

MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

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 23 December. Business will resume on Thursday 5 January 2023.

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 and the Association has tried to help and support as many tenants as possible who needed any additional support or were struggling to pay their rent.

With Christmas approaching, we understand that this can be a very expensive time of year. However, it is vital that you continue to pay your rent. If you have arrears, then please stick to the agreement that you made, and if you are unable to pay this amount then contact us as soon as possible. If you pay by

standing order or direct debit you do not need to worry about making payments over the holidays as these will be taken automatically, and 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.

Rent arrears can escalate quickly and be difficult to pay off. If you are worried about your rent, we are here to help you and you can get in touch with us by phoning the office.



CHECKING THE STATUS OF YOUR TENANCY

Are you the tenant, are you a joint tenant? Or maybe you are not the tenant!

We have had a lot of enquiries lately from people thinking that they are a tenant or joint tenant where they are living, and they are not. The person who rents the property from us is the tenant and a joint tenant is usually the partner or relative of the main tenant.

When you moved into your property you would have signed the tenancy agreement if you were the tenant or joint tenant. As the tenant you have statutory rights with a Scottish Secure Tenancy.

Some people are assuming they are the tenant

when they are not. If you are not sure, please check the tenancy agreement on the front page and it will be clearly stated who the tenants are or if you would prefer, please call your housing officer who will be happy to help you.

If you are not the tenant, you will be a resident of the property and will be listed as such. You do not have the same rights and responsibilities as the tenant.

It is important that you keep your household details as up to date as possible we need know who is all living in the property, as it can affect things like assignments, successions, benefits due and even overcrowding.

COMMUNAL AREAS

Secure door entry systems are in place in our closes to ensure that non residents cannot easily gain access to the building. When residents leave the doors open they compromise the security for everyone residing in the close. Please ensure that when you enter and leave the building the close doors are closed behind you.

It is also residents' responsibility to ensure that they take it in turns keeping common areas clean. If you share a common stair, you must take your turn regularly cleaning, washing and keeping the area tidy.

No property belonging to you or anyone else residing with you, or visiting you should be stored in the common parts except in areas set aside for storage.

Festive Period Refuse Collection & Special Uplifts

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. Please note you can no longer turn up at Mavis Valley Recycling Centre without an appointment. Appointments can be booked online via the Council's website: www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk by calling 0300 1234510 or by emailing recycling@eastdunbarton.gov.uk. If attending a recycling centre, you will need photographic ID and be able to provide proof of residence in East Dunbartonshire, a council tax or utility bill should be sufficient.

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 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.



Keeping Warm this Winter

The winter nights drawing in and many of us are turning on our heating. However with the Cost of Living Crisis, many of us are struggling to keep warm over the winter.

The Government announced a wide range of help for people on low incomes. The £600 Cost Of Living Payment has been paid in two separate payments of £324 & £326 in July and November for those on certain benefits.

If you are in receipt of PIP/DLA/Attendance Allowance or the Scottish Government's Adult Disability Payment, you also qualified for the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment.

Pensioners who are entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment will receive up to £500 this year (£600 if you were born before 26/09/1942)

All households, regardless of your income, will receive £400 from the Energy Bill Support Scheme from the Government, which has been paid as £66 in October & November, and £67 in December through to March. This money has been given to your energy supplier, and will be credited to your account, smart meter, or you may be emailed/posted vouchers. If you have not received your fuel help, you should contact your energy supplier directly.

The Warm Home Discount is also open for applications from your energy supplier (although, Scottish Power's applications have been delayed due to changes in how the scheme is now operating). If you are in receipt of Pension Credit, you do not need to apply, however, if you are getting other benefits, or are on a low income, you will need to make an application to your energy supplier, and each supplier has their own criteria.

Child Winter Heating Assistance is a benefit from the Scottish Government. It's a payment to help disabled children and young people and their families with increased heating costs over winter. It's paid once a year. The payment for winter 2022-2023 is £214.10.

The Cold Weather Payment paid by the DWP has been replaced by the Winter Heating Payment issued by Social Security Scotland. It's an automatic payment of £50 paid from February 2023 if you are in receipt of a qualifying benefit between 07/11/2022-13/11/2022

If you're not sure if you qualify for any of the assistance, or would like a benefit check to make sure you are getting all of the benefits that you may be entitled to, please contact either Morag or Heather M at the office on 0141 573 0200.

The Scottish Government has a tool kit for more help with the Cost of Living Crisis which can be found here:

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.uk>

Home Energy Scotland (<https://www.homeenergyscotland.org>) also have a lot of energy saving tips to help you reduce you energy use to help you save money on your heating bills. If you don't have internet access, you can call them on 0808 808 2282

The Welfare Rights Service are also referrers to the local Food Bank as well as the Fuel Bank Foundation. We can refer you for emergency funds to top-up your PAYG or Smart Meter if you are at risk of disconnection- please do not sit in the cold and dark over the winter. Contact us - we are here to help.

Help for Children & Families

The Scottish Government announced an extension of the Scottish Child Payment to children under 16 years old, and has been increased to £25 per child. Applications for children opened in November. If you have not already done so, you should put in an application for any children you have if you are on a low income or in receipt of benefits. Children under 6 years old already in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment will continue to be entitled to the new higher amount.

Applications can be made online or by calling 0808 182 2222

This is also followed by the Scottish Government's announcement that Social Security Scotland will begin

making automatic payments of the Best Start Grants to eligible families.

Social Security Scotland will send a text message to recipients when they check for eligibility, and then write to them to advise of the payment.

Eligible families who also qualify for the Best Start early learning and school age payments will not need to apply for them separately.

The automatic award of the Best Start payments, each of which are worth around £250, was announced in April this year.

Lastly, due to the extension of the Scottish Child Payment, this December will be the last payment of the Bridging Payments which will be worth £260 this time round. The payments have been made three times this year to line up with the school holidays, and are paid to families whose children qualify for Free School Meals on the grounds of

low income. There are currently two ways to receive free school meals- there is *universal* entitlement to *all* children in Primary 1-5. If you *only* receive free school meals through the universal entitlement, then you will not qualify for the bridging payment. However, if you have applied for free school meals because you are in receipt of benefits and have earnings of less than £660 per month, then you will be eligible for the bridging payment, but *only* if you have an application in for, or have been awarded free school meals on this second ground of entitlement.

If you're not sure if you qualify for any of the assistance, or would like a benefit check to make sure you are getting all of the benefits that you may be entitled to, please contact either Morag or Heather M at the office on 0141 573 0200.

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
- 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 Hillhead HA office on 0141 578 0200 or contact your Housing Officer on their direct phone number or 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)
Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men | Men's Advice Line UK (mensadvice.org.uk)

For the LGBT+ community: 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.

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



PREVENTING DAMP & MOULD

Although we all want our homes to be warm, it's important to remember that a healthy home requires adequate steps to prevent damp and mould.

Many people have experienced issues with damp and mould in their property at some point. This can occur in all types of properties, including new builds and properties that are always kept warm. Mould growth can occur in various parts of the home, especially in the colder months. Most mould growth people will experience is likely to be the result of condensation.

What is condensation?

Condensation is the process where water vapor becomes liquid. It happens one of two ways: Either the air is cooled to its dew point or it becomes so saturated with water vapor that it cannot hold any more water.

Condensation moisture can be created by everyday living: cooking, showering and even breathing. It is present in the air all the time but only becomes visible when it comes into contact with a cold surface and you see the water droplets.

To help prevent condensation you can:

Ventilate your home: On dry days open some windows to allow humid air to ventilate out of the house. It is better to open a few windows a little throughout the whole house. This helps the air to move through the house. One window open wide in one room may not be

as effective. Try to do this as often as possible (2-3 times a week), but keep windows closed on wet days as damp air may increase indoor humidity. Use trickle vents located on windows

Don't seal or block extractor fans: these quickly remove damp air from moisture-dense rooms like kitchens, bathrooms and utility rooms.

Try to keep your home at a healthy temperature: On cold days try to keep indoor temperatures at least 18°C

Keep doors closed: This will prevent warm moist air travelling through the house and finding the colder surfaces.

Keep lids on pots while cooking: When cooking ensure that you cover your pans with a lid to reduce moisture being created from the water boiling

Think about the location of your furniture: Keep furniture away from walls to allow air circulation. Cool areas behind furniture will be high humidity areas conducive to mould growth. Open wardrobe doors regularly to promote air circulation.

Drying Clothes: try to avoid drying clothes in your home, if you must then do not dry over radiators, use a clothes stand, try to only dry in one room (consider the bathroom) if you can open the window and close the door to the room, this will help moisture escape outside and not into other rooms in the house.

You can also watch a video from Energy Saving Trust for further information - <https://youtu.be/ypB2Y81BP7w> This video is on the Association's website: www.hillheadhousing.org



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 2022.

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

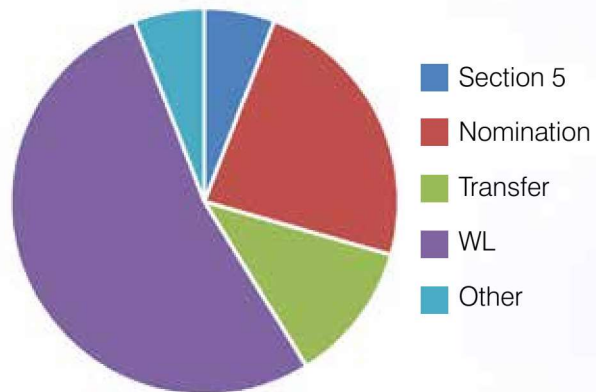
CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS

Month	Tenant Arrears	Level of Arrears
July	£106,426.59	2.67%
August	£108,030.00	2.71%
September	£103,285.25	2.59%

ALLOCATIONS

Month	No. of Lets
July	4
August	9
September	4

WHO WERE PROPERTIES ALLOCATED TO?



REPAIRS RESPONSE TIMES (excludes gas servicing)

Category/Month	% Completed within time scales		
	July	August	September
Emergency (24hours)	94.74%	100%	100%
Urgent (3 days)	100%	98.59%	98.36%
Routine (10 days)	96.66%	98.94%	99.19%
Voids (7 days)	100%	86.67%	84.62%
All Repairs - HHA 2000	98.21%	97.79%	98.18%

HOW WE COMPARE TO OTHER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

We compare our performance against those of other housing association members of Scotland's Housing Networks every quarter.

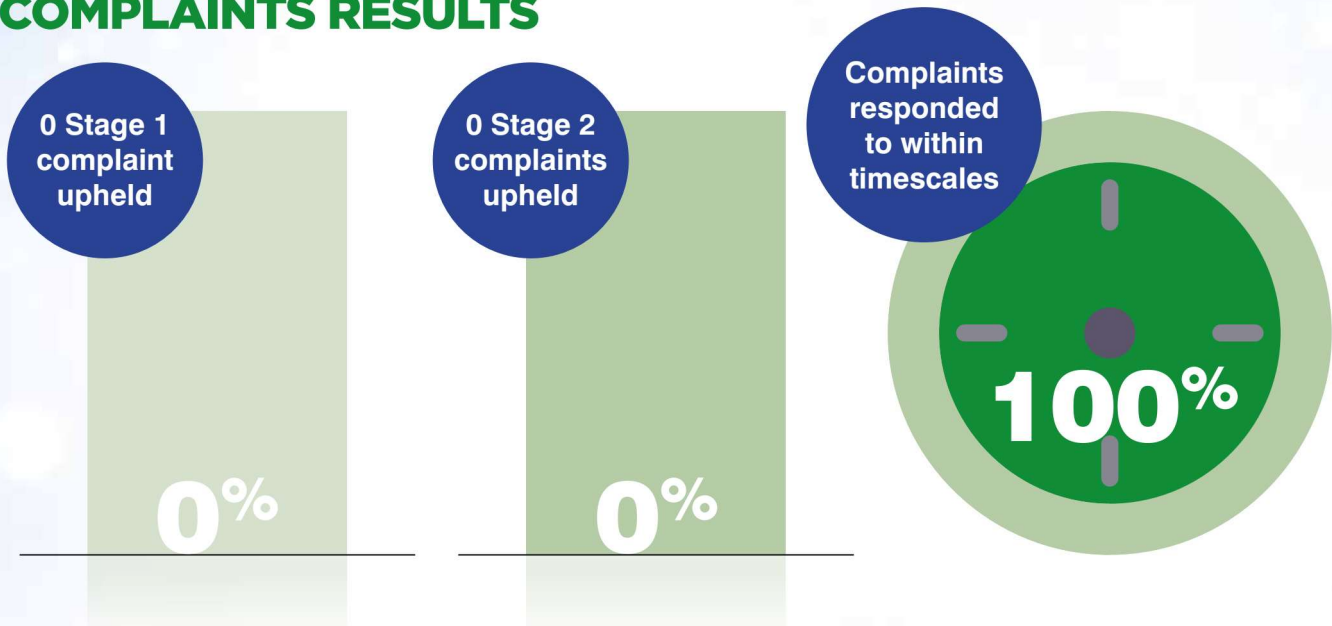
The table below lets you see how we are performing against the average of this group at the end of September 2022

Performance Area	Hillhead	Scotland Housing Network
Current Tenant Rent Arrears	2.59%	2.80%
Rent Loss for empty houses/flats	0.85%	0.99%
Average time taken to re-let a house	21 days	40.37 days
Average number of days to complete non emergency repairs	3.30 days	7.05 days

COMPLAINTS

Between 1 July and 30 September 2022, the Association received 3 Stage 1 complaints.

COMPLAINTS RESULTS



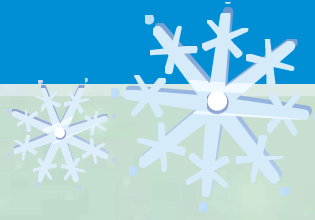
COMPLAINTS BY NATURE OF COMPLAINT

Housing Quality & Maintenance	2
Access to Housing and Support	0
Customer / Landlord Relationship	0
Getting good value from rents & service charges	0
Neighbourhood and community	1
Complaints relating to equalities	0

ACTION TAKEN TO IMPROVE SERVICES

None of the complaints reported were upheld, therefore no service improvement was required.

Chair's Fund



You may recall us setting up this fund some years ago. This allows us to support and develop young local people by providing financial support to take part in educational, vocational and character-forming activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, such things as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, overseas scout camps, trips with cadet forces, sporting activities and many other forms of personal development activities.

In addition to this, if a young person is struggling to afford the costs associated with an educational, vocational or personal development opportunity (such as having to buy equipment to attend, travel costs, etc) the association may be able to help.

In the past few months we have covered an award for a young person to continue her attendance at Theatre School and we also covered the cost of four Primary 7 school children to attend the residential weekend field trip.

If you would like further information on this, please contact the office to request details on eligibility.



Christmas & Religious Festivities

It's that time of year when your household may be shelling out extra costs for food, decorations and more. But have you considered home contents insurance?

Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions and personal belongings.

It's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would cover you for in order to help you make an informed decision on whether you need one.

The Thistle Home Contents Insurance Scheme offers cover for fire, theft, water damage, floods and much more.

And over the festive period or other religious festivals, the scheme automatically increases the contents sum insured by £1,500 or 15% (whichever is the greater), for one month before and one month after the special occasion.

Also covered is:

- Contents of fridge and freezers (excluding damage caused if the electricity supplier deliberately cuts of the supply to your home).
- Money and gift vouchers (up to £750) (excludes theft where there are no signs of force or violence to get into, or out of your home).

The holiday period could also see more accidents, such as spillages, breakages and general mishaps.

Accidental damage to TV's and aerials, and home computers is covered (excludes items designed to be portable including laptops, mobile phones, iPods etc). A £50 excess may apply. Cover for portable items is available under the Extended Accidental Damage optional cover (for an additional premium).

Terms and conditions, limits and exclusions apply, a copy of the policy wording is available on request.

The Thistle Home Contents Insurance scheme was designed for tenants living in social housing, and you can pay premiums in cash fortnightly or monthly, monthly by direct debit or annually. (Fortnightly and monthly premiums include a transaction charge). To find out more, contact Thistle Tenant Risks:

1. Call Thistle Tenant Risks on: 0345 450 7286
2. Request an application pack from your local housing office
3. Visit www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk where you can also request someone to call you back!



Connect-ED

Connect-ED is a new information session for anyone aged 50+ living in East Dunbartonshire. We have brought together a range of groups and services providing information and advice on topics such as money and benefits, exercise and assistance to prevent falls and keep you moving,

social groups, volunteering, healthy ageing, leisure and culture facilities, Power of Attorney and more.

Join us for a tea or coffee and a warm welcome at:
 Hillhead Parish Church, opposite Hillhead Primary School
 2 Rosebank Ave, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow G66 2PR
 1-3pm, Wednesday 11th January 2023 (and then every first



Wednesday of the month thereafter) We look forward to seeing you then. No need to book, just drop in. For more information call Mandy on 07970 164981 or visit **Support in Your Local Community – Connect-ED | East Dunbartonshire Council**

Storms, Flood and Winter Weather

We have all seen what effects the weather can have on our homes - it's a good idea to stay safe and protect your belongings.

Here's some tips to minimise the risk of damage from a flood:

- Stock up on sandbags, flood barriers and more.
- Temporarily seal your air bricks with a cover.
- Keep gutters clear.
- Never enter a flooded room where electricity is still live. Turn off circuit breakers that control power to that room. If the electrical panel is inaccessible due to flooding, call your landlord or an electrician.
- Protect yourself – wear gloves and rubber boots.
- If it's sewage, outdoor flooding, toilet overflow or other potential toxic water, leave the removal to qualified professionals.
- Take photos to document the extent of damage.
- Remove as much water as you can using buckets, pumps and mops (be careful water is heavy).
- Ventilate – open windows and run fans (when safe to do so).

We hope that you will never suffer flood or water damage, but these things do happen and that is why your Landlord suggests all tenants take out home contents, either through the Thistle Home Contents Insurance Scheme or by making your own arrangements.

Please remember you are responsible for replacing your home contents and belongings. Contents insurance is designed to help protect your

possessions and personal belongings and it's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would cover you for in order to help you make an informed decision on whether you need one.

The Thistle Home Contents Insurance Scheme was designed for tenants in social housing, and you can pay premiums by cash fortnightly or monthly, monthly by direct debit or annually. (Fortnightly and monthly premiums include a transaction charge).

Contact us

There are three ways to contact Thistle Tenant Risks.

1. Call Thistle Tenant Risks on: 0345 450 7286
2. Request an application pack from your local housing office
3. Visit www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk where you can also request someone to call you back!



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

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

Our phone lines are open between 9.00AM
and 12.30PM and from 1.30PM to 5PM.

**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.



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:

Monday 26 December 2022 – Wednesday 5 January 2023

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