




Tenants News



Title	Pg
Welcome from CEO	2
Tenant Satisfaction	
Survey Prize Drawer	
Winners	3
TIS	3
Asset Team	4
Rent Increase 2021/2022	10
Ways to pay your rent	10
Home Contents Insurance	11
Spotlight on Macduff	12
Shelter Scotland	13
Health & Safety Update	
Covid 19 Vaccines	13
Moving to social rented home	14
Complaints Update	16
Ark Pet Policy	18
Foodbanks	19

 Click the menu icon
to return to this page



Welcome

Bobby Duffy
Ark Chief Executive



Welcome to the spring edition of the Ark Newsletter. Probably like most of our readers, I have been spending some time reflecting on the past year and find it sobering that twelve months on, we continue to live and work with high levels of restrictions necessary to keep us all safe and control the spread of Covid-19 as much as possible.

As a service provider, Ark has had to make significant adjustments to how we work whilst maintaining a focus on delivering positive outcomes for our tenants and supported people. I hope your experience of Ark over the last twelve months has been a positive one and you have seen minimal disruption to your service. We launched our new brand and Business Plan 2020-2025, in October last year and since then have been working steadily to bring to life the ambitions we set out in the business plan. We have now agreed with the Board, the key business objectives we will be working to over the next few years that will evidence the progress we are making with the delivery of the Business Plan. We want to be open and transparent with our community in Ark; our people; tenants and supported people and we will share with what those business objectives are and on a regular basis, how we are progressing the delivery of the Business

Plan over the next twelve months; this will mean the leadership of Ark can be held accountable for its success by our community and the Board of Management.

I have also been reflecting with great pride, the work of our people across the organisation and the lengths they have gone to, to ensure that our services continued to deliver good lives for tenants and supported people and when we share our business objectives, you will see we have a significant focus on improving the working environment for our people. This is vital for Ark to continue with the progress we are currently making.

There is light at the end of the tunnel; the hugely successful vaccination programme has brought closer a return to some normality over the coming months and the leadership of Ark are already preparing to make the necessary adjustments, to ensure we continue to operate safely and provide quality services to our tenants and supported people. Please stay safe and I look forward to continuing to work with you to deliver the ambitions we set out in our Business Plan.

Bobby

TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2020

MEL Research carried out Ark's tenant satisfaction survey. We would like to thank all of our tenants who participated we will include our findings in our next newsletter and make contact with the tenants who confirmed they were happy for us to contact you to discuss how you think we can improve the service that Ark provides.

To thank tenants for participating in our survey they were entered into a prize draw. We have three prizewinners who won love to shop vouchers Congratulations to our tenant in West Lothian, tenant in Moray and Mr PR Cowie in Aberdeenshire

Get Involved, Have Your Say, Influence Decisions, Help Improve Services

Ark Housing Association is delighted to have appointed Tenants Information Service (TIS) to work with us to provide a fantastic opportunity for tenants to review and to help improve housing services.

As a national membership organisation, with over 200 tenants, community and housing organisation Members, TIS is committed to supporting tenants and landlords to work together to develop and improve services. TIS believes that by working together, we can plan more to effectively deliver high quality and affordable housing, and wider services to meet the needs of our diverse communities.

TIS will provide independent information and support to develop a Service Improvement Group made up of tenants from across all of our communities.

If you would like to join the group or find out more, please contact e-mail housing@arkha.org.uk or phone Ark or 0131 478 8146



Ark Assets Team



The main functions of the Asset Team is the delivery of a customer focused reactive repairs service as well as void property maintenance, capital investment works, planned and cyclical maintenance.

We also are responsible for the delivery of new build housing, grant funded adaptation works as well as specific project works for our customers.

Reactive Repairs Service

Our staff will talk to you or your representative (during working hours), and provide information about how quickly your repair will be carried out, and by which contractor. We will also be able to advise if the repair comes under the Right to Repair Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and whether you would be entitled to compensation if the repair is not carried out within a specific timescale. Timescales are dependent on the type of repair, but you can discuss this with our staff.

We monitor all repairs carried out and will send out a customer satisfaction form to our customers when the repair has been completed. We also try to contact all our customers who reported a repair by

phone, to establish if the work was carried out on time and to their satisfaction.

Please note - the current government restrictions only allow for emergency repairs or essential works relating to health and safety (eg. Gas servicing) to be carried out. We will resume our full repairs service as and when restrictions are eased and allow us to do so.

Our first point of contact for repairs is Erin Tracey who is our Property Administrator, Erin can be contacted on the details below, and for the reporting of all repairs via email please use the repairs email address:

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm

Phone: 0131 478 8143

Email: repairs@arkha.org.uk



Reporting repairs out of office hours:

Should you need to report an emergency repair after our offices are closed you can contact our preferred contractors directly on the details below.

This type of work will be attended to as soon as possible to make safe only, with any follow up work instructed the next working day.

This type of work includes things like:

- Unsafe power or lighting sockets or electrical fittings
- Loss or part loss of electric power
- External windows, doors or locks which are not secure
- Loss or part loss of space or water heating if no alternative heating is available
- Toilets which do not flush (if there is no other toilet in the house)
- Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans (if there is no other toilet in the house)
- A blocked sink, bath or basin
- Loss or part loss of water supply
- Significant leaking or flooding from a water or heating pipe, tank or cistern, water leaking through roof or fabric of the building due to external defect.

For gas central heating breakdowns for all areas

contact: Heatcare Ltd on 01343 842 042

If you suspect a gas leak or smell gas:

- Turn off the gas appliance and isolate the gas at the meter if you can.
- Open all doors and windows so the gas can escape.
- Put out cigarettes and do not use naked flames
- Do not touch electrical switches.
- Phone the National Gas Emergency Service immediately by dialling 0800 111 999 and they will attend within one hour.

If the emergency service engineer shuts down your gas system to make it safe please contact our gas contractor Heatcare on **01343 842 042**. Heatcare will then arrange a visit to fix your gas system. They will usually have your gas system repaired within 24 hours.

For emergency repairs for Buckie, Forres, MacDuff, Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Inverurie, Aberdeen, Portlethen contact:

1 Call Property Maintenance on **01224 638 888**

For emergency repairs for Arbroath, Blairgowrie, Forfar, Perth, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Fife, Lothians and Borders contact:

All in One Property Maintenance on 07756 147365 or 07810 883676

Our Maintenance Officers assist in delivering a reactive repairs service for all Ark’s assets including liaising with tenants to ensure their home is maintained to the required standards and their satisfaction.

As well as assisting in the repairs service our officers also manage all void properties ensuring the works during the time they are empty is completed as quickly as possible to our lettable standard. Each officer also manages any capital investment works, planned and cyclical maintenance within their area. Each Officer covers specific geographical area noted below, along with their contact details.

Nicola Hampton Maintenance Officer
Mobile: 07514 670186
E-mail: nicola.hampton@arkha.org.uk

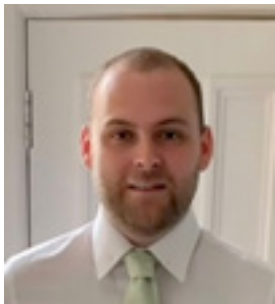


Area	Sub Area
Fife	Cardenden
	Dunfermline
Mid Lothian	Dalkeith
	Loanhead
East Lothian	Musselburgh
West Lothian	Uphall
	Linlithgow
Falkirk	Grangemouth
Clackmannanshire	Alloa
Edinburgh	Quartermile
	Restalrig
	Quartermile
	Longstone
	Oxgangs
	Niddrie Ffarm
	Broomhouse

Paul Allison Maintenance Officer
Mobile: 07967 320379
E-mail: paul.allison@arkha.org.uk



Area	Sub Area
Moray	Forres
	Buckie
Aberdeenshire	Macduff
	Fraserburgh
	Peterhead
	Inverurie
	Portlethan
Aberdeen City	Provost Mitchell Circle
	Greenfern Lodge
	Back Hilton Road
	Balnagask Circle
	School Drive



Rob Ormston Maintenance Officer
Mobile: 07720 096456
Tel: 0131 478 8161
E-mail: rob.ormston@arkha.org.uk

Our Property Administrator and Maintenance Officers are line managed by our Senior Property Officer Lucy Stang. Any concerns or issues about the services we deliver should be passed to Lucy in the first instance.



Area	Sub Area
Western Isles	Stornoway
Angus	Forfar
	Arbroath
Perth & Kinross	Perth
	Blairgowrie
Fife	Glenrothes
	St.Andrews
Mid Lothian	Penicuik
Scottish Boards	Peebles
	Hawick
Edinburgh	Hoseason Gardens
	Southhouse Broadway
	Stenhouse Drive
	Stenhouse Place West
	West Adam Street
	Richmond Place

Development & Projects work



Ark’s asset management strategy identifies clear aims to create better built living and working environments and to provide good quality affordable homes for people requiring care and support. Within this area of the Asset Team is the responsibility for managing the delivery of Ark’s new build development programme, strategic asset management projects and Stage 3 Adaptations.

This work is managed by Lindsay Campbell who is our Development Coordinator and for further information on new build housing, projects and adaptations please contact her.



Lindsay Campbell
Development Coordinator

Mobile: 07514 670128
E-mail: Lindsay.campbell@arkha.org.uk

Student Placement



The housing department is working with Stirling University and has taken on an student intern. Below is a little bit about the our student intern that we are working with this year to provide her with an insight to working in the world of social housing.

Hello to everyone at Ark. My name is Margot Lord and I’m really pleased to join you as an internship student from the Housing Studies course at Stirling University. Previously, I’ve worked in education and social care in Edinburgh and Midlothian and I’m excited to learn more about housing and support at Ark. I will be working from home on Mondays and Wednesdays between now and September and hope to meet staff and tenants when it’s safe for me to do so. As well as finding out about what housing staff do day to day, I hope to help with the tenants handbook and anything else that comes up.



Rent Increase 2021/2022



In mid December a Rent Increase Proposal and questionnaire was sent to 421 tenants:

- 143 general needs tenants
- 278 supported tenants and 88 Guardians

This year 29 tenants responded.

This was 28 less than last year.

18 of the tenants stated their preference for the lower increase of 2.6%, whilst 4 tenants chose the higher increase of 3.1% and 6 did not answer the question.

Of the 6 that did not answer Yes or No, tenants commented on the fact that they did not think there should be a rent increase during the pandemic when people were having to endure a cut in wages.

With upcoming development projects tenants were asked if they thought that Ark should have a new category for new build and reconfigured properties.

- 23 of the 29 tenants said that we should introduce a new category.

Based on the responses received it was decided that we increase the rents by 2.6% for 2021/2022.

All tenants should have now received their rent increase notification letter in the post. If you have not yet received this or have any questions please contact a member of the housing team.

If you are in receipt of housing benefit Ark will notify the local housing benefit team of the rent increase.

If you are in receipt of universal credit housing costs it is the tenants responsibility to update your journal with the increased rent charge from 1st April 2021.

Ways to pay your rent

There are various options available to make it easier for you to pay your rent:



- Direct Debit – if you wish to set up a Direct Debit please contact the Housing Team on 0131 78 8146



- All Pay Card – contact the Housing Team to request for us to order you a card. This will allow you to make payments towards your rent at any shop/post office with a PayPoint symbol



- Cheques or Postal Order - Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to “ARK Housing Association LTD”. To identify your payment please write your name and property address on the reverse of the cheque/ postal order.



- Telephone – you can telephone the Housing Team on 0131 478 8146 to make a payment via World Pay using your debit card.



- Online - you can pay using your allpay card and credit/debit card at www.allpayments.net. To download the Allpay app for your mobile phone please refer to www.allpay.net/app.

Home contents insurance

Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen so home contents insurance may help provide you with peace of mind.

The Diamond Insurance Scheme covered against loss and damage caused by burst pipes, fire, theft, flood damage and much more.

For further information please call the housing team on 0131 478 8146 for an application pack or to apply for cover call URIS Group on 0345 671 8172.



If you are experiencing financial difficulty and struggling to pay your rent please contact your housing officer who will be able to assist you further.



Spotlight on Macduff



Ark has a small development in the coastal town of Macduff in Aberdeenshire which neighbours Banff. It has a population of approximately 4000 people and the fishing harbour remains one of the town's key features. It is perhaps best known for its Macduff Aquarium visitor attraction which is well worth a visit for all ages!

Ark's own development is based on Institution Street, Gellymill Street and Market Street and consists of a mix of mainstream and supported tenancies, between 1 – 3 bedrooms.

We spoke to one of our newest tenants, Stacie Duncan, who has been kind enough to share her thoughts and experience of her new Ark home in a short

question and answer session. She has also given us some photos which she would like to share. We hope you agree that she has made her new tenancy into a lovely new home for her future.



Q. Where were you living before? How long had you lived there?

A. I lived in Banff with my parents until I moved to Macduff

Q. What is the biggest change for you having your own tenancy?

A. Having to take care of things on my own which I like.

Q. What are the best and worst things about the town of Macduff?

A. The best It has a nice harbour the worst it doesn't have much shops as Banff.

Q. How was your first Christmas in your new home?

A. It was fine but with the COVID thing it wasn't the same but hopefully 2021 will be a better year.



Health & Safety



In need of further housing advice?

Access shelters online advice and emergency help-line at shelter.org.uk/get_help

Shelter is trying to reach out to more people who are in urgent housing need. They can help out if:

- You are about to become homeless within 56 days
- You are at risk of harm

Shelters site also offers

Housing Advice

- Information and Guides
- Searchable topics
- Available 24/7

Webchat

- Fast personalised advice
- Links to further information
- An emailed copy of your chat

The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine

Your best protection against coronavirus. NHS Scotland strongly recommends you get the vaccine when offered it.

Who is currently being offered the coronavirus vaccine? NHS Scotland are vaccinating those most at risk first, and those who work closest with them. Those who have already been invited or are currently being invited to be vaccinated are:

- residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
- front line health and social care workers
- clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
- everyone aged 65 and over
- those aged 16 to 64 with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
- unpaid carers aged 16 to 64

People with underlying health conditions and unpaid carers are a large group of people. It will take several weeks to get everyone in these groups vaccinated so please be patient.

The next group of people to be invited for their coronavirus vaccination are those aged 50 and over. Further information will be available soon

Moving to a social rented home

If you find your circumstances change so that perhaps you need a bigger or smaller home, or you wish to move to another area, there are a number of options which you can follow to help you find another more suitable social rented home. The route to follow will depend on the location you wish to move to.

The City of Edinburgh

EdIndex is the single point of access to find social rented housing in the City of Edinburgh.

EdIndex is a partnership between the Council and 18 housing associations/co-operatives in Edinburgh.

This means that you only need to complete one application to apply for houses provided by the landlords. Information can be found on the new updated website at: www.edindexhousing.co.uk To register with Edindex you can download an application form to print out and complete, or you can obtain an application form from Ark's office. Once you have registered you can view and bid for available homes using the "Key to Choice" link.

The new website also has new features to make it easier to search for available homes by area and size using the "Supply and Demand" tool.

House Exchanges in Edinburgh

If you are a Council or Housing Association tenant and you want to move you can swap your tenancy with another tenant who is looking to move. Tenants in Edinburgh can register with House Exchange which helps to match social housing tenants in the city who wish to exchange properties. Information can be found on the website www.houseexchange.org.uk

You can also call the Ark office on 0131 478 8146 to obtain information and we can help to sign you up over the phone.

Ark Housing out with Edinburgh

Ark has a variety of sizes of properties in a number of different locations throughout eastern Scotland. If you would like to find out more about the areas where Ark has housing and to obtain a housing application form you can look on Ark's website www.arkha.org.uk where you can also download a form. Alternatively you can contact the Housing Team for more information and to request a housing application form by phoning 0131 478 8146.



House Exchanges outwith Edinburgh

Tenants who want to exchange out with Edinburgh can register with other house swap schemes that are set up nationally. For example, the Home Swapper scheme and information can be found at www.homeswapper.co.uk. Please note there may be a fee to pay to register with other national schemes.

When you find someone you'd like to swap with then get in contact with them and arrange to view each others' properties. If you are both happy to go ahead with the exchange then you need to apply to your landlords for written permission. We have applications forms which must be completed and you can contact the Housing Team to request a form to be sent out on 0131 478 8146.

Contact Other Social Rented Landlords

There is a high demand for social rented housing and therefore when looking for another home to rent it is best to widen your options as much as possible, and to consider applying to the local Council in the area you wish to move to and other Housing Associations.

The local Council will be able to provide information on all the landlords that have social rented accommodation in that area and also on other housing options.

Information on other Housing Associations in Scotland can also be found on the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations website at www.sfha.co.uk.

The East Hub website www.eastscotlandhousingoptions.co.uk also provides information on housing options in Lothians, Falkirk and Scottish Borders.

Complaints Update



Here is our update on what has been happening with complaints in Ark between October and December

During this period ARK received 12 complaints, which can be summarised as follows:

Department	Total Number of Complaints	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Care and Support	7	2	3	2
Asset Management	4	2	1	1
Total	12	4	4	3

7 Complaints were dealt with at frontline stage.

‘Frontline complaints’ are relatively straightforward complaints which can usually be responded to within 5 working days.

The remaining 5 complaints were responded to at the investigation stage. ‘Investigation complaints’ are more complex and are usually responded to within 20 working days.

If you’re not happy about the support you receive from Ark, or with anything else about the service we provide, please let a member of Ark staff know.

Breakdown of complaints by staff attitude/ service issues

Type of Complaint	Total Number	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Attitude or Behaviour	2	2	0	0
Ark Service Issue	4	1	2	1
Attitude/ Behaviour and Service Issue	6	1	3	2
Total	12	4	5	3

Using Complaints to Improve Service Delivery

Some of the complaints we received this quarter reminded us of the importance of clear and consistent communication. In one example, a complaint was made about the lack of some elements of building repair and decoration in a tenant’s home while they could see other areas progress. One of the outcomes of this complaint was a recommendation for a review to improve customer communication.

In another example, where part of the complaint

was about poor communication, the detailed outcome letter included an overview of a thorough investigation. This led the individual to acknowledge that they recognised Ark as an organisation that was willing to learn and improve.

Arks Pet Policy



If you do want to keep a pet you must complete a Pet Permission Leaflet and return it. Pet Permission Leaflets can be obtained by contacting the Housing Team on 0131 478 8146 or housing@arkha.org.uk

Only once you have received written permission from us should you go ahead and get a pet. You do not normally need permission to keep fish or small caged animals and birds. Please find conditions of keeping a pet below. If you would like to find out more about pet permissions please contact the Housing Team.

Please find below conditions with regards to keeping pets, if ARK feels that your pet is causing nuisance or damage and is not meeting the conditions below we will remove permission to keep a pet.

- Ark will not allow you to keep a pet that is not permitted by the dangerous dog act 1991 or by any other law.
- Tenants will be responsible for looking after the pet and ensuring that it behaves

- Tenant must take all reasonable steps to supervise their pets and keep them under control
- Tenants must take reasonable care to make sure that their pet is not causing nuisance annoyance or danger to their neighbours
- Tenants must take care to ensure that their pet does not foul or cause damage to their house, their neighbour's house, anything that belongs to Ark or any of the communal area or gardens

TENANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CLEANING UP AFTER THEIR PET.

Help from Foodbank



How food banks work

As a nation, we know it isn't right that anyone should be left hungry or living in extreme poverty.

But whilst we work for long-term change, our network of food banks provides emergency food and compassionate, dignified support to people locked in crisis. There are over 1,200 food bank centres in our network. The services provided by food banks may vary from area to area as they react to the needs of their community to provide help and support to local people in crisis.

Food donations

Non-perishable, in-date food is donated by the public at a range of places, such as schools, churches, and businesses, as well as supermarket collection points. It is then sorted into emergency food parcels.

Food vouchers

Care professionals such as health visitors, staff at schools and social workers /housing staff identify people in crisis and issue them with a food bank voucher. This means people can receive a food bank parcel of three days' nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food from their local food bank.

Additional support

Our food bank network helps people break free from poverty by providing additional support to help people resolve the crises they're facing so that they don't need to use a food bank again in the future. This could include things like debt advice, mental health support, or benefits guidance.

Food banks rely on the support of their local communities. Coronavirus has had a significant impact on many people's income and there may be people who need help from a food bank.

If you have a referral, you're still allowed to travel to a food bank - either for yourself or someone who's vulnerable. Start by looking online to see if there are any independent local food banks that you can go to without a referral.

A good place to ask for a referral is your nearest Citizens Advice. Tell them you need the food bank - they'll probably make you an appointment to discuss your situation with an adviser.

The adviser will ask you some questions about your income and needs. For example, if you need the food for just you or your whole family.



Housing Team Contacts

housing@arkha.org.uk
0131 478 8146



Maintenance Team Contacts

repairs@arkha.org.uk
0131 478 8143

Due to covid 19 restrictions both our Edinburgh and Forres office remain closed with staff working remotely.

We can still be contacted on the numbers above but are providing a limited service until restrictions are lifted.



0131 447 9027

The Scottish Housing Regulator checks that Ark is providing a good Housing Service. Their Significant Performance Failures factsheet provides more information on how to raise concerns with them.

This can be found on our website but if you want a copy, contact us and we can send one to you.



**Scottish Housing
Regulator**

www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk
shr@scottishhousingregulator.gsi.gov.uk
0141 242 5642

If you made a complaint to Ark and you want something more to be done, you can ask the Ombudsman to look at your complaint.



enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk
0800 377 7330