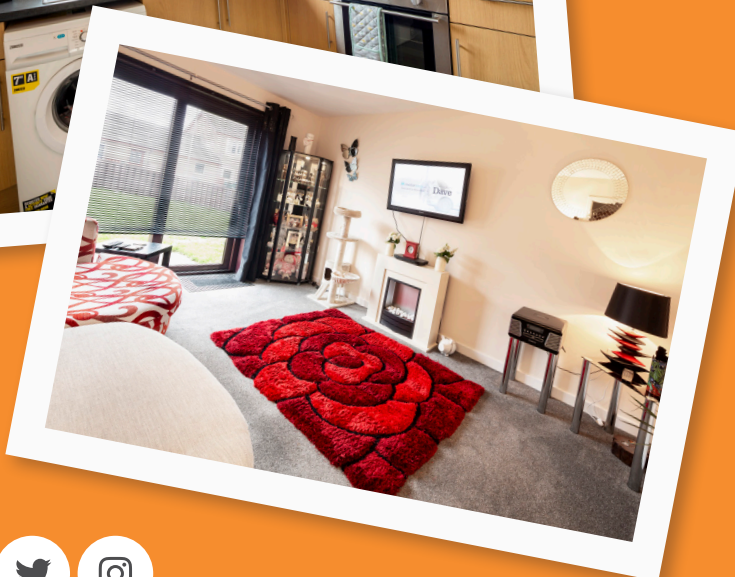




Tenants News



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Welcome

Bobby Duffy
Ark Chief Executive



Welcome to the summer edition of the Ark Newsletter.

I am not going to talk about Covid-19, except to say I hope you and your families have stayed well throughout the past 14 months and to thank colleagues across Ark for all they have done and all they continue to do to provide excellent services to you, our customers.

Instead I wish to focus this article on what you can expect to see from Ark this year and ultimately how this will benefit you as a customer of Ark.

I wrote in the spring edition of the newsletter that our main focus continues to be delivering our strategic objectives set out in the Business Plan 2020-2025.

We have reviewed the ambitions and strategic objectives in the plan and have now identified a significant number of areas for improvement that describe in practical terms, how we will know if we are delivering the continuous improvement across the business our customers told us they wish to see.

We have called the plan for 21/22 the **Programme for Improvement**.

For the purpose of this update I will highlight some areas where we aim to improve the quality of service you receive from Ark; we will also provide you with detailed progress updates over the course of this year, so you too can monitor how we are delivering the Programme for Improvement 21/22 and subsequently the ambitions and strategic objectives of the Business Plan.

Detailed here are a selection of the areas for improvement we aim to deliver this year and how this should positively impact you as a customer of Ark:

For Ark's Tenants

- Ark's Asset Team will complete a programme of **stock condition surveys** on every Ark owned property; this will enable us to develop detailed plans and the investment required to ensure your home is of good quality; is energy efficient and can run at a low cost;
- We will create a **Community Benefit Fund** to be used by our Housing and Maintenance Officers to deliver local improvements within communities and investment initiatives that have

been identified and promoted by our customers;

- We will use the results from the **tenants satisfaction survey** to identify areas for improvement that will ensure a focus upon improved housing services; I will provide you with more detail on this in the next newsletter;
- We will review and redesign our **property repair service** to implement improvements and deliver a customer focused service with a right first time repairs strategy.

For Ark's Supported People

- We will develop ideas on how we can create **opportunities for supported people** that are not part of their commissioned care package to enable individuals to enjoy wider life experiences;
- We will continue to ensure that **supported peoples wishes are central** to how their support is planned and delivered and we will know if this approach is successful as we will be able to receive quarterly reports on how we are supporting people to achieve their outcomes via the Good

Life Support Plans;

- We will collect feedback on **supported peoples satisfaction** with their support on a quarterly basis and use this information to make immediate service improvements for each individual.

This is gearing up to be a very busy and productive year and whilst I have identified some areas of improvement you can expect to see this year, there are many more areas that we will focus upon, that should ultimately lead to better services and improved communication and engagement with Ark customers across the country.

I hope you have a great summer, if we ever get one in Scotland, and I look forward to updating you in the autumn on how we are making improvements across the country for you, our customers.

Thank you.

Bobby

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2020



Findings

Every 3 years, Ark undertakes a survey of all tenants to find out how satisfied, or dissatisfied, they are with the housing and maintenance services provided.

In the summer of 2020, an independent and accredited research company, M-E-L Research, was appointed to carry out the latest survey.

In October 2020 a survey form was e-mailed or posted to all 431 tenants with a return deadline of December 2020.

178 tenants gave feedback to M-E-L.

Table 1 below shows the response rates between tenants who are supported and those who aren't supported. Across both groups roughly 41% of tenants gave us their views.

	Stock size	Responses	Response rate
Tenants	154	65	42%
Supported Tenants	277	113	41%
Overall	431	178	41%

The main headline figures are shown in the next page.

If you want to see the full report, please go to [our website](#).



78%

were satisfied with the overall service provided by Ark.
This was **3% less** than in the 2017 survey results.



80%

were satisfied with the quality of their home.
This was **6% less** than in 2017.



75%

were satisfied with repairs carried out in the last 12 months.
This was **2% less** than in 2017.



73%

felt Ark is good at keeping tenants informed
This was **3% more** than in 2017.



70%

were satisfied with Ark's management of their neighbourhood.
This was **the same** as in 2017.

68%

felt their rent represents good value for money.This was **4% less** than in 2017.

54%

were satisfied with the opportunities to participate in decision making.This was **16% less** than in 2017.

Satisfaction has fallen across most of the key areas since 2017, especially in “opportunities to participate” (16%) and “quality of the home” (6%).

Whilst satisfaction has fallen in most areas it is important to say that dissatisfaction levels, on the whole, have not increased significantly, with more tenants adopting a neutral position.

In fact, dissatisfaction fell by 2% for key indicators such as:

- Overall service (11% compared to 13% in 2017),
- Opportunities to participate (6% compared to 8%),
- Repairs (13% compared to 15%)
- Rent providing value for money (9% compared to 11%)

Table 2 below shows the range in levels of satisfaction between our supported tenants and mainstream tenants. Generally supported tenants were more satisfied compared to mainstream tenants.

Indicator	Tenants	Supported tenants
the quality of home	87%	69%
Ark's management of the neighbourhood	77%	59%
Rent representing good value for money	74%	59%
Keeping residents informed	73%	73%
Opportunities to participate in decision making	52%	58%

The results also showed that:

- older residents were more satisfied than younger ones,
- tenants living in flats, bedsits and rooms were more satisfied with the overall service provided, the quality of their home and their rent providing value for money compared to those living in bungalows and houses,
- tenants who joined Ark more recently and those that have been with Ark for over 20 years were generally more satisfied.

Beyond the 7 key areas above, tenants were asked what they thought Ark does well as a landlord and what they do not do particularly well. The figure in brackets is the percentage of tenants that gave feedback in each of the areas.

Areas where Ark does well include:

- Having helpful staff (70%)
- Providing a good standard of housing (55%)
- Offering a good repairs service (43%)

Areas where Ark does not do well include:

- The repairs service needs improving (40%)
- Estates need improving or maintaining better (28%)
- Poor communication (23%)

The recently launched Ark Business Plan for 2020 – 2025 sets out the new vision that Ark has of “inclusive communities where quality of housing and care enable people to thrive and live a good life”.

We will develop a **Service Improvement Plan** to tell tenants what we will do and how we will do it but some key objectives will be:

- Creating new strategies to ensure the provision of high quality housing at rental levels that offer value.
- The development of a new Asset Management Strategy to ensure compliance with SHQS and EESSH standards.
- Setting a new definition for value for money, creating a strategy that will focus on partnering with tenants to meet this definition.
- Supporting tenants with rising fuel costs and promoting the free advice given by Home Energy Scotland and providing advice on fuel poverty support.
- Re-launching the Scrutiny Group – so far we have 5 volunteers but we would like to see more tenants get involved as this is a real opportunity to closely examine what we do and make recommendations on how we can improve things.
- Developing a new Customer Engagement Strategy where we will consider what we currently do to engage with customers and how we can make this better.

Repairs & Maintenance



We are delighted that with the easing of restrictions we can now resume our full repairs service. 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
Buckie, Forres	Emergency Only	1 Call Property Maintenance	01224 638 888
MacDuff, Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Inverurie, Aberdeen, Portlethen	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

Stock Condition Surveys

By now, you should have received a letter advising you that one of our Maintenance Officers will be inspecting your property to carry out a stock condition survey.

If the proposed time does not suit you, please e-mail repairs@arkha.org.uk to re-arrange.

The surveys are important in allowing us to assess the condition of our properties and plan for future investment programmes over the next 5-10 years.

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.

New Housing Development



In our new business plan one of our key objectives is to have a reputation for excellence and be recognised as a high quality provider of housing and care.

To help us achieve this, we are working towards improving the quality and standards of our existing properties and, after a pause of almost a decade, we are reigniting our development programme to build a range of new homes to meet the needs of our existing and future customers.

Our first development site is at Crusader Rise, Livingston and will provide 20 new homes for social rent that will increase the supply of good quality, sustainable, accessible and affordable housing to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of West Lothian's population.

The new homes will provide a range of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom houses and flats including a provision of wheelchair properties. They have been flexibly designed to suit varying needs and future proofed to enable the property to be easily adapted as our customers' needs change.

Subject to securing grant funding from Scottish Government and final Ark Board approval we are hoping to start on site in October 2021 and have the properties completed early 2023.

More detailed information will be shared in the winter edition of the newsletter. To register your interest please contact us.



Health & Safety



Hot summer weather

Most of us welcome some hot weather, but when it is too hot for too long there are risks to your health. Look out for information on the news about very hot weather or heatwaves to help you prepare.

What can happen to people during very hot weather:

- Dehydration – not drinking enough water
- Overheating can cause health problems
- Sunburn

How to cope with very hot weather:

- Try cover your skin during 11am and 3pm
- Wear loose clothing and a hat
- Shut windows and blinds to help keep your rooms cool
- Have a cold drink regularly, try to avoid tea, coffee or alcohol
- Have cool baths and showers
- Use sunscreen with a high factor (50) if your skin is exposed when outside
- If you feel unwell during very hot weather – tell someone about it.

If you have any health and safety concerns please contact Ark's Health and Safety Adviser Brian Gunn at: brian.gunn@arkha.org.uk

COVID-19 Rapid Test

Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus do not show symptoms, so can spread the virus to others without knowing.

Community pharmacies in Scotland are now providing free rapid Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Covid-19 tests for everyone in Scotland.

LFD tests detect proteins in coronavirus. They're simple and quick to use, so are sometimes called rapid tests that you can do at home.

You can collect one pack of 7 LFD tests per person. If you're collecting for a household, you can collect 1 pack for each household member.

You do not need to book an appointment, but you should check opening times.

Find your nearest participating pharmacy at maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk

Fuel Support Fund



The Scotland Social Housing Fuel Support Fund introduced by the Scottish Government is to support households in vulnerable situations during the COVID-19 outbreak, to maintain adequate energy supplies for health and wellbeing and to avoid self-disconnection.

The fund was established in recognition of the additional burden the coronavirus pandemic is having on many households, who may struggle to pay their fuel bills due to loss of income, increased fuel use, and other challenges brought about by the past year.



TENANTS WHO HAVE BENEFITED

Ark posted on social media advising tenants that the fund was available and also sent out an email to all tenants email addresses we have recorded on our system to make them aware of the fund and offered to make an application on any tenants' behalf that had experienced financial difficulty.

Tenants were asked a series of questions set by the Scottish Government and Scottish Federation of Housing:

- About their health over the last 12 months
- Any difficulties they have experienced paying for housing
- Who they would approach in their neighbourhood for fuel or debt advice
- Any current debts
- Impact of the current debts

Access to the fund ended on 7th June 2021. Ark have issued **£1298** worth of cash and energy vouchers to 17 tenants across several of our developments, who made contact and advised that they felt they were eligible and would benefit from the financial assistance.

Utilita Energy Community Fund



Utilita has introduced a Community Fund and, in partnership with Ark, have developed this bespoke fund to support Ark's tenants and their local communities.

For every void that Ark submit and switch to Utilita, they donate £15 per supply point to the bespoke fund. This additional revenue stream can be tailored to suit the needs of the community and tenants.

The Community Fund is available to draw down on every three months, will be paid directly to Ark and can be used to support a project.

Ark & Utilita are committed to:

- Reducing fuel poverty
- Strengthening communities
- Helping provide activities and services which meet the need of communities
- Promoting social inclusion

This is just a guidance, given the fund's focus on community-led programmes, the range of people benefiting from its support is diverse.

It will include all tenants:

- Families
- Lone parents
- Children
- People living with disability and those suffering from a range of health issues
- Older people
- Ethnic minorities
- Other vulnerable groups
- Rural or fragile communities

How do we spend the money?

Get in touch with David at david.weddell@arkha.org.uk or on 0131 478 8162 and let us know how you would like Ark to spend the money.



Scottish Housing Regulator



Annual Assurance Statement

Social landlords must submit to the Scottish Housing Regulator an Annual Assurance Statement between April and October each year.

This is to provide assurance that the organisation complies with the regulatory requirements that apply to all social landlords and the Standards of Governance and Financial Management that apply to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

ARK Housing Association Ltd - Annual Assurance Statement 2020

We comply with the regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework.

This includes that we:

- Achieve all the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services;
- Comply with our legal obligations relating to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety;
- Comply with the Standards of Governance and Financial Management for Registered Social Landlords.

The Board of Management considered sufficient evidence and approved the above statement at the Board of Management on 22nd October 2020.

On 31st March 2021 the Scottish Housing Regulator published the Engagement Plan for 2021-22, a copy of which is published on Ark's website, and Ark's regulatory status based on the above assurance statement that was submitted.

Ark is compliant which means that as a registered social landlord we meet the regulatory requirements, including standards of governance and financial management.

We are currently working on the 2021 Annual Assurance Statement.

Should you want to find out more about the Scottish Housing Regulator and how they assess landlords' performance more information is available on their website: www.housingregulator.gov.scot



**Scottish Housing
Regulator**

Scottish Social Housing Charter



Time for another look

It's that time again!

Every 5 years the Scottish Government looks at the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should achieve for their tenants.

Throughout June and July, TPAS and TIS are hosting a series of consultation events for tenants and landlords to find out whether the Charter needs changed in any way.

The events will last for 2 hours, places are limited! Book now! You can book into an event at a time that suits you.

Consultation sessions are all online, both TPAS and TIS can help you get on-line.

To book a TPAS event call 0141 552 3633 or email enquiries@tpasscotland.org.uk

To book a TIS event call: 0141 248 1242 or email info@tis.org.uk

Date	Time	Participants	Platform	Book with
Tuesday 22nd June	10-12pm	Tenants	Zoom	TIS
Tuesday 29th June	2-4pm	Tenants	Zoom	TIS
Tuesday 29th June	6-8pm	Tenants	Zoom	TIS
Tuesday 6th July	2-4pm	Tenants	Zoom	TPAS
Wednesday 14th July	10-12pm	Tenants	Zoom	TPAS
Wednesday 14th July	2-4pm	Tenants	Zoom	TPAS
Thursday 15th July	2-4pm	Tenants	Zoom	TPAS

Antisocial Behaviour



Anti-social behaviour is a complex issue. Often what feels like a nuisance to some can have a very negative impact on others. The general range and scope of anti-social behaviour can range from relatively minor disputes involving noise and lifestyle clashes to serious and extreme cases including drug dealing and serious harassment.

The definition of what constitutes ‘anti-social behaviour’ is based upon what is viewed reasonable and unreasonable, and this in turn requires a judgement to be made. The types of behaviour viewed as anti-social are likely to include:

- Drug dealing;
- Harassment;
- Racism;
- Sectarianism;
- Violence or threat of violence;
- People gathering and causing a disturbance;
- Noise;
- Failing to control pets;
- Failing to maintain gardens to an acceptable standard;
- Failing to keep the communal areas clean and tidy, (i.e. stairs, closes, back courts, bin areas etc.);
- Failing to comply with instructions on

the storage of rubbish / recycling goods and the storage and collection of rubbish / recycling bins; and

- Any other anti-social behaviour that the Ark reasonably defines as being unacceptable.

We will assess each case individually against the definition outlined in The Anti-social Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 which states the following:

“A person engages in Anti-social Behaviour if they act in a manner that causes, or is likely to cause, alarm or distress or pursues a course of ‘conduct’ that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress, to at least one person who is not of the same household (‘conduct’ includes speech and must involve conduct on at least two occasions).”



Dealing with reported incidents

An incident has to be categorised so that Ark staff will be guided how to respond and to adopt a consistent approach.

It should be recognised however that not all cases will be easily categorised. In the first instance, the Housing Services Officer will be responsible for categorising the complaint.

The table below gives general descriptions, the response targets and resolution targets. Whilst we will respond quickly to Category A incidents, the more serious nature of these incidents and the need to involve a range of partners means that they can take longer to reach a satisfactory resolution.

Category A	Category B	Category C
Incidents of a very serious nature	Incidents of a serious nature	Nuisance behaviour - breach of tenancy conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal behaviour in or around the property including drug dealing. • Physical assault. • Threat of violence. • Harassment. • Serious damage to property. • Other criminal behaviour such as prostitution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent and/or serious noise disturbance. • Allegations of threatening / aggressive / abusive behaviour. • Ongoing failure to control children. • Ongoing failure to control pets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One – off noise disturbance. • Pet nuisance • Keeping pets without permission. • Untidy gardens. • Stairs not being cleaned.
Response: Immediate Or within 1 working day if an immediate response is not possible.	Response: Within 5 working days	Response: Within 5 working days
Resolution: Within 12 months	Resolution: Within 6 months	Resolution: Within 1 month

Money advice



What to do in a financial crisis

If you find yourself in a financial crisis and need help to obtain essential items, such as food, electricity or gas, and household goods, then then you may be able to get help in the following ways:

Crisis Grants

If you need money quickly because of an emergency or a disaster or you have unexpected expenses you may be able to get a crisis grant from the Scottish Welfare Fund:

- You might be able to get a grant for food, essential heating costs, nappies and toiletries, travel costs, furniture, household equipment, travel costs, removal expenses, storage charges and connection charges for gas and electricity.
- You may be eligible if you are 16 years or over, and you have a low income and are unable to get financial help from any other appropriate source.
- It must be needed to prevent serious damage or risk to the health or safety of you or your family.
- To apply for a crisis grant you have to

get in touch with your local Council and you can find out how to contact every Council on www.mygov.scot.

Food Banks

If you run out of food and don't have any money left to buy more you can obtain help from a Food Bank:

- In the first instance you should always contact a referring agency. If you contact the Housing Team then we help to direct you.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau can also refer you to a local foodbank and contact details are provided below.
- If referring agencies are closed, you can contact a local foodbank directly by visiting www.trusselltrust.org

Electricity and Gas

If you run out of electricity or gas and don't have any money to top up:

- Contact your energy supplier, they may be able to provide you with credit until you can top up. The credit normally has to be paid back.
- Another option is to apply for a Crisis Grant from your local authority.

- For advice on energy issues you can call Changeworks Affordable Warmth Advisors free on 0800 870 880, or email them at warmth@changeworks.org.uk
- Home Energy Scotland can also offer advice, call free on 0808 808 2282

What can I do if I need help when self-isolating?

People on low incomes may be eligible to receive a £500 grant if asked to self-isolate. **The Self-Isolation Support Grant** will help those who would lose income if they needed to self-isolate, such as those unable to carry out their work from home.

To be eligible for the grant you must:

- Have been asked to self-isolate by Test & Protect Scotland
- Be able to prove you have lost income due to self-isolation
- Be in receipt of a qualifying benefit or earn less than the real living wage

To apply contact your local Council.

If you are struggling for money you can get advice about the welfare benefits you may be entitled to and how to make the most of your money. Below are some organisations you can contact for help:

Citizens Advice Scotland

0800 028 1456 or www.cas.org.uk

Money Talk Team

0800 085 7145 or moneytalkteam.org.uk

Shelter

0808 800 4444 or
scotland.shelter.org.uk

National Debtline

0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.org

Further Information on welfare benefits at:

- D.W.P - www.gov.uk
- Social Security Scotland - www.mygov.scot

Discretionary Housing Payment



If you're finding it difficult paying your housing costs and you are in receipt of housing benefit or the housing costs element of Universal Credit then you may be able to get discretionary housing payments (DHP's).

The government has given councils funding to give discretionary housing payment to people who have been impacted by welfare reforms and are facing hardship.

What is a discretionary housing payment?

A discretionary housing payment is an additional sum of money that can be paid to you if you are receiving housing benefit or the housing costs element of universal credit and you require some extra help to meet your housing costs because there is a shortfall.

These payments are made at the discretion of your local council and they will decide whether to give you a discretionary housing payment, how much you will be paid and for how long you will receive the payment. Discretionary housing payments can be paid weekly, monthly or can be a lump sum, and they may also be backdated.

Your local housing benefit department will usually take into account any special circumstances that contribute to your financial difficulties, for example:

- reductions in housing benefit or universal credit where the benefit cap has been applied.
- reductions in housing benefit or universal credit for under occupancy.
- for a deposit or rent in advance for a property you have yet to move into, or assistance with moving costs –if you are already receiving housing benefit or universal credit.

Each application is treated strictly on its own merits.

How do I make a claim for DHP?

This will depend on your local council. They may accept claims for discretionary housing payments over the telephone, in writing or electronically.

Your Housing Services Officer will be happy to give you advice on how to make a claim for DHP.

Alternatively you can look on the local council website or speak to your local council.

You can find the contact details for your local council on letters from them, or check at www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council

What information will I need to make a claim?

You will be asked to give evidence of how much money you spend each month. This could be copies of bills or your bank statements. If you or your partner is working you will need to supply recent wage slips. You should also provide any information

about your circumstances that make things difficult for you financially.

If I don't get DHP can I appeal?

The local council can review a discretionary housing payment decision in the event of disputes or where the claimant asks for a re-consideration.

If they don't change their mind, then the matter cannot be progressed any further.



Cycling Action Plan For Scotland



Ark encourages and supports promotion of cycling as a sustainable travel alternative.

Not only is cycling good for the environment, but the health benefits of cycling include muscle toning, improved cardiovascular health, and better blood circulation.

It is one of the simplest (and cheapest) forms of working out and can be done at different intensities depending on your fitness levels and ability.

Certainly since the first lockdown of last year, there has been a visible increase in the amount of cyclists and government reports suggest that cycling soared by as much as 200% on weekends with a 100% increase on weekdays.

Ark are happy to say that we have been successful in applying to Cycling Scotland for funding to install cycle storage at some of our properties, where our staff have highlighted cycle storage as a potential problem.

Installing cycle stores is part of Ark's commitment to improve the health of residents, tackling pollution and congestion and fits in with the Scottish Government's Cycling Action Plan vision which was that 10% of everyday journeys were to be made by bike by 2020.

Ark hope to see our tenants and staff able to meet this as a result of this project and by continuing to promote awareness of the benefits of cycling.

The Assets Team aim to have our initial cycle storage fitted at Back Hilton Road, Aberdeen and Hoseason Gardens (Edinburgh) in the summer of 2021....hopefully in time for some nice sunny bike rides!

We hope that further funding may be secured to roll out storage on to our other developments which could benefit from it too.

The storage units will provide residents with a safe, secure place to leave their bicycles close to their home.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The stores will help reduce the issue of residents parking their bikes in corridors which creates building safety issues, and keeps the communal areas looking tidier for all tenants.

They will mean tenants don't have to take bicycles into their houses as some may do due to concerns about leaving them outside in garden areas or car parks.

Encouraging cycling is not only about improving the health and well-being of our residents, it is improving the health and environment of our estates, with fewer cars, less parking congestion and less pollution.

As part of our commitment to the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, Ark will initially join Spokes, the Lothian Cycle campaign, and Aberdeen Cycle Forum to help keep us up to date and informed on matters pertaining to cycling in both these areas.

We will link with local cycling retailers to make the promotion of cycling even more exciting for our residents and to be able to point them in the direction of quality products and advice and we will also link in with Police Scotland to promote advice about bike security as well as road safety.

Happy Cycling!



These Homes



There is a new Choice Based Lettings System which Ark opt to use to advertise available properties occasionally in the North East of Scotland.

As well as covering Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City, it also advertises properties in Clackmannanshire, East Lothian and Scottish Borders.

It is a quick and easy to use service for people looking for rented housing and completely separate from local authority housing lists.

How it works

Available properties are advertised fortnightly on a Tuesday and have a closing date which you must apply before if you want to be considered.

By using the search function for your chosen areas you can see which properties are available and decide if you are interested in applying – you can apply for more than one at any time too.

You can view property details such as property type, number of bedrooms, rent/service charges and see the location on a map. Often there is a picture of the outside of the property too which is always good to see.

You can also check out how many other people have applied for the property and can receive email notifications of suitable properties that match your needs.

These Homes state that “By offering more choice These Homes hope to build more settled communities and give you more say in where you are housed. These Homes is a simple and straightforward way of letting homes which is fair, open and transparent.”

If you are interested in These Homes you can check them out online at www.thesehomes.com

Registration

These Homes was formerly known as Homehunt. if you or anyone you know were previously registered on Homehunt and are still interested in looking for a Housing Association property then make sure that you complete a new registration on These Homes.

Registration should be done online at www.thesehomes.com

Once your registration has been approved you will receive confirmation that it is live and you will then be able to apply for properties.



Complaints Update



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

During this period we received 11 complaints, which can be summarised as follows:

Department	Total Number of Complaints	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Care and Support	7	1	3	3
Asset Team	3	1	2	0
Others	1	1	0	0
Total	11	3	5	3

5 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 as although the complaint was not upheld the responsible manager wanted to speak to the complainant to provide detailed feedback and reassurance.

On another occasion there was an extension of 1 day to allow the relevant staff member to return from annual leave to respond.

The remaining 6 complaints were responded to at the investigation stage. ‘Investigation complaints’ are more complex and are usually responded to within 20 working days.

Breakdown of complaints by staff attitude/ service issues

Type of Complaint	Total Number	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Attitude or Behaviour	2	0	1	1
Ark Service Issue	5	1	3	1
Attitude/Behaviour and Service Issue	4	2	1	1
Total	11	3	5	3

Using Complaints to Improve Service Delivery

This quarter two of our tenants explained in complaints their frustration about outstanding repairs within their tenancies.

The Asset team made several recommendations in these cases including ensuring that the most up to date government advice was explained in detail to the tenants

and agreeing to organise surveys of the properties once restrictions are lifted.

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 staff know.



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