2022/23	2023/24	Trend	Comparison
Average time from application to assessment	13 days	12 days		
Percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made	100%	100%		
Percentage of all homeless cases re-assessed within 12 months (repeat homeless)	4.4%	4.3%		
Average total time spent in temporary accommodation	172 days	177 days		

This situation has contributed to the housing emergency that was declared in May 2024 and a key focus of the Council's response is to ensure we make the best use of existing housing stock and enhance our approach to housing access and the prevention of homelessness.

What we are doing in 2024/25:

- We will carry out a review of the Council's approach to homelessness prevention.
- We will take a range of actions aimed at reducing the length of time households spend in temporary accommodation.
- We will minimise the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation.



Outcome 13

Value for Money



Aim:

Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that:

Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

Our “Every day counts” approach to managing empty homes has delivered significant improvements in performance following the period when letting properties was restricted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The overall number of empty properties has reduced and whilst the average days to let properties increased slightly during 2023/24, the rent loss due to empty homes reduced further and performance compared to our peers remains good on both measures.

We have implemented a revised re-let standard and a working group continues to meet regularly to review performance and identify areas where further improvements can be made.

Our rent collection performance in 2023/24 also improved, with the level of rent arrears reducing and the percentage of rent due that was collected increasing. This is positive when considered within the context of the financial pressures tenants are facing. The processes we have in place are designed to support tenants and offer assistance to help maintain agreed payment arrangements that are in place.

Performance indicator	2022/23	2023/24	Trend	Comparison
Average time to re-let properties	33.6 days	34.99 days	↓	
Rent loss due to voids expressed as a percentage of the total amount of rent due	1.28%	1.01%	↑	
Rent collected as a percentage of total rent due	98.5%	99.09%	↑	
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due	10.04%	9.44%	↑	

What are we doing in 2024/25:

- We will continue to monitor performance and take action to minimise the time taken to re-let empty properties and rental income lost.
- We will continue to review ways to improve rent collection.



Outcomes 14 & 15

Rents and Service Charges

Aim:

Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:

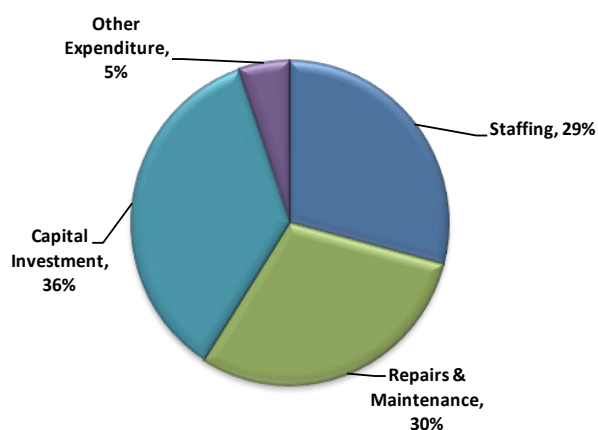
A balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them.

Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

All tenants want to live in good quality, energy efficient homes in well maintained neighbourhoods, where they feel safe. For this reason, we continue to invest in both our housing capital programme and our new council house building programme and employ housing officers to manage estates, promote successful tenancy sustainment and tackle anti-social behaviour.

Last year we were able to fulfil our commitment to including tenants early in the rent setting process and held a series of meetings in October 2023 to develop the options being put forward for voting. The key priority for tenants was to keep any rent increase as low as possible and following consultation in which a total of 1,724 tenants voted, a 6.7% rent increase was preferred by 76% of those that responded and this was agreed at a Council meeting in March 2024.

How your rent was spent in 2023/24



Staffing:

employee costs, administration costs (this also includes payments to other departments for example financial services, computer systems, human resources, corporate communications, architectural services) and property costs.

Repairs and Maintenance:

the costs for day to day repairs carried out across all properties and costs associated with medical adaptations.

Capital Investment:

the interest and principal repayments on money we have borrowed to fund the Council's new build programme and carry out major works and improvements (e.g. cladding, kitchens, bathrooms, roofs).

Other expenditure:

costs associated with arrears and the collection of rents, bad debt provision (funds required to account for rents and debt accounts which are not paid to the Council) and Council Tax and lost rent on empty homes.

We have a Joint Rent Group comprising tenant volunteers, Council officers, as well as the Convener of the Housing and Communities Committee. The group's aim is to improve transparency and the involvement of tenants in key financial decisions to ensure the services we deliver provide best value for current and future tenants. We are keen to ensure that the involvement and influence of tenants in this process continues and if you would like to become involved contact Jane Mack on **0798 354 2993** or jane.mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

What we are doing in 2024/25:

- We will review all existing budgets and strive to keep our costs as low as possible in advance of carrying out the Rent Setting consultation with tenants.



Tenant Involvement

At West Dunbartonshire Council we have a long history of tenant involvement. Tenant Participation helps you become directly involved in decision making which will influence housing services now and in the future.

Details about the various ways tenants can become involved are available online at <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/tenant-participation/>. You can also follow us on Facebook, where we post regular information about housing, events and share community information.

There are many ways to participate, including via a local Tenants and Residents Association, Scrutiny Panel or making your views known during the annual rent setting consultation or satisfaction surveys.

Our tenant groups have been continuing to focus on encouraging new members to help them represent their area and improve neighbourhoods. We provide practical and financial support to tenant groups to help them function effectively. We encourage and support tenants to take part in local walkabouts alongside housing staff and have a specific Tenant Priority Budget set aside aimed at delivering improvements that tenants have asked for.

We produce a quarterly newspaper called Housing News, which is delivered to all West Dunbartonshire tenants. It provides up to date news on housing in West Dunbartonshire, including information on our performance, new housing developments, tenant consultations and information on tenant participation activities.

A copy of Housing News is also available online at <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/housing-news/>

If you would like more information about tenant participation or the opportunities that exist to get involved, then please get in touch with Jane Mack on 0798 354 2993 or by email - jane.mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk.

What do you think of this report?

We are keen to hear your thoughts on this report and how it could be improved.

Please use the link or QR code below to complete 5 very short survey questions.

<https://arcg.is/mP4Tj0>



This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.

Arabic

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.



British Sign Language users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](https://www.scotland.gov.uk/Contact/SCOTLAND-BSL), the on-line British Sign Language interpreting service.
The Council contact number is 01389 XXXXXX

Chinese (Cantonese)

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

Gaelic

Tha an sgrìobhainn seo cuideachd ri fhaighinn ann an cànanan eile, ann an clò mòr, agus ann an cruth claisneachd ma thèid iarraidh

Hindi

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Polish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.

Punjabi ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Ukrainian

Цей документ також доступний іншими мовами, великим шрифтом та в аудіоформаті за запитом.

Urdu درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

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