



THE OCHIL VIEW

Find us on  

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

Welcome from Chair

Hello, and welcome to the Spring edition of our Newsletter.

It has been another challenging period for everyone, but I hope you were able to enjoy your festive period and 2022 so far. We are delighted to have our office open again, as of 28th March. Tenants are asked to still phone ahead of visiting and Covid measures remain in place. We are hopeful for much more face-to-face engagement in the months ahead.

I always feel this time of year is great for looking forward to what's ahead. You will see in the following pages that we have lots going in within the Association. We highlight the benefits for tenants using our My Home service, our partnership work with Clacks Citizens Advice Bureau, lots of Easter fun and new tenant engagement opportunities.

We also launch our Annual Garden Competition for our green-fingered tenants, including a new Sunflower Challenge!

Lastly, we are delighted to welcome tenants into their new Elm Grove homes. We are sure they will be happy there and we look forward to hearing how they are settling in.

We hope you enjoy your Spring Newsletter and have a lovely Easter.

Take care.
Margaret Baxter
Chairperson



We were delighted to be able to hand over the first keys to our brand-new properties at Elm Grove in Alloa this March.

The Elm Grove project actually began way back in 2005, when we acquired the land but, with priority and funding challenges, not to mention COVID, it has been a longer journey than anticipated. Thankfully, we now have 33 beautiful homes for tenants such as Angela Dreyer-Larsen (Pic 1) and Scott & Liza McLean (Pic 2) to enjoy. We have also received some lovely feedback from new tenants, with one commenting "I am absolutely ecstatic. What a difference this will make to me and my family". We look forward to hearing more from those settling into their new homes over the coming weeks and months.

1
Angela
Dreyer-
Larsen



2
Scott & Liza
McLean



Good Neighbours

If you haven't seen your neighbour in a while, why not pop round and see if they are OK?

It doesn't take much time to be a good neighbour and it's always worth checking that someone is safe, warm, and well.

Knock on the door and ask how they are doing. Have they got essential supplies like bread and milk?

Or pick up the phone, call them and ask if they are ok, do they need any shopping done – a few items collected when you go to the shops yourself. Spend a few minutes having a chat.

It can make all the difference.



How are we doing?

We continue to experience challenges under the pandemic, however the majority of services have resumed. Here is how we have performed so far in 2021-22:



Where we performed well:

emergency repairs completed on target: **99.39%**

average length of time to complete emergency repairs:

1 hour 29 minutes

tenants satisfied with the repairs service: **97.29%**

repairs completed on target: **96.61%**

repairs completed right first time: **92.19%**

anti-social cases resolved: **98.3%**

current tenancy arrears: **3.77%**

% of annual lets to homeless applicants: **34.48%**

Stage 1 complaints resolved within timescale: **96.04%**

tenancy offers refused: **23.7%**

rent collected as a % of rent due: **100.1%**

Where we didn't do so well:



average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs: **9.73 days**

average time to let a house: **41.31 days**

Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale: **84.62%**

(New) tenants satisfied with condition of home on taking up tenancy: **93.75%**

Questions or comments?

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

Complaints & Positive Comments

All complaints and comments are welcome as they help change and improve our services. Here is how we did between April and December 2021:

For 101 Stage 1 Complaints we resolved 96.04% within timescale (5 days)

For 13 Stage 2 Complaints we resolved 84.62% within timescale (20 days)



Here is an example of how we have responded to a complaint:

- Our contractor accidentally damaged tenants belongings whilst carrying out a repair. We inspected the works, agreed that it was through the contractor's fault. We apologised and the flooring was replaced at the contractors' expense.

How we learn from complaints is important and can result in changes to our services and procedures. Following a complaint around permission for CCTV, we reviewed our internal process and, as a result, introduced a new procedure for dealing with these approvals. This new procedure should make the process easier and clearer for both tenants and staff and reduce further complaints.

Over the period to the end of December 2021 we received further praise on where we performed well, with 69 positive comments. Examples of these are:



"Really happy, 10 out of 10"

Existing tenant comment on our repairs contractor.



"I've been a tenant of OVHA since 2008 and they are the best housing association in Clackmannanshire. Very helpful, friendly and kind. Thank you ever so much for everything that you all do"

Feedback from existing tenant on recent repairs and staff assistance.



"Operatives working on the contract have been excellent"

Feedback from existing tenant on an investment project.



"My Home makes things a lot easier, everything you need from repairs to rent can be done all in one page."

Feedback on our My Home service.

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



We are delighted to be engaging face-to-face with tenants again. Our offices fully re-opened on Monday 28th March however we would encourage anyone visiting to make an appointment so that we can ensure you speak to the right person. You can continue to contact us on our main office number 01259 722899. We are hopeful that, as the year progresses, we will be able to do much more of this, both in our office and at tenant homes and the wider community.

Tenant Engagement Report

Like most things, we have had to adapt our approach to tenant engagement over the last couple of years.

That said, we have still been able to achieve plenty since we appointed our first Tenant Engagement & Communications Officer last April. Highlights include:

- Creation of monthly Tenant Sessions, initially via Zoom
- Revised our Tenant Engagement Strategy, including a new Action Plan
- Reviewed and changed our approach to how staff discuss and develop tenant engagement opportunities
- Improved engagement through our social media, including launching a Twitter page
- Achieved great success with our Connecting Scotland application

You can read more on these, and what we hope to achieve in the months ahead, via our first Tenant Engagement Annual Report, which is available to view on our website, or on request.



Tenant Sessions

We have commenced with our tenant sessions for 2022, currently via Zoom but, hopefully, in person as the year progresses. These informal get-togethers are an opportunity for tenants to meet staff and talk about the issues important to them.

Sessions are normally held weekday mornings, but we want to make them as accessible as possible, so we are having a trial session at 6pm on Thursday 5th May.



It will last no more than an hour and we would love to see as many tenants as possible!

If interested, please contact **Chris McShane**, Tenant Engagement & Communications Officer, on 07874 864 323 or by email, at: tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk

Rent Review Outcomes



Thank you to everyone who completed the survey on our proposed rent charges for 2022-23. A report on the survey outcomes can be found on our website. The key feedback included:

55% were opposed to the proposed increase of 4.2%

39% felt we should have a lower increase, which would mean a reduction in services or investment. 35% were against this idea.

84% were against the proposal for an even greater increase which could offer more services or investment.

Following receipt of these survey outcomes, Ochil View Housing has given further consideration to the proposed increase, and we are pleased to say that we have been able to reduce this a little, to 3.95%. By now, you should have received a letter or email advising of this.

Thank you to everyone who took part in this engagement process.



£2.6m

INVESTMENT in Tenants Homes

The Association plans to invest £2.6m in tenants homes during next financial year.

Included in the above sum is

£708,004

for heating and boiler upgrades;

£281,093

for external works;

£130,187

for external decoration;

£68,103

for aerial upgrades;

£505,010

for kitchen replacements and

£89,303

for new windows.

In addition to the above investment,

£725,440

will be spent on purchasing new homes for rent at our development at Elm Grove / Forth Crescent, Alloa.

£

Annual Assurance Statement Update

The Association submitted its 3rd Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator in October 2021 and, with the exception of being unable to meet our gas servicing obligations due to the pandemic, we continue to meet all regulatory standards.

During 2021, the Covid pandemic continued to affect progress with our Action Plan however many areas identified for improvement were met as follows;

- Reviewing our Tenant Participation Strategy;
- Establishing a Tenant Engagement Group;
- Factoring service improvements;
- Reviewed all Factoring agreements;
- Provision of additional information on Board / Committee membership.

Other areas are under progress:

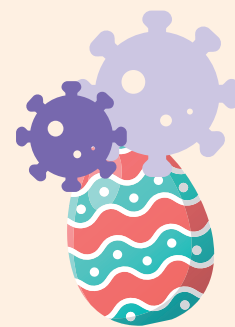
- Developing an Equality Strategy and updated Policy, including any actions;
- Agreeing / implementing an Equalities Data Collection Procedure;
- Develop an Equalities Impact Assessment;
- Introducing My Home to our Factored Owners.

We are working on completing our Action Plan in readiness for our 2022 submission which will include service user engagement throughout the process until final submission stage in October.

A copy of the 2021 Annual Assurance Statement can be found on the Associations website.



Scottish Housing Regulator



Staff Changes

Christine Thomson one of our Housing Services Officers retired from the Association in February 2022 after 24 years' service with Ochil View.

Christine previously worked in Housing before joining the Association in 1998 with a total of 36 years' service to the industry. Christine has worked with tenants across most of our areas over the years. We would like to wish Christine our very best wishes for a long and happy retirement.



"I feel lucky to have worked for the Association for so many years with such great staff and meeting many tenants along the way. I will miss it all, but the time feels right, and I wish all staff and tenants well for the future"

Here are some important updates from Margaret in our Tenancy Sustainment Team.

If you need any further information or help, then please contact the team via our office number or email to: tenancysustainment@ochilviewha.co.uk



Scottish Child Payment to Increase

From April 2022, the Scottish Child Payment will increase from £10 per week to £20 per week.

The Scottish Child Payment helps towards the costs of supporting your family. It is a weekly payment that you can get for every child you look after who is under 6 years of age. You'll receive the payment every 4 weeks, if your application is successful.

The Scottish Child Payment doesn't affect any other UK or Scottish Government benefits that you, or anyone else in your household, currently receive. It may affect local council allowances or grants – contact your local council for more information.

Only one person can get the payment for a child. This means if two people apply for the same child, Social Security Scotland will decide who gets the payment.

Applications can be made online at mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment/how-to-apply, via telephone on 0800 182 2222 or by post (telephone for a pre-paid envelope).



Changes to Personal Independence Payment in Scotland

From summer 2022, a new Scottish Benefit called Adult Disability Payment will replace Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

If you are already in receipt of PIP, you will receive a letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) letting you know about the change and when your PIP will end. You don't need to apply for Adult Disability Payment.

Social Security Scotland will then contact you to let you know what will happen and when the move is complete. You will continue to receive payments from DWP until Social Security Scotland start to pay you. There won't be a gap in your payments.

You'll still be eligible for related benefits and services, including Blue Badges or discounts on your Council Tax. You may need to let your local council know when you switch to Adult Disability Payment.

Changing from PIP to Adult Disability Payment will not affect your Motability lease. Social Security Scotland will let the company know and take over payments. If you have a vehicle through Motability now, you'll be able to keep it until the end of your lease. After this you'll be able to lease a vehicle from the Accessible Vehicles and Equipment (AVE) scheme.



Energy Price Cap

Ofgem has announced that the Energy Price Cap will increase, impacting around 22 million households in Scotland, England and Wales. This will see a **54%** rise on default tariffs, resulting in an average annual bill of **£1,971** for a typical dual fuel customer. The average prepayment bill will also increase from **£1,309 to £2,107**.

While the cap rates set a maximum charge per unit of energy, the overall costs will still be influenced by the amount of energy used and the type of heating system. For example, those with electric heating will face higher average bills than those with gas, due to the high cost of electricity compared to gas.

The increase is due to take effect in the spring, placing even further pressure on household budgets.

The UK Government has announced that households will receive an automatic £200 discount on their electricity bills from October, to reduce the impact. However, this will have to be repaid over the next 5 years.

The Scottish Government is providing additional support to households as part of the Winter Support Fund, including the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund for social housing tenants. Other measures will also be considered in light of the new price cap.





COMPETITIONS

We've got so much competition news that we have given it a full page in this edition!

In the lead up to **Christmas**, we had a gift-giving extravaganza, with wonderful prizes won every day by tenants. These included new bikes, family days out and lots of Lego! A big thank you to everyone who helped provide

these gifts, it was great to share them with many happy tenants. **Here are just a few!**



We had a special competition in March for **World Book Day**. Our younger Ochil Viewers told us what their favourite stories were, and we had some great entries. **Cassidy Cooper, pictured, was one of our winners.** She loves Dr Seuss books and was delighted to get a Frozen castle and 2 brand-new books to read. **Well done everyone!**"



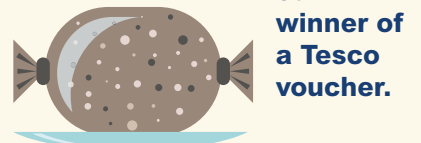
We also had our usual **monthly voucher winners** for tenants who have provided us with feedback on an Ochil View service, such as a repair.

Here is one of our happy winners, Lizzie from Alloa.



Liz Young

For **Burns Night**, we had a **Scottish cryptic clue game** which had plenty tenants guessing. **Megan Teven was our winner of a Tesco voucher.**



Lastly, we have two **fantastic CHILDREN'S EASTER COMPETITIONS, with lots of fantastic toys to give away!**

Hidden inside this Newsletter are Easter eggs.

Count them up and tell us how many there are to win an Easter egg of your own!



We are also asking your little artists to draw us their

Easter picture and send it in to us by Tuesday 19th April and we'll announce the winners shortly after. You can do this by sending it in the post, or a picture of it via social media or to our Competitions number below.

Entering our competitions could not be easier!

Pictures or entries can be sent to us:

By post to our office

By a personal message to us via Facebook or Twitter

By email to: tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk

By mobile to 07874 864 323

We couldn't let **Valentine's Day** pass without a competition and this year we asked tenants to tell us their favourite romantic movie. Most went for Titanic, including our winner Nicole Mulligan.

Here she is with a Valentine's goodies hamper to enjoy with Jack and Rose!



Garden Competition

As Spring is now upon us, it seems like the perfect time to launch our annual **GARDEN COMPETITION**. This year, we will be giving out prizes for the Best Garden Display, Best Window Box Display and, for the first time, we will be having a Giant Sunflower Challenge!

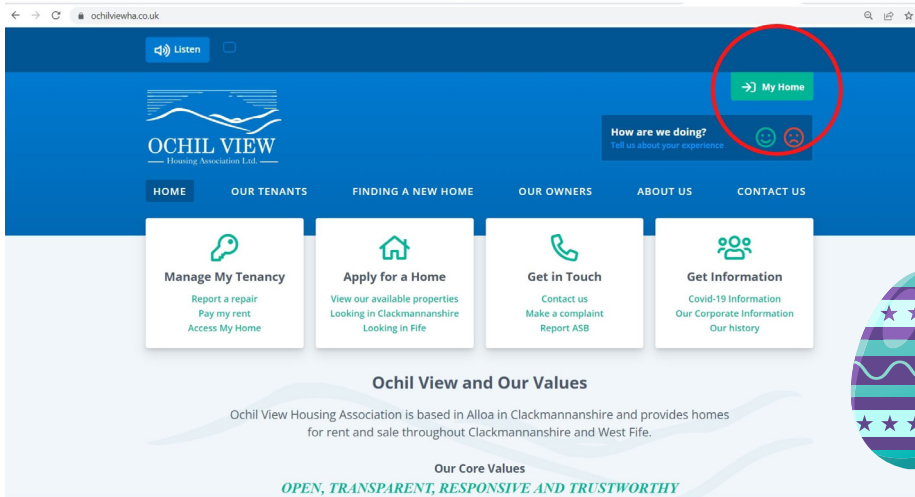
The tallest entry will win a special prize and, if you need some sunflower seeds to get started, just let us know and we'll provide them!

Be Part of Our Tenant Portal

Did you know that our tenant portal, My Home, has now been up and running for over a year?

This service is designed to make the everyday things, such as reporting repairs or paying rent easier for tenants. The portal is free to use and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

To register for My Home, all you have to do is click the green button at the top right of our website homepage to get started.

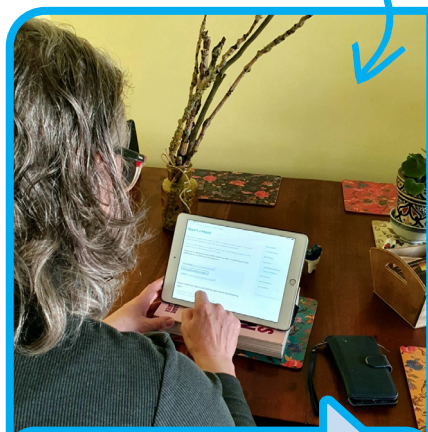


And, what's more, any tenant registering will automatically be entered into our monthly prize draw to win an Android Tablet device worth £100!

You will be asked to complete a few details to get started. If you have a friend or family member you would like to do it on your behalf, then that option is there too.

If you need help getting started, or are already registered, and need assistance with the services, then we have our dedicated staff, the Digital Champions, on hand to help. They can assist with all your options and getting the most of your account. Just email us at housing@ochilviewha.co.uk or call our office.

Rebecca from Sauchie shares what the service means to her.



"I find using My Home very easy, it also saves time phoning, you get a response to say the repair is logged, right away you can check the progress, and as you can input a description of the problem, you don't need to explain it to different people so it makes it efficient for everyone."

Elizabeth from Tullibody was our first monthly winner of a brand-new tablet device.



Sign up to be in with a chance of winning!

Community Benefit Sponsorship

Massive thank you to MCN (Scotland) Ltd for sponsoring the WASPs Community Club football team. This team were almost about to give up as they didn't have an indoor venue for training over the winter months. Andy Shearer, Director of MCN, stepped in via our Community Benefits Initiative and selected the team as one of the winners of the sponsorship offer. Huge thank you to all involved in making this possible!



Adapting your Home

Did you know that the Association can assist with making adjustments within your home if you have mobility issues? We can arrange small adaptations such as grabrails, handrails and keysafes. We can also provide assistance in contacting the social work department for more complicated referrals.

In 2021/22 we have completed around 100 adaptations for our tenants by installing keysafes, grabrails, bannisters and showers. Adaptations are funded by the Scottish Government and you do not always need a referral from Occupational Therapy for small adjustments.

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



Connecting Scotland Update

You may remember in our previous edition, we shared how free iPads and Chromebooks through the Connecting Scotland project have helped make a difference to tenants. We have received more positive feedback and thought it would be good to share it with you:

"I'm getting on fab with mine, done a few free courses to help with the job I'm in. I have since been made up to Supervisor and I'm halfway through my training as a Store Manager so hopefully get my own store soon. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity as I couldn't have done it without your help and the Chromebook."

Angie from Tullibody



"I really appreciated that you helped me out with the iPad and internet so thank you for that and thank you to the company running the programme.

Since we have last spoken, I have looked into setting up my own business again and I have a work coach at the job centre and working with enterprise as well for 12 months to get it in place and trading again."

Steven from Tillicoultry



We hope to explore further opportunities with Connecting Scotland again in the near future.

CCTV / Viewing Equipment

We are receiving higher numbers of requests for installing viewing and recording equipment such as CCTV or video doorbells. Whilst many feel these systems are important to provide security, you must understand how they can impact on others privacy as well as the law around their use.

Capturing images beyond the boundary of your home means that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies to you, therefore any system must comply with the law. This means considering what you record, how any data is stored and informing others that their images are being captured.

The Association has a leaflet outlining what you should consider before installing any equipment. If you would like a copy, please visit our website or contact us and we can send one to you.

Remember that you require permission to install any system under your Tenancy Agreement and the Association will consider how you intend to use the system and for what purpose before granting approval. If you wish to speak to someone about this area, please contact Vicki Brown.

Housing And Dementia

We are excited to announce that Ochil View have joined other landlords in committing to improve on our current practices and how we communicate with our tenants who have Dementia.

We are using the Housing and Dementia Framework which was developed by the Charter Institute of Housing Scotland, Alzheimer Scotland and the Place Home and Housing portfolio of Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Improvement Hub to set out how best Scotland's Housing Sector can support people living with dementia and their carers. We hope to keep you advised of all the work we will do in our future newsletters.



Ochil View Housing Association are working in partnership with Clackmannanshire Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB).

We are delighted to advise you that two new Money Advisors have been appointed to provide advice and assistance to our tenants.

Angie Harron and Jade Scott are delighted to be working with Ochil View tenants and can offer advice with regards to rent arrears, council tax arrears, utility bills, and other debt issues you may be facing.

Help and support is available, confidential and free. 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.



Our office will be closed on the following days:

Easter: Friday 15th April 2022
Monday 18th April 2022

May Day: Monday 2nd May 2022

We hope you all have a wonderful Easter

Different Formats

We are striving to make this Newsletter as accessible as possible for everyone. Should you require a copy in large print, audio or in another language, please let us know by contacting our office.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE