



THE OCHIL VIEW

Find us on  

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

Welcome from the Chair



Hello, and a warm welcome to the Summer edition of the Ochil View Housing Newsletter.

Hopefully, as you read this, you are enjoying some wonderful weather, something I'm sure we appreciate a little more after the last couple of challenging years.

Slowly, but surely, we are getting back to some sort of normality. Meetings are being held in our office and staff are appreciating having more face-to-face engagement with tenants. We understand that, for some, communicating online is still their preferred option and we will ensure this option is still available.

Summer also presents the opportunity for us to carry out more estate visits. These are a great way for us to see what's happening in the communities,

as well as give tenants the chance to share their thoughts and ideas on their neighbourhood. If tenants would like to join in on a walk, they can get in touch. We always welcome their feedback.

In this edition, we say hello to a new staff member and goodbye to an 'old' one. We've got lots of useful information around topics like the Tenant Handbook and My Home. And we are delighted to be opening our doors again for the upcoming My Home support day and future Tenant Sessions.

Have a wonderful, sunny, and safe summer from all at Ochil View.

Take care.
Margaret Baxter
Chairperson

A Winning Day for this Ochil View Family



The last day of school proved to be a particularly memorable one for the Anderson family. Not only did their children win our end of school competition, but it was also the day the family moved into their new Tullibody home, as well as celebrate a birthday! Mum Holly said:

"What a wonderful surprise, after picking up our keys for our new Ochil View home to get a message saying the kids had won the toy hamper, all in the same day of our eldest son's 10th birthday! After six years in our last Ochil View property, we have made lots of happy memories in our wee house but are looking forward to our next chapter finally in a house that's big enough for our four mess makers! Thanks again Ochil View team!"

How are we doing?

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



Where we performed well:

emergency repairs completed on target: **99.32%**

average length of time to complete emergency repairs:
1 hour 32 minutes

tenants satisfied with the repairs service: **97.81%**

repairs completed on target: **96.48%**

repairs completed right first time: **92.15%**

anti-social cases resolved: **98.4%**

current tenancy arrears: **3.8%**

% of annual lets to homeless applicants: **28.99%**

Stage 1 complaints resolved within timescale: **96.62%**

tenancy offers refused: **23.7%**

rent collected as a % of rent due: **100%**

Where we didn't do so well:



average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs: **8.64 days**

average time to let a house: **38.57 days**

Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale: **84.21%**

(New) tenants satisfied with condition of home on taking up tenancy: **94.12%**

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 during 2021/22:

Stage 1 Complaints
148 resolved
within timescale
(5 days)

96.62%

Stage 2 Complaints
19 resolved
within timescale
(20 days)

84.21%

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

Our contractor did not contact a tenant for several weeks regarding updates for an outstanding repair. We apologised, and arranged for the repair to be completed as soon as possible. We have also ensured that all our contractors use all available contact details we hold and reminded staff on ensuring we check contact details when a tenant calls us.

Over the year we received further praise on where we performed well with 129 positive comments. Examples of these are:



"Housing Officer helped me out today with things I did not understand and made it easy for me"

Existing tenant comment on assistance by a staff member.



"Delighted with the conduct of the tradesmen installing the kitchen... they were very respectful and kind"

Feedback from existing tenant on recent investment project.



"Happy with all services. Get all the help I can ask for"

General feedback from existing tenant.



"I would like to express my thanks to Ashleigh for taking the time to visit me at home to help me get started with My Home. Ashleigh was very person centred when explaining everything to me and I was able to understand"

Feedback on one of our Digital Champions.

Tenant Engagement Roundup

We continue to develop opportunities for tenants to share their thoughts and be involved in the decisions we make. We have achieved plenty since our last edition, including:

Our monthly Tenant Sessions have discussed a wide range of topics over the past few months. This includes reviewing the current anti-social behaviour information that is shared with tenants. Following consultation with the group, these details were revised and refreshed, and the resulting leaflet was much clearer and precise. Tenants also met with Andrew Gibb, our Property Services Manager, who discussed our new boiler contract and energy efficiency in general. Other topics included community benefits, the Newsletter and how the group can continue to grow and develop.

Next Tenant Session

2022
9th AUGUST

Tenants can now attend these monthly sessions either in-person at the office or online. This opens the meetings up for all tenants to attend in a way that they are comfortable with. One of our regular attendees, John from Alloa shares his thoughts on them:

"I like the Tenant Sessions as we are informed of what Ochil View is currently doing for tenants and what is planned for the future. It is nice to meet other tenants who have different views and issues. Everyone who attends can give their opinions and share issues, Chris is welcoming, a good listener and helpful."



John

"We are trying hybrid meetings going forward, so you can attend via Zoom or in person. The sessions are friendly and informal, and you can even just come along and listen in the background if you prefer. It's a great opportunity to see what Ochil View can do for tenants and the overall Ochil community. Chris and the rest of the staff are always happy to listen and do their best to try resolve or inform on any topic."



We have created a new Tenant Engagement Leaflet which explains why it's good for tenants to get involved and the engagement opportunities available. Copies of the leaflet will be shared at public events, as well as with all new tenants. You can request your own copy by contacting Chris, as per details below.

Updates to the Tenant Handbook

We have made a few changes to the current Tenant Handbook. This is mainly some very minor alterations to the language. The most significant change has been the Tenant Engagement section, which has been redrafted to highlight the benefits of getting involved and the opportunities available. You can see the Handbook in full on our website.

Tenants' Handbook



OCHIL VIEW
Housing Services Ltd.

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

In April, we implemented new software to improve how we gather feedback on our services. CX Feedback allows us to carry out automated surveying of any aspect of our service by texting and email, on top of our more traditional method of phoning.

To date, we are monitoring satisfaction with our repairs service using this tool and we have already noticed a significant increase in the volume of responses received. We are using this data to focus contractors on where they need to improve.

Over the next few months, we intend to expand how we use this tool, to include other areas of our service. If you do receive texts or emails from us, please ensure to respond to them. In doing so, you can shape the services you receive.

Newsletter Survey

Shortly after receiving your Newsletter, we will be getting in touch to ask if you could complete a short survey on the latest edition, and the Newsletters in general. It would be great to get as much feedback as possible as this will help us shape how future Newsletters will look!

You will receive a text or email informing you when the survey is open. It will only be a short number of questions and, when completed, you will be in with a chance of winning a £100 gift voucher!

£100
GIFT
VOUCHER

Resident Satisfaction Survey

Every three years we carry out a large scale satisfaction survey involving our tenants and owners, this is to gather views on our services and how we can improve. The time has come around again and we have recently appointed Knowledge Partnership to undertake the survey during September and October.

Further details will be provided nearer the time, but please take part if you are selected, we want to hear your views!

MONEY MATTERS

UK Government Cost of Living Support

With millions of households across the UK struggling to make their incomes stretch to cover the rising cost of living, the UK Government is providing over £15 billion in further support, to those with the greatest need. A brief description of how this will be shared is below however, full details can be found on our 'Cost of Living Support Factsheet' which, you can find on our website at <https://www.ochilviewha.co.uk/page/tenancy-support>.

Here is some updated news from Margaret in our Tenancy Sustainment Team



Margaret Hall, Tenancy Sustainment Officer

Energy Bills Support Scheme

- Households will get £400 of support with their energy bills
- It will be given out by Energy Suppliers over a six-month period from October
- This is in addition to the £150 Council Tax rebate announced in February

Cost of Living Payment

- Households in receipt of means tested benefits will get two payments, the first will be a payment of £326 and then this will be followed by a payment of £324
- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will make the payments in two lump sums – the first from July, the second in the autumn. Payments from HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC) for those on tax credits will follow shortly after to avoid duplicate payments
- The criteria on your entitlement to this payment can be found on our 'Cost of Living Support Factsheet'
- The payment will be tax-free and will not count towards the benefit cap, and will not have any impact on existing benefit awards

Pensioner Cost of Living Payment

- Pensioner Households who are over State Pension Age between 19-25 September 2022 and who receive the Winter Fuel Payment will receive an extra £300 one-off payment
- This will be an additional payment made in November/December with your Winter Fuel Payment

Disability Cost of Living Payment

- If you are in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit as at 25th May 2022 then you will receive a one-off payment of £150 from September
- To find out what the qualifying benefits are then please refer to our 'Cost of Living Factsheet'
- These payments will be exempt from tax, will not count towards the benefit cap and will not have any impact on existing benefit awards

Other Support

The UK Government has extended the Household Support Fund for England, providing an additional £500 million of local support. This will be managed by local authorities. The Scottish Government will be giving funding to however, how they intend to use this is still unknown.

Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments

The Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments are available for each child who gets free school meals because of low income.

Who can get it?

You could get the payment if you meet the eligibility criteria for free school meals which, is usually due to being on a low income or getting certain benefits. You may also get the payment if you're experiencing financial hardship, such as:

- You're waiting for your first Universal Credit Payment
- Your immigration status means you cannot get help from the government

How to get the payment

Your local council will be responsible for making the payments. The payment will be made automatically if your child is getting free school meals.

You have to apply for free school meals to get the payment and if you meet the eligibility criteria for them and;



- You have never applied before or had help with school meals during the school holidays
- Your child gets universal free school meals in primary 1 to 5
- Contact your local council to apply for free school meals and get the payment

For more information on free school meals please go to your councils website as follows:

- Clackmannanshire - <https://www.clacks.gov.uk/learning/freeschoolmeals/>
- Fife - <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/education2/schools-in-fife/free-school-meals-and-school-clothing-grants>

When will it be paid?

During 2022, four equal payments of £130 will be made at Easter, Summer, October and Christmas. The payments will be made in line with the start of the school holidays.



MORE MONEY MATTERS...

Other changes that have happened over the last 3 months

- The definition of terminal illness for Employment Support Allowance (ESA and Universal Credit) was changed. Terminal illness was defined as a doctor reasonably expecting their patient might die within 6 months this is now 12 months.
- Scottish Child Payment is to double £10 per week to £20.
- Energy Suppliers can no longer request an increase in deductions or any new deductions from DWP benefits for the ongoing increase in the prices of fuel. Claimants can still request Fuel Direct.
- Ukrainian refugees can claim benefits in the UK and are exempt for waiting period also changes to people hosting refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Managed Migration to move people claiming legacy benefits over to Universal Credit has restarted.
- Introduction of Adult Disability Payment in Scotland for new claimants in 6 local authorities.



Future changes that will happen over the next 3 months

- Adult Disability Payment in Scotland for new claimants for seven local authorities, including Fife, on the 25th July.
- Adult Disability Payment in Scotland for new claimants for all other local authorities on 29th August.
- The law will change to extend Bereavement Support Payment and Widowed Parents Allowance to unmarried couples with children.

For further information on any of the above please contact Margaret or Robert in the Tenancy Sustainment Team



Property Acquisitions

Ochil View receives funding each year from the Scottish Government to purchase 8 properties on the open market and take them back in to our social rented stock, however there is certain criteria that needs to be met.

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MAY BE INTERESTED IN SELLING TO US?

Please ask them to contact us on 01259 722899 for further details and information.

DID YOU KNOW?

We still have access to funding for fuel vouchers. If you haven't received 3

vouchers, and need help with your energy bills, please contact your Housing Officer.



Adapting your Home

Are you struggling with mobility? Or at risk of falls?

The Association can assist with making small adjustments within your home to assist you. 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.

The Scottish Government provide us with funding for our tenants in Clackmannanshire & West Fife by installing keysafes, grabrails, bannisters and showers. You do not always need a referral from Occupational Therapy for small adjustments so please contact us if you think we can help.

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



Career Ready

Once again, we are delighted to be taking part in the Career Ready programme, which enables young people to develop the skills, confidence and aspiration they need for a future successful career.

During July we will be inviting Gregor, a student from Alloa Academy, to work in our office for several weeks and gain valuable experience of the workplace. He will be mentored by our Property Services Officer, Ailsa Sadowski, and will have various tasks and small projects to deliver whilst here.

We look forward to welcoming him to the team!

COMPETITIONS

We love our competitions here at Ochil View and we've had plenty since our last edition!

Mother's Day was in March and we asked tenants to nominate their super mums. We received lots of lovely entries and our winner of a beautiful bouquet was **Beverley (pictured), who was nominated by her daughter Lisa.**



We conducted a short survey with tenants to get their thoughts on our My Home service, with a £100 voucher prize for one lucky entrant. **Amanda Thomson was our winner.** Here she is with her prize!



We also ran a competition asking for tenants' **thoughts and ideas on what could go into future Newsletters** and we received lots of interesting feedback. We had

a very special winner from Elm Grove, **Harry, who won a £30 Amazon voucher!**



Every month, we continue to offer a fantastic, brand-new tablet for one lucky tenant who registers to our My Home service. Our recent winner was John Fitzpatrick and he was delighted to collect his at our office.



With summer now in full swing, we thought it would be fun for our younger Ochil Viewers to draw us a picture of summer. Send your entries in via post, by email (tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk) or a picture to mobile number 07874 864 323. Prizes to be awarded by our judges! Competition closes Friday 5th August."

We hope your **garden displays** are coming together as our judges will soon be selecting the best displays for our annual prize-winning competitions!

We have prizes for best garden display, best window-box display and also our giant sunflower challenge!

Thank you again to idVerde for sponsoring this year's competitions.

Closing date for all entries is Friday 12th August. Good luck!



STAFF CHANGES

Hazel's Retirement

Hazel McLean, one of our Assistant Housing Services Officers, retired from the Association in May 2022 after

21 years' service with Ochil View. Hazel previously worked in Housing with Stirling Council before joining the Association in 2001. Hazel has worked with tenants across most of our areas over the years.

We would like to wish Hazel our very best wishes for a long and happy retirement.



"I feel very proud to have worked at Ochil View with great staff who are committed to their jobs. I have also dealt with some lovely tenants during my time and wish them and the staff all the best for the future."

Kathryn McPhait

We are delighted to announce that Kathryn McPhait has joined the Association on Monday 16th May 2022 as an **Assistant Housing Services Officer.** Katie (Kathryn) worked with Falkirk Council previously as a Housing Officer and will be working across some parts of **Tullibody, Sauchie, Alloa, Tillicoultry, Dollar, Coalsnaughton, Fishcross and some parts of Alloa.**



"I am looking forward to my new role with Ochil View and getting to know the team as well as the tenants. I have worked in housing for 7.5 years so far and I am looking forward to continuing to support people with their housing."

Collecting Equality Information

To comply with the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) Regulatory Framework and along with all other social housing landlords in Scotland, Ochil View is going to be required to collect a range of different information about all our customers. This includes tenants, applicants who have applied for housing, our Board members and staff. The information is relating to protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010

Once collected, this information will help us to:

- Protect and promote the rights and interests of our customers
- Promote equality objectives across all our services
- Identify and address our customer's needs, and improve our services
- Identify and remove any form of discrimination

The Association will soon be asking you to complete a form with this additional information and we will provide an update on this at a later date. If you have any concerns or wish more information please contact Linda McLaren, Housing Services Manager or email us at housing@ochilviewha.co.uk.

My Home

Our My Home 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.** You can access it by visiting our website at www.ochilviewha.co.uk and clicking the green button at the top to get started.

In our last edition, we highlighted that we would be carrying out a short survey on My Home for those who have signed up to the service, and another for those still to do so. This would help give us a better perspective on what services the users are accessing, as well as identify how we can help those looking to sign up to it.

Nearly 180 tenants in total completed the survey and the feedback highlighted some key points:

The majority of My Home users utilise the service to pay rent or report a repair

The vast majority of My Home users found the service to be very easy to use

A percentage of non-users are keen to learn more about the services available through My Home

Outcomes Report from My Home Surveys



The feedback from these surveys will help us continue to shape the online service, as well as how we can share more about what it does with non-users.

You can read a full report on the survey outcomes on our website, a link to it can be found on our homepage.

Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Garden Tips

Get to know your garden

Is it south facing or north facing? This will help you to know what to grow and where. Get to know what type of soil you have.

Plan your garden

This is a great starting point. Think about what you will grow together. Planning helps to use colour and structure wisely and create a lovely garden all year round.

Learn how to plant

Planting properly will ensure they grow well and live a long time. Take time to weed and prepare soil.

Start small

Just do a bit at a time. You can cover areas to stop weeds growing while you work on another area.

Make use of compost

This is great for the environment, wildlife, your purse and your garden.

Be kind to wildlife

Wildlife can be useful in the garden. Birds eat various pests and bees pollinate our food crops. Create habitats for wildlife and share your garden with them.

Enjoy your garden

Don't forget to enjoy your garden. Take time to sit back and enjoy all your hard work!



My New Home

We are delighted to be able to launch **My New Home** service which will enable our new tenants to sign up to My Home even before they get their keys or sign a tenancy agreement. My New Home service will enable our new tenants to read and go over important pre-tenancy information at their own pace, wherever and whenever they like.

A few of the features of My New Home are: -

- Checking and updating household and contact information
- Reading over the Associations Tenancy Agreement
- Reading our Tenants Handbook
- Applying for various permission requests i.e. keeping a pet, alterations to the property



We were delighted to work with partner organisations from across Forth Valley offering advice and support for individuals, family and friends during week beginning 16th May 2022 which, was National Hoarding Awareness week. This included a drop-in session on Monday 16th May at the Speirs Centre, Alloa where, people could pop in and speak to someone from housing, social services, the fire service or the NHS.

We are going to continue this work and develop a Forth Valley Hoarding Strategy which, will detail our partnership working and how we can support people who are affected by Hoarding.

If you would like to talk to someone just now about Hoarding then please contact your Housing Services Officer or email us at housing@ochilviewha.co.uk and someone will be in touch.

Ochil View Housing Association continue our partnership working with Clackmannanshire Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB).

Angie Harron and Jade Scott from CAB 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.



BROADBAND SOCIAL TARIFF

Did you know that many broadband providers offer a **social tariff** for eligible households who might be struggling to afford their broadband or phone services?

More information can be found here on the OFCOM website <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs>



BEES V WASPS

Heading in to summer (and hopefully some better weather!) you may have noticed more of a **buzz** around your home.

If you think you have a wasp problem, you need to first make sure you know what it is that's bugging you as it could in fact turn out to be bees!

Here's some handy hints...

Helpful hints to tell the difference between

Bees

and

Wasps



Fuzzy

Little to no hair

Help humans by pollinating our plants

Help humans eating other insects

Eat pollen and nectar

Eat human food that is laying around

Gentle in nature and rarely sting

Aggressive and ready to sting

Legs are usually hidden when flying

Legs hang down when flying

***Please note that bees are protected and the Association cannot issue any pest control works to Clackmannanshire or Fife Council for this.**

Alteration and adaptation permissions

If you would like to make any alterations or improvements to your property you will require first our written permission.

Examples of permission requests include: **Change to flooring, external decoration, internal doors, fencing, any external work to the property, CCTV etc.** If you are in doubt as to whether permission is needed then contact us and we can advise you.

To apply for our permission, you must tell us in writing details of changes that you would like to carry out. We will reply with our decision within one month. In the reply we will inform you of our decision and if there are any conditions attached if permission is provided.

CCTV: Please note that, due to Data Protection Laws, all forms of CCTV require permission. This includes Ring Doorbells and anything that captures and records images.

Written permissions can be requested via my home, email customer.services@ochilviewha.co.uk or by letter.

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