

# THE OCHIL VIEW

Find us on 

[customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk)  
[www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk)

## WELCOME FROM CHAIRPERSON



Hello, I hope you are all keeping safe and well. Welcome to our latest newsletter, which I hope you will find useful and informative.

It is unfortunate that, due to another lockdown, we have had to stop all but emergency repairs again and all staff have had to return to working from home. However, we are in the fortunate position that we have never had to furlough any of our staff as they can all work from home.

Hopefully they will be able to return to the office (on a rota system again) in the spring.

Although certain routine services were temporarily suspended again in January, particularly where these involve "household visits" or working in tenants homes, we have managed to maintain all essential services and to that end we hope that this continues to reassure tenants that their safety remains the Association's number one priority.

I am also pleased to let you know that the Association has entered into a new partnership with Clackmannanshire Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) whereby a dedicated specialist Money Advisor based at CAB will work two days per week to provide advice and assistance to our tenants.

In addition to maintaining key services, developing the partnership with CAB and successfully accessing significant amounts of external funding for our tenants during the pandemic, we have also been able to make excellent progress in both the development of our new tenant portal and our new arrangements for allocating our properties.

Our interactive "MY HOME" portal is now up and running well with 643 tenants already signed up. This is a fantastic achievement! Have you already registered? If not it's very quick and easy to do. It allows you to check various aspects of your tenancy including checking and amending your details, report a repair, check all your documents, up to date information, report any tenancy issues, access your rent statement and pay your rent.

Our online digital letting system "THESE HOMES" is scheduled to become "live" on 22nd March 2021 and, although some tenants need not concern themselves too much with this, considerable work has been involved in getting this set up.

Why not consider becoming involved in the Association. This can be by volunteering to join our pool of tenants who engage with us through surveys (online or by phone), help with review of policies and other aspects of the Associations' work.

If you are interested please contact the office by telephone on 07857 650 038, 07857 650 040 or 07857 650 042 or by email: [customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk)



Keep safe  
Margaret Baxter  
Chairperson

## Annual Rent Review and Universal Credit



We notified you in February that your rent will increase from 1st April 2021. If you are claiming Universal Credit then please remember that it is your responsibility to notify the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) of any change of circumstances including changes to your housing costs. If you haven't already done so it is important that you notify the DWP of your rent increase now by entering this as a change on your online journal.

**Please contact your Housing Services Officer if you require any help with this.**

## We Need Your Help!



It is important to us to receive feedback from our tenants. We regularly review our policies and services that we provide and there is no one more important than our tenants to let us know how we are doing or how we can improve on matters.

We need your help! Ochil View are looking for a group of tenants who would be willing to consult with us on planned changes to policies or our services. We may also ask for your opinion on various communication that we send to tenants.

If you are interested in providing feedback to us on our services then please contact Linda McLaren, Housing Services Manager. Thank you!

# How are we doing?

Here's how we performed between October and December 2020



## Where we performed well:

- average length of time to complete emergency repairs: **1 hour 25 minutes**
- tenants satisfied with the repairs service **100%**
- repairs completed on target: **97.48%**
- repairs completed right first time **92.88%**
- anti-social cases resolved: **100%**
- current tenancy arrears: **4.10%**
- investigation complaints (stage 2) resolved within timescale **100%**
- rent collected as a % of rent due **103.3%**

## Where we didn't do so well:



- emergency repairs completed on target: **98.46%**
- average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs: **5.15 days**
- average time to let a house **56.74 days**
- tenancy offers refused **32.5%**
- % of annual lets to homeless applicants **15.4%**
- frontline complaints (stage 1) resolved within timescale **92%**

Questions or comments?  
Contact Andrew Gibb,  
Property Services  
Manager or  
Linda McLaren, Housing  
Services Manager.

# COVID - 19 SERVICE UPDATE



We would like to take the opportunity, again, of thanking service users for continuing to adhere to government guidance, which is also being strictly adhered to by staff and our various contractors, as a means of keeping tenants, staff and contractors as safe as possible during the pandemic.

Having been pleased to report in the previous newsletter that things had improved significantly towards the end of 2020 the Scottish Government legislation and "Stay at Home" directive in January 2021 has resulted in a further temporary disruption to services and the working arrangements for staff.

## In summary

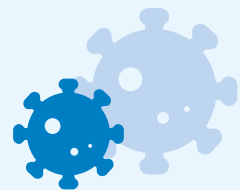
- staff have again had to revert to working from home on a fulltime basis although it is important to stress that **all staff continue to work full time and are available during normal working hours to deal with all enquiries;**
- following the resumption of most of the Associations maintenance services many of these have yet again had to be temporarily suspended and although full details can be found on the Associations website the following summarises the position as at **16th March 2021;**

## Services now temporarily suspended again;

- Routine repairs (except for properties which become vacant);
- All planned maintenance contracts, cyclical inspections (except for external works);
- All non-essential property / estate inspections (except for properties which become vacant);
- All non-essential tenancy applications/services ie joint tenancies, subletting, lodgers.

## With the following essential services continuing to be delivered (or having recently resumed);

- Emergency / Urgent repairs;
- Gas servicing;
- Medical adaptations;
- Allocations and re-lets;
- Empty property repairs
- Full close cleaning service;
- All external repair works.



We would continue to urge tenants to phone the Association on one of the following 3 temporary phone numbers in order that we can assist you with your enquiry **07857 650 038, 07857 650 040** or **07857 650 042** or by email: **customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk**

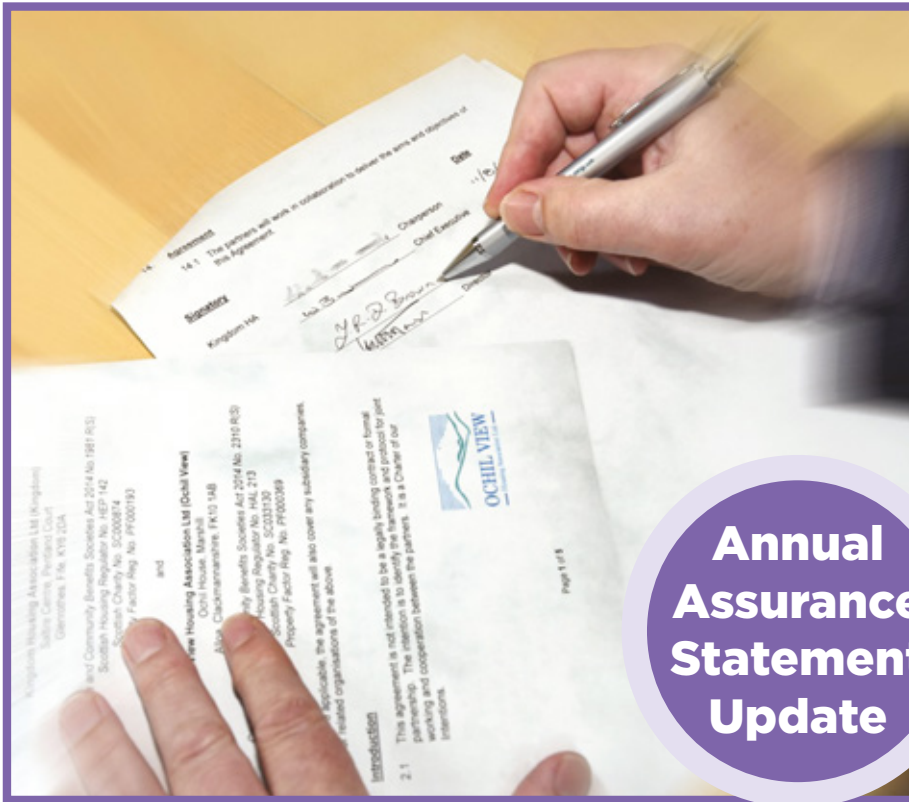
In terms of information we would encourage as many service users as possible to use the Associations website **www.ochilviewha.co.uk** and facebook page.

We continue to appreciate the difficulties being faced by many tenants at this time.

Of particular re-assurance is that our Housing and Tenancy Sustainment staff continue to be on hand to assist anyone experiencing financial difficulties and to answer any questions on rent, housing benefit or universal credit.

I think everyone has been lifted by the recent excellent news on the vaccination programme and hopefully these will allow us all to get back to living and working more normally within the next few months.

**George Tainsh**  
Chief Executive



**Annual Assurance Statement Update**

The Association submitted its 2nd annual assurance statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator in November 2020 and apart from being unable to fulfil our gas servicing obligations due to the pandemic we have confirmed that we continue to meet all regulatory standards.

Unfortunately, our action plan for improvement was detrimentally affected by the Covid restrictions and as a result many of the actions, particularly those relating to tenant engagement have been carried forward into 2021.

The areas where we have identified room for improvement and therefore included in the action plan are as follows;

- improving tenant and resident engagement;
- improving options for service users to scrutinise performance;
- encouraging a greater number of service users to use the online tenant portal "MyHome";
- providing more information on Committee membership.

We have now successfully recruited a Tenant Engagement & Communication Officer and most of these actions will be taken forward during 2021.

Despite the pandemic we have however made good progress in some areas and have:

- established a Tenant Participation Working Group;
- improved communication of estate inspections;
- increased the profile of our Community Initiatives Fund;

- reviewed all Factoring Agreements;
- undertaken a more up to date and focussed Customer Satisfaction Survey;
- amended the format of the Social Housing Charter Report to Tenants;
- published all Committee minutes;
- improved the format and content of the Website;
- introduced a Statement on Value for Money.


We have recently agreed a timetable for our 2021 statement and in that we have included an element of remote service user engagement at 3 specific stages of the process namely outline stage (March), draft submission stage (August) and final submission stage (October).

A copy of the 2020 Annual Assurance Statement can be found on the Associations website [www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk)

# £2.2m Investment in Tenants Homes

The Association plans to invest £2.2m in tenants homes during next financial year.

Included in the above sum is

 **£143,701** earmarked for heating and boiler upgrades

 **£281,093** for external works

 **£238,398** for kitchen replacements

 **£145,026** for new windows

In addition to the above investment the Association has agreed to restrict the annual rent increase to 0.7%.

**The Association's Chief Executive, George Tainsh said;**

**"Balancing the income generated through rents, which is required to provide the management and maintenance services to tenants and trying to keep rents as affordable as possible is always a difficult task and this year has been no exception particularly in light of the financial difficulties faced by many tenants as a result of the pandemic.**

**We are particularly pleased that we have been able to restrict the rent increase to 0.7% which allows the Association to deliver its ambitious investment plans and to continue to provide excellent value for money for tenants whilst ensuring a financially robust organisation"**

## Social Housing Charter

A big thank you to all service users who responded to the Associations survey on the Social Housing Charter in November last year.

In general, most respondents agreed with the Associations assessment of the areas where we were performing excellently, performing well and performing not so well and the areas where we are determined to make further improvements include:

- Time to respond to routine repairs
- Satisfaction with repairs service
- Satisfaction with management of neighbourhood
- Satisfaction that rent represents value for money
- Satisfaction with factoring service
- Number of properties which are vacated each year
- Number of households waiting for adaptations
- Rent collection
- Rent arrears

Continuous improvement continues to be a key objective of the Association and I can confirm that progress has already been made in improving many of the indicators mentioned above.

Thank you again if you took part in the survey  
George Tainsh  
Chief Executive



## My Home Tenant Portal

Have you registered on our Tenant Portal My Home yet? 45% of our tenants have already registered and are able to access their tenancy information securely via the internet.

**My Home allows you to: -**

- View your rent transactions
- Make a rent payment
- View your recent repairs history
- View any outstanding repairs
- Place a repair request
- Update your details and contact information
- Request a meeting with a member of staff
- Report a complaint
- Complete relevant forms and documents
- View all correspondence sent to you



**If you haven't registered, then please contact a member of the Customer Services who will be happy to help you get started. All tenants who register will be entered into a free prize draw for a £30 gift voucher.**

If you would like to nominate someone to register your account on My Home and log in on your behalf then please ask your Housing Services Officer about a Proxy User and we can help you set this up.

## Complaints & Positive Comments



**We welcome all complaints and comments as these help us make changes and improvements to our services.**

Here is how we did in October, November and December 2020:

- For **35 Stage 1 Complaints** we resolved **94.29%** within timescale (5 days)
- For **6 Stage 2 Complaints** we resolved **100%** within timescale (20 days)

Here are examples of how we have responded to complaints:

- A tenant was unhappy about new radiator not working. We apologised, arranged a new appointment and fixed the radiator at the visit.
- Another tenant was unhappy about our emergency service during a weekend. We explained that this service only covered making safe, we arranged an urgent visit and the heating was fully repaired.

**You continued to tell us when we performed well with 34 positive comments during the same period. Examples of this are:**

"The new joiners were great left no mess and done a great job and very friendly."

"Love the interactive aspect of your Facebook Page."

"Great support and very helpful."

**Questions or comments: Contact Andrew Gibb, Property Services Manager.**

The Association are delighted to be working in partnership with Career Ready for another year.

**career ready**

The 2-year mentoring programme for young people was so successful last year that the Association has committed to supporting another pupil. Ailsa Sadowski (Property Services Officer) has been matched with an S5 pupil from Alloa Academy, who will be provided with support and an insight into the world of work.

**Chloe will be employed by The Association during her summer holidays for a 4-week internship to develop her workplace skills.**



## Community Initiatives Programme

The Association continue to provide a Community Initiatives fund where applications are invited to support community projects, school initiatives and the like. In recent years donations have been made to various organisations locally including, Menstrie Community Resilience Group, Connect Alloa, Tullibody Events Team for the Christmas Lights Appeal, The Tilly Ladies and Puddleducks.

**Do you have a project or event which supports or benefits your local community? If you would like to apply for a donation, or would like more information, please email us at [customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk) and we can send you an application form.**

## Medical Adaptations



**Are you aware that the Association can help you to arrange medical adaptations in your home?**

This year we have completed around 75 referrals ranging from grabrails and level access showers to property extensions or renovations.

You do not need a referral from Occupational Therapy to allow small adjustments to be made in your home. If you need grabrails, bannisters or handrails, we can discuss this with you and arrange for our contractor to help.

**If you would like to speak to someone about adaptations, please contact Ailsa Sadowski on 07936 948980.**

## Garden Waste Scheme



Last year Clackmannanshire Council introduced a charge for collection and disposal of garden waste which required the purchase of a permit to allow your brown bin to continue to be collected. We subsidised this service last year for tenants who do not receive a landscaping service through our own contractors and we intend to continue this year.

Properties which we provided this for last year have been auto enrolled again for 2021/22 and do not need to do anything further, however if you do wish to be included, please contact us by one of the following methods:-

**By telephone on 07857 650 038, 07857 650 040 or 07857 650 042**

**By email to [customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk)**

## Tenant Survey and Action Plan

At the tail end of last year, we asked for your views on how we performed during this pandemic, your suggestions on how we shape our services going forward and your opinion on our new digital service, My Home.

Your response was great and the feedback we received has given us valuable information on how you feel our services should be delivered. We are now progressing several key areas from this, some of which will be taken forward in the summer, when we will have a new Tenant Engagement & Communication officer in post. Some of these are:

- Improving how we follow-up with tenants who contact us
- Establishing tenant groups to focus on specific areas of our service and discuss what changes/improvements can be made
- Investigating other means of communicating with our tenants
- Reviewing how we continue to promote My Home and improve how it is used

We had also undertaken other work during the survey from feedback given at the time directly to our staff. This included:

- Changing the information we provide on our website and how it is displayed
- Making our contact information more visible across all our literature and emails
- Making staff utilise mobile numbers more effectively to allow direct contact
- Adding options to My Home to allow people to log onto your account on your behalf

**Any questions contact Andrew Gibb, Property Services Manager or Linda McLaren, Housing Services Manager.**



Established 1968

**Logie Glazing & Building Services welcome a new apprentice joiner and apprentice electrician.**

As part of our commitment to working within our communities and providing opportunities for young people to gain employment, we are delighted that our new repairs contractor, Logie Glazing & Building Services have started two new apprenticeships.

**Zak Foran (18)** is their new electrical apprentice. His hobbies include following Dundee United and darts, and his favourite bands are Oasis and Steps.



**James Forsyth (20)** is their new joinery apprentice. His hobbies include gaming, music festivals and playing the guitar. His favourite bands are Oasis and the Stone Roses.



Both Zak and James will be working alongside other operatives to undertake repairs for the association and we wish them success at the start of their respective careers. Logie's Managing Director Ian Cleall-Harding said

**“Logie Glazing & Building Services are delighted to have Zak and James join the team and start their apprenticeship journeys with ourselves learning all the skills required to becoming a 5 star Tradesman. I look forward to watching them develop over the next 4 years and have high hopes for them for the future, all the best boys”**

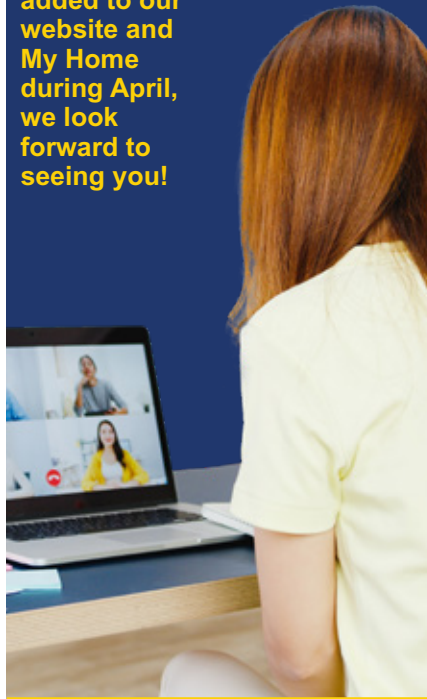
## Near Me

In April, we are launching a new video calling service to enable you to contact us.

This will allow us to provide greater flexibility for meetings whilst limiting the need for travel for you or our staff.

Near Me is easy to use and can be accessed from a smartphone, tablet or computer with webcam and speaker. The only cost involved is your internet usage (like other video call platforms) and staff will be able to offer appointment times to suit you.

**Further details will be added to our website and My Home during April, we look forward to seeing you!**



**We are pleased to advise of a new partnership that the Association has with Clackmannanshire Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB).**

We now have a dedicated specialist Money Advisor based at CAB who will work with Ochil View two days per week to provide advice and assistance to our tenants. The following is just some of the help and assistance that a specialist Money Advisor can provide: -

- Income Maximisation
- Budgeting advice
- Debt Advice
- Negotiation and representation with creditors
- Dealing with Rent Arrears
- Fuel debt
- Court Representation
- Advice on bankruptcy

**If you feel this service may be of benefit to you then please contact your Housing Services Officer who will refer you to the specialist Money Advisor.**

## We would love to hear from you!

Do you have feedback about any repairs you have carried out recently? Leona is our Property Services Assistant and she is responsible for carrying out satisfaction surveys for repairs. Your feedback is really important to us!

Our target is to contact 15% of tenants who have had repairs, but don't wait until Leona calls you! **If you want to give us feedback on any repairs you have had carried out, please call Leona on 07936 948977.**

**She will be happy to help!**



# Phone Scam Alert



We are aware that some local residents may have received bogus calls that look like they are from Ochil View. We have reported this to the Police and to Action Fraud. The current advice from Police Scotland to protect yourself from bogus phone callers is as follows:

- Consider making your phone number ex-directory
- Don't give out any personal information unless you are the one that made the call and you are certain of the identity of the person you are speaking to
- Don't give your credit card or bank card details to strangers on the telephone
- NEVER tell somebody your bank PIN number, even if they claim to be from the bank or police
- Don't give out information which may infer that you live alone, are older or are vulnerable
- Never send money to anyone who claims to have a prize for you
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is
- Contact Trading Standards Scotland on **0808 164 6000** or [www.tsscot.co.uk](http://www.tsscot.co.uk) – they may be able to assist with approved call-blocking technology

Ochil View staff will always identify themselves by their full name and role in the organisation. For further security you should ask the member of staff to confirm your tenant account number or if you are still unsure then you can ask to call us back to confirm the call was genuine.

**When calling us back you must ensure that the previous call has disconnected before calling us.**

## Tenant Engagement Group Update

Our Tenant Engagement Group have had an exciting couple of months, with loads of competitions and Facebook events.

St Andrew's Day was celebrated by tenants sending us their favourite Scottish poems. The winner, Leona Stein, Tullibody, was voted as the winner by staff for her original and witty poem. We delivered her Scottish themed hamper, which she was delighted with.

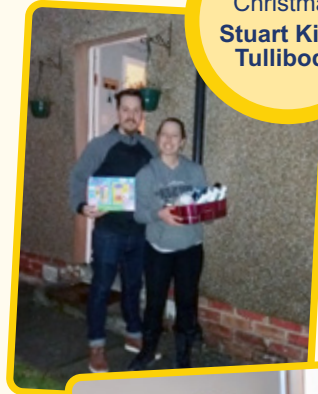
Our next event was in celebration of the 12 Days of Christmas where we randomly selected tenants as the winner of the daily prize where we have amazing gifts like Lego, Urban Decay Hampers and Art Sets. All prizes were purchased from InKind Direct, our social enterprise supplier. We would like to thank them for their continued support.

Staff were keen to give something back to the community this year with a huge donation of parcels delivered to the Love in a Box Appeal where toys are given to local children.

Our Christmas Jumper Day competition was so popular, with 31 entries. The winner was selected at random and Myiah (9) was the winner of the Christmas Eve goodie box. All of entrants received a selection box!

Valentines Day was celebrated with an afternoon tea being sent to the winner for sharing their story on how they met their loved one! Elaine Machray, Alloa was the winner!

12 Days of Christmas  
**Stuart King,  
Tullibody**



12 Days of Christmas  
**Chelsea Hogg,  
Menstrie**



St Andrew's Day  
**Leona Stein  
Family,  
Tullibody**



Staff Donation  
to Love in a  
Box Appeal

## Prize Draw Winners

**Congratulations to all of our recent prize draw winners, who have all received a £30 gift voucher.**

**Mrs McCullagh,  
Alloa**

**Mr & Mrs  
Matthewson,  
Tullibody**

**Mr McLuckie,  
Tullibody**

## Electrical Regulation Changes

Recent changes have been made to electrical guidance and it is now a requirement that Registered Social Landlords must access each property, once every 5 years to carry out an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). As a responsible landlord, Ochil View Housing Association have, for many years, carried out this practice but we have not forced entry to those properties where access has been denied. From April 2021, the practice will change and action will be taken to gain entry if required.



An EICR identifies any damage, deterioration or defects which can cause danger and will provide the Association with any observations where improvement is required.

**Magnus Electrical will commence the project in April 2021 and you will be notified if your property is included in the programme.**



## Personal Packs

In 2017 we introduced 'Personal Packs'. These can be provided to Ochil View tenants who may need additional assistance or are in financial difficulty. They can include personal hygiene, cleaning and baby products and are tailored to each individual household. You can access these by contacting your Housing Officer or through the Tenancy Sustainment service. In the first instance, you can contact Robert Cowan, Tenancy Sustainment Assistant or email us at [housing@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:housing@ochilviewha.co.uk).

**Since starting these in June 2017 we have provided around 80 packs to tenants.**

## Fire Regulation Changes

With the deadline for upgrading the smoke detection systems in all properties extended to February 2022, the Association continue to work with tenants to complete this project. Legislation changed following the major fire and tragedy at Grenfell Tower in London. By February 2022, all residential properties must be fitted with one smoke alarm in the living room, one smoke alarm in every circulation space such as hallways or landings, one heat detector in the kitchen and a carbon monoxide detector. These appliances must be linked so that if one is activated, they will all sound together so that wherever you are in your home, you will hear it. We have been carrying out these upgrades since 2014 so many of our properties already meet this new standard.

For those properties that do not, we will improve them to the new standard by February 2022 and access will be required to carry out the work. It's very important that we get access to your home as we do not want to take steps to force entry. The presence of working smoke and heat detectors has been proven to significantly reduce fire casualties and fatalities. Saltire Facilities Management will continue installation once Covid-19 measures are relaxed. If you have not had an appointment to have these fitted, you can call Ailsa or Leona to make arrangements.



## Are your Household Details correct?

If you are a tenant, then it is important to notify us of who is in your household and when someone moves in or out. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 brought in changes to your Tenancy Agreement which, meant that any changes in your household must be notified in writing to the Association. If you do not notify us of a change in writing, then it may affect your tenancy rights including succession or assignation of your tenancy.

**If you have registered on our tenant portal, My Home then you can see who we have listed as members of your household and you can also notify us of any change on the portal if the information is incorrect.**

## Gas Heating Repairs

Ensuring your heating is working at all times is really important. To make sure it is working effectively, please report any repairs as soon as possible and allow access for your boiler service. We as your landlord have a legal obligation to service your boiler every 12 months.

If you have any pressure loss issues, do not top your boiler up and report this to City Technical



Services as there may be a leak within the boiler itself or on the heating pipework.

**Any heating repairs should be reported directly to City Technical Services on 0333 202 0708 where their staff will answer your call and arrange necessary repairs.**



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE