December 2023

Winter Newsletter





From everyone at Yoker Housing Association! We wish you all the very best for 2024!



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Blawarthill Hospital Development Update





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Be a responsible dog owner

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Tenant Participation Strategy

During 2024 the Association will be reviewing its Tenant Participation Strategy. The Strategy promotes effective communication and engagement with tenants, making it an important tool in allowing tenants to influence and shape service delivery.

To ensure the Strategy remains effective, the Association would like to hear your thoughts on how it can be improved. Specifically, the Association would like your views on:

- * How easy it is to participate in, and influence, decision making;
- * How you would like the Association to communicate and engage with you;
- * The barriers facing tenants with regards to participation; and
- * The aspects of the Strategy that need to be changed or developed.

The Association always welcomes individual feedback from tenants. However, should you wish to participate in a tenant / staff group where you and other tenants can express your views collectively, please contact Housing Services on 0141 950 9052 to register an interest. The Association looks forward to hearing from you.



What is Tenant Scrutiny?





Tenant Participation Strategy

Tenant Groups

The Association has a duty to consult with tenants on proposed changes to policy and services that directly affect their tenancy. The Association consults a number of ways including individual surveys, questionnaires, newsletters and through our website.

The Association is always keen to encourage different forms of participation and is happy to consult with tenants in a group setting. If you wish to register an interest in forming a tenant group, please contact Housing Services on 0141 950 9052 for more information.



Open Management Committee Meeting

The Association will be hosting an open Management Committee meeting on **Thursday the 25th of January 2024.** The open meeting will allow tenants that are interested in joining to gain a better understanding of the role and duties of the Management Committee.

If you would like to register your interest in attending the open Management Committee meeting, please contact Kevin Freeman on 0141 950 9052 or by email at housing@yokerha.org.uk





New Development Update

Blawarthill Hospital Site

The Association and its construction partner CWP, with funding support from Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government, completed the refurbishment of the listed Blawarthill Hospital building during 2021.

The new build development is currently under construction and, CWP is making great progress. Subject to no further delay, the contractor is aiming to have the properties completed and hopefully ready for handover during late February 2024.

The properties will be a mixture of bungalows and cottage flats (10 x 1 bedroom and 4 x 2 bedroom). These properties will be highly energy efficient with the aim of achieving the "Passivhaus" standard. Their high levels of insulation, good indoor air quality and low carbon footprint will help the Association comply with regulatory requirements and assist with Scotland's climate change targets.

Take a look around . . .





Rent Consultation 2024 / 2025

During early 2024, the Management Committee will be making decisions regarding the level of rent increase that should be applied from 1 April 2024. When considering its decision, the Management Committee considers the affordability of current rent levels, how our rents compare to those charged by 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. The Association consulted with 623 tenants during November and December. As part of the consultation process, tenants were asked to confirm whether they consider their current rent charge to be affordable and to also provide feedback regarding the level of rent increase that they think should be applied from 1 April 2024.

Of the 623 surveys issued, the Association received responses from 103 tenants which represents a response rate of 16.5%. The results of the tenant consultation are shown below:

How affordable do you consider your current rent?				
	Responses	%		
Very affordable	23	22.3		
Fairly affordable	58	56.3		
Neither affordable nor unaffordable	14	13.6		
Fairly unaffordable	5	4.9		
Very unaffordable	3	2.9		
Total	103	100		

What rent increase should be applied next year?				
	Responses	%		
Increase of 4.6% (CPI)	74	71.8		
Increase of 5.0%	17	16.5		
Increase of 6.1% (RPI)	4	3.9		
Question not answered	8	7.8		
Total	103	100		



Of the 100 tenants who responded, 78.6% considered their rent level to be either very or fairly affordable. In terms of what rent increase should be applied next year, 71.8% of respondents agreed with a rent increase of 4.6%. This was followed by 16.5% of respondents who agreed with a rent increase of 5.0%.

The Association wishes to encourage as many tenants as possible to provide their views. This can be done by completing the questionnaire and returning it to the Association's office, or online at: https://uk.surveymonkey.com/r/G2TZKJP



Tenant Reward Scheme

Since 2011, the Association has rewarded tenants with over £450,000 through our **Tenant Reward Scheme**.

This year, the average payment to tenants was £299.



Remember ...

- * Any rechargeable repairs **must** be paid in full by the end of the month following issue by the Association, or an agreed repayment plan must be in place and being adhered to.
- * You need to have enough money in your bank account. If your bank rejects your payment, **you may** lose your reward!
- * The tenant reward scheme qualifying period for 2024 will run from 1 March 2024 to 1 December 2024.
- Your reward payment will be based on the difference between your annual rent on 31 March 2024 and your annual rent on 31 March 2021 (or your tenancy start date if you signed up after 31 March 2021).



You can request further details on the Tenant Reward Scheme by:

- Contacting a member of staff on 0141 950 9052
- Emailing the Association at housing@yokerha.org.uk
- Viewing the policy online at www.yokerha.org.uk



Paying Your Rent

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

If you are in receipt of Welfare Benefits, and they are paid directly to the Association, it remains your responsibility to manage your rent account in accordance with the terms of your tenancy.

The implications of not paying rent has a direct impact on the Association's ability to maintain properties and provide services to residents.

The Association appreciates that tenants circumstances may change and people can experience difficulties in meeting their financial commitments which may result in rent arrears. Should this be you, please seek welfare / money advice and contact the Association at the earliest opportunity to agree an affordable repayment arrangement.

You can request a statement of your rent account at any time by contacting Housing Services on 0141 950 9052.

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If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit you can arrange for your housing costs to be paid directly to the Association.

By doing this, the Association can monitor your payments and ensure discrepancies are rectified as quickly as possible.

Paying Your Rent

You can pay your rent in the following ways:

ALLPAY

DIRECT

Simply take your rent card to any shop / outlet which displays the Allpay logo, along with your payment method (i.e. card or cash) and hand them to the cashier. Once payment has been made you will receive a receipt. Please retain this receipt for your own records and for proof of payment. If you do not have an Allpay rent card, or if you require a replacement, please contact Housing Services who will be more than happy for a card to be ordered and delivered to either your home address or to the Association's office.

DIRECT DEBIT

The easiest way to pay your rent is by setting up a direct debit. All you need is a U.K. current account or building society account that accepts direct debits. You can set up a direct debit based on your preferred payment schedule (e.g. weekly, fortnightly, monthly). This can now be set up over the telephone and only requires 7 days notice. If you would like to set up a direct debit, or make a change to your current arrangement, please contact Housing Services who we will be happy to assist you.

INTERNET BANKING

If you have access to internet banking, or have your banking app on your phone (you can download this from your device's App Store) you can pay via bank transfer. This service is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Just remember to use your reference number in order for the Association to correctly identify your payment.

You can also pay by **Standing Order.** You should remember to use your reference number to allow the Association to correctly identify your payment. Please note that the Association does not have control over the maintenance of standing orders.

CASH / CHEQUE

If you must, you may pay by cash or cheque at the office during working hours.

Please make any cheques payable to 'Yoker Housing Association Limited' and write your name, address and reference number on the back. Cheques take time to process, so please ensure you allow enough time for them to be credited on / before the 1st of the month. Paying by cash / cheque at any time during the year will disqualify you from the tenant reward scheme.





Maintenance Information

Condensation, Mould and Damp

Mould and Damp can present itself in any property when the moisture levels are high. Mould develops in damp and poorly ventilated areas and reproduces by creating spores. You can minimise the risk of mould by ventilating your property.

Activities such as cooking, showering, washing and drying clothes creates extra moisture meaning it is extremely important that you ventilate your home.

You can reduce condensation and mould by:

- Moving furniture away from walls to allow air circulation.
- Covering pans when cooking.
- Using extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms.
- Closing internal doors when cooking or showering.
- Drying clothes outdoors or by using a ventilated tumble dryer.
- Opening your windows for 5 to 10 minutes when you get up in the morning.
- Heating your home on a low temperature (18 degrees is the Government's recommendation) in all rooms.

If you still have issues with condensation and mould, please contact the Association's Maintenance Department on 0141 950 9051.

DAMPNESS!

If you notice any damp patches in your property, please report these to the Association as soon as possible.

Do not paint over the damp patch even if you think it has dried out. Painting over the patches may prevent us from being able to trace and rectify the problem.

Don't get frozen out this winter ...



Avoid burst pipes this winter.

Keep your central heating on **at all times** during the cold weather (the recommendation from the Government is to set your thermostat to eighteen degrees Celsius). This will prevent considerable damage to your home.

Are you going away over winter? If switching off your central heating, turn your radiator valves to the frost setting to prevent your pipes from freezing.



Maintenance Information

Rechargeable Repairs

The following services / repairs are rechargeable to tenants:

- The tenant has requested that the work be carried out and the Association is not responsible for the cost (e.g. a tenant requests locks to be changed or for the installation of electrical / white goods).
- Damage has occurred as a result of neglect / abuse by the tenant, occupier or visitors to the tenant's home.
- Emergency services have forced entry.
- The repair is considered the tenants responsibility under the terms of their tenancy (e.g. replacement of lightbulbs / thermostat batteries).
- The tenant has locked themselves out and forced entry is required.

Electrical Testing

What is an EICR?

An Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is carried out to check the safety of electrical fixtures and fittings such as light switches, sockets, visible wiring and light fittings.

This is a mandatory safety check that is **legally required to be** carried out by a qualified electrician—usually every 5 years. When your home is due an electrical test, we will write to you.

How to Prepare

The electrician will need access to the electrical fuse box as well as sockets, light switches and light pendants. You can reduce the time the electrician spends in the home by making sure they can access these fittings by moving household items or furniture out of the way.

BIN IT! DON'T FLUSH IT!

<u>DO NOT</u> flush nappies, wipes, sanitary towels, gum, condoms, wrapping paper, unpaid bills, junk mail or gold fish down your toilet!

YOU WILL BE RECHARGED FOR DAMAGE TO YOUR DRAINS IF YOU DO

Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

All properties have now been fitted with smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms in accordance with Scottish Government legislation.

If these are found to be disconnected, this will be considered an essential repair and will be refitted. You must not remove any safety alarms — if you do, the costs associated with replacing these will be recharged to you.



Maintenance Information

Gas Servicing is both your and the Association's responsibility

Gas servicing is an essential yearly service that the Association is **legally required** to carry out in accordance with the Gas Installation and Use Regulations.

You must provide the Association with access to carry this out before the last inspection's expiry date to ensure the continued safety of you and your neighbours.

The Association will write, giving you at least 28 days notice before the anniversary date of your last check. **You** should contact us **immediately** upon receipt of your letter to arrange a suitable appointment.

If you do not allow access, we will arrange to force access for us to undertake this work. **You will be recharged for the additional costs** regardless of whether or not we force access on the day.

Working together will ensure the safety of all our residents, so please call to book in your gas safety check when requested to do so.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO FOLLOW IF YOU SMELL GAS

- * Turn off **all** gas appliances.
- * Turn off gas supply at meter.
- * Put out all open flames (e.g. candles, cigarettes etc.).
- **Do not** touch any electrical switches to prevent sparks / fire.
- * Open all windows and doors to let the gas out.
- * Immediately phone the Scottish Gas Network (SGN) on 0800 111 999.
- Think you have a gas leak? Never attempt to deal with this yourself. Call SGN and report it on 0800 111 999.



Maintenance Performance Feedback

Our Maintenance department is responsible for day-to-day repairs, safety checks and improvements to your home.

The Association continually monitors the maintenance service provided by issuing monthly Performance Feedback Questionnaires. We would appreciate if you would take the time to complete and return these to the office. Questionnaires can also be returned by email, or completed online via the Survey Monkey address enclosed within the questionnaire letter.



Kid's Corner





Are you a young budding writer? If so, you could feature in next years Newsletter.

Write us a poem or short story about Christmas time or about what your home / community means to you.

Send your masterpiece to us via post to Yoker Housing Association, 2310 Dumbarton Road, Yoker, Glasgow, G14 0JS or via email at housing@yokerha.org.uk by **29th January 2024**. Remember to include your name.

All entries will be entered into a prize draw for a £100 Smyths Toy Store gift voucher!



Tenant Support

Glasgow NW Foodbank

The Association acts as a referring agency for Glasgow NW Foodbank.

The Association can issue foodbank vouchers for tenants in need. To find out more information about the foodbank or to request a voucher code please contact a member of Housing Services 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 Tuesdays and Fridays from 12.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

The Foodbank will remain open as normal during the festive period.

Drumchapel Money Advice Centre (DMAC)

Are you struggling with the cost of living? Do you need help with these issues? If you do, then DMAC are here to help!

DMAC is a free and independent money advice service who provide assistance to tenants of the Association.

To arrange an appointment with an advisor please contact DMAC on 0141 944 0507. Alternatively you can contact a member of Housing Services staff you will be more than happy to arrange an appointment on your behalf.





Tenant Support



- LEAP is a **free energy advice service**, providing assistance to thousands of fuel poor and vulnerable households in Scotland.
- LEAP offer a straightforward way for households to access directly, or be referred for, high quality personalised advice related to energy efficiency and affordable warmth.

LEAP offer a wide range of services including:

- An in-depth energy advice session during a home visit or over the phone.
- An in-depth review of finances including: benefit checks, debt advice & support, benefit claim support.
- Replacement of old appliances.
- Fuel Vouchers Pre-Payment meter vouchers to the value of £150 for anyone at risk of self-disconnection.



You can contact LEAP on 0800 060 767

Or by emailing support@applyforleap.org.uk

Free Home Fire Safety Visit

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service offer free Home Safety Fire Visits to help you spot possible fire hazards, sort out a fire escape plan and provide information about smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms.



To book a free Home Fire Safety Visit you can **call** 0800 0731 999, **text** 'Fire' to 80800 or **visit** firescotland.gov.uk



Phone Glasgow North West Citizens Advice Bureau directly on:

0141 948 0204

Or visit: https://www.gnwcab.org.uk/ Glasgow North West Citizens Advice Bureau is a local, independent charity that provides free, impartial and confidential advice and information.

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) provide support on a number of different topics such as:

- Benefits
- Work place issues
- Debt and Money
- Consumer issues
- Family
- Housing
- Health
- Immigration

Estate Management

Bulk Uplift

Do you have large items that need disposed off?

Our contractor, Caledonian Maintenance Services can help. Simply leave your large items adjacent to the bin storage areas and these items will be uplifted.

REMEMBER … Don't cause any trip hazards by leaving items inside the close or leaning them against the building.

Tenants occupying main door properties should contact Glasgow City Council to arrange for the uplift of any bulk items.

Back Courts

The Association asks that residents dispose of refuse by using the bins provided within the backcourt area. Failure to properly dispose of waste attracts vermin such as rats, foxes and birds which in turn spread the rubbish over backcourt areas.

Tenants are advised to report an infestation of vermin to Glasgow City Council on 0141 287 1059 (Council Environmental Protection Emergency Line) or 0141 287 9700 (Environmental Control Cleansing Line).

Old Collection Day	Monday	Tuesday	Monday	Tuesday
Date:	25th Dec 2023	26th Dec 2023	1st Jan 2024	2nd Jan 2024
New Collection Day	Wednesday	Thursday	Wednesday	Thursday
Date:	27th Dec 2023	28th Dec 2023	3rd Jan 2024	4th Jan 2024

Refuse Collection Dates

Glasgow City Council's (GCC) bin collection dates are changing over the festive period.

The above dates are for our Main Door properties **only**.

Tenement / flat collection dates may also be subject to change over the festive period.

All services will return to normal in the new year.

Please remember to use the bins correctly. If the bins are contaminated the cleansing will not remove refuse from the backcourt. If the Association need to arrange for bins to be emptied, all residents in the close will be recharged their share of the cost.

Being a responsible dog owner!



Remember a pet is for life not just for Christmas

Do you want your furry friend to feature in next years Newsletter? Send us your **festive** friends to housing@yokerha.org.uk *All animals are welcome!!* Here are some of our favourite furry **festive** friends!







Policy Updates

Tenants have a right to be consulted on any proposed changes to policy that will significantly impact their tenancy.

During 2024 the Association will be reviewing the following policies and is therefore looking for feedback from tenants and other service users on how these can be improved.



A copy of any of the policies scheduled for review next year can be provided on request. These policies can also be downloaded from our website at <u>www.yokerha.org.uk</u>.

If you would like to discuss any of these policies, or wish to provide any feedback or suggestions, you can do so by contacting Housing Services on 0141 950 9052. Alternatively, you can e-mail your comments to housing@yokerha.org.uk.

Festive Fun For All

R Ε Т Ε S 0 L Т P 0 Ε Ε Ε W D Ε Ν I L D R R Ε С R Ε Α Т S B W Η Т D Ε E F Ε S S 1 D ν Η D W 0 G X U Ν F Y Τ Ν L V Т Α Ν Α Ε U I S R V L Α Μ Ν E X Ν Ν I U Ο Υ Ε Ν B Ν L Ε Т Т Т С 0 P Τ 0 0 L Ρ Η R U D Т Ε Α S Ν Μ С U 1 0 Ρ Ο U 11 R С V G Ν S Ν 0 W Ρ R К Ν Α X L Ν Ν Ε Ρ S 0 Q К Ν К Μ L W Α G 1 D С L Ε Α Α 1 Ε 0 Ε Ε Α К W U Т В С R L Y С S S L С L 0 G K F S U 0 D 0 Μ Μ Ν Ν S 0 Α B U I Ν 0 ρ S Τ S Α W R B G Ε R B R Ε Μ Ν G Α D С S

The missing word _

Mary Berry's stained glass window cookies! Recipe taken from BBC

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C (Fan) / 160°C (Gas Mark 4).

Line two baking sheets with baking paper.

Place the butter, flour and sugar in a food processor and pulse until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add the vanilla and beaten egg and pulse until it forms a smooth dough. Using a rolling pin, roll out on a lightly floured work surface until the dough is about 5mm / ¼ inch thick. Use your large cutter to cut out the shapes (then a small cutter to remove the middle (for the glass to sit)). Re-roll any scraps of dough to make more biscuits!

Arrange on the prepared baking sheets and chill in the fridge for 10 minutes.

Separate the sweets into colours and put them in plastic bags (one colour in each bag). Crush using a rolling pin until broken into fine grains. Sprinkle these grains in the middle of each biscuit in a generous layer that covers the hole (mix the colours to make a rainbow if you want).

Bake for about 15-18 minutes or until the biscuit is a pale golden brown and the sweets have melted. Leave to stand on the trays for about 5 minutes, or until firm enough to move. Carefully transfer to a cooling rack and leave to cool and firm up.



Noel Mistletoe

Stocking

Winter

Baubles

Turkey Nativity

Angel

Star

Snowman

Presents Elf

Rudolph

Wreath

Snow

Tinsel Gingerbread

Santa Claus Mulled Wine

Reindeer

Ingredients

175g / 6oz chilled butter, cubed

1 egg, beaten

225g / 8oz **plain flour**, plus extra for dusting

75g / 2 ¾ oz caster sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

about 20 boiled **sweets** (mixture of colours)



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:

Gas & Central Heating HiFlow Heating & Plumbing 0141 944 6060 Joiner and Electrician Property One 0141 611 1922

Other Useful Contact Numbers

Stair & Backcourt

Close Door (No Entry/Exit Only) Property One 0141 611 1922 Gas Leaks Scottish Gas 0800 111 999 SHOUT (Mental health support) Text 'SHOUT' to 85258

Lighting Glasgow City Council 0800 595 595 Loss of Water Scottish Water

0800 731 0840

SAMARITANS (24hr)

(From your mobile) 116 123 GCC Noise Team

Operate from 5p.m. to 3a.m. 0141 287 6688

Loss of Power

Scottish Power 0800 092 9290

Drumchapel Money Advice Centre 0141 944 0507

Office Hours during the Festive Period

The Association's office will close on Friday the 22nd of December 2023 at 4.00 p.m. and re-open on Wednesday the 3rd of January 2024 at 9.00 a.m.