

December 2021

 With head
& heart



Tenants News



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Ark[®] People Housing Care



arkha.org.uk

Welcome



Bobby Duffy



Welcome to the Winter edition of the Ark Newsletter.

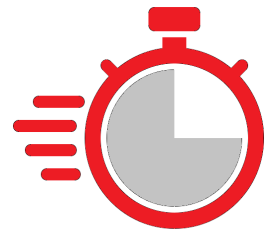
In the last edition I told you about our programme for improvement 2020/21. We continue to make good progress with this and these are some of the areas we are working on.

For Ark's tenants:



- Plans are to be made for all Ark properties in making sure they are high quality, energy efficient and affordable. Details will be shared when the plan is completed.
- We have established the tenant scrutiny group, they will be reviewing the contract for grounds maintenance. This is a huge step forward to ensure contractors are focused on making improvements that tenants wish.

- We have created a Community Benefit Fund. This will provide local communities access to funding and make decisions about what minor improvements can be made in areas of your communities.
- Repairs are going onto our system in real time which will speed up the time to get the repair completed.



For Ark's Supported People

If you are struggling to meet the cost of heating your home, please contact us. We will do all we can to get you the support you need to ensure your home is warm this winter.



I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas, I look forward to updating you all in the New-Year, as we continue to bring you the improvements to your service that you told us are important to you.

Bobby

Health & Safety Update



Going out safely during Winter.



During winter the weather can vary from calm conditions to high winds, heavy snow, black ice and blizzard conditions.

How to stay healthy and safe?



- It is important to listen to **TV or radio** to see if there are winter weather warnings coming to your area.
- Always **listen to police advice** if they say it is too dangerous to go outside.
- Make sure that you have **warm clothing and suitable footwear** if you decide to go outside during winter weather.
- Try to keep your **paths and steps at your home clear** by removing snow using a shovel and place rock salt on **paths and steps** to prevent ice forming.
- Have regular **hot drinks and hot food** during times of severe weather to give you energy.
- Speak with family, neighbours and Ark staff how we can all **check on each other** during winter weather periods.



Housing Update



Information sharing & gathering

We recently sent you a letter with a couple of very important documents.

Rent Consultation Paper

This sets out the 2 options we are considering for 2022-23. Please give us your feedback by:

- E-mailing us at housing@arkha.org.uk
- Completing the reply form and posting it back to us in the prepaid envelope
- Deadline is 14th January 2022
- We will report back to the Board of Management to make the final decisions.

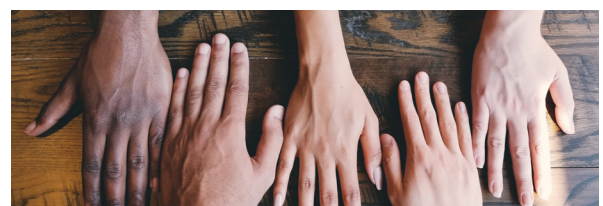
Equality Monitoring Form

In the last newsletter we told you we would be sending a form to every tenant.

It is really important that we know all these details about our tenants as it helps us to assess if we are treating everyone equally and allows us to shape our services to suit your specific needs.

Please be assured that this information will be treated with the utmost confidence and will not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know.

Again, a pre-paid envelope is enclosed to allow you to send this back to us and we hope that you will do so before 31st January 2022.



Annual House Visits



The Housing teams plan to visit each of our tenants in their home each year as part of our efforts to improve the service we provide as a landlord.

Annual House Visits are an opportunity for you to keep in touch with us and discuss any concerns you may have.

It also gives us the chance to check that our homes are not being used for anything that breaches tenancy conditions and are kept in a good condition.

Annual House Visits April 2021- June 2021

4 house visits were carried out in the first quarter.

- 1 visit Oxgangs Bank, Edinburgh
- 1 visit Albany Street, Dunfermline
- 2 visits Muirs Court & Uphall

Issues discussed at visits:

- Garden contractory
- Repairs

The reason that only 4 visits were carried out:

- Housing Officers were awaiting update on COVID 19 restrictions.
- Co-ordinating visits with Asset Officers doing surveys



Annual House Visits June - September 2021

75 annual house visits were carried out in the second quarter:

- Alloa - 10
- Linlithgow - 9
- Musselburgh - 1
- Dalkeith - 2
- Fraserburgh 13
- Portlethen - 14
- MacDuff - 17
- Peterhead - 9

Issues discussed at visit:

- Maintenance issues
- Furniture packages
- Rent accounts
- Guardian details
- Neighbour disputes
- Properties in poor condition
- Hoarding issue

If you were not home for the arranged annual house visit and would like to rearrange or you would like your visit prioritised please call the housing team on:
0131 478 8146

or you can email:
housing@arkha.org.uk

What work has been done to address issues raised?

- Feedback has been given to the asset team to support them with retendering the garden contract to prevent future issues with the landscaping contract.
- All repairs were reported to the asset team to raise works orders.
- Furniture packages were removed when not utilised or new items of furniture were ordered when required.
- Advice/support offered to tenants in financial difficulty.
- Tenancy records/contact details updated.
- Housing officers working with tenants to improve the condition of their tenancy and improve their living conditions with support from 3rd party agencies



What are Tenant Led Estate Visits?

These are opportunities for tenants to get involved. We invite you to walk around with Ark staff and be involved in the management of your local area.



We encourage you to give feedback on services and highlight areas you feel there are issues that should be prioritised.



We will be onsite for about 90 minutes and you can come for a chat or accompany us for the full visit. If you would rather not attend but still want to give feedback then you can email housing@arkha.org.uk

Letters will be sent out with dates for developments on the New-Year, look out for these in the post and please have a think about joining us at your development.



What are the benefits of effective Estate Management?

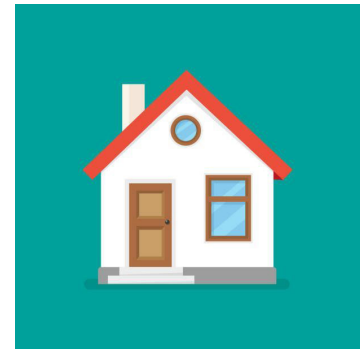
Regular visits and actions help to maintain our properties and the local environment. By involving tenants it allows for residents to be involved and participate.

Tenants can help their local community by providing feedback and ideas, as well as encouraging positive relationships between Ark and tenants.

Being proactive and making sure there is quick response to the estate management problems.

Regular visits provide clear rights and responsibilities for staff and tenants in order to achieve and maintain high property and environmental standards.

Tenant led visits provide the opportunity for feedback so Ark can ensure contractors are providing quality of service, which represents value for money.



Complaints Update



In the autumn edition of the newsletter, we told you about the revised Model Complaints Handling Procedure, published by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Learning from complaints

One complaint was about how we keep in touch with people using Ark.

We agreed that we can do better with this and said sorry for our mistake. We are going to look at how we keep in touch with people to make sure we get this right in future.

David Boucher
Compliance Officer
0131 478 8170



Between July & September Ark received 26 complaints.

Out of the 26 complaints

- 17 about Care and Support
- 9 about other departments

Of these complaints-

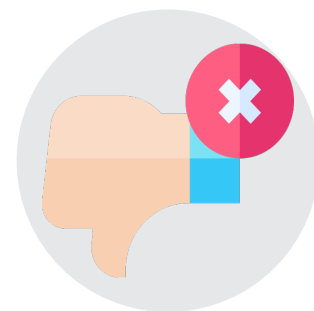
- 13 we agreed with
- 8 we partly agreed with
- 5 we did not agree with

20 of these complaints were handled within 5 working days.

6 of these complaints required more investigation and were dealt within 20 working days.

2 of the complaints needed more examination.

How to make a Complaint



How to Report Complaints to Us

The way to report a complaint to us depends on the type of complaint.

Housing Services - Tenancy Matters

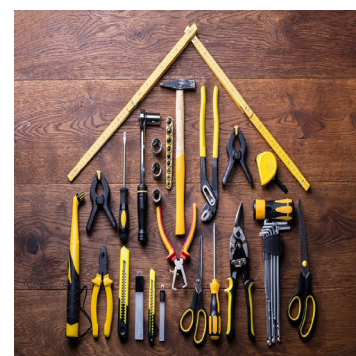
If you have a concern or complaint about your tenancy you can contact the team on **0131 478 8146**

Tenancy matters could be:

- Seeking help to resolve a neighbour dispute or if you are experiencing anti-social behaviour caused by a neighbour.
- Concerns about the communal areas or the estate area surrounding your home.

Property and Repairs

If you have a complaint about the property you live in or getting repairs carried out you can phone the asset team on **0131 478 8143** or email repairs repairs@arkha.org.uk



Ark Care & Support

If you have a complaint about the Ark Care and Support staff, this can be directly reported to the local service manager or you can phone Ark head office on **0131 477 9027**



A complaint about Our service

We aim to deliver a first class service to our tenants at all times.

However we realise that there may be times in which you are unhappy with the services we provide.

We want you to tell us when you are unhappy and we will work to resolve any issues as quickly as possible



You can make a complaint in any way that you chose:

- Speak to your local Ark Care & Support team, Housing services team or Asset team
- Telephone us on **0131 477 9027**
- Write to us Ark, The Priory, Canaan Lane, Edinburgh, EH10 4SG
- Online at **www.arkha.org.uk/how-we-work/how-to-make-a-complaint**

We will speak to you about your complaint within 5 working days or we will write to you to let you know we have received your complaint and that we will respond in 20 working days.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman by telephone **0800 377 7330** or by post **99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS**

Moving into an Ark Property



A warm welcome to all new tenants who joined us at Ark Housing this year and who will be celebrating their first Christmas in a new home.

Finding a new home and moving in can be a stressful experience but you can be supported by friends, family and the Housing staff at Ark.



Usually within eight weeks of a new tenancy starting, a Housing Officer carries out a **Settling In Visit** at the tenants new home to find out how they are getting on and to answer any questions they have.

It is also an opportunity to discuss any issues they may have whether that relates to benefits, rent, repairs or accessing other services within the community.



Any feedback new tenants may have can also be made in the Moving In Satisfaction Survey. This questionnaire asks about tenants experiences of the allocation and sign up process, standard of the property when moving in, estate and communal areas and any maintenance issues.

Data from the survey and tenant's comments are used to evaluate how well Ark supports tenants throughout this process and to improve services for all tenants.



In 2020/21:

- 50% of new tenants were satisfied with the standard of their new home
- 36% of new tenants were very satisfied with the standard of their new home.



Ark housing also was highly rated by new tenants for giving enough information about the property, arranging viewing at times convenient to applicants and explaining tenancy agreements clearly achieving over 80% rating by new tenants in each of these areas.

The Housing Team recently met to discuss Moving In Satisfaction Surveys recognising that they are an important part of helping tenants feel at home and welcomed to their new property.



Currently the team are reviewing the content of the form and the way in which they are sent out to tenants, going forward we would like to introduce online Moving In Satisfaction Surveys for tenants to complete.

If you have any comments, feedback or suggestions on the moving in process please feel free to contact the

Housing Team on **0131 478 8146**
or email **housing@arkha.org.uk**



Significant Failures



All tenants receive the significant performance failures leaflet in their sign up pack.

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about 'significant performance failures'.



What is a significant performance failure? (SPF)

The Scottish Housing Regulator have set out what could constitute a SPF.

- consistently and repeatedly fails to achieve outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter or outcomes agreed locally with tenants; or
- has not reported its performance annually to its tenants or the annual reported performance does not reflect actual performance;
- has materially failed to meet our Regulatory Standards;
- the landlord's action (s), or failure to take action, puts tenants' interests at risk and this significantly affects a number of the landlord's tenants.



An SPF could happen where ARK:

- fails to carry out health and safety requirements, such as annual gas safety checks;
- is not maintaining tenants' homes or carrying out repairs in line with its legislative duties and published policies;
- fails to have appropriate governance and financial procedures in place or apply them; or
- does not consult tenants about issues such as proposed rent increases and other policies that affect tenants.



Complaints about Ark

An SPF is not an individual tenant complaint about services.

If you have a complaint, for example if you are unhappy about how ARK carried out repairs to your own home, then you should raise this directly with ARK through our complaints procedure.

You can get a copy of the complaints procedure from a member of our team.

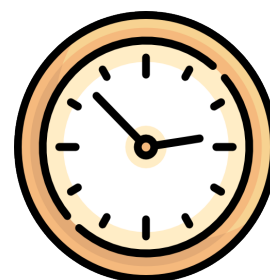


What should I do if I think there is an SPF?

If you think there is an SPF you firstly need to raise the issue directly with Ark.

You should give Ark the chance to respond within its published timescale and reasonable time to address the issue.

If Ark has not dealt with the issue then you can report an SPF to Scottish Housing Regulator.



How do I report an SPF?

To report an SPF, you should complete the form available from the Regulator.

You should tell them exactly what the issue is and demonstrate that it significantly affects a number of the landlord's tenants.

You should also tell them when you raised it with Ark and how Ark responded.

The Regulator will contact you within five working days of receiving your reported SPF to tell you what we will do and our timescales.



What will we do?

The regulator will:

- look at the information to decide whether it is, or could be, an SPF;
- ask you for further information if we need it; · ask the landlord for information if we need it;
- decide whether we need to contact other regulatory bodies;
- keep you updated about progress and tell you when we aim to make a decision; and
- write to tell you and the landlord our decision and the reasons.

The regulator will decide whether it is an SPF as quickly as possible. The length of time it takes will depend on:

- how complex the issue is;
- the amount of information we need to gather and look at; and
- how quickly we get the information we need.

What will happen if we decide it is an SPF?

This will depend on the circumstances. The regulator will decide whether they need to engage with Ark to ensure it takes action to address the issue.

If the regulator needs to engage with Ark about an SPF the regulator will say this in a regulation plan. Where there has been an SPF they publish the findings on the regulator website.

If you disagree with the regulator decision

You can ask the regulator to review their decision. Further information about their review process and how you can request a review is contained in the regulator guidance, How to request a review of a regulatory decision – March 2016 on their website.

How to contact The Scottish Housing Regulator

If you would like to report an SPF please complete the required form providing as much information as possible. You can send this information by:

Email: shr@scottishhousingregulator.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Telephone: 0141 242 5642

Postal Address:
Scottish Housing Regulator,
Buchanan House,
58 Port Dundas Rd, Glasgow G4 0HF



Housing Team Contacts
housing@arkha.org.uk
0131 478 8146



Asset Team Contacts
repairs@arkha.org.uk
0131 478 8143

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