



Office Based Working Returns!

Like many businesses across Scotland we have been following the Scottish Government's guidelines on office closures as a way of helping control the spread of the Virus and keeping our staff and visitors safe.

Since the easing of almost all restrictions was announced in August we have been preparing for a return to Office Based Working for our staff in a way that minimises risk but also allows our staff to have a presence in the local area.

From **Monday 6 September 2021**

we increased the number of staff working from the office. Staff will be working a mix of home and office based working and we plan to trial this for a six month period.

However, we are only able to offer an "in-person" pre-arranged appointment service from this date. We would still ask that you continue to contact staff by telephone, email or by your smart phone in the first instance as our appointments are limited, and should only be arranged if a face to face appointment is essential.

The office will remain closed to passing visitors so please only attend

if you have an appointment. We also ask that anyone with an appointment wears a face covering and registers their contact details with us.

Should you be experiencing corona virus symptoms including a new or continuous cough, or high temperature or if you are awaiting results of a PCR test having been identified as a close contact of someone with the virus, then please do not visit the office.

We would welcome your feedback on this and your views on how we can further improve our services to you during these difficult times.

Problems paying your rent?

There may be times when you have difficulty paying your rent due to illness, unemployment, changes in family circumstances etc.

As soon as you start to get into difficulties, you should contact your Housing Officer who can make a realistic arrangement with you to pay your rent and any arrears and can also refer you to our Welfare Rights Service if required.

If you are on a low income or in receipt of any kind of benefit you may qualify for help with paying your rent through Housing Benefit from East Dunbartonshire Council; or through Universal Credit from the DWP.

Your Housing Officer can give you information and advice on all of this.

Get help at an early stage and don't let arrears get out of control

If you are in genuine difficulty, we will try to help you as much as we can.

The Citizens Advice Bureau also offer independent advice on managing debt and can help you work out a payment plan to negotiate with the people you owe money to, with a view to reducing the amount you need to pay each week or month.



KEEPING HILLHEAD TIDY

We are out and about a lot more now carrying out estate management inspections again.

We are checking garden areas, at the side and behind our properties. Unfortunately, we tend to notice that some tenancies will have household goods and assorted debris in these areas. This can be upsetting to neighbours having to look at it all the time and not only could it attract vermin but it could potentially be a fire hazard, as well as a danger to young children.



The Association takes this issue very seriously and we will always contact these tenants to make sure that an uplift has been requested or arrangements have been made to remove the items. It is your own responsibility to make sure that your garden area is clear and the removal of your rubbish or household goods has been arranged.

If you are unable to properly dispose of items yourself, please make sure that you arrange a Special Uplift through the Council by calling them on **0300 12345 15**. With the exception of large furniture, items should be put in bags and then left in a neat pile for uplifting.



HomeSwapper

If you've ever considered swapping your home through a mutual exchange, then we're happy to tell you the process of doing so just got a whole lot easier.

If you're already a tenant with Hillhead Housing Association you can swap your home with other housing association or council tenants.

HomeSwapper is an online mutual exchange service which lets you advertise your property and find someone to swap with and it's free to use for Hillhead tenants. You can register online directly with HomeSwapper at homeswapper.co.uk

If you have any questions about mutual exchange and swapping your home in general, please speak directly to your Housing Officer.

CHANGES TO YOUR HOUSEHOLD – KEEP US INFORMED!!!

Hillhead Housing Association previously advised tenants that The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced a number of significant changes to tenants' rights under the terms of your Tenancy Agreement. As a result of these changes, some of which are noted below, it is important that you let us know of any changes to your household. This includes letting us know about anyone who has previously moved in with you who you have not already told us about. In the future, you should tell us when anyone moves into or out of your home.

Subletting:

If you want to sublet all or part of your house to someone else, you must get the Association's

approval. You **MUST** have been the tenant for at least 12 months prior to applying.

Assignment:

If you want to assign your tenancy (pass the tenancy on to someone else), you must apply for permission, and the person you want to assign the tenancy to **MUST** have been **registered** as living at your address for at least 12 months prior to the application.

Joint Tenancy:

If you want another person to become a joint tenant with you, again you must ask permission from us, **and** the proposed joint tenant **MUST** have been registered with Hillhead Housing Association

as living at your address for at least 12 months prior to your application.

Succession:

There have been changes to the rules around when certain people can succeed to (take over) a tenancy on the death of a tenant, these changes do not apply to a spouse, civil partner or joint tenant. To make sure your rights to succession are protected, you **MUST** have told us that the person wanting to succeed to the tenancy has moved in with you **at the time they did so.**

In the case of a partner or lodger, tenants are required to complete a permission form. A number of forms have been issued by Housing Officers in recent months but have not been returned. Please ensure these forms are completed and returned to your housing officer. If you require any assistance with this please contact your housing officer.



Be Prepared for the Unexpected....Get Insured!

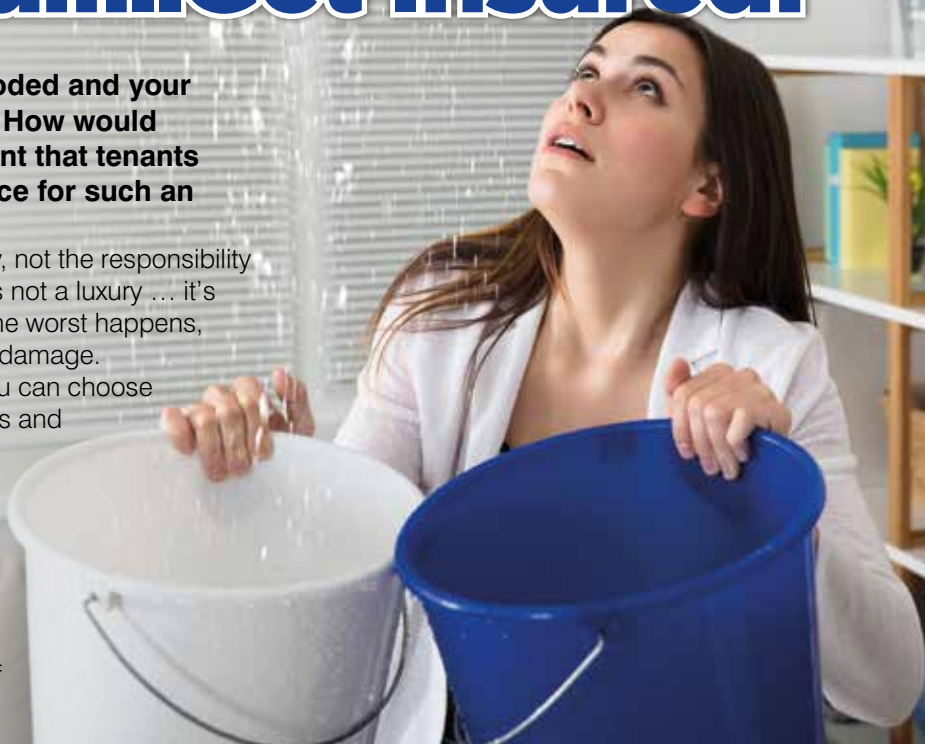
What would you do if your home was flooded and your household possessions were damaged? How would you repair or replace them? It is important that tenants have adequate contents insurance in place for such an eventuality.

Your household contents are your responsibility, not the responsibility of the housing association. Insuring your home is not a luxury ... it's a necessity. It will give you peace of mind that if the worst happens, assistance would be at hand to help sort out any damage.

While there are lots of insurance companies you can choose from, we have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks and Ageas Insurance Limited who provide specialist Tenants Contents Insurance policies.

For further information, you can ask your housing officer for an application pack or telephone the office. You can also contact Thistle Tenant Risks direct on 0345 450 7288.

Basic household insurance cover is probably not as expensive as you might think and peace of mind is priceless.



ELECTRICAL TESTING

Following a procurement exercise we have appointed a new contractor AC Gold Electrical Ltd to carry out Periodic Electrical Inspections within your home. The Scottish Housing Quality Standard states that we must carry out an inspection of the electrical installation at your home every 5 years. This is to ensure

that the electrical circuits are fitted to the current standards and complies with all current legislation.

Our new contractor has started working on this year's programme and all residents whose address is scheduled for an inspection will receive written notification. It is important that access be allowed to carry out Periodic Electrical Inspections within your home. If



you have received a letter regarding a Periodic Electrical Test but, for whatever reason you have not been able to allow access, then please contact a member of the Property Services Team to discuss this further.



Environmental Works

You will be aware that our environmental works are currently taking place, and tenants will be lettered before any works commence. Please note that not all gardens will have identical works carried out. If you have any queries or questions about the works please do not hesitate to contact our Property Service Officer Malcolm Macdonald who will discuss the works planned for your garden.

Phase 1 involves new fencing, and the contractors are currently working on Newdyke Road and Eildon Road. Kenilworth Road tenants have been lettered with their dates. Abbotsford drive and the remaining houses on Redbrae Road will be contacted shortly thereafter.

Along with a letter in advance of the works taking place, which will outline dates, you will also receive a frequently asked questions booklet and a mandate for the removal of hedges, if required.

Phase 2 is Groundworks which will include path repairs and clothes poles where/if required. The contractors



are currently working on the higher end of Meiklehill and Highfield Roads. Works will be carried out at Newdyke Road shortly thereafter. Then the remaining addresses will be lettered with dates for the works to start.

Community Garden

We are happy to report that our Community Garden has reopened and we now have a number of new volunteers helping out in the garden. If you wish to become involved with the garden and enjoy growing your own vegetables and connecting with new people then please contact our Property Services Officer Marie Savage for more information.

If you are visiting the garden at this time, please ensure that you adopt the social distancing requirements as outlined by the Scottish Government to ensure everyone's safety. We look forward to seeing you there.



FIRE SAFETY

Tips from the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service on how to stay safe in your home:

- Don't leave cooking unattended and don't cook if you're tired, under the influence of alcohol or drugs or on strong medication.
- If you smoke then please smoke outside, at an open external door or window. Always use an appropriate ashtray.
- When using a laptop, make sure it's placed on a hard surface to prevent overheating. Always turn computers and laptops off at night.
- Don't overload electrical sockets.
- Make sure all common areas and exits are kept clear of any

combustible materials and don't leave any items in escape routes, such as hallways, closes and doorways.

At night when you go to bed:

- Ensure white goods such as washing machines, dishwashers, or tumble dryers are switched off, and never use while sleeping or out of the house.
- Switch off all electrical appliances not designed to be left on overnight. Don't leave chargeable items like phones, tablets or laptops charging overnight.
- Keep handy any mobility aids and any methods of calling for help.
- Extinguish all candles and cigarettes.

- Make sure your door keys are accessible and in a safe place.
- Close all your internal doors before going to bed.

And remember to regularly test smoke alarms in the home. **TEST IT TUESDAY** is an easy way to remember this.



Be Safe in Open Water! Stop and Think, Spot the dangers

If you are thinking of being near or entering the water, have you considered the following?

- Scotland's Waters can be very cold even in the summer which can lead to Cold Water Shock, for more information visit <https://www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk/information/cold-water-shock/>
- Check for any signage or flags which could warn you of potential dangers
- Alcohol/drugs and coastal or inland waters don't mix - they can reduce coordination and impair judgement and reaction times
- The depth of the water may hide underwater ledges, hidden currents and unseen items
- Be aware of other water activities that may pose a threat to you
- If it is safe to enter the water, ensure you have a safe way out
- If you are at the coast have you considered rip currents, offshore winds and the tide?

Stay Together, Stay close

- It is better to go near the water with a friend or family member
- Float – If you are in trouble in the water, float until you feel calm...then think what to do next
- If you fall into water, fight your instinct to swim until cold water shock passes
- Lean back, extend your arms and legs
- If you need to, gently move them around to help you float
- Float until you can control your breathing
- Then call for help or swim to safety.

In an emergency

- If you see someone in trouble, do not enter the water
- Look for a throw line or life ring to help whilst you wait on the emergency services
- Call 999 or 112

Use CCTV and Video Doorbells Responsibly

You will need to fill in an alterations and improvement form if you are considering installing a CCTV system in your home, and you also need to think about data protection and privacy when installing and configuring it.

If you configure your CCTV system so it only captures images within the boundary of your property, then data protection law does not apply. But if it captures images of people outside that boundary, such as your neighbours' homes or gardens, shared spaces or a public footpath or street, then your use of the system must comply with data protection law.

We recommend you use CCTV responsibly in a way that respects the privacy of others. Think about what areas you feel you need to cover, how you can position the cameras to avoid intruding on your neighbours' property or any shared or public spaces and disable any audio recording facilities, where available.

If you feel you need to capture images beyond your property, you will then need to have clear and justifiable reasons for doing so, write them down and comply with data protection law by:

- Letting people know you are using CCTV by putting up signs saying that recording is taking place and why.
- Not capturing more footage than you need to achieve

your purpose in using the system.

- Ensuring the security of the footage you capture by holding it securely and making sure nobody else can watch it without good reason.
- Only keeping the footage for as long as you need it by deleting it regularly.
- Ensuring the CCTV system is not misused by other members of your household.
- Respecting the data protection rights of the people whose images you capture.



You do not need to register with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) or pay a fee, but you should keep records of the above, as the ICO can ask to see these. The ICO can take enforcement action against you if you do not comply with data protection law, and this can include a fine.

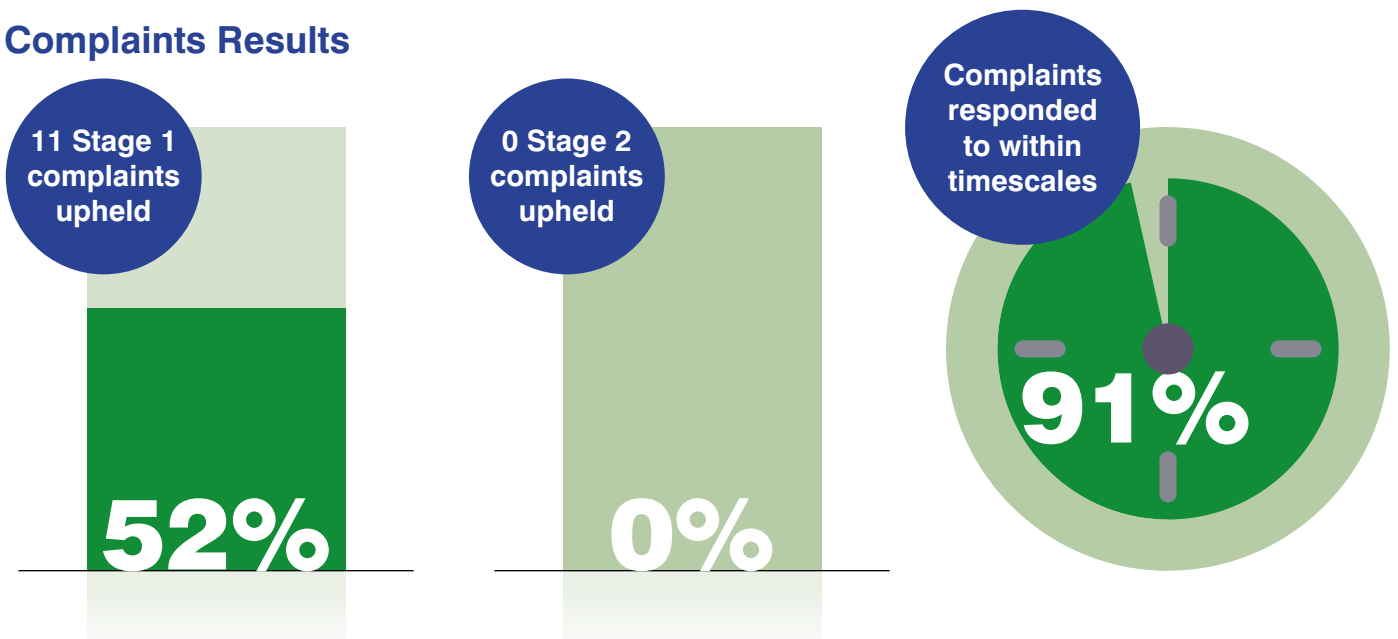
Cameras fitted to doorbells, like the popular "Ring" doorbell, are regulated in the same way as CCTV systems. The above advice must be followed if you are considering putting such a doorbell in place.

Performance

COMPLAINTS

Between 1 April and 30 June 2021, we received 21 Stage 1 complaints and 2 Stage 2 complaints. When you complain, we always aim to resolve the issue as soon as possible and within 5 working days. However some complaints are more complex and require detailed investigation, meaning they are treated as Stage 2 complaints which we aim to respond within 20 working days.

Complaints Results



Our New Strategic Plan

This month our Management Committee approved a new Vision and a refreshed set of Values of the Association.

In order to keep us on track we have a new 5- year plan with 8 key priorities.

Our vision is of:

“A great community with a strong sense of belonging”

This is a great way of demonstrating the importance we give to:

- **Serving our community.....**
- **Supporting the community’s aspirations;**
- **Fostering a sense of ownership; and**
- **Pride in the local area.....**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

To Enhance our customer services



OUTCOMES BY END OF PLAN PERIOD:

- To be performing in the top quartile of benchmarked housing services
- To enjoy a 95% average tenant satisfaction rating

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

To improve quality of life locally



OUTCOMES BY END OF PLAN PERIOD:

To complete our investment in environmental improvements and achieve high levels of customer satisfaction with the local neighbourhood and high levels of social impact value.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

To strengthen local decision-making and encourage wider community engagement

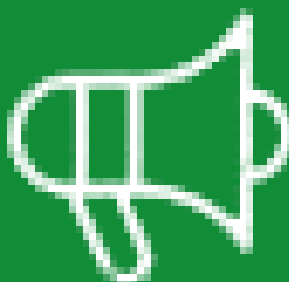


OUTCOMES BY END OF PLAN PERIOD:

To re-establish our Customer care Working Group and Service Improvement Panel with greater levels of tenant participation and involvement in the management and scrutiny of our services and continued positive level of engagement with the Scottish Housing Regulator.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4:

To encourage wider community engagement



OUTCOMES BY END OF PLAN PERIOD:

We will know that we have achieved this through more tenants and service users being happy with the services we provide and the profile of our organisation is increased across our community.

Our Values

Going the extra mile...	Thinking positively....
Showing appreciation....	Empowering others....
Not forgetting the important things....	Spending wisely....

Key Priorities

Our Management Committee has agreed on 8 key priorities to ensure that we stay focused on working towards our vision over the next 5 years. All of our activities will be aligned to delivering these specific objectives and outcomes. We will set targets that will help us measure our performance.

- To enhance our customer services.
- To improve quality of life locally.
- To strengthen local decision-making.
- To encourage wider community engagement.
- To maximise our use of digital technologies.
- To safeguard our financial position.
- To combat climate change.
- To explore opportunities for growth.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5:

To maximise our use of digital technologies

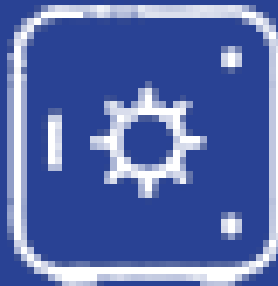


OUTCOMES BY END OF PLAN PERIOD:

- To provide online access for key services including applications, rent and repairs reporting
- To facilitate agile working for staff

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6:

To safeguard our financial position



OUTCOMES BY END OF PLAN PERIOD:

To continue to meet financial performance targets and satisfy our Lender's covenants

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7:

To combat climate change



OUTCOMES BY END OF PLAN PERIOD:

- To meet Energy Efficiency in Scottish Social Housing (ESSH2) compliance levels across 95% of our housing stock.
- To reduce our carbon footprint by 25%

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 8:

To explore opportunities for growth



OUTCOMES BY END OF PLAN PERIOD:

To increase our stock of socially rented housing by 10%

Staffing News

You might have noticed a new face in the area recently. Gary Cameron joined the Property Services Team in July. Gary's duties cover all aspects of estate management and he will take a lead role in ensuring the Hillhead area is maintained to the best standard and is a safe and healthy environment for all.

Gary's duties cover all aspects of estate management and he will take a lead role in ensuring Hillhead Housing Association's operating area is maintained to the best standard and is a safe and healthy environment for all.

Gary (right) meets our Director Stephen Macintyre at the office



Getting Involved

As highlighted on our front page, we are currently not holding "in person" meetings with tenants at our office. We are looking to see what other local venues might be available to allow us to hold meetings safely with you.

We have a number of areas we are keen to involve you in. These include:-

- A review of how we let our houses
- Setting rents for next April
- Feedback from the ongoing Tenants' Survey
- Our new 5 year plan and strategy

We are of course happy to offer virtual meetings on Zoom. If you and your neighbours would like us to set a Zoom meeting up we would be delighted to do so. It can be on any topic as well as the ones listed above – even just for a chat! We would love to hear from you! Please contact a member of staff for more details.



Dolly Parton Imagination Library



The Association has registered with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The scheme is being sponsored by the Association's repairs contractor **Rodgers & Johnston Ltd.**

R&J Ltd

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a 60 volume set of books beginning with the children's classic *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* for children aged 0-5 years old. Each month a new, carefully selected book will arrive by mail in your child's name and be delivered directly to your home. Best of all it is free. There is no cost or obligation to your family.

All children under the age of 5 and who are in Hillhead Housing Association tenancies are eligible for this scheme. A parent or guardian should contact the association and request a registration form, which should be completed and returned to our office.

Once we receive the completed registration form we will post you the first welcome book. Six to eight weeks after your registration form has been received, books will begin arriving from the Imagination Library at your home and will continue until your child turns five or you move out of the area.

**For more information, please visit
imaginationlibrary.com**

**Or you can also contact Marie Savage
on 0141 776 8623.**



Useful Telephone Numbers

Below is a list of contact telephone numbers that we hope you will find useful

Advice and Response EDC
0141 775 1311

Emergency Housing EDC
0141 578 2133 / 0141 578 8000

Kirkintilloch Integrated Care Centre
0141 232 8200 /
0141 304 7400 / 0141 355 2200

EDC – The Hub
0800 901 057

Housing Benefit
0800 901057

Caledonia Housing, Kirkintilloch
0141 578 0260

Police Station, Kirkintilloch
0141 532 4400 or 101

Special Uplift
0300 1234515

Cleansing and Recycling
0300 1234514

**Environmental Protection
(including dog fouling, dog
barking, antisocial noise)**
0300 1234510

Fire Station
0141 776 6263

**National Grid (formerly Transco)
Gas Emergency**
0800 111 999

DWP (Cumbernauld)
01236 786500

Local MP, Stuart McDonald MP
01236 453 969

Local MSP, Rona Mackay
0141 776 1561

Citizens Advice Bureau
0141 775 3223

Crimestoppers Scotland
0800 555111

How to contact us:

Hillhead Housing Association,

2 Meiklehill Road, Hillhead, Kirkintilloch, G66 2LA

**Please refer to Direct Dial Numbers for
all staff on enclosed Staff Contact List**

Email: admin@hillheadhousing.org

Web: www.hillheadhousing.org

Free Phone Number: 0800 0523 188

Tel: 0141 578 0200 • Fax: 0141 578 4817

Text Number: 07491 163429

**KEEP US
UP TO DATE!**

Please remember to let us know of any changes in your circumstances, for example change of name, change of number in household etc.



While there is more of a staff presence within the office, we would still encourage you to contact staff directly unless you are phoning to make a payment.

 Find us on
Facebook

OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS CONTACT NUMBERS:

(Gas Heating repairs–James Frew Ltd)

01294 468 113

(all other repairs–Rodgers & Johnston)

0800 999 2520

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS - OFFICE HOURS

Our office will be closed on the following dates:

Friday 24 September / Monday 27 September

Please let us know if you require any information within this newsletter in larger print, Braille, cd/tape or in another language.