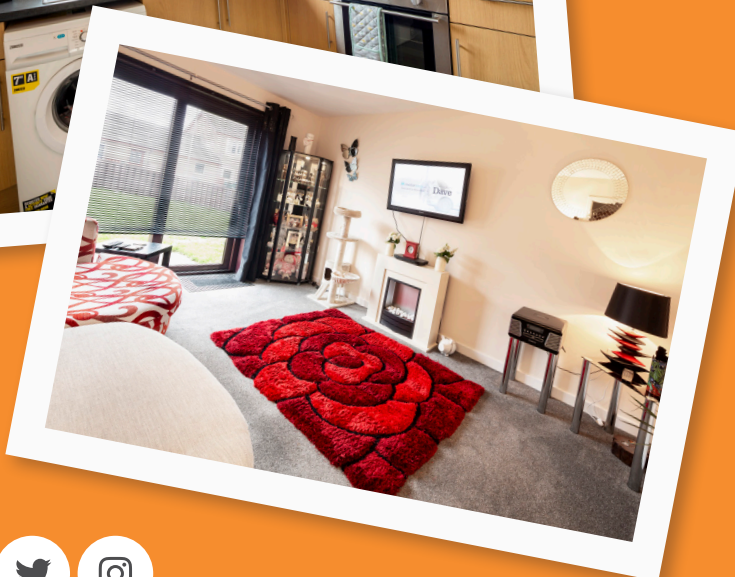




Tenants News



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Welcome

Bobby Duffy
Ark Chief Executive



Welcome to the autumn edition of the Ark Newsletter.

I hope you are well and receiving a good quality of service from Ark.

In the summer edition of the newsletter, I told you about the Programme for Improvement 2021/22; our programme for delivering the quality improvements we have identified across Ark.

It is early in the reporting year, but we are making good progress in the areas for improvement we have identified; we are currently working on fifty different areas at the moment that will be delivered over the next few months and I wish to highlight a few for you.

For our tenants:

- We have created a strategic planning group of colleagues across all aspects of the business that will have a key focus on ensuring we meet our strategic objective of providing high quality, energy efficient, affordable homes. This group will lead the work of assessing how our homes will meet this objective and create the plans for making the necessary improvements in our homes.

The details of this plan will be shared with our tenants when it has been completed.

- Now that we can move around the country more freely, the Asset team have just completed a full survey of the condition of all of our housing stock. This is the first time in many years we have carried this out in-house and in full in the same year. The data from this survey will be collated and used to inform the work of the strategic planning group I described above.
- We have now shared the findings of the latest tenants' satisfaction survey with our tenants. We have established a Project Group made up of Ark colleagues and work has commenced on creating a tenant improvement plan that will build on the areas our tenants told us we were doing well in and address the areas our tenants told us we were not doing so well; again the detail of this will be shared with you when it is completed.

For our supported people:

- We have identified the key information we will need to assess future service developments and have created a timetable in which to carry out this work. This is important for our supported people as it will help us identify our areas of strength in our service provision that we can build upon and help us identify where we need to improve to ensure we continue to support people to live good lives

These are just a few of the areas where we have made progress since April this year and I will keep you updated on our progress throughout the year.

I had the pleasure, last week, of attending my first tenants' meeting since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was really good to be out and about again, meeting new people and hearing what the impact of the last 18 months has been like for them.

We discussed a number of issues, some positive and some not so positive; however I am confident that the response they received from me and the team, reassured

them that those areas where they were dissatisfied will be addressed.

This is the first of a series of visits I plan to undertake in the coming months and I look forward to meeting tenants, supported people and staff across the organisation. If you are planning an event or a meeting and you think I could add some value to that please let me know and I arrange to come along.

As restrictions continue to ease, Arks' operations are returning more to normal. Our main office, the Priory, will start to ease the full closure and we will welcome more presence in the building with a gradual and planned approach and it will be good to see colleagues we have not seen in quite some time. As always thanks to every member of Ark staff for all you have done in the past 18 months and thank you to you, our customers, for bearing with us over what has been a very challenging period for everyone.

Take care and please continue to stay safe.

Bobby

Low Income Pandemic Payment



The Low Income Pandemic Payment is a one-off payment of £130 to a household to help with increased costs and lost income due to coronavirus.

Who can get it?

You could get the payment

1. If you were in receipt of **Council Tax Reduction** for at least one day during the period 1 April to 30 April 2021

or

2. If you **do not pay Council Tax** for one of the following reasons:

- you are in temporary accommodation, including a refuge
- your home is unoccupied because you are being cared for or are caring for someone else
- all members of the household are care leavers, are under 18 or are severely mentally impaired.

Your local council will identify who is entitled to this payment and will make the payment to you if you are eligible. Check with them for more information if you are not sure.

Your local council can make the payment as a credit into your Council Tax account or into your bank account or a payment card such as PayPoint.

You may also get the payment if you make a backdated claim for Council Tax Reduction which covers any day in April 2021.

If you are not currently in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and think you were eligible in April 2021, you will have to apply for Council Tax Reduction first before you can get the Low Income Pandemic Payment.

Contact your local council to apply for Council Tax Reduction and get the payment. You can apply for Council Tax reduction on your local council website or contact them by phone.





Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Do I need to apply for the Low Income Pandemic Payment?

A. No. The Council will have your details on record and will be in touch.

Council's will be contacting people to find out how they would like the payment to be made to them. If you are invited to provide bank details to receive this payment into your bank account you will need to do so within the required timescale.

Some Council's indicate if you are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and do not respond within the set timescale to provide your bank details then £130 will be credited to your Council Tax account.

If you are exempt from paying Council Tax and you do provide bank details your Council may not be able to make this payment to you.

Q. When will I receive the payment?

A. Council's aim to have payments issued by Sunday 31 October 2021.

Q. Will I get a payment for each member of my household?

A. No - if you are eligible for payment, you

will receive one single payment of £130 for your household.

Q. Will this payment affect my claim for Universal Credit?

A. If you receive Universal Credit, then this payment will be counted as Capital. This will not normally affect the amount you receive unless you have savings or other Capital totalling over £6,000. If you are worried that this payment could impact your Universal Credit award, you should report the payment in your journal by signing in to your Universal Credit account or by calling the Universal Credit Freephone Helpline on 0800 328 5644.

This payment will be disregarded in full for other benefits and for Income Tax purposes.

Q. Where can I find more information on the Low Income Pandemic Payment?

A. For more information, visit the Scottish Government website at:

www.mygov.scot/low-income-pandemic-payment

Scottish Housing Day 2021



We are happy to have supported the SFHA's Scottish Housing Day on 15 September 2021.

This year as the world's attention will be on Glasgow for the UN's climate conference COP26 in November, the focus was on **housing and the climate emergency**.

We were delighted to be able to do lots of activities for this year's theme.

We planted trees in our development in Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, following a request from our tenants who want to create a beautiful and accessible sensory space in their garden. We very much support this idea and wanted to help them get started in their project.



Our asset management team was also busy with **rewilding an area in our development in Peebles, Scottish Borders**. An area of the garden has now been marked and wildflower seeds planted. It won't take too long for them to start growing, looking colourful and attracting bees and other pollinators which are really important for the environment.



We have also encouraged our people to think about the role that they and their homes play in tackling the climate emergency. The response has been great, from some of our services taking part in an Eco Challenge to tenants and staff giving us their tips and powerful statements.

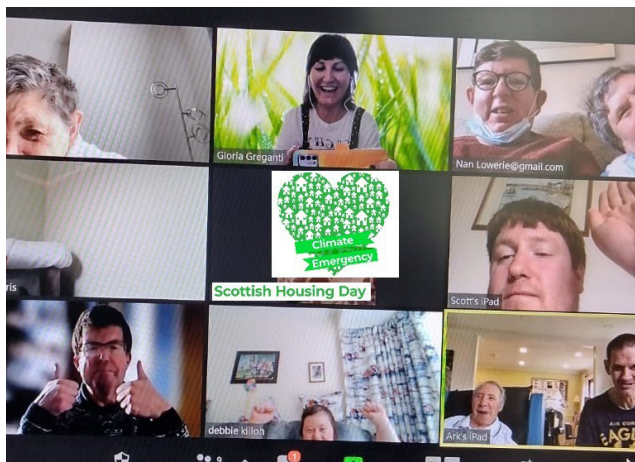
In particular **we would like to congratulate Speak Out Worker Laura who was able to organise a whole week of litter**

picking events in Forfar, involving staff, tenants, supported people and the whole community. What an amazing achievement for someone who just started in her Speak Out role!

Laura said: 'I'm so happy with how well everyone did! They pulled together as a group helping each other, they had a blast and would like to make it a regular thing!'



On Friday 10th the **Ark Voices group** members met on Zoom to share tips on how to help the environment. From recycling household waste to planting wildflowers for the bees, everyone showed great knowledge and commitment to tackle the climate emergency.



We also asked our staff to share their thoughts with us.

Ark Chief Executive Officer Bobby Duffy said:

'I'm helping to tackle the climate emergency by...educating myself on the small things I can do to reduce my own carbon footprint, using the car less, recycling everything that I can, using more energy efficient domestic appliances, buying goods that have been produced in a greener way, I have an energy supplier who uses green energy sources, I try to use less energy at home and I am gradually making my home more energy efficient.'

'It's important to tackle the climate emergency because... time is running out! Governments across the world must create a climate emergency strategy that every country can sign up to that will make a meaningful impact on reducing the impact of the climate emergency. '

Debbie Munro, Ark Housing Officer said:

'I'm helping to tackle the climate emergency by.... recycling as much household waste as possible'

'It's important to tackle the climate emergency because.... it is our responsibility as humans, we are the ones who can make positive changes'

Repairs & Maintenance



You can report a repair either by calling us on 0131 478 8143 or e-mailing repairs@arkha.org.uk.

Please provide as much information as possible to allow our staff to quickly and correctly categorise the urgency of the repair. Please note, if you exaggerate the urgency of the problem to get a quicker (emergency) response, we may need to charge you for the emergency call out.

Handy Tips for repairs to try before calling

Blocked toilet/Sink - If the toilet pan is already full, remove some of the water into a bucket or container. If you have a plunger (or a toilet brush wrapped in a plastic bag would also work), push the plunger/toilet brush to the bottom of the pan and pump up and down vigorously about a dozen times. This creates a vacuum that may shift the blockage.

If the sink won't drain, try putting in the plug, or plunger and pull back out again about a dozen times, this can also create a

vacuum which may shift the blockage. If this doesn't work please call the repairs number or, if out of hours then call the appropriate emergency number.

Smoke Detectors - Remember to test your smoke detector, usually every week, by pressing and holding the button for a few seconds - the alarm should sound. If you can't hear anything, try giving the smoke detector a quick clean with your Hoover nozzle. If it still doesn't work, you may need a repair or replacement. If you hear a low tone every few minutes, it means the back-up battery in your smoke alarm needs replacing.

Loss of Power - A total loss of power could also be due to a power cut so (while keeping a safe distance) check if your neighbour has also lost power, if they have then please call your supplier.

Outside of office hours emergency repairs should be reported by telephoning the numbers listed below:

Area	Repair	Contractor	Telephone
All Areas	Gas Central Heating	Heatcare	01343 842 042
Forres	Emergency Only	Heatcare	01343 842 042
MacDuff, Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Inverurie, Aberdeen, Portlethen, Buckie	Emergency Only	1 Call Property Maintenance	01224 638 888
Arbroath, Blairgowrie, Forfar, Perth, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Fife, Lothians and Scottish Borders	Emergency Only	All in 1 Property Maintenance	07756 147 365 or 07810 883 676

Fire Alarm Upgrades

You should have received a letter confirming that the smoke and heat detectors in your property will be upgraded to comply with new legislation being enforced by the Scottish Government in February 2022.

Our contractor, First Call, will be carrying out the installations. Please get in touch with us if your property has not yet been upgraded and we will arrange a time, convenient to you, for First Call to attend.

Gas Servicing

Throughout the year, our contractor Heatcare carry out Annual Gas Safety Checks. It is our legal responsibility to provide an annual gas safety certificate to our tenants, and we would therefore ask that you help us by allowing Heatcare access to your property in order to carry out the annual service.

To keep your household and our employees/contractors safe, we will follow social distancing protocols whilst in your home. If self-isolating, please let us know and we will re-arrange the visit after the isolation period.

Gardening

Advice and Responsibilities



During the last 18 months of various restrictions and lockdowns, the importance of a pleasant garden space has been highlighted and many people have taken to gardening and looking to improve their spaces at home. For some it is a new found hobby and a good way of connecting with nature and keeping fit.

Ark tenants with a private garden have a responsibility to keep their garden to a “satisfactory standard”. Below we explain what this might mean for you.

- You should keep the garden including footpaths and driveways in good and tidy order, free from weeds, free from litter and free from dog and other animal dirt.
- During the growing season you should cut the grass frequently so that it is no longer than ten centimetres.
- You should prune back bushes and shrubs so they are not overgrown.
- You should cut hedges so that the hedges do not exceed one metre in height where the vision of motorists would be impeded and two metres elsewhere.
- You should not top, lop, pollard or fell trees without our prior written consent. You must also not remove, chop down or

destroy any bushes or hedges without our prior written permission unless you planted them.

- You should receive our prior written permission and all other necessary approvals (for example Planning Permission) before erecting any structures (for example a shed or greenhouse) in the garden.

If you are struggling to maintain a private garden please do not hesitate to get in touch for further advice. There may be services locally which can help you if you are finding it hard to manage.

Please remember if you want to make changes to your garden space, for example lay/update any slabbing or make changes to the garden structure, then you must request permission from the Maintenance Team to do this. They can be contacted via repairs@arkha.org.uk or call 0131 478 8143 and ask to discuss with your local Maintenance Officer who will send out permission forms to be completed and returned.



Health & Safety



Looking after your home safely

There will be small jobs that will need done around the home from time to time such as changing light bulbs, changing batteries in smoke detectors, taking down/hanging curtains and cleaning jobs that you may want to carry out.

- Remember that you can ask friends or family to help you with these jobs if you prefer.
- If you, friends or family do this work make sure that they work safely and do not carry out work they are not allowed to do. Ark's tenant handbook has more information on this.
- Use stepladders that are in good condition if you have to do a job that means you have to go up high – never work of chairs or stools, this is how many people get hurt in their home.
- Sometimes, Ark staff or contractors will have to do small jobs in your home. There are rules for them to work safely and they have to be followed as part of their job.



Some work in your home such as gas, plumbing and electrical work should only be carried out by trained people. Ask Ark staff for advice if you are unsure.

Bulky / Special Uplifts



Bulky / special uplifts is a service to collect bulky household items that are too big to fit into a wheeled bin and cannot be transported to a recycling centre.

This should be arranged by contacting your local council on the numbers provided on the next page.

What can be collected:

- fridges/freezers
- all items of free standing furniture
- all domestic electrical appliances
- carpets, rugs, vinyl, mattress/mattresses, beds/bedding etc
- general waste - non-recyclable
- Sky Dishes

Will not collect:

- any liquid in containers (eg cans of paint)
- materials from house improvements/renovations (eg asbestos, bathroom suites, cement blocks, central heating boiler or radiators, doors, fitted kitchens, fuel tanks, gas cylinders, glass, large planks of wood, plasterboard, skirting boards, storage heaters, window frames)

- garden materials (earth or turf, garden sheds or greenhouses, hedging, trees)
- car parts
- recyclable waste (paper, cans, plastic containers etc)
- pianos
- mirrors
- windows

Material for a bulky waste collection should be sited at the normal point of collection, and should be available from 6am on the day of collection. The crew will not enter your premises for the goods.



Contacts for your area:

Area	Telephone	Website
Aberdeen City	03000 200 292	www.aberdeencity.gov.uk
Aberdeenshire	03456 081 207	www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Angus	07594 223596 angusupcycling@gmail.com	www.angus.gov.uk
Edinburgh	0345 143 005 or 0800 0665 820 to pass items on. Items are collected and sold to support good causes	www.edinburgh.gov.uk or www.reusephonenumber.com
Fife	03451 55 00 22	www.fife.gov.uk
Midlothian	0131 561 5284	www.midlothian.gov.uk
Moray	0300 123 4565	www.moray.gov.uk
Perth & Kinross	01738 476476	www.pkc.gov.uk
Scottish Borders	0300 100 1800	www.scotborders.gov.uk

Fly Tipping



Fly tipping is the illegal deposit of any waste onto land, including waste dumped or tipped on a site with no license to accept waste.

Everyone is responsible for the safe and correct disposal of their own waste.

Key legislation: Section 33 EPA 1990.

Fly tipping is a criminal offence.

Fly tipping is the illegal dumping of waste onto land that has no licence to accept it – from a bin bag of household rubbish to large quantities of tyres or construction waste.

Preventing Fly Tipping

Waste that isn't managed properly can lead to fly tipping or unauthorised burning. Fly tipped waste blights our rural land and countryside and puts the health and wellbeing of our communities at risk.

Householders and members of the public can help tackle fly tipping. Your waste is your responsibility. By following the guidance below, you can make sure your household waste is disposed of legally, safely and doesn't cause environmental pollution.

Incidents of fly tipping can be reported by contacting your Local Authority directly. You can find details for the relevant Local Authority at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Alternatively, if you don't have online access, you can call the Dumb Dumpers phone line on 0300 777 22 92.

If the incident you report is on-going, is believed to be of a hazardous nature or is near a watercourse, the information will be passed to SEPA or Police Scotland.

If the waste concerned is non-hazardous, the information will be passed to the relevant Local Authority for investigation.



Waste Crime

Waste criminals profit at the expense of legitimate businesses, undercutting them by not paying to deposit waste at approved disposal sites and competing unfairly.

It often leads to illegal large scale chronic fly tipping at industrial sites and rural locations.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) will work with partners, such as Police Scotland and local authorities to investigate large scale industrial fly tipping in communities.

If you see anyone dumping rubbish illegally, report it through the Dumb Dumpers online report or on SEPA's pollution hotline, 0800 607080.



For more information on fly tipping and duty of care, visit:

Zero Waste Scotland



SEPA's waste carriers web page



Find your local authority website



LIFT Scheme



Get a LIFT onto the property ladder

The LIFT (Low-cost Initiative for First-Time Buyers) scheme helps first-time buyers, and other priority groups including current social renters, get onto the property ladder with Scottish Government support.

“If it wasn’t for LIFT, I would not have been able to purchase a property as I found it difficult to save a large amount of money for a deposit. I’m so grateful for LIFT and would definitely recommend it to others.”

Tracy, LIFT scheme buyer

The Scottish Government contributes between 10% and 40% towards the property price and gets the same percentage back when it is sold. Alternatively, buyers can increase their share if they wish to at any point in future.

You can purchase any size of property as long as you meet the financial criteria and the property is large enough to avoid overcrowding. To be eligible, properties must be:

- Advertised for sale publicly e.g. on a website, and
- Priced within the maximum price threshold for the area.

Visit www.linkhousing.org.uk/lift-tenants for a full list of maximum price thresholds.

LIFT example

A couple with a household income of £38,000 per annum and savings of £3,000 bought a two-bedroom property in Edinburgh with the help of LIFT.

Property price: £155,000

Buyer contribution (deposit plus mortgage): £95,000

Scottish Government contribution: £60,000

In this example, the Scottish Government contributes 39% of the price and will get the same percentage back when the property is sold, unless the buyer decides to increase their share.

In addition to first-time buyers, LIFT is open to:

- Social renters
- People with a disability who can demonstrate a housing need
- Members of the armed forces and veterans who have left within the past two years
- Widows, widowers and other partners of those who have lost their life while serving in the armed forces within the last two years
- People aged over 60 who can demonstrate a housing need (not required to take a mortgage)



For more information, visit www.linkhousing.org.uk/lift-tenants or text 'LIFT' to 66777.

Eligibility criteria apply.

Always seek independent financial advice.



Home Energy Advice



Home, heating and habits for a greener Scotland

Energy bills continue to rise and account for a large part of many tenants budgets. In Scotland, the numbers of people living in fuel poverty, when more than 10% of their income is spent on heating, has also increased.

Staff at Ark Housing were recently introduced to the work of **Home Energy Scotland** at a special workshop aimed at creating warmer homes, helping tenants reduce bills and to tackle climate change.

Home Energy Scotland is a network of local advice centres all over Scotland. Their website and advisors are able to give free, impartial advice on energy saving in the home. Funded by the Scottish Government and the Energy Saving Trust, it also offers a digital or telephone Home Energy Checks for many local areas as part of an online advice hub.

Advice on energy-saving habits in the home was especially useful in reducing bills and improving energy efficiency. This included:

Understanding your energy bill

Home Energy Scotland provide a useful guide and short video. Different tariffs and charges can be difficult to work out but understanding how and when you use energy in the home gives you the information you need to make changes.

Switch off standby

Although some digital recording devices need to remain switched on to record TV programmes, many electrical and electronic devices such as mobiles and i-pads can be switched off rather than left on standby or charging. Home Energy Scotland suggests that by simply turning off, we could save up to £35 per year.

Kitchen care

Making a change to small habits in how we use larger appliances is also recommended. One less dishwasher load each week can save £8 per year. Filling the kettle half-full before boiling £6 per year. One less load in the washing machine each week £8 per year. Tumbler dryers can significantly add to household energy costs.

Water consumption

Although, there is certainly no shortage of water in Scotland, the costs to heat the water we use for washing, cleaning and cooking increases especially in the winter months when we want to be cosy at home. Home Energy Scotland recommends using water efficient shower heads where possible; making sure washing machines and dishwashers have full loads and are set to eco programmes; running cold water when hot is not needed and fixing any dripping taps; having a basin for washing dishes instead of letting the tap run.

Understanding Heating Controls

Taking the time to learn about and understanding the different functions and settings for timers, room thermostats and radiator valves not only reduces our CO2 footprint, but can help us save from the start. By setting heating and hot water to go on when and where it's needed we can use the systems we have more efficiently.

Many properties now have smart meters which can be controlled remotely by an app on your phone and provide a break-down of energy use. Home Energy Scotland website

has excellent guidance on how to get more efficient at using whatever heating systems, settings or tech you might have.

Although the move to renewable energy and more sustainable habits of energy consumption is challenging, Home Energy Scotland provides useful information and practical advice for making changes that start at home. Housing staff are also able to give advice and provide information on relevant support and services on request.

Home Energy Scotland

Telephone: 0808 808 2282.

All calls are free

Monday – Friday from 8am – 8pm

Saturday from 9am – 5pm



Becoming a member of Ark



Ark Housing Association Ltd. is a membership-based organisation. We will seek to recruit individuals and organisations that have an interest in our work, and also to make effective use of their skills, views and experience.

A member of the Association is an individual or an organisation holding a share in the Association and whose name is entered in the Register of Members.

Ark will seek to ensure that we have a broad-based membership which reflects our purpose and objects, and the communities we serve.

In particular we will welcome applications for membership from tenants, supported people, community groups and other residents of the towns and villages in which we are active.

Members are entitled to:

- attend and vote at Annual or Special General Meetings of the Association;
- seek election to the Board of Management;
- vote at meetings on issues such as elections to the Board.





Would you like to become a member of Ark?

Any enquiry about membership of the Association, will be passed to the Executive Team, who will issue the relevant application form together with a data protection consent form and a covering letter giving details of how an application should be submitted and how it will be processed.

The Board will normally consider each application at their first meeting following receipt of the application form, or as soon as possible thereafter.

If the application is approved membership will take effect immediately, and within 7 working days the appropriate person in the Executive Team will:

- enter the applicant's name in the Register of Members;
- write to the applicant to advise them of the decision;
- arrange for two Board Members and the Secretary to sign a Share Certificate which will then be sent to the new member.

**To apply or for more information, contact Mary Bell
0131 478 8150 or mary.bell@arkha.org.uk**

Cycling Action Plan For Scotland



Ark are pleased to confirm that the consultation phase for Back Hilton Road was carried out in late July.

Letters were issued to residents and an on-site consultation day was carried out by Debbie Munro, Housing Services Officer and Margot Lord, Housing Services Assistant.

There was some positive feedback received and no objections from tenants or guardians, which happily means that the plan can go ahead. Ark firmly believe this will benefit residents and the environment in the long term.

There will be four brand new Velo-Box cycle stores installed in the coming months.

Although we had hoped this work would be complete by end of the summer, it will now be undertaken in the autumn months due to production and delivery delays out with our control.

The agreed location for the units is near the front entrance to the building. In addition to being readily accessible for all tenants/

staff on site, this site is visible from the front of the development and does not restrict access to the parking areas or result in a loss of car parking spaces.

There will be some ground preparation works in the coming weeks carried out by contractors locally – this will include relocation of a litter bin and removal/cutting back of shrubs. Please be reassured that any disruption to tenants will kept to a minimum though.

This will be Ark's first cycle storage installation and we want to encourage uptake for the units. If you are a Back Hilton Road resident and interested please call 0131 478 8146 or email housing@arkha.org.uk for more details.

The next development to benefit from the funding plan is Hoseason Gardens in Edinburgh. Consultation with tenants took place on Tuesday 14th September and we will share more details in the next newsletter.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Bike Security

Ark would also like to encourage all tenants to consider Police Scotland advice to keep their bikes secure:

- Photograph your bike and record all of your bike's details (serial number can be found on the bottom bracket)
- Keep the bike in a safe place.
- Register your bike on the National Cycle Database to help recover your bike if it goes missing.
- Mark your bike's frame with your home postcode and house number using an UV pen or something else
- Insure your bike



Happy Cycling!



Equality Form



Working toward equality for Ark's existing and prospective tenants and employees

From time to time when you apply for a service you may be asked to give lots of personal information about yourself in an Equality Monitoring Form. You may question why you have been asked for this information and what is going to happen with it.

Legislation (The Equality Act 2010) requires public bodies to collect such data to:

- Eliminate conduct prohibited in law.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

The 9 protected characteristics which are "grounds" on which it is unlawful to discriminate are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Scottish Government's Scottish Social Housing Charter, the Scottish Housing Regulator's regulatory framework and the Care Inspectorates' regulatory standards all build on the legal requirement for local authorities, registered social landlords and care providers to collect such data to ensure that the services provided meet the criteria above.

At the start of 2020 Ark began collecting data for 8 of the 9 protected characteristics from our housing applicants (excluding marriage and civil partnership – which only needs to be considered in employment situations).

However for our tenants, where provided previously, we only have data relating to 4 of these protected characteristics (age, disability, race and sex) so we plan to ask you about the other 4.

We do however have to be very careful what we do with the data that we collect as a lot of this data is very personal and classed as special category data.

The UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data protection Act 2018 sets out the requirements on data protection and Ark will pay full regard to these requirements.

You may be concerned that your data may be shared unnecessarily. We will undertake a data protection impact assessment which will ensure that we put in place steps to protect your data. Where we need to use the information for reporting purposes, the data will be anonymised so that it cannot be tracked back to any one individual.

Over the next couple of months you will receive an Equality Monitoring Form and a pre-paid envelope. The completion of this form is completely voluntary but we hope that you will take the time to complete and

return it thus allowing Ark to get a fuller understanding of our customer profile.

It will ask for your explicit consent to share your data with us, by asking you to provide your name and sign the form.

This means that if there is a specific need for us to be aware of your protected characteristics for a particular purpose we will have this knowledge and can adapt the service provision to suit your needs where we can.

Once all the data is collected, long term we will use it to review the services we deliver to tenants and other customers and to use it when developing our strategies on customer care, equality and tenant participation.



Complaints Update



Here is our update on what has been happening with complaints in Ark between April and June 2021.

During this period ARK received 13 complaints, which can be summarised as follows:

Department	Total Number of Complaints	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Care and Support	10	5	3	2
Asset Team	1		1	
Others	2	1	1	
Total	13	6	5	2

Six of these complaints were dealt with at the frontline stage. 'Frontline complaints' are relatively straightforward complaints which can usually be responded to within 5 working days.

On one occasion this deadline was extended by 2 days to allow a more senior manager to speak to the complainant to ensure that he was happy with the resolution.

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

Using Complaints to Improve Service Delivery

One of the complaints received this quarter was jointly investigated by our Housing and Asset Teams as it related to a customer's unhappiness about the sign up visit for a tenancy.

One of the improvement actions identified was that, whenever possible, there will be a joint sign up meeting with the tenant and a member of both the Housing and Asset team to make sure that every tenant has a clear understanding of the roles of each team.

New Model Complaints Handling Procedure

Following a consultation process the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman has produced a revised Model Complaints Handling Procedure for adoption by Registered Social Landlords such as Ark.

The revised version of the complaints procedure includes a core text which is consistent across all public services in Scotland, along with specific guidance for each sector.

The purpose of the MCHP is to provide a standardised and simpler approach to dealing with customer complaints across the housing sector in Scotland, and to make best use of lessons from complaints in order to improve service delivery.

Ark's Board of management has approved the new procedure and this will be available on our website within the next couple of weeks. Our new Compliance and Improvement Business Partner has developed training for staff which will be rolled out from September.



Housing Team Contacts

housing@arkha.org.uk

0131 478 8146



Maintenance Team Contacts

repairs@arkha.org.uk

0131 478 8143

Don't miss out on important updates...

Our housing team are sending regular updates via email to tenants and we want to ensure that we reach as many of you as possible.

If you do not already receive emails from Ark please send us an email to housing@arkha.org.uk and we will add your updated contact details onto our system.



0131 447 9027