



Yoker Housing News

(also available online at www.yokerha.org.uk)

Winter 2019

23 December 2019

Seasons Greetings from the Association

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Office Closure

The Association's offices will close for the Christmas and New Year holidays on Tuesday the 24th of December 2019 at 1:00pm.

The offices will re-open on Monday the 6th of January 2020 at 9:00am.

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

Development News

Yoker Primary School Site to provide twenty-eight new affordable homes for rent

The Association submitted a planning application on 21 November 2019 to develop twenty-eight houses on the site of the former Yoker Primary School at Craggans Drive.



The development viewed from Dyke Road.

The proposals include a mix of highly insulated terraced and semi-detached houses, bungalows and cottage flats to accommodate varying housing needs.

Three wheelchair adaptable cottage flats are included in the plans.

All floorplans have been designed to fully comply with the "Housing for Varying Needs" and the current "Glasgow Standard" space requirements.

The full planning application can be viewed online at www.glasgow.gov.uk/onlineplanning

(Continued on page 2)

Development News

(Continued from page 1)

Blawarthill Hospital Site Development

Our contractor Community Workforce Partnership is currently on site with the conversion of the Category "C" listed building to four flats. Many of the old features will be retained on the external envelope - traditional sliding sash and case windows, cast iron gutters and downpipes, chimneys. Inside, the building will be completely renewed and formed as a timber kit.

An aerial view of the Blawarthill Hospital Site from Holehouse Drive



We are currently awaiting Stage 2 Building Warrant approval from Glasgow City Council before we can progress with the new build houses.

The new build houses will be built as energy efficient highly insulated "Passive Houses" using local labour under the employability model. This model will assist the trainees on the project to move from welfare to work - providing them with a waged training placement and certified qualifications through which they are able to develop the skills, confidence and work record to enable them to progress in the mainstream labour market. The houses will be constructed using modular panels built off site.

The construction period is likely to be around 18 months and over the full project period we aim to recruit up to 40 trainees to the programme. If any local young people aged 17 to 24 are interested in participating in the project, please contact the Association on 0141 950 9051 in the first instance.

Condensation In Homes

The Scottish Government has produced information that explains how condensation forms and ways in which you can keep it to a minimum. This reduces the risk of dampness and mould growth.

You can view the information online at the Scottish Government's website at:

www2.gov.scot/Publications/2005/05/10103020/30224



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 normally open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 12.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

Over the festive period the foodbank will be open on Tuesday the 24th, Friday the 27th and Tuesday the 31st of December and Friday the 3rd of January.

Maintenance Performance Feedback

The Association continually monitors the maintenance service provided to residents by both its staff and its contractors.

This is carried out by way of a performance feedback questionnaire randomly selected and issued monthly.

We would be grateful if time could be taken to complete these questionnaires noting any comments you may have and returning them to the office by the date stated.

Thank you.

Development Policy Reviews 2020

During the course of 2020 the following policies will be reviewed by the Association.

- Contractor Insolvency Policy
- Development Contract Control Policy
- Development Policy
- Policy to comply with CDM Regulations

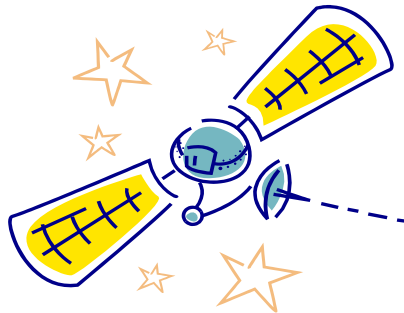
A copy of these policies can be obtained upon request by calling a member of the property services team on 0141-950-9051. These policies can also now be downloaded from our website at www.yokerha.org.uk.

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.

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.

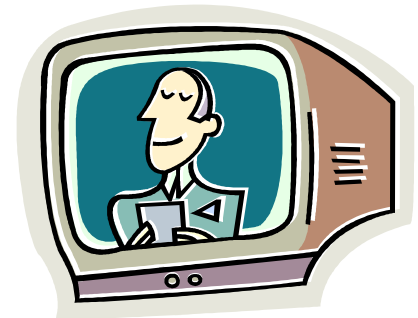
As you may be aware it is the Association's policy to disallow the siting of individual satellite dishes on its buildings. These will be removed and the resident recharged the cost of removal. However there is a communal



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

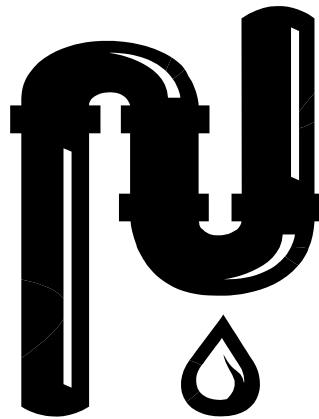


Avoid Burst Pipes this Winter

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 tenant's 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 0845-270-1558 or alternatively visit their website at www.glasgow.gov.uk for further information.

Tenants are advised to report mice or rats directly to Glasgow City Council's Public Health Department on 0141-287-1059 (option 4) or at www.glasgow.gov.uk/pestcontrol 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

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

Request a printed form by email 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.

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

2020 Tenant Reward Scheme

Over the course of the past nine years since introducing the scheme in 2011, the Association has rewarded tenants with over £370,000 in tenant reward payments.

A total of £32,560.92 was paid out in rent rebates for tenant reward year 2019. Reward payments were made to a total of 188 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 £173.20.

To qualify for tenant reward year 2020 you must meet the qualifying criteria by the 1st of March 2020.

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 2020 and your annual rent at the 31st

of March 2017.

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 2017 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 2020 "

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.

A full copy of our Tenant Reward Scheme Policy is now available online at 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 ser-

vice the Association is required to carry out under Gas Regulations. Access must be gained prior to the anniversary date ensuring the continued 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 2020 / 2021

During early 2020 the Association's Management Committee will be making decisions regarding the level of rent increase that should be applied from 1 April 2020.

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 607 tenants during December 2019. 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 2020.



Of the 607 surveys issued, the Association has received responses from 119 tenants to date—representing a response rate of 19.6%. 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	43	36.1%	No rent increase	31	26.1%
Fairly affordable	62	52.1%	1.0%	50	42.0%
Neither affordable nor unaffordable	9	7.6%	2.0%	12	10.1%
Fairly unaffordable	3	2.5%	2.1% (RPI)	13	10.9%
Very unaffordable	0	0.0%	3.0%	8	6.7%
No response given	2	1.7%	3.1% (RPI + 1%)	1	0.8%
			4.0%	1	0.8%
			5.0%	0	0.0%
			No response given	3	2.5%

Comment: 88.2% (that's almost nine out of every ten) of tenants who responded considered their rent level to be affordable. Only 2.5% (that's one in every forty) considered their rent to be unaffordable.

In terms of what rent increase should be applied next year, 71.4% were in favour of some form of rent increase—although most of those thought it should be restricted to 1.0%. A minority of tenants (26.1%) 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.

Keep Your Rent Account Up-To-Date - We Are Here To Help



Under the terms of your tenancy agreement, you are required to ensure that your rent is paid monthly, in advance, on or before the first of each month.

If you receive Housing Benefit paid directly to the Association, it is still your responsibility to ensure that you manage the rent account in accordance with your tenancy agreement. You can request a statement of your rent account at any time.

We do appreciate that people can experience difficulty in meeting their financial commitments and that you may get into rent arrears as a result of a change in circumstances, such as unemployment or less income. However, the implications of not paying rent have a direct impact on the Association's financial ability to maintain properties and provide services to residents. It is therefore important that you act quickly if you are getting into difficulty—we are here to help.

If you require money or welfare advice then we would encourage you to seek assistance as soon as possible. You should contact Housing Services on 0141-950-9052 to discuss your circumstances and arrange a reasonable repayment plan. You can also get independent money / welfare advice and assistance from Drumchapel Money Advice Centre on 0141-944-0507 (admin@d-mac.org.uk).

Housing Policy Reviews 2020

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 2020, we will be looking to review the following policies.

- Rent Setting Policy
- Lodger Policy
- Decoration Allowance Policy
- Freedom of Information 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.

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.

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

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 tenants' 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

 Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

It has been over five 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 introduced significant changes in many areas of housing management which were implemented during May 2019 and November 2019.

The Act has impacted on the following areas:

Allocations (from May 2019)

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

Tenancy Agreement (from 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 Association's automated telephone service can be used to access emergency contractors when the office is closed. Please dial (0141) 950 9050 and follow the instructions to access an emergency contractor.

This service is for emergencies only—non emergency call-outs will be recharged to tenants ...

If you wish to contact an emergency contractor directly, please use the following numbers:

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

Thank you to all those tenants of the Association who have already returned their **tenant satisfaction survey form** to assess satisfaction with the service we provide. We kept the form as simple as possible so it should not take more than a few minutes to complete.

If you have not already done so, **please return** your completed form to the Association as soon as possible to enable us to assess how we are doing and where we can make improvements. We need a high level of returns this year to ensure that we have a fair representation of your views.

Thank you for your help.

As part of our duties under the Equality Act, the Association is required to monitor and collect data on equality and diversity. All tenants were issued with an equality and diversity survey form earlier this month. Thank you to all those who have already completed and returned their form to us.

If you have not yet returned your completed Equality and Diversity Survey Form then please do so as soon as possible. If you do not wish to answer a specific question or questions then the option to choose not to answer is available. All returns are confidential and no personally identifiable information is recorded on your form.

Thank you for your help.

