



# A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

We hope you  
all have a lovely time  
over the festive period  
and stay safe.

Our staff will finish up for  
the Christmas holidays at 12  
noon on Friday 24 December.  
Business will resume on  
Thursday 6 January 2022.

## EMERGENCY REPAIRS SERVICE

During the Christmas and New Year period, our contractors will be providing an Emergency Repairs Service. If you have an emergency repair during the days our office is closed, please refer to the contact telephone numbers on the back page.

# Paying Your Rent Over The Holidays

**We know it has been a tough time for everyone these last few years. The Association has tried to help and support as many tenants as possible that needed additional support or were struggling to pay their rent. We are still here to help you and you can get in touch with us by phoning the office or calling your Housing Officer on their mobile phone numbers. These numbers are available on the Coronavirus page of our website – [www.hillheadhousing.org](http://www.hillheadhousing.org)**

Please continue to pay your rent in December and the coming months. If you have arrears please continue to pay the agreed amount in addition to your rent. If you find that you are unable to stick to any rent arrears agreements, you have made please contact us. We can discuss options and refer you to our Welfare Rights Officers for benefits advice.

If you pay by standing order or direct debit you do not need to worry about rent payments over the holidays as

these will be deducted automatically. If you pay by Allpay remember to pay at the local shops or the post office which will be open most days.

Your monthly rent pays for the services provided by the Association, including our repairs service and improvement programmes. If rent is not paid, then this can impact on the services we can provide.



## Festive Period Refuse Collection

**We have been advised by East Dunbartonshire Council that the bin collection days for the Festive Period have not been determined yet, but their website will be updated as soon as the information is available. It is usually the case that the uplifts on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January will take place around 2 days later.**

As we all know, during the Festive Period there is often more waste from the packaging of food and gifts and we would encourage all tenants to recycle as much as possible either using the kerbside collection, or by using any of the Council's recycling sites throughout the area.

Tenants can find information on the location, opening times and what can be recycled on the Council's website: [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk), by calling 0300 123 4510 or by emailing [recycling@eastdunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:recycling@eastdunbarton.gov.uk).



## Special Uplifts

**The Council have advised that their special uplift service should be fully operational throughout the Festive Period, apart from Public Holidays.**

To request a Special Uplift please phone 0300 123 4510 or use the council website: [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk) to request a Special Uplift Form.

Please note this service is chargeable and the standard uplift charge is £24.22 which must be paid in advance. If you require a large number of items uplifted then the price may increase – this depends on the volume and type of items to be removed. In those cases, a visit will have to be carried out to your property and you will be informed of a price. Alternatively you can upload and send pictures to the Council for them to make an assessment. If you do this, please make sure the pictures clearly show all items that need to be moved.

At this time, the Council have advised that they are responding to requests within 10 working days of receipt of payment.

If you do not pay for the items to be removed the Council will not attend and the job will be cancelled.



# HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

Home Contents insurance is one of the main types of insurance. It covers the contents of your house in the event of loss, damage, or theft. The policy you pick would also protect your belongings from events outside your control, including fire, theft, storms, floods.

Home Content insurance specifically protects your belongings and provided your payments are up to date, it would pay out to replace your household items if they are stolen or damaged.

Please refer to the information below from Thistle Insurance.

## 10 reasons to choose Crystal Insurance this winter



- ❄️ Flexible regular Pay-As-You-Go payment options (fortnightly and monthly premiums include a transaction charge).
- ❄️ Apply over the phone or by completing an application form.
- ❄️ You don't need to have special door or window locks (just a lockable front door).
- ❄️ Covers theft, water damage, fire.
- ❄️ Covers tenants improvements (up to £2,000 or 20% of the sum insured whichever is greater).
- ❄️ Accidental damage to TV's and aerials and home computers is covered as standard (excludes items designed to be portable including mobile phones, ipods etc). A £50 excess may apply, full details are available on request.
- ❄️ Covers damage to external glazing for which you are responsible.
- ❄️ Covers replacement and installation of locks for outside doors or windows and alarms, if keys are lost or stolen.
- ❄️ The sum insured will be increased by £1,500 or 15% (whichever is the greater) for one month before and after Christmas to cover presents bought or received (excludes theft which does not involve forcible or violent entry into your home).
- ❄️ Covers theft or attempted theft of contents in sheds, outbuildings and garages (up to £3,000).
- ❄️ Optional extras are available for an additional premium.

Exclusions & limits apply. A copy of the policy wording is available on request.

**Ask your landlord for an application pack or to apply for cover today, call Thistle Tenant Risks on:**

**0345 450 7286**

**email: [tenantscontents@thistleinsurance.co.uk](mailto:tenantscontents@thistleinsurance.co.uk) or visit [www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk](http://www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk)**

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# DOMESTIC ABUSE

**The festive period can be a stressful time for some people and a time when relationships can become strained. Unfortunately in some cases this can result in domestic abuse.**

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, you can get confidential advice and assistance, including information on your housing options by contacting:

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline on **0808 200 247**
- **[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)**
- Mens Advice Line (for male domestic abuse survivors) on **0808 801 0327**
- Scotland's Domestic Abuse & Forced Marriage Helpline on **0800 027 1234**

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness you can get independent advice from **Shelter Scotland (24 hrs) on 0800 800 4444**. If you need advice and assistance about temporary or longer term housing needs, you can speak to your housing officer in complete confidence. Please phone our office on **0141 578 0200**

or contact your housing officer on their direct phone number or via email. Otherwise you can contact **East Dunbartonshire Council on 0300 123 4510**.

Domestic violence and abuse can happen in any relationships. It occurs within all ages, gender and ethnic backgrounds. Whilst women are more commonly victimised, men are also abused, especially verbally and emotionally. Abusive behaviour is never acceptable. Everyone deserves to feel valued, respected and safe.

Other organisations that may be helpful to anyone who is experiencing domestic abuse are:

- Site Home page - Safer Scotland
- Scottish Women's Aid | Changing attitudes, changing lives. (**[womensaid.scot](http://womensaid.scot)**)
- Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men | Men's Advice Line UK (**[mensadviceline.org.uk](http://mensadviceline.org.uk)**)
- For the LGBT+ community: **[www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)**
- Samaritans Scotland (24/7) on **116 123**

# Get Ready... Be Prepared for Winter!

## **Forecasters are again predicting a long winter ahead so it's time to prepare for the worst!**

Here are some practical suggestions to help prepare for the months ahead:

### **Tips To Prevent Frost Damage**

There are some simple steps to take to help prevent your pipes from freezing:

- Leave the central heating on for short periods of time throughout the day.
- Let warm air into your roof space by keeping the trap door open.
- Keep the cupboard door under the sink open, this will let warm air move around the pipes.
- Keep room doors slightly open to allow warm air to move around the house.
- Know where your stopcock is so that you can switch off your water if there is a burst. Most frozen pipes occur in the roof space and below sink units and can cause considerable damage if they burst.
- Ensure that you have insurance for your contents and personal belongings.

### **If You Have A Burst Pipe**

Turn off the mains water supply immediately by turning the stopcock clockwise. This will stop any more water getting into the water pipes. If the burst pipe is on the main water system the rush of water will stop after a short while.

You should immediately contact our Property Services Team in the event of a burst pipe within office hours only, or call our out of hours number in an emergency.

### **If You Have A Frozen Pipe**

Thaw it out slowly by using hot water bottles or towels soaked in warm water. Do not use direct heat such as blowtorches as this may cause permanent damage to the pipes. The use of blowtorches could also lead to a fire in the home. If in any doubt please contact our Customer Services Team to report the fault.

### **Going Away From Your Home While The Weather Is Cold**

- If you are likely to be away for a short period please leave your heating on.
- If you are likely to be away for a long period, your house will be safer if you drain down the water pipes and switch off your heating and water. Please contact a reputable plumber or your Property Services Officer if you require advice about this.
- Ask a friend or neighbour to check the house and leave a spare key.

### **Structures**

Be aware that snow or ice could fall from roofs suddenly. Be prepared and predict where it might fall and don't park your car, bikes or garden furniture in its path.

# Keep Cosy for Less

Use these handy tips to keep you snug without breaking the bank:

Keep your radiators clear and avoid putting furniture up against them. Drying your clothes on the radiator can make your house colder and can also encourage condensation and mould.

Bleed your radiators regularly to avoid cold spots and get the most out of your heating system.

Your room thermostat should be set to the lowest comfortable temperature, which is usually between 18C and 21C. Turning down the room thermostat by one degree can save up to £75 a year.

Compare energy tariffs and deals to help you make sure you're getting the best gas or electricity tariff for

Use heavier curtains during the winter months – and making sure you close them when it gets dark – helps to keep the heat in and the cold out.

what you're using.

## WINTER GRIT BIN LOCATIONS

During the winter months, we have grit bins located in various locations on non adopted roads. Other grit bins are located throughout the area by East Dunbartonshire Council.

### Locations of Hillhead Housing Association Grit Bins

- Ivanhoe Drive
- Border Way
- Mitchell Gardens
- Meiklehill Avenue
- Hardmuir Gardens
- Waterloo Gardens



# Condensation in Homes

**Problems of dampness in a home are usually caused by condensation. Condensation happens when the air gets colder and it cannot hold all the moisture. Tiny drops of water then appear. If this is allowed to happen on a regular basis, black or green mould can form on walls and furniture, while on clothes and other fabrics mildew appears.**

## Tips to avoid condensation

- Produce less moisture
- Cover boiling pans and open a window if you are cooking
- Don't allow steam from cooking to enter other rooms in the house
- Dry your clothes outside if possible, or in the bathroom with the door closed and window open
- Use extractor fans if they are fitted
- If you use a tumble drier, make sure it is vented to the outside unless it is the self-condensing type
- Wipe up water lying on window sills in the morning
- Open a small window (or the door a little) when you are using a room
- Open windows in your kitchen and bathroom when you are cooking and washing, or use an extractor fan if you have one
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use to stop moisture reaching other rooms
- Keep air vents unblocked - these are fitted to reduce condensation
- Keep window trickle ventilators open if fitted
- Don't overpack your wardrobe

- Open your wardrobe doors occasionally or cut breather holes in the backs of wardrobes or cupboards
- Leave space between wardrobe backs and walls
- Position furniture against internal walls

## Heat your home

Keeping your home a little warmer throughout helps prevent condensation. During cold weather, ensure there is background heat throughout the day and make sure you don't over ventilate.



## Cleaning mould growth

If you do experience mould growth on walls, it can be cleaned with a fungicidal wash solution. Look out for one which carries a Health & Safety Executive "approval number", available from DIY stores or good paint decorators' shops. Once treated with this solution, walls can be painted with a good quality fungicidal paint.



## Electrical Inspections

**It is important that access be allowed to carry out Periodic Electrical Inspections within your home. The Scottish Housing Quality Standard state 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 contractor AC Gold Electrical Ltd are currently working through this year's programme and all residents whose address is scheduled for an inspection will receive written notification soon. If you have had a Periodic Electrical Test scheduled in the past but, for whatever reason have been unable to allow access, then please contact a member of the Property Services Team to discuss this further.



# Fire Risks

Here are a few tips to keep you safe over the festive period.

## Christmas Trees:

- Use artificial flame resistant tree where possible
- If you have a real tree purchase a living tree, in soil, and ensure they are kept watered to reduce the risk of fire
- Throw out old fashioned incandescent bulb Christmas lights and replace with LED lights.
- Never leave the lights on when you go to bed.

## Candles

- Never leave a candle lit if you are not in the room. Keep candles away from your trees, curtains, papers, children, pets and never, ever, light a candle on a shelf under your wall mounted TV.

## Christmas Puddings

- Have a jug of water close at hand if you are going to light your pudding, it's easy to be too generous with the spirits. Also, clear away the paper hats and bits of cracker before you light the pudding.

## Fire Alarms

- Make sure you check your alarms have new batteries before the holidays, and never remove your alarm, even if the toaster keeps setting it off.

## Wrapping Paper

- It gets everywhere on Christmas morning. It takes up more space than you think, and it can get knocked into the fire place or lit by a cigarette really easily. Bag it up - before the children, or the cats, can throw it around.

## Contents Insurance

- It won't keep you safe, and it's not just for Christmas, but if there's one thing worse than a burst pipe, or a burglary, or a fire destroying everything you own at Christmas, it's being uninsured when it happens.

## Cyber Risk:

- In the lead up to Christmas. Social engineering memes are spread, password recovery answers are identified, and scam emails are sent. Always be cautious when opening emails.

## Theft:

- Thefts from garages & sheds are unusually common in the lead up to Christmas. Do not to use these for storage of expensive items, and ensure you have contents insurance.

## TEST THEM TUESDAY

**It is a harsh reality that you are more than twice as likely to die in a fire at home if you haven't got a working smoke alarm. A smoke alarm is the easiest way to alert you to the danger of fire, giving you time to escape.**

The more alarms you have, the safer you'll be – as long as they are working – so make sure you test them every week. Easy to remember – **Test Them Tuesday!**

Fire and rescue services also offer free home safety visits to eligible customers. This involves them visiting your home and offering fire safety advice for you and your household.

If your home has smoke and heat detectors, it is important that you look after them and follow the manufacturer's instructions. If any are not working, please contact us immediately.

It is essential that you test the battery in your smoke and heat alarms

regularly to make sure it works – only a working smoke alarm can buy you and your family the valuable time you need to get out, stay out and telephone 999.

So remember three simple words – **Test Them Tuesday.**



# HOW WELL ARE WE DOING?

The tables below let you see how we are performing against some key activities during the period **1 July to 30 September 2021**

Remember, we always want to hear from you, whether it is good or bad. We can only improve our service if we hear from you.

## KEY HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

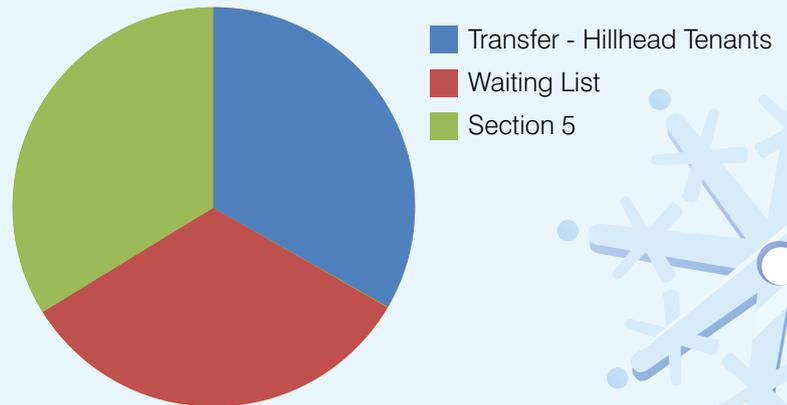
### CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS

Month	Tenant Arrears	Level of Arrears	Rent Arrears Target
July	£123,805.92	3.23%	5.0%
August	£118,394.07	3.09%	5.0%
September	£117,649.37	3.07%	5.0%

### ALLOCATIONS

Month	No. of Lets
July	2
August	4
September	3

### WHO WERE PROPERTIES ALLOCATED TO?



### REPAIRS RESPONSE TIMES (excludes gas servicing)

Category/Month	% Completed within time scales		
	July	August	September
Emergency (24hours)	100%	100%	100%
Urgent ( 3 days)	100%	100%	98.46%
Routine (10 days)	80%	100%	98.24%
Voids (7 days)	95.91%	100%	85.71%
All Repairs - HHA 2000	98.20%	100%	97.82%

## HOW WE COMPARE TO OTHER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

We compare our performance against those of 3 other housing associations every quarter. The table below lets you see how we are performing against the average of this group at the end of September 2021

Performance Area	Hillhead	Housing Association Group
Rent Arrears	3.79%	3.46%
Rent Loss for empty houses/flats	0.28%	1.0%
Average time taken to re-let a house	36 days	27.5 days
Average number of days to complete non emergency repairs	2.72 days	3.55 days

# HILLSIDE HOUSING TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2021

Between August and October 2021, Hillside Housing Association invited Knowledge Partnership, an independent market research company, to carry out a tenant satisfaction survey to establish how tenants feel about our services and where we might be able to do

better. A total of 393 tenants were surveyed online and by telephone, and as the analysis is now complete, Knowledge Partnership has prepared the following results summary. If you would like to find out more about the survey, please contact Hillhead Housing on 0141 578 0200.

**OVERALL SATISFACTION**

88%



**REPAIRS**

88%



**TENANT PARTICIPATION**

83%



**HOUSING**

86%



**NEIGHBOURHOOD**

82%



**VALUE FOR MONEY**

76%



**INFORMATION**

91%



## NEXT STEPS

The Association's staff team is currently reviewing the survey report. We will use the information it contains to assess our performance overall including identifying areas for improvement across key services such as repairs, and housing quality. Focus groups and other events to discuss the survey results are being planned and we would encourage you to attend these. Please contact Hillhead Housing for further details.

## COMPLAINTS

Between 1 July and 30 September 2021, we received 9 Stage 1 complaints and 1 Stage 2 complaint. 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





# Find 12 differences



# 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

**Direct Dial Numbers for all staff  
available on our website**

Email: [admin@hillheadhousing.org](mailto:admin@hillheadhousing.org)

Web: [www.hillheadhousing.org](http://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)	<b>01294 468 113</b>
(all other repairs–Rodgers & Johnston)	<b>0800 999 2520</b>

### **PUBLIC HOLIDAYS - OFFICE HOURS**

Our office will be closed on the following dates:

Monday 27 December – Wednesday 5 January

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