

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 12.30pm on Tuesday 24 December. Business will resume on Monday 6 January 2024.

**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.

Bins and Recycling

East Dunbartonshire Council collects waste and recycling seven days a week.

However, over the festive period your bin collection day may change so it is important that you note the following:

The Council's waste service will not be operational on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, 1 January 2025 and 2 January 2025.

Possible delays in the service provision are expected during this busy period, so residents are advised to leave bins on the pavement until the collection has taken place, the time of collections may vary from normal.

Festive collection times:

Normal Collection Day	Festive Collection Day
Wednesday 25 December	Friday 27 December
Thursday 26 December	Saturday 28 December
Wednesday 1 January	Friday 3 January
Thursday 2 January	Saturday 4 January

The Mavis Valley Refuse and Recycling Centre site will also be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, 1 and 2 January 2025.

Over the rest of the festive period, the site will be open to the public Monday to Friday, from 8am to 5pm and between 9am and 4.30pm Saturday and Sunday. Residents are reminded to book online prior to visiting.

From Friday 3 January to Sunday 12 January, you can dispose of your real Christmas tree in a skip at the following locations:

- William Patrick Library car park, Kirkintilloch
- Mavis Valley Recycling Centre, Bishopbriggs
- Milngavie Community Education Centre, Milngavie

If you hold a Garden Waste 2024 Permit, you can call EDC's Customer Services team on **0300 123 4510** to arrange for your Christmas tree to be picked up or your garden waste bin emptied between Monday 13 January and Sunday 19 January 2025.

Please also make sure all your household waste has been disposed of properly in the appropriate bins.



Your Rent Account

While we appreciate that times are hard just now, it is very important to continue to make rent payments and keep to any arrangements over the festive period. Falling in to rent arrears means that we are required to take action against your tenancy which includes phone calls, home visits and sending letters. If rent payments are repeatedly missed it could result in a Notice of Recovery of Possession being issued and legal action being taken.

If you are struggling to make payments it is very important to contact us as soon as possible. Our

Housing team will look to support you in any way we can and we have our Welfare Rights Team and Tenancy Support Officer who are also available for financial and sustainment advice and assistance.

For those tenants who make their payments at the office or over the phone, please take note of our opening times over the festive period. Alternatively, you can make your rent payments via the Allpay app or by using your rent card at any PayPoint outlet.

We can now also send you an individual, secure payment link via text message or email to save you having to call us with your card details. This link is re-usable and therefore you can note it for future payments if required – please call us to request your payment

link if you would like to pay this way.

You can also pay by bank transfer. Bank: Royal bank of Scotland, sort code: 83-24-05, account number: 00690899. Please contact the office if you need to find out your tenancy reference.

If you are on our housing waiting list, it is important to note that if you have rent arrears and have not been making regular payments to reduce your arrears, you will not be considered for a transfer until you have made and maintained an arrangement. This will also apply should you have any outstanding rechargeable repairs.

If you would like to discuss your rent account or would like to make an arrangement, please contact your Housing Officer.



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 2000 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 our 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 relationship. 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 - **<https://safer.scot/>**
- Scottish Women's Aid | Changing attitudes, changing lives. (**womensaid.scot**)
- Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men | Men's Advice Line UK (**mensadviceline.org.uk**)
- For the LGBT+ community: **www.galop.org.uk**
- Samaritans Scotland (24/7) on **116 123**

Property Services News

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

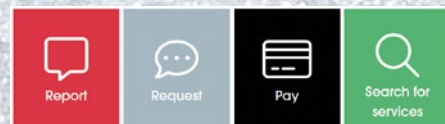
Reporting to East Dunbartonshire Council

We have found that a number of our tenants speak to us about cleansing and environmental issues affecting the community. Often, these issues fall under the remit of services provided by East Dunbartonshire Council and while we can support our tenants to report these, it can be useful if tenants report these directly to resolve the issue quickly.

Some of the main issues discussed with us are:

- Bin Collections
- Fly Tipping
- Dog Fouling
- Grit bin refills or new bin requests
- Graffiti
- Street Cleansing

The easiest way to report any request or issue with East Dunbartonshire Council is to sign up to their online reporting portal 'My EDC' – once you have logged in you can report the issues above as well as wide range of others such as animal welfare concerns, abandoned vehicles, traffic and road faults and many more. If you are unable to go online or require assistance in setting up a login for 'My EDC', please call their Customer Services telephone number on 0300 123 4510 - Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.



HOW WELL ARE WE DOING?

The tables below show some key areas of performance within both Housing Management and Property Services, this includes Current Tenant Rent Arrears, Number of Property Allocations and Repair Performance information.

We always encourage feedback from our tenants and customers, this helps us improve our service. Please get in touch and take part in our regular surveys that are issued.

KEY HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

PERIOD BETWEEN 1 JULY AND 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

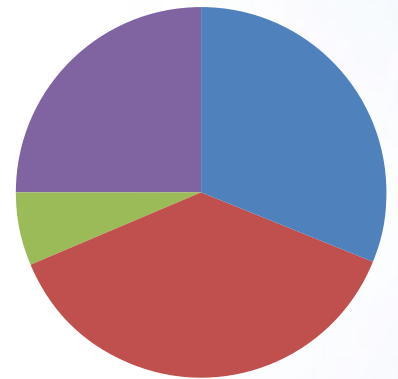
CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS

Month	Tenant Arrears	Level of Arrears
July	£85,294.69	1.88%
August	£82,638.30	1.82%
September	£93,404.43	2.05%

ALLOCATIONS

Month	No. of Lets
July	7
Aug	5
Sep	4

WHO WERE PROPERTIES ALLOCATED TO?



■ Transfer ■ Section 5
■ Waiting List ■ Nomination
■ Other

REPAIRS RESPONSE TIMES (excludes gas servicing)

Category/Month	% Completed within time scales		
	July	August	September
Emergency (24hours)	100%	98.49%	100%
Urgent (3 days)	100%	100%	100%
Routine (10 days)	100%	100%	100%
Voids (7 days)	96.00%	95.24%	100%
All Repairs - HHA 2000	99.32%	98.69%	100%

HOW WE COMPARE TO OTHER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

As a member of Scottish Housing Networks, we take the opportunity to compare our performance against other Housing Association members.

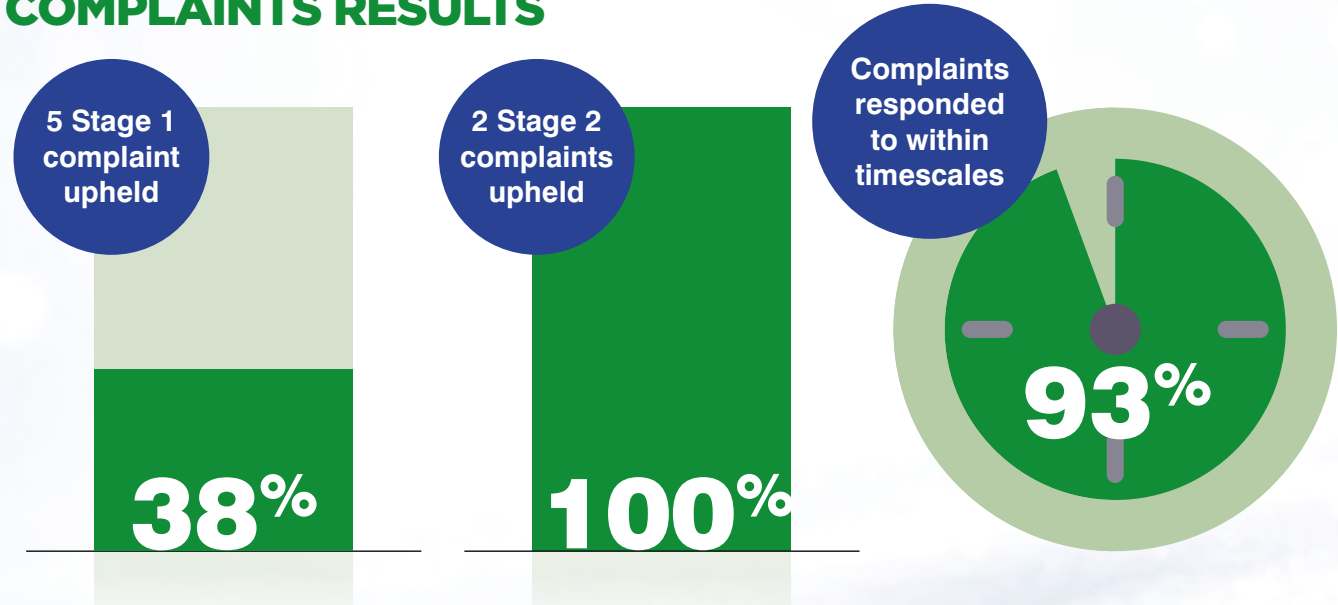
As shown in the table below, our performance remains favourable, with Hillhead’s current tenant rent arrears and empty house/flat rent loss below the SHN average as well as relet times. In relation to average number of days to complete non emergency repairs, our timescales are significantly better than the SHN average.

Performance Area	Hillhead	Scotland Housing Network
Current Tenant Rent Arrears	2.05%	2.54%
Rent Loss for empty houses/flats	1.82%	0.63%
Average time taken to re-let a house	30 days	29.88 days
Average number of days to complete non emergency repairs	2.36 days	6.25days

COMPLAINTS

Between 1 July and 30 September 2024, the Association received 13 Stage 1 complaints and 2 Stage 2 complaints.

COMPLAINTS RESULTS



COMPLAINTS BY NATURE OF COMPLAINT

Housing Quality & Maintenance	10
Access to Housing and Support	0
Customer / Landlord Relationship	3
Getting good value from rents & service charges	0
Neighbourhood and community	0
Complaints relating to equalities	0

ACTION TAKEN TO IMPROVE SERVICES

The upheld complaints were related to minor issues with repair works, some delays in works being instructed and issues regarding the landscape maintenance contract. One also related to incorrect information given regarding rent arrears. All such instances continue to be monitored and further training given regarding advice on rent accounts.

The two stage 2 complaints were initially Stage 1 complaints which were escalated to stage 2 and are not separate complaints.

Rent Consultation 25/26 now open!

Each year we ask tenants to let us know what they think about rent levels for the next financial year which will allow us to continue to provide services and invest in properties. Recent years have been challenging for our tenants and the wider community due to the cost-of-living crisis and we continue to prioritise services such as our Welfare Rights Service and Tenancy Support Service to support our tenants when they need it most.

However, rising costs have also affected the Housing Association and this then has an impact on the rent we charge. Our ongoing business plan which plans for our predicted spending is reviewed continuously in order to ensure we can afford to do all of the things we are legally required to do (such as yearly gas safety checks) and that we plan to do (such as kitchen replacements). How much rental income is required in order to cover costs is looked at as well as what would happen if we did not apply rent increases.

Our business plan requires that we increase the rent by 3.3% (October 2024 CPI + 1%) if we are to continue to be a viable business in the coming years. Any less will mean we would need to reduce the money spent on repairing and improving our properties and to the services we provide. This would lower the quality of our homes and mean we couldn't do as much to support our tenants.

We understand that some tenants will find a rent increase difficult to afford. We are committed to keeping the rent increase as low as we can whilst continuing to provide help and assistance for our tenants.

There is much more information on our proposals in the full rent consultation leaflet which tenants should have received in the post. You can also access the leaflet on our website – <https://hillheadhousing.org/tenant-consultation-/>



The leaflet details how to respond to the consultation:

- Scan the QR code on the leaflet to complete the consultation online.
- Return the tear off slip on the leaflet to our office.
- Call our office on **0141 578 0200**
- Attend one of our drop in sessions:
- Or contact us to make an appointment suitable to you.

Please let us know what you think by 13th January 2025 and you will be entered in to our prize draw to win a £50 voucher of your choice!

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

Katrina Murray

Katrina.murray.mp@parliament.uk

01236 800123

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.

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:

- Wednesday 25 December – Friday 3 January

**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.



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