West Dunbartonshire Council

Housing Services

Annual Charter Performance Report for Tenants and other Customers 2017/18

Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our "2017/18 Annual Charter Performance Report" for tenants and other customers. The report outlines how we have performed against the Outcomes and Standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The content and style of the report was chosen in partnership with tenants and I hope that it is received as positively as previous reports.

This past year has been a challenging and busy year across the housing service in West Dunbartonshire. As we have continued to mitigate against the ongoing impacts of Welfare Reform, a renewed focus and energy on providing excellent and appropriate housing services has resulted in continued improvements.

A comprehensive survey of tenant satisfaction carried out in Autumn 2017 showing that 84% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided (up from 72% in 2014) with satisfaction levels across all main areas improving since 2014.

Continued delivery of investment in housing across West Dunbartonshire to provide the homes needed by our communities has resulted in 114 new build homes being available for social rent (WDC 40 homes at Second Ave/Singer St, Clydebank Housing Association 44 homes at Bingo Hall site, Link Housing Association 30 homes at Dalmuir).

During 2017/18 West Dunbartonshire Council became the first social landlord in Scotland to introduce a zero tolerance policy on domestic abuse within its properties. The Council has introduced measures which will ensure victims have immediate access to practical help and specialist legal assistance and support following any incident of domestic abuse.

During the course of 2017/18, we also continued to focus on the implementation of priority work-stream areas intended to deliver innovation, improvement and value for money. These are Homelessness, Tenancy Sustainment, Rent Collection, Empty Homes and Anti-Social Behaviour, with significant progress being made in each of these areas.

We have also approved the introduction of an updated Housing Allocations Policy to ensure that people find it easy to apply for the widest choice of housing available and developed a sector leading Care Leavers protocol which ensures that young care leavers in West Dunbartonshire do not find themselves homeless.

This report looks at our overall performance during 2017/18 and outlines how we have continued to deliver the standards and outcomes that tenants and other customers can expect, in terms of the quality and value for money of the services they receive. The report also highlights areas where we still need to improve and sets out some of the actions we will be taking during 2018/19, in order to ensure that our tenants and other customers are provided with good quality homes and other services and that we achieve our goal of being a top performing landlord across all the Charter Outcomes, delivering both value for money and excellent customer service.

As always we welcome your opinion and would be happy for you to provide your views via the Housing Development team at HousingStrategy@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Peter Barry

Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability

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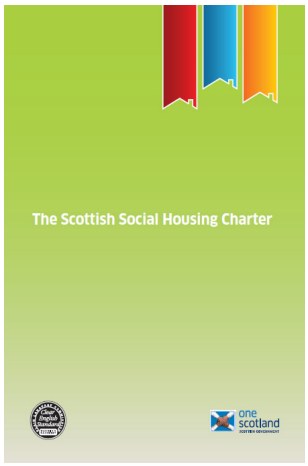
Introduction



In April 2012, the Scottish Government introduced the new Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Charter sets out 16 outcomes and standards that the Scottish Government expects landlords should be delivering to their tenants and other service users.

From 2012 onwards, landlords have been expected to annually self-assess their performance against each of the Charter outcomes and report this to the Scottish Housing Regulator in May. This is called the Annual Return on the Charter or the 'ARC'.

In addition to reporting to the Regulator, the Council must also report its performance to its tenants and other service users by 31 October each year. This is our fifth annual report, and it tells you how Housing Services performed between April 2017 and March 2018.

It doesn't cover all 16 outcomes and standards, but focuses on those areas tenants have told us they are most interested in. The purpose of our report is to provide you with clear, accurate information about areas of our performance which you want to know about. We hope that it will encourage you to ask more detailed questions and provide more comments to help improve housing services.

A review of the Charter was carried out and published by the Scottish Government in April 2017. Following this review, the Scottish Housing Regulator is now updating the indicators used to measure progress against the Charter outcomes and these will come into effect from April 2019.

We are keen to hear your views about the content and style of this report and you can do this by completing the form on the inside back cover or on our website at

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LQXMH3C

or alternatively by using the QR code below

Key Achievements during 2017-18

Some of the key achievements delivered by the Housing Service during 2017/18 included:

- a comprehensive survey of tenant satisfaction carried out in Autumn 2017 showing that 84% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided (up from 72% in 2014)
- levels of satisfaction across all main areas of housing improving since 2014
- continued delivery of investment in housing across West Dunbartonshire to provide the homes needed by our communities, resulting in 114 new build homes being available for social rent (WDC 40 homes at Second Ave/Singer St, Clydebank Housing Association 44 homes at Bingo Hall site, Link Housing Association 30 homes at Dalmuir)
- the launch of “No Home for Domestic Abuse”, a zero tolerance policy on domestic abuse to ensure victims have immediate access to practical help and specialist legal assistance and support following any incident of domestic abuse
- the introduction of an updated Housing Allocations Policy to ensure that people find it easy to apply for the widest choice of housing available and that sustainable solutions are found
- the development of a sector leading Care Leavers protocol, which ensures that young care leavers in West Dunbartonshire are provided with the most appropriate and securest type of accommodation and that no one should find themselves homeless
- following a review of void processes and our focus on fostering an “Every Day Counts” culture, our performance around Empty Homes had improved significantly by the middle of the year, reducing average relet times by 20 days and significantly reducing the number of abandoned tenancies
- piloting a new housing officer role with fewer properties and a wider remit, which will provide a ‘wraparound’, early intervention service to our applicants and tenants
- continuing to preparing for welfare reform rollout, to better assist affected tenants and limit the impact on rent collection.

Tenant and Customer Involvement in this Report

The Scottish Social Housing Charter gives tenants a central role in assessing landlords performance. We share performance information with tenants throughout the year through our quarterly newsletter Housing News and on our website.

Our initial Charter Performance Report was created with the help of a tenant working group. This working group reviewed each area of housing performance and discussed what areas the report should focus on. The working group also helped us decide on the colour, the symbols and the way the report is set out.

Tenants input has remained central, with readers of the report also able to have a say in relation to which performance areas they were most interested in and what changes should be made to the content and format of the report.

Based on this feedback we continue to make small changes to the annual report, including reducing the use of jargon as much as possible.

The Charter Indicators have been in operation now for years. These are due to be updated from April 2019 and we will use this opportunity to again engage with tenants to review and update the format of this annual report. You have an opportunity to use the comment sheet at the end of the report to have your say, or use the QR code on page 3 or the inside back cover to give us your views.

This report is based on an open and honest assessment about how housing services are performing in West Dunbartonshire. It has received positive feedback from tenants, as well as receiving a commendation from the Scottish Housing Network as a good example of a clear and accessible report, We have also received an award from TPAS Scotland for Best Practice in communicating performance information to tenants.

If you are interested in being involved in a more detailed review of the format of this report please use the contact details at the end of this report.

Tenants were involved in choosing a range of symbols used in our report to tell you how we are performing over time and compared to other landlords.

performance improved ↑ performance declined ↓ no change in performance ↔

ranking is shown in quarters ranging from top (best) to bottom (poor).

Top Quarter | Second Quarter | Third Quarter | Bottom Quarter

Outcomes 2,3

Communication and Participation

What we aim for: *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 landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.*

Performance Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	Trend	Rank
% of tenants who feel that we are good at keeping them informed about services and decisions	87.2%	84.5%	↓	
% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes	67%	79.1%	↑	

Developments in the last year have included taking actions to increase the number of complaints responded to within target timescales, implementing an improvement plan based on the feedback provided via our tenant satisfaction survey and implementing Year 1 of our Tenant Participation Strategy "Involving You".

We continue to take action to ensure that tenants get the information they need about their landlord and this includes reporting performance against our Service Standards every quarter via our web page and also via the Housing News.

We also continue to ensure that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence decisions at a level they feel comfortable with. We take account of the views and priorities of tenants and use these to shape the services we provide. Examples of opportunities to participate include Tenants and

Residents Groups, the West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel and the interested tenants register.

For more information becoming involved see the tenant participation section of our website.

	Stage 1	Stage 2
Complaints received	185	20
Complaints upheld	84	3
Complaints responded to within target timescale	77% (5 days)	59% (20 days)

Developments in 2018/19

- We will implement Year 2 of our Tenant Participation Strategy
- We will continue to improve the Complaints Handling process.
- We will continue to support tenants and residents association across West Dunbartonshire and increase the opportunities for tenants to become involved

Outcome 4 The Quality of Housing

What we aim for: *tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015, and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair*

Performance Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	Trend	Rank
% of Council's housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	88.2%	90.2%	↑	
% of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	81%	86%	↑	
% of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in	86.6%	94.9%	↑	

We continue to invest in our housing stock and develop cyclical programmes of maintenance and our Capital Investment Programme with the aim of ensuring that all properties meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH) by 2020.

Levels of compliance continue to increase and the level of satisfaction with the quality of new homes also continues to rise. The majority of properties not meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard are properties where works are not being carried out due to owner or tenant refusals and during 2018/19 we will implement further actions recommended by the West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel aimed at reducing these and increasing compliance levels.

Developments in 2018/19

- We will implement year 1 of our Housing Asset Management Strategy
- We will continue to invest in our housing stock by delivering our Housing Capital Investment Plan

Outcome 5 Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements

What we aim for: *Tenants' homes are well maintained; with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable* choices when work is done

Performance Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	Trend	Rank
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	3.9 hours	3.67 hours	↑	
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	7.17 days	7.08 days	↑	
% of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time	87.8%	88.1%	↑	
% of repairs appointments kept	85.4%	86.1%	↑	
% of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	93.6%	92.3%	↓	
% of properties that had a gas safety check within 12 month anniversary date	100%	99.13%	↓	

Our dedicated customer focused repairs and maintenance service is delivered from offices and depots in Dumbarton and Clydebank.

A reasonable performance was achieved in 2017/2018 with 4 indicators showing improved performance, with 2 having marginal declines in comparison with the outturn from 2016/2017.

West Dunbartonshire performance compares well with peer groups for emergency and non-emergency repairs and also customer satisfaction and improvement in the other categories are being made ahead of the implementation of our Integrated Housing Management System in December 2018.

Clearly the Gas Safety performance was very disappointing and improvements have been carried out to ensure the percentage of properties requiring a gas safety record that had a gas safety check and record by anniversary date in 2018/2019 will be 100%.

Throughout 2018/19 we will implement key actions aimed at continued improvement, some of which have been developed using feedback provided by tenants via satisfaction surveys which are carried out.

Developments in 2018/19

- **We will develop and implement an improvement plan to ensure that 100% of properties have a gas safety check within the required anniversary date**
- **We will implement new technology to improve our appointment system**

Outcome 6 Managing our estates, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

What we aim for: *Tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhood where they feel safe.*

Performance Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	Trend	Rank
% of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	80%	80%	⟷	
% of anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed targets	70.45%	81.4%	↑	

Ensuring that tenants live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe is a key objective. During 2017/18 the level of tenant satisfaction with the management of the neighbourhood increased and the percentage of cases of anti–social behaviour resolved within our target timescale of 12 weeks also increased.

During 2017/18 West Dunbartonshire Council became the first social landlord in Scotland to introduce a zero tolerance policy on domestic abuse within its properties.

The Council introduced measures to ensure victims have immediate access to practical help and specialist legal assistance and support following any incident of domestic abuse.

In addition the local authority will use the full scope of Anti-Social Behaviour powers in conjunction with Housing and Matrimonial Homes Legislation to ensure victims can remain at home, whilst the perpetrator will be legally removed and prevented from returning.

The Council is acting in response to figures which highlight West Dunbartonshire as having the highest incidences of domestic abuse per head of the population in Scotland.

Developments in 2018/19

- **We will review the Greenspace services and publicise expected service levels widely**
- **We will continue to implement our zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse via our "No Home for Domestic Abuse" approach**
- **In conjunction with tenants, we will review and update target timescales in place for resolving cases of anti social behaviour**

NO HOME FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE

Outcome 10 Access to Social Housing

What we aim for: *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.*

Local Indicators	2016/17	2017/18	Trend
Average time to assess housing applications	3.9 days	4.2 days	↓
% of medical assessments assessed within 28 day target	42.5%	28%	↓

We are committed to ensuring that people find it easy to apply for the widest choice of housing available and which meets their needs. In addition to being given information about their prospects of being housed by the council, our application process provides information about how homes are allocated and information about a range of housing options.

During 2017/18 we reviewed and updated our Housing Allocations Policy and also introduced a sector leading Leaving Care Housing Protocol, which ensures that young care leavers are provided with the securest form of accommodation appropriate and not routinely made homeless.

Disappointingly, the percentage of medical applications being assessed within our 28 day target decreased and as a result we plan to review and update the processes we have in place to ensure improvements are delivered during 2018/19.

	2017/18
Total number of properties	10485
Total number of lets in the year	907
Total number on waiting list	3810

Developments in 2018/19

- We will take action to increase the number of medical applications assessed within target
- We will maximise the use of mutual exchanges where appropriate
- We will carry out the annual review of the nomination process in place with local housing associations

Outcome 11 Helping People Stay in their Homes

What we aim for: *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 other organisations.*

Performance Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	Trend	Rank
% of all new tenants housed in 2016/17 who were still in their tenancy 12 months later	88.4%	88.5%	↑	

Providing 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 recent improvements are sustained.

During 2017/18 the overall rate of tenancy sustainment increased slightly, helped by the introduction of initiatives such as new tenant visits and annual tenant visits. The number of abandoned properties also continued to fall.

Last year we again carried out a large number of major adaptations, with the overall average time to complete adaptations reducing slightly. We have taken further actions aimed at ensuring that this reduces further during 2018/19.

Developments in 2018/19

- **We will continue to take action to reduce time taken to complete medical adaptations**
- **We will continue to develop initiatives aimed at supporting tenants to remain in their homes**

A key area of development during 2018/19 is to provide a more in comprehensive level of pre-tenancy support to all prospective new tenants where this is required, with the aim of ensuring that their needs and requirements are addressed and the number of tenancy failures continues to reduce.

Performance Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	Trend
Number of tenancies ending — with notice given	675	701	↓
Number of tenancies ending — being abandoned	84	61	↑
% of WDC tenancies ending with notice, ended for negative reasons	20%	23%	↓
Average time to complete medical adaptations	92 days	90 days	↑

Outcome 12 Homeless People

What we aim for: *homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; 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.*

Performance Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	Trend	Rank
% of people satisfied with the quality of temporary accommodation	77.8%	83.0%	↑	
% of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made	100%	100%	↔	

Following the approval in February 2017 of our Homelessness Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy for the period 2017–2020 'More than a Roof', year 1 of the action plan was implemented during 2017/18.

All of the key indicators relating to homelessness have subsequently improved during 2017/18. The strategy sets out a number of key actions and developments that will be taken in Year 2 to ensure that these improvements are sustained and we continue to prevent and alleviate homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

Following an extensive review of supported and temporary accommodation provision, including the provision of supported accommodation, a key task for 2018/19 is to develop a 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, aimed at ensuring that people that have experienced homelessness reach a settled housing solution as quickly as possible, rather than spending long periods of time in temporary accommodation.

Developments in 2018/19

- We will implement Year 2 of our Homelessness Strategy "More than a Roof"
- We will develop a 5 year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
- We will review and update our Hospital Discharge Protocol
- Review Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention service delivery to ensure we meet service objectives

Local Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	Trend
Number of young people presenting as homeless in West Dunbartonshire	360	290	↑
% of homeless cases re-assessed within 12 months (repeat homelessness)	5.6%	5.0%	↑
% of homeless applications given a decision within 28 days	99%	100%	↑

Outcome 13

Value for Money

What we aim for: *tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay. Social Landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers*

Performance Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	Trend	Rank
% of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money.	68.0%	75.8%	↑	
Rent collected as percentage of total rent due in the reporting year.	100.2%	100.4%	↑	
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year.	10.15%	8.83%	↑	
% of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year.	1.05%	0.9%	↑	
Average length of time taken to re-let properties in the last year.	46 days	35.6 days	↑	

Whilst Welfare Reform continues to pose a significant challenge and we continue to maximise the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to assist those most affected, the success of our "Help Us, Help U" rent arrears campaign has contributed to a reduction in the overall level of arrears owed to the Council and an increase in the level of rent collected in the calendar year.

In addition, our "Every day counts" approach to managing empty homes has resulted in the average time to re-let empty properties reducing from 46 days to 35.6 days and the rental income lost as a result of properties being empty reducing to 0.9%.

We have developed detailed action plans which aim to deliver continued improvements and will monitor these closely to assess their effectiveness as we continue to prepare for the roll out of Universal Credit.

Developments in 2018/19

- **We will continue to develop our approach to early intervention aimed at tackling arrears**
- **We will implement a comprehensive mitigation plan for the rollout of Universal Credit**
- **We will continue our "Every Day Counts" approach with the aim of further reducing the length of time properties are empty.**

Outcomes 14,15

Rents and Service Charges

What we aim for: *social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers.*

	2 Apt	3 Apt	4 Apt	5 Apt
WDC average rent	£73.64	£75.85	£80.59	£86.39
Scottish average rent	£73.33	£74.94	£81.37	£90.39

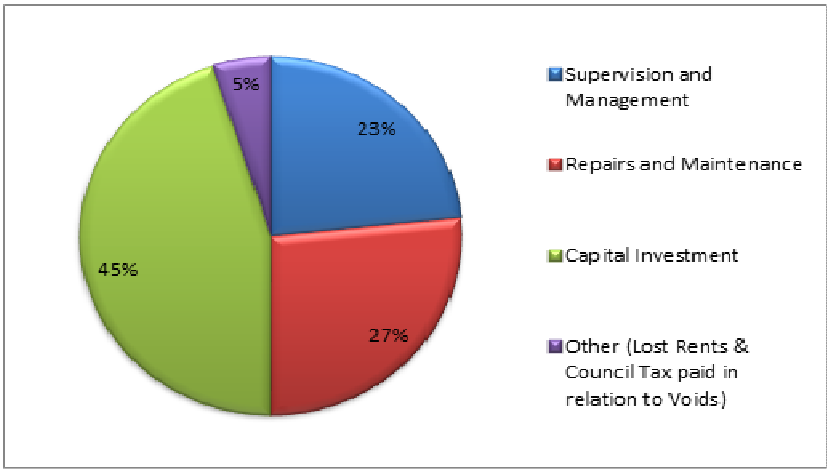
All tenants want to live in good quality, energy efficient homes in well maintained neighbourhoods, where they feel safe. For this reason, we continue to invest heavily in both our housing capital programme and our new council house building programme and employ housing officers to manage estates, promote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

We strive to keep our costs as low as possible and carry out a rent consultation process annually in conjunction with tenants.

This consultation focuses on the Council's plans to both meet and maintain the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing, alongside our ambitions to improve our communities.

Last year various options were looked at and discussed with tenants and proposals were developed which were then agreed by the Council.

We aim to improve the involvement and influence of tenants in this process year on year and if you would like to become involved contact Jane Mack on 01389 737281 or Jane.Mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk.



How we spent each £1 of your money in 2017-18

Supervision and Management: 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 jobbing repairs carried out across all properties and costs associated with adaptations.

Other expenditure including voids: 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 on empty homes.

Capital Investment: the interest and principal repayments on money we have borrowed to carryout major works and improvements (e.g. cladding, kitchens, bathrooms, roofs).

West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel

The WD Scrutiny Panel is independent from the Council and made up of tenant and factored owner volunteers who look at the Council's performance, investigate weaknesses and suggest improvements.

If you would like more information on what they do or are interested in joining then please get in touch with Jane Mack, 01389 737281, 07983542993 or email jane.mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk. Training, support and travelling expenses are provided.

For more information on the Scrutiny Panel or to see their previous reports they have a section on the Council's website http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/tenant-participation/west-dunbartonshire-scrutiny-panel/

What do you think of this report?

Tell us online at https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LQXMH3C , use the QR code on the right or complete this page and return it to the address overleaf

1. **How satisfied are you with the design and layout of this report?**
   Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied/Neither or/ Fairly dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied
2. **How satisfied are you that this report is easy to read and understand?**
   Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied/Neither or/ Fairly dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied
3. **How satisfied are you that this report informs you about how we are performing?**
   Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied/Neither or/ Fairly dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied
4. **Which information did you find particularly useful or not useful?**

   .....

   .....
5. **What other information would you like to see in a future annual report?**

   .....

   .....

Business Reply
Licence Number
RTZC-UJXA-BKHE

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West Dunbartonshire Council
16 Church Street
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West Dunbartonshire COUNCIL

This document can be provided in large print, Braille or on audio cassette and can be translated into different community languages.

If you need this information in a different format please do not hesitate to contact us.

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

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

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

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。

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