

THE OCHIL VIEW

Find us on 

customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk
www.ochilviewha.co.uk

WELCOME FROM CHAIRPERSON

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

It is pleasing to see that staff have been able to return to the office at least on a rota basis whilst continuing to work from home as much as possible.

This has allowed most of our services to be restarted and provide some sense of normality.

However, it is still the case that the office remains closed to the general public with the recent tightening of restrictions causing our planned tenants appointments system to be further delayed.

Our interactive "MY HOME" portal is now up and running well with 536 tenants already signed up. Have you already joined? If not it's very quick and easy to do. It allows you to check various aspects of your tenancy you can amend your details as necessary, you can book repairs, you can pay your rent.

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

In closing I would just like to wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas
Margaret Baxter
Chairperson



COVID - 19 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.

It is very pleasing to report that things have improved significantly over the past 3 months with:

- staff returning to office working on a rota basis (although the office remains closed to the general public and for office appointments);
- the Associations being designated as a provider of essential services which means that we are no longer affected by travel restrictions and it meant that we could re-open the office;
- most of the Associations housing, maintenance and tenancy sustainment services having resumed over (although the recent introduction of the governments tiered system of restrictions has resulted in mutual exchanges again being suspended).

The not so good news is that should Clackmannanshire or Fife be designated Tier 4 it is likely that this could change again with a return to essential repairs only, and services of a health and safety nature, being permitted.

I think everyone has been lifted by the recent news of the various vaccines and hopefully these will allow us all to get back to living and working more normally by next summer at the latest.

Unfortunately until there is a successful vaccination programme staff will continue to be unable to have face to face meetings with service users and on that we would urge tenants to phone the Association or 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 rather than relying on written correspondence which unfortunately can be out of date by the time it reaches you by post.

We continue to appreciate the difficulties being faced by many tenants at this time and this can be seen by the significant increase in enquiries being made about universal credit.

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.

Notwithstanding the circumstances which we are all living through I hope that everyone can have as safe and enjoyable festive period as possible.

George Tainsh
Chief Executive



Community Initiatives Project

In 2018, the Association launched the Community Initiatives fund where applications were invited to support community projects, school initiatives and the like. The initiative has been hugely successful with donations being 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. As part of this initiative staff can volunteer during working hours. The Gate Uniform Bank has benefited from staff time over a number of years at this hugely successful annual event.

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 and we can send you an application form.



Ochil View announces extension of contract with City Technical Services

Ochil View has agreed the 1 year extension with current gas repairs and maintenance contractor City Technical Services to carry on in to 2021/22. Should you have any queries on this, please contact Ashleigh Brown on Ashleigh. brown@ochilviewha.co.uk



Warm Home Discount

Good news! The Warm Home Discount scheme has opened, and you could benefit from a one-off discount from your energy supplier of £140.

If you have qualified in the past, now is the time to re-apply as not all energy suppliers automatically renew their customers' special discounts each year.

We work with Home Energy Scotland who can check if you are eligible.

A friendly advisor will help you see if there is any other support you can get. If you're not sure, just call Home Energy Scotland.

If your circumstances have changed, and the team find you no longer qualify for discount, there may be other ways we can help you make your home easier to heat which will reduce your bills.

To speak to a Home Energy Scotland advisor free of charge call 0808 808 2282, or email adviceteam@sc.homeenergyscotland.org and they'll call you back.

Or have a look online here:

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>



Keep cosy for less this winter top tips

With winter just around the corner, here are a few top tips from Home Energy Scotland to help keep you cosy for less.

- 1 **Set your heating controls** to manage the temperature of your home. Remember to use the weekday and weekend settings.
- 2 By regularly **bleeding your radiators** you will avoid cold spots and get the most out of your heating system.
- 3 **Keep your radiators clear** and avoid putting furniture against them. Drying your washing on the radiator can make your house colder and can also encourage condensation and mould growth.
- 4 Your room thermostat should be **set to the lowest comfortable temperature (typically between 18°C and 21°C)** Turning down the room thermostat by one degree can save up to **£80 a year**.
- 5 **A quick shower** uses less water and energy than taking a bath. For every minute you shave off your daily shower, you'll save **£7 a year** on your energy bills.
- 6 **Use heavier curtains** during the winter months and make sure you close them when it gets dark to keep the heat in and the cold out.

Questions or comments: **Contact Margaret Hall, Tenancy Sustainment Officer**

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.

For more information or help with My Home then please contact your Housing Services Officer.

Protecting Your Home this winter

Keep your house warm and protect from frozen pipes:

In very cold weather keep heating on overnight at low temperature

Report leaks to taps or valves immediately

Ask us where your mains stop valve is located

If your water supply becomes frozen:

- 1 Turn off your water at the mains valve
- 2 Open all cold taps to drain the system
- 3 Turn off your central heating or immersion
- 4 Contact our Emergency Repairs Service



If you have a burst pipe:

- 1 Turn off your water at the mains valve
- 2 Switch off the electricity, any water heaters and any central heating
- 3 Open all taps to drain your system
- 4 Contact our Emergency Repairs Service



Going on holiday over winter?

- 1 Make sure someone else can check on your home regularly
- 2 Let us know your contact details
- 3 Ask for advice on turning off your water supply



Tips to prevent condensation in your home

- Keep your home well ventilated - open windows daily and keep window vents open.
- Always use the kitchen extractor fan when cooking and leave it on for longer than you are cooking.
- After bathing open windows and always use bathroom extractor fans during bathing.
- Try to maintain a constant temperature in your home.
- Keep lids on pots and pans whilst cooking so that the moisture does not escape from the pans.

Questions : Contact Ashleigh Brown,
Property Services Officer on
Ashleigh.brown@ochilviewha.co.uk



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 July, August and September 2020:

For 40 Stage 1 Complaints we resolved 95% within timescale (5 days)

For 7 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 the time taken for an external repair. We established this was caused by poor weather conditions. We apologised and re-scheduled the appointment.

Our contractor accidentally damaged items belonging to a tenant when undertaking works. Both we and the contractor apologised, and the contractor compensated the tenant for the damaged items.

You continued to tell us when we performed well with 67 positive comments during the same period. Examples of this are:

"You dealt with it swiftly, promptly and I am so thankful" – Plumbing repair.

"Really like it, great way to check things without needing to phone up and also easy to pay rent." – Feedback from My Home user.

"The best contractor you have ever had" – Guttering repairs.

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

Rent Payments During Christmas and New Year

Christmas can be a busy and expensive time of year, with the costs of presents and celebrations adding up but rent payments must still be paid, during and after the festive period.

If you miss any payments during December and January it means that you will start the New Year with rent arrears and risk legal action against you to recover the money due. It is a condition of your tenancy that your rent is paid in advance and in full at all times.

Ochil View want to make sure that you are able to enjoy Christmas without having to worry about money problems so here are some sensible steps that you can take to ensure that this Christmas you stay out of debt: -

- Think carefully before you start buying presents and planning parties on how much you can spend and set yourself an affordable budget and stick to it
- Make sure all your priority bills are being paid, including rent, gas, electricity and council tax
- If you have any change in circumstances that may affect your housing benefit or universal credit housing cost entitlement then it is important that you update the council or your Universal Credit journal immediately
- If you are in debt and want advice then please contact your local Citizen Advice Bureau
- If you need any benefit advice or a referral for home energy advice, debt management or a food parcel over the festive period then please contact our Tenancy Sustainment Team who will be happy to help

Comments or questions: Contact Linda McLaren, Housing Services Manager



Prize Draw Winners

Congratulations to all of our prize draw winners!

TSS Winners

William Stone, Tullibody, was picked as the winner for completing a tenant satisfaction survey in July and won a £30 Voucher.

Mr & Mrs Peddie, Tullibody were picked as the winner for completing a tenant satisfaction survey in August and won a £30 voucher.

Josephine McVie, Tullibody was picked as the winner for completing a tenant satisfaction survey in September and won a £30 voucher.

Mr & Mrs McDonald, Alloa was picked as the winner for completing a tenant satisfaction survey in October and won a £30 voucher.



My Home Tablet Winners

Stephanie Innes & Thomas Hunter, Menstrie were picked as the winner of a tablet for registering with My Home in August.

Jacqueline Dubois, Tullibody was picked as the winner of a tablet for registering with My Home in August.

Laura Willocks, Tullibody was picked as the winner of a tablet for registering with My Home in September.

Joanne Clowry, Tullibody was picked as the winner of a tablet for registering with My Home in October.



Mr & Mrs McDonald, Alloa



Thomas Hunter, Menstrie



Joanne Clowry, Tullibody

Significant Performance Failure

What is a significant performance failure?

If you are a tenant of a registered social landlord (RSL), such as a housing association or co-operative, or if you are a council tenant, you can report a significant performance failure (SPF) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). A group of tenants or an individual acting on behalf of tenants, such as a representative of a registered tenants' organisation, can also report an SPF to the SHR.

An SPF is where a landlord:

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

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

If you think there is an SPF you firstly need to raise the issue directly with the Association. You should give us the chance to respond within our published timescale and reasonable time to address the issue.

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

Tenant Survey

Thanks to everyone who participated in our recent survey, carried out by Knowledge Partners. We felt it was important to get your views on how we performed during this pandemic and your suggestions on how we shape our services going forward. We also wanted to gauge your opinion on our new digital service, My Home.

The headline results are :

Area	Result	
Feeling supported by Ochil View during the pandemic	87.7%	😊
Satisfaction with Housing and Maintenance Services	83.6%	😊
Awareness of services being introduced following lockdown	68.5%	😐
Awareness of My Home service	65.4%	😐
Satisfaction with contact with Ochil View during lockdown	85.5%	😊

The survey highlighted several areas for further work or improvements. These are being developed and we will be publishing the full survey results and our plans soon.

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



**We Need
Your Help?**

It is important to us to receive feedback and consult with 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.

Christmas Charity Donation

Each year, Ochil View staff make a donation to charity at Christmas, instead of sending Christmas Cards. In the past few year's we have supported Shelter, a hugely worthwhile cause. Due to the impact of Covid-19 we recognise that local families might need help, now more than ever. Love in a Box is a local charity who collect gifts for children, mums and dads and deliver them locally to those most in need. Ochil View staff will be making a contribution to this worthwhile cause with goodie bags filled with gifts!



Christmas Competition

Watch this space for our "12 Days of Christmas" Competition.

A tenant will be picked at random to win one of our great prizes, for each of the 12 days on the lead up to Christmas. We have some great prizes for all the family!



How are we doing?



Here's how we performed between July and September 2020

Where we performed well:

- average length of time to complete emergency repairs: **1 hour 39 minutes**
- tenants satisfied with the repairs service **99.05%**
- anti-social cases resolved: **97.1%**
- current tenancy arrears: **4.40%**
- complaints resolved within timescale
 - frontline stage 1 **95%**
 - investigation stage 2 **100%**
- rent collected as a % of rent due **100.5%**
- % of annual lets to homeless applicants **81.8%**



Where we didn't do so well:

- emergency repairs completed on target: **95.77%**
- repairs completed on target: **92.17%**
- repairs completed right first time **84.97%**
- average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs: **6.62 days**
- average time to let a house **66.5 days**



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

My Home Tenant Portal

Have you registered on our Tenant Portal My Home yet? 40% 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 supermarket 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.



Art Competition

Our Tenant Engagement Group recently ran an art competition, open to all ages. With two categories, Age 16+ and Children Under 16, we had a huge response to both. Staff voted for their favorite entry and the winners were, Kadie Louise Waters (15) from Tullibody and Stacey Higgins Gay from Tullibody. Both winners received an art hamper. Well done and thank you to everyone who entered!



Entry & photo from Stacey Higgins Gay



Entry from Kadie Louise Waters

Good Neighbour Nominations

A new competition was announced in October, in celebration of International Chocolate Week! We asked our tenants on Facebook to nominate their outstanding neighbour and give us the reason why they were so special, with a chocolate hamper being delivered to the winner.

The response, and comments were overwhelming, showing the great community spirit in Clackmannanshire & West Fife. There were fantastic nominations and the winner was chosen at random. Mr & Mrs White from Menstrie were selected as the winners. They were nominated by Fiona Logan who lives next door. Fiona said

"I would like to nominate my neighbours of 20 years Mr and Mrs White. They are always there with a smile and a wave and always there for a chat if you need it. They are the loveliest neighbours".

Well done Mr & Mrs White!

We also selected a winner at random from our current tenant list to receive the second hamper. Mr & Mrs Norris from Tullibody were delighted to win, with Simon (8) and Laura Lee (5) more than happy to accept the prize on their behalf!



Simon & Laura Lee, tullibody

Mr & Mrs White, Menstrie





Fire Safety at Christmas

Keep your home safe from fire this Christmas

- Check your Christmas tree lights carry the British Safety Standard sign.
- Never place candles near your Christmas tree
- Don't leave a cooker unattended and don't cook if you've been drinking
- Don't attach decorations to lights or heaters
- Never overload electrical sockets
- Always switch Christmas lights off at night and unplug them
- Keep candles, lighters and matches out of children's reach and never leave a lit candle unattended
- Make sure any cigarettes are extinguished
- Test your smoke alarms monthly and never take the battery out



Additional income for families with children under 6 who are claiming tax credits or certain benefits

Social Security Scotland are now taking applications for the new Scottish Child Payment. It's £40 every 4 weeks for every child under 6. It's for families who get Tax Credits or certain benefits.

This will start in February 2021 and they are expecting a huge demand so it is important to get your application in early.

Find out more and make an application at: mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment/

For more information you can also contact Margaret Hall Tenancy Sustainment Officer.



Tenants Handbook

Our Tenants Handbook has been reviewed and updated with a brand-new look. The new Handbook will be issued to all our new tenants however, existing tenants can take a look on our website at

<https://www.ochilviewha.co.uk/page/tenants-handbook>

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.

Since starting these in June 2017 we have provided around 70 packs to tenants.



Christmas & New Year Public Holidays

Thursday24th December 2020

Friday25th December 2020

Monday28th December 2020

Thursday31st December 2020

Friday1st January 2021

Monday4th January 2021

We're open again on Tuesday 5th January 2021



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE