



# Yoker Housing News

(now also available online at [www.yokerha.org.uk](http://www.yokerha.org.uk))

Winter 2018

21 December 2018

## Seasons Greetings from the Association

### In this Issue ...

- Page 2  
Development news  
Housing options
- Page 3  
Glasgow NW foodbank  
Policy review—development
- Page 4  
Satellite systems  
Cold weather advice
- Page 5  
Blocked drains  
Rechargeable repairs  
Pest control
- Page 6  
Scottish Hsg Regulator—National Panel  
Membership  
Universal Credit
- Page 7  
Tenant reward scheme
- Page 8  
Smoke alarms  
Gas servicing
- Page 9  
Rent increase consultation
- Page 10  
[www.yokerha.org.uk](http://www.yokerha.org.uk)  
Policy review—housing
- Page 11  
Money advice services  
Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Page 12  
Emergency telephone numbers  
Equality & Diversity

### Office Closure

The Association's offices will close for the Christmas and New Year holidays on Monday the 24th of December 2018 at 1:00pm.

The offices will re-open on Thursday the 3rd of January 2019 at 9:00am.

Please refer to the back page for emergency contractor telephone numbers.

## Development News

### Blawarthill Hospital Site to provide nineteen new affordable homes for rent

The Association recently received tender approval from Glasgow City Council for the provision of nineteen new homes on the site of the old Blawarthill Hospital.



The site on the corner of Holehouse Drive and Dyke Road will provide nine new build bungalows and six new build cottage flats for rent. The existing Category "C" listed building will be converted to provide an additional four flats for rent.

The houses in this development are being built as energy efficient highly insulated "Passive Houses" - the first developed by the Association and among the first in the country. These new homes should require minimal heating in winter and remain cool and comfortable in the summer months through their use of advanced heat recovery and ventilation systems.

Construction which is expected to take around eighteen months, is due to start early in the New Year. It is hoped that the first homes will be available for rent in the summer of 2020.

The successful contractor will be developing the new homes using local labour under the "employability model". This assists local young persons on welfare into work - providing them with a waged training placement and certified qualifications through which they

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Development News

*(Continued from page 1)*

are able to develop the skills, confidence and work record to enable them to progress into the mainstream labour market. We aim to recruit up to forty trainees over the course of the eighteen month build period.

Are you a local young person aged between 17 and 24 years old and interested in participating in the project? If the answer to that question is "yes" then please feel free to contact a member of the property services team on 0141-950-9051.

### Re-development at Sandholm Terrace / Sandholm Place / Drysdale Street

Plans to re-develop the site of the redundant Sandholm common room, adjacent boiler house and guest rooms are now under way. The Association plans to develop three new homes to "passive house" standard similar to those currently being developed at the Blawarthill Hospital site mentioned above.



The image (left) provides an architect's impression of how the new homes might look.

In addition, two further houses on the vacant site in Drysdale Street are also planned as part of the new development in the area.



Just over eighteen months ago the Association introduced a new approach to meeting the needs of those seeking housing. This approach offers personal advice to anyone who may need housing assistance ...

'Housing Options' aims to support people who are struggling to stay in their current home, to help them make informed choices about their housing options and to prevent them from becoming homeless.

Housing Options has been developed by Glasgow Housing Association and Glasgow City Council with other housing associations, the NHS and the voluntary sector. During the course of a housing options interview, the Association will learn about your personal circumstances and offer tailored solutions. We will help you consider all housing options such as access to social housing, the private rented sector, ownership options, homelessness services and support to help you remain in your current home.

For further details on housing options please contact a member of the housing services team on 0141-950-9052 or contact [housing@yokerha.org.uk](mailto:housing@yokerha.org.uk).



The Association acts as a referring agency for Glasgow North West Foodbank.

We can issue vouchers for the foodbank to tenants in need.

To find out more information about the foodbank or to request a voucher please contact a member of the housing services team on 0141-950-9052.

The address of the foodbank is:

Glasgow NW Foodbank  
Blawarthill Parish Church  
Millbrix Avenue  
Glasgow  
G14 0EP

The foodbank is open on Tuesday's and Thursday's from 12.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

## Maintenance performance feedback

The Association recognises that the maintenance service we provide to tenants is one of the most important elements of the overall service we provide.

We therefore closely monitor feedback from residents on their level of satisfaction with the Association's maintenance staff and contractors.

Please take the short time needed to complete these questionnaires noting any comments you may have and return them to the office by the date stated.

Thank you.

## Development policy review 2019

During the course of 2019 the following policies will be reviewed by the Association.

- Greening our Workplace
- Sustainability Policy
- Sustainable Housing Design Guide
- Policy on the Recovery of Other Owners' Costs
- Development Policy
- Home Loss and Disturbance Payment Policy
- Defects Policy
- Standard Housing Brief for Technical Consultants

A copy of any of these policies can be obtained upon request by calling a member of the property services team on 0141-950-9051. These policies can also now be downloaded from our website at [www.yokerha.org.uk](http://www.yokerha.org.uk).

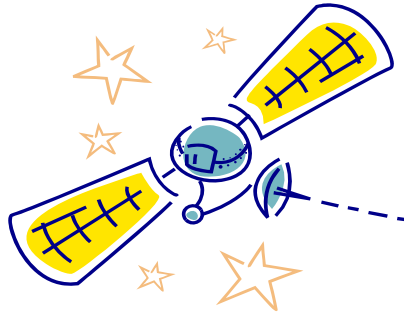
Having reviewed a policy or policies, if you wish to discuss further or provide any feedback or suggestions you can do so by telephoning a member of the property services team on 0141-950-9051 or by e-mailing your comments to [maintenance@yokerha.org.uk](mailto:maintenance@yokerha.org.uk).

Alternatively, if you wish to discuss any of these policies in person with a member of staff, please contact the property service to arrange a suitable appointment

## Satellite Systems

In order to receive television digital signals you need to have either a freeview television, freeview digibox or subscribe to either Sky through satellite or through Virgin Media or equivalent.

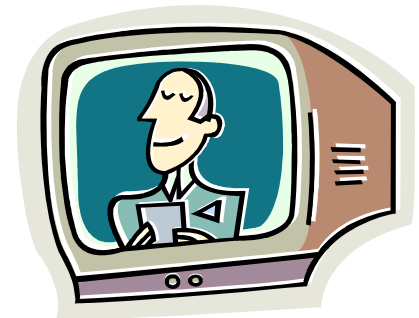
As you may be aware it is the Association's policy to disallow the siting of individual satellite dishes on its buildings. These will be removed and the resident recharged the cost of removal. However there is a communal



satellite system fitted on all tenements, which is capable of serving all flats in each block. The system provides residents with the opportunity of receiving satellite television channels. A con-

nection charge of **£70.00** is levied to those who are interested in connecting onto the system.

Please note that this charge is for **connection only** to the satellite system and is payable to the Association. A

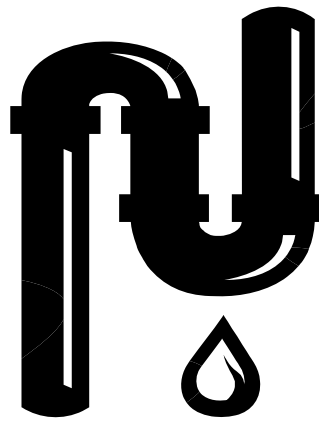


## Avoid Burst Pipes this Winter

During cold weather it is advisable to keep your central heating on at all times to prevent burst pipes. Burst pipes can cause considerable damage to your house and that of your neighbours below.

If you are going to be away from your home over the festive period your radiator valves can be turned to the frost setting.

If you notice any damp patches appearing on your ceiling, whether it is during the festive period or throughout the year, please report this to the Association immediately. It is im-



portant that you do not paint over it if you think it has dried out. The initial cause has to be traced and rectified even if it is only that your neighbour has let a bath, wash hand basin or sink overflow.

contract will then have to be entered and any installation charges paid to Sky (or their agents) to receive satellite television channels. Please note all tenements have only one cable per flat and both Sky Plus and Sky Q require additional cabling. It is the resident's responsibility to find out if it is possible to fit additional wiring for these services as it will depend which floor you reside on. The cost of any additional wiring will not be met by the Association.

We would remind all residents who are attached to the communal satellite that during bad weather (wind, rain or snow) it is possible that the sky dish may be damaged and you will lose your signal. Should this happen this will be repaired only when it is safe for the engineers to go onto the roof.

## Blocked Backcourt Drains

Unfortunately the Association's contractors have been called to clear numerous blocked and overflowing backcourt drains at considerable cost to the Association's maintenance budget over the last year.

We would once again remind you that the following items must not be flushed down the toilet:

Sanitary towels / Condoms / Face wipes / Toilet wipes / Baby wipes / Nappies / Kitchen roll

We would also request that when emptying or cleaning pots, frying pans or chip pans which have had oil, fat or grease in them, please ensure that this is



wiped off with kitchen towel or emptied into a sealed container which can then be placed in the bin. All nappies, sanitary items etc. should be placed in sealed bags and binned.

The drains simply cannot cope with such items being flushed into them and that is why they are continually blocking. The Association now charges all residents their share of the cost of clearing the drains affected.

## Rechargeable Repairs

It is the Association's policy to re-charge tenants for works carried out which are not covered by the Association's repairs policy. These include:

- (a) Damage that has occurred as a result of neglect or abuse on the part of a tenant, a member of the tenant's household, visitors to a tenant's home or forced entry by the Police;
- (b) Work carried out at the request of the tenant and the Association is not responsible for the cost (e.g. where a tenant wishes locks to be changed; installation of electrical appliances or where an appliance has caused the electricity to fail or water to leak etc.);
- (c) The repair is the tenants responsibility under the terms of their Tenancy Agreement;
- (d) The cost of forced entry to a property where a tenant is locked out of their home and has no other means of access;
- (e) Call-out charges where a tenant fails to allow access to a contractor for pre-arranged repair works; and
- (f) Forced entry costs where essential works are required and the resident has failed to communicate or agree access.

## Pest Control

The Association is not responsible for dealing with pest problems such as wasps, bees, fleas, spiders, bedbugs, carpet beetles and pigeons etc.

Residents experiencing problems with pests can seek advice on treatment from Land & Environmental Services on 0141-287-9700 or alternatively visit their website at [www.glasgow.gov.uk](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk) for further information.

Tenants are advised to report mice or rats directly to Glasgow City Council's Environmental Health Department on 0141-287-1059 (option 4) who will send out an officer to inspect and treat affected areas.



## Scottish Housing Regulator National Panel

### Add your voice, help us improve services...

Would you like to help improve social landlord services in Scotland? The National Panel is one of the ways that the Scottish Housing Regulator can hear what people think and make sure they focus on the important things.

Panel members are asked for their views on a range of issues affecting people who use social landlord services. You will receive occasional surveys, information updates and invites to take part in other feedback exercises. Participation is always optional, and you can leave at any time.

The Regulator wants to include as many different voices on the Panel as possible, including people who are not involved in other ways of giving views on landlord services (most members are not part of local tenant forums). Members include **Council and Housing Association tenants**, people who are using or have used **homeless services**, home owners who receive **factoring or common repairs** from a social landlord, and people living on **social rented Gypsy/Traveller sites**.

### Find out more and join ...

Online at [www.bit.ly/shr-panel](http://www.bit.ly/shr-panel)

Call Engage Scotland (who manage the Panel) on 0800 733 7212

Request a printed form by email [natpan@engagescotland.co.uk](mailto:natpan@engagescotland.co.uk) or call 0800 733 7212



The rollout of Universal Credit commenced at Partick Jobcentre on 31 October 2018. Universal Credit is a single monthly benefit that replaces Housing Benefit, Income Support, Income based Jobseekers Allowance, Income related Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

If you currently claim any of the benefits noted above, you won't need to do anything until the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) contact you, unless:

- You make a new claim for any of the above benefits or tax credits, or
- Your circumstances change and your benefits need to be reassessed.

Furthermore, applications for Universal Credit will have to be made online and claimants will need to have access to the internet and an email address in order to apply. Universal Credit will only be paid into a bank account or credit union account. When an application is made for Universal Credit, claimants will also be given an online account to manage.

Universal Credit will replace Housing Benefit and will therefore include housing costs. To ensure that housing costs are included within a claim for Universal Credit, applicants must confirm their exact monthly rent when submitting their claim for Universal Credit.

For more information about Universal Credit or information about Housing Benefit or Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) please contact a member of the housing services team on 0141-950-9052. Alternatively, more information about these benefits is available on the Association's website at [www.yokerha.org.uk](http://www.yokerha.org.uk)

## 2019 Tenant Reward Scheme

Over the course of the past eight years since introducing the scheme in 2011, the Association has rewarded tenants with almost £340,000 in tenant reward payments.

A total of £44,947.80 was paid out in rent rebates for tenant reward year 2018. Reward payments were made to a total of 197 tenants. The amount of the reward depends on how long you have stayed in your current home and the amount you pay in rent. The average payment was £228.16.

To qualify for tenant reward year 2019 you must meet the qualifying criteria by the 1st of March 2019.

The reward is based on the tenanted property that you are in at the end of the tenant reward year.

For most tenants the reward amount will be the difference between your annual rent at the 31st of March 2019 and your annual rent at the 31st

of March 2016.

Tenants who comply with the terms of the scheme will therefore be paying the same rent in the tenant reward year as they were paying in 2016 or when they first entered their current property—whichever is the later.

The tenant reward is not paid out for nothing—it **is for the tenant to take responsibility** for ensuring rent is correctly paid on time and that repayment arrangements for other outstanding arrears are maintained.

**“ To qualify ... you must meet the qualifying criteria by the 1st of March 2019 ”**

If you are in any doubt about your account then contact a member of staff for the up-to-date position.

The easiest way to ensure you qualify is to set up a direct debit or standing order for pay-

ment of your rent and any outstanding re-chargeable arrears. That way you will be sure that the correct amount is paid at the correct time.

You will not qualify unless you pay your rent with your rent card or by direct bank transfer. Those who pay by cash or cheque at the Association's offices will not be eligible.

However, remember to ensure that you have enough money in your bank account to meet your rent payment—if your bank rejects the standing order or direct debit request you will lose your reward!

For full details of the qualifying criteria contact a member of staff at the Association's offices on 0141-950-9052 or email [housing@yokerha.org.uk](mailto:housing@yokerha.org.uk).

A full copy of our Tenant Reward Scheme Policy is now available online at [www.yokerha.org.uk](http://www.yokerha.org.uk).

## Smoke Alarms

All Association properties now have smoke alarms that are wired directly to the mains electricity supply, they do however have a battery back up in the event of a mains failure. These batteries can either be a normal 9v battery or a special rechargeable type. When the battery requires replacing the alarm will make a beeping sound. When this happens please replace the battery as soon as possible.

It is the responsibility of the tenant to replace the battery and you should check which type of battery is nec-



essary for your type of smoke alarm.

Please note that if an electrician has to call to your property because a new battery is required and you are unable to carry this out by yourself, the cost will be recharged to you in full.

## Magnetic Fobs for Door Entry Doors

Should you require a replacement key fob these can be purchased from the Association at a cost of £15.00 per replacement fob. Please check availability by contacting the Association in advance.

## Gas Servicing—A Free Essential Service to Tenants

The Association's annual gas servicing is carried out over the year on a rolling programme, ensuring that each service is carried out by its anniversary date.

**The Association gives 28 days notice of the anniversary date. Please contact us immediately on receipt of your letter as the service can be booked well in advance.**

Also, if you know you may be going away on holiday etc. at the time it's due, please contact us well in advance to arrange to have this carried out before you go.

If there is no response from our initial letter a reminder letter is sent 7 days later. Should there still be no response after a further 7 days a letter will be sent out with an arranged appointment. If there is no access and still no response the Association will have no choice but to force access on an arranged date with all costs being recharged to the tenant.

This is an important service the Association is required to carry out under Gas Regulations. Access must be gained prior to the anniversary date ensuring the con-

tinued safety of tenants and surrounding residents. Access not given is a breach of your tenancy terms and forced access will be carried out as a last resort.





## Rent increase - Consultation 2019 / 2020

During early 2019 the Association's Management Committee will be making decisions regarding the level of rent increase that should be applied from 1 April 2019.

When considering its decision, the Management Committee considers the affordability of current rent levels, how our rents compare to those of other landlords and the financial viability of the Association.

As part of the review process the Management Committee also takes into account the views of tenants. In order to collect feedback and opinions from tenants the Association consulted with 610 tenants during December 2018. As part of the consultation, tenants were asked to confirm whether or not they considered their current rent charge to be affordable. We also asked their opinion regarding the level of rent increase that should be applied from 1 April 2019.



Of the 610 surveys issued, the Association has received responses from 180 tenants to date—representing a response rate of 29.5%. The results of the tenant consultation are shown below:

Tenants views regarding their current rent level			What rent increase should be applied next year?		
Very affordable	53	29.4%	No rent increase	58	32.2%
Fairly affordable	87	48.3%	1.0%	74	41.1%
Neither affordable nor unaffordable	29	16.2%	2.0%	21	11.7%
Fairly unaffordable	4	2.2%	3.0%	14	7.8%
Very unaffordable	4	2.2%	3.3% (RPI)	8	4.4%
Did not reply	3	1.7%	4.0%	2	1.1%
			4.3% (RPI+1%)	0	0.0%
			5.0%	2	1.1%
			Did not reply	1	0.6%

**Comment:** 77.8% (that's almost four out of every five) of tenants who responded considered their rent level to be affordable. Only 4.4% (that's less than one in every twenty) considered their rent to be unaffordable.

In terms of what rent increase should be applied next year, the majority were in favour of some form of rent increase—though most of those thought it should be restricted to 1.0%. A substantial minority of tenants (32.2%) felt that no increase should be applied.

There is still time to give your views—if you haven't already done so, please complete your consultation survey form and return it to the office.

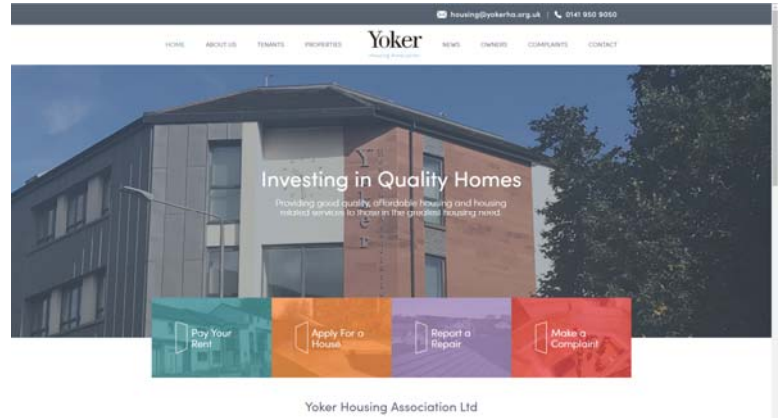
## Our Website Launched—[www.yokerha.org.uk](http://www.yokerha.org.uk)

Following a consultation exercise carried out last year, the Association's Management Committee agreed to commission a new website. Thanks to input from all the guys at "Mucky Puddle" and much effort on the part of the staff of the Association, the website finally went live at the end of November 2018.

We intend to use the website as a key tool in keeping tenants, owners and others with an interest in our services informed about what we are doing. Regular updates will be provided to ensure that all the information remains relevant and useful.

Please feel free to browse the site and assess for yourself what additional information might be useful to you and others like you.

Full contact details are available on the website at [www.yokerha.org.uk](http://www.yokerha.org.uk).



## Housing Policy Reviews 2019

Tenants have a right to be consulted on any proposals that affect them significantly. The Association both welcomes and encourages the constructive views of tenants and other service users.

During 2019, we will be looking to review the following policies.

- Abandonment Policy
- Anti-social Behaviour & Neighbour Nuisance Policy
- Assignment Policy
- Housing Application Suspension & Cancellation Policy
- Joint Tenancy Policy
- Letting Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Resident Handbook
- Sub-letting Policy
- Succession Policy
- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Tenant Reward Scheme Policy

A copy of any of these policies can be obtained upon request by calling a member of the housing services team on 0141-950-9052. These policies can also now be downloaded from our website at [www.yokerha.org.uk](http://www.yokerha.org.uk).

Having reviewed a policy or policies, if you wish to discuss further or provide any feedback or suggestions you can do so by telephoning a member of the housing services team on 0141-950-9052 or by e-mailing your comments to [housing@yokerha.org.uk](mailto:housing@yokerha.org.uk).

Alternatively, if you wish to discuss any of these policies in person with a member of staff, please contact the Association to arrange a suitable appointment.

## Local Access to Money Advice Services



Drumchapel Money Advice Centre (DMAC) is an independent money advice service who can provide assistance to tenants of the Association.

DMAC holds a surgery for tenants at the Association's office on a Thursday afternoon. The service is free of charge to those attending and will be tailored to tenant's specific needs. DMAC can assist tenants with the following issues:

- Rent Arrears
- Council Tax Arrears
- Welfare Benefit Entitlements
- Housing & Council Tax Benefit
- Appeals against benefit decisions
- Working and Family Tax Credits
- Debt counseling
- Benefit overpayments
- Representation at benefit tribunals

To arrange an appointment with an advisor please contact DMAC on

0141 944 0507 or alternatively, a member of our housing services team on 0141 950 9052 to arrange an appointment on your behalf.

## The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014



It has been over four years since the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 was passed by the Scottish Parliament. In addition to abolishing the Right to Buy in Scotland on 31 July 2016 the Act proposes to introduce significant changes in many areas of housing management which will be implemented during May 2019 and November 2019.

The Act will have an impact on the following areas:

### Allocations (May 2019)

Changes will be introduced to the reasonable preference categories used for determining the needs of housing applicants; and changes will be made to the reasons as to why an applicant can be suspended from receiving an offer of housing;

### Tenancy Agreement (November 2019)

**Assignment:** - If a tenant wants to assign their tenancy to another person, the Act requires that both the tenant and the person that they wish to assign the tenancy to should have been living in the home as their only or main residence for a minimum of twelve months prior to submitting the application to assign.

**Joint Tenancy:** - If a tenant wants to create a joint tenancy with another person, the Act requires that both the tenant and the prospective joint tenant should have been living in the home as their only or main residence for a minimum of twelve months.

**Sub-letting:** - Before a tenant can apply to their landlord for permission to sub-let their home, the tenant will have to have been living at the property as their only or main home for twelve months prior to making the application.

**Succession:** - There will be a twelve month qualifying period for co-habiting partners, family members and carers to succeed a tenancy. This means that the person applying for succession will have to have lived in the property as their only or main residence for twelve months immediately before the tenant's death.

In all cases of assignment, joint tenancies and succession, the twelve month qualifying period starts at the point where the landlord has been informed in writing by the tenant that the individual is living in the property as their only or main home.

If you have any questions regarding the introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Act please contact a member of the housing services team on 0141-950-9052.

## Emergency Contact Numbers

The following telephone numbers are provided in the event of an emergency while the Association's office is closed. Please use these telephone numbers for emergencies only—non emergency call-outs will be recharged to tenants ...

<p><b>Gas Central Heating / Plumbing</b> HiFlow Heating &amp; Plumbing (0141) 944 6060</p> <p><b>Joiner / General Builder</b> MCK Joiners &amp; Builders Ltd 07947 276 328</p> <p><b>Electrician</b> Clyde Electrical Solutions Ltd 07711 167 955</p> <p><b>Close Door (No Entry / Exit Only)</b> Clyde Electrical Solutions Ltd 07711 167 955</p> <p><b>Gas Leaks</b> Scottish Gas 0800 111 999</p>	<p><b>Loss of Power</b> Scottish Power 0800 920 9290</p> <p><b>Stair &amp; Backcourt Lighting</b> Glasgow City Council 0800 595 595</p> <p><b>Loss of Water</b> Scottish Water 0800 731 0840</p> <p><b>Police</b> Police Scotland 101 for emergencies dial 999</p>
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## Equality & Diversity

The Association recently reviewed its approach and policy on equality and diversity with the two main aims of:

- ensuring that no person, group of persons or organisation who deal with the Association in any way or who requires a service, assistance or advice from the Association, is employed by or served in any capacity by the Association, is treated less favourably than any other person, group of persons or organisation; and
- to promote the policy so that anyone dealing with the Association in any capacity is made aware that the Association has a policy and that there is a zero tolerance of any act which in any way contravenes the policy or its principles.

We will seek to promote and to achieve equality of treatment and opportunity for all groups in society without discrimination or prejudice on any grounds. The Equality Act introduced the term "protected characteristics" to describe groups against whom any sort of discrimination is unlawful. Section 4 of the Act specifies nine protected characteristics:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Age                            | 6. Religion or belief                       |
| 2. Disability                     | 7. Gender (referred to as "sex" in the Act) |
| 3. Marriage and civil partnership | 8. Gender reassignment                      |
| 4. Pregnancy and maternity        | 9. Sexual orientation                       |
| 5. Race                           |   |

In addition, the Act recognises that unlawful discrimination can occur because of a combination of protected characteristics and so people will be able to make a claim because for example they may be both female and disabled or black and gay.

A full copy of the Association's policy on Equality & Diversity is available on line at [www.yokerha.org.uk](http://www.yokerha.org.uk). Alternatively, copies are freely available from the Association's offices—please call 0141-950-9052 or call in for further details.

