

THE OCHIL VIEW

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HELLO and welcome to Ochil View Housing's *Summer* Newsletter.

With the school holidays upon us, we hope you are enjoying some fine Scottish sunshine.

We have plenty of interesting news and stories to share with you. We have details of our new reactive and voids repairs contract. Staff have been working with tenants at Bedford Place to redevelop their garden space and our Tenant Scrutiny Group have been working hard on reviewing how the Association delivers its repairs service. Plenty more on that to come!

It's also a time of year when we get to enjoy our gardens in full bloom and our prize-winning garden competition is well underway. We've already had some fantastic entries, so don't delay in sending us pictures of your hard work!

We say thank you and goodbye to a long-serving member of staff, as well as hello to some fresh faces – read all about it on Page 5.

We also have plenty of useful information around the ongoing cost-of-living challenges and how we can look after ourselves and each other during the summer.

Lastly, we have updates on tenant engagement activity, in our Lochills we have information on a new Noise App we are trialling and our usual summer-themed competitions.

I hope you all enjoy this edition and have a wonderful, hopefully sunny, and safe, summer.

Take care, Margaret Baxter
Chairperson



Bedford Place

It wasn't quite the perfect summer's day recently when Ochil View staff volunteered their green-fingered services at Bedford Place! Their communal garden area was badly needing a makeover and staff and tenants braved the summer rain to help clear away rubbish from the garden and plant new flowers and veg.

Hedges were trimmed back, old pots cleared out and lots of weeds picked up! The garden is now looking lovely, and we hope the tenants won't have to wait too long to get out and enjoy it!

One tenant, David (below), is promising us soup and rhubarb crumble when everything grows, we can't wait!



BEFORE



AFTER



How are we doing?

All services are in operation however we have seen repair problems due to our repair's contractor ending their contract. Here is how we performed for the year April 2022 to March 2023:

Where we performed well:

average length of time to complete emergency repairs: **1 hour 14 minutes**

reactive repairs appointments kept: **92.29%**

planned maintenance works v programme: **109.22%**

current tenancy arrears: **3.29%**

% of annual lets to homeless applicants: **29.66%**

rent collected as a % of rent due: **99.90%**

positive comments from service users: **274**



Where we didn't do so well:

(New) tenants satisfied with condition of home on taking up tenancy: **90%**

average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs: **6.09 days**

repairs completed right first time: **87.62%**

repairs completed on target: **93.33%**

tenants satisfied with the repairs service **84.00%**

Stage 1 complaints resolved within timescale: **93.42%**

Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale: **95.45%**

average time to let a house: **27 days**



Questions or comments?

Contact Andrew Gibb,
Director of Property Services
or Linda McLaren, Director
of Housing Services.



Complaints & Positive Comments

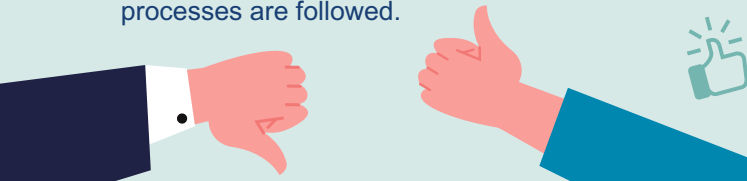
All complaints and comments are welcome as they help change and improve our services. Here is how we did for the year April 2022 to March 2023:

For 152 Stage 1 Complaints we resolved **93.42%** within timescale (4 days)

For 22 Stage 2 Complaints we resolved **95.45%** within timescale (20 days)

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

- A contractor attempted to make a service visit using the incorrect access procedure and providing wrong information to our tenant. We arranged for a new appointment and we reviewed access procedures and information with the contractor to ensure correct processes are followed.



We have a system for tenants to share positive experiences with Ochil View Housing and we continue to receive lovely comments. Here's a selection:



"The electrician was brilliant made sure house was safe went above and beyond working into the evening to sort fault, returned next day to check everything was as should be. Very polite, one of the best workers I have had in my home."

"The workmanship was magic, 10 out of 10"

"I am really satisfied with all the help that is provided from yourself to help. I am extremely grateful for everything that is done and all the information provided."

"Prompt response and very helpful and polite"

You can share your positive experiences of Ochil View anytime. Just give us a call, chat to a staff member or pop into our office.

Questions or comments: Contact Andrew Gibb, Director of Property Services.

Reactive Maintenance Service

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Quality Assured Property Maintenance Ltd (QAPM) to undertake reactive repairs for the Association. The contract is for an initial 3-year period, with the option to extend to 5 years based on performance and their contract covers all reactive repairs, emergencies both in and out of office hours and repairs to empty properties to get them ready for letting.

So far, we have been encouraged by QAPM's commitment and dedication to deliver a high-quality repairs service and we will be working closely with them over this initial period to ensure the Association's standards are achieved across all repairs areas.

For out of hours non-gas emergency repairs, tenants should now call:
Electrician – 07989 427 310, For Plumber – 07827 343 775 and for Joiner – 07976 479 245



Questions or comments? Call us on **01259 722 899** and ask for Andrew Gibb or Ashleigh Brown.

Estate Visits

Did you know our Assistant Property Services Officer, Vicki Brown, carries out estate inspections to each Ochil View area every 4 months? During these visits Vicki looks for issues such as external issues like gutter repairs, downpipe repairs or any issues with roof tiles etc. She also notes any communal landscaping issues and notes any properties that have debris outside or overgrown gardens and passes this information to our Housing team.



Tenants are always welcome to join Vicki on a walk around their neighbourhood to discuss how we look after the areas. Just give us a call on 01259 722 899 or keep an eye on our social media for any upcoming visits.

Communal & Garden Areas

As the warmer weather arrives, the Association does request that you keep your garden and communal areas tidy. We realise that some tenants may struggle with maintaining gardens due to lack of equipment or medical conditions. If this is the case, please contact your Housing Services Officer who can offer advice and assistance.



Please dispose of all rubbish responsibly as debris and food waste left out with a wheelie bin can attract vermin. If you have any large items of rubbish to be disposed of, a reduced cost bulk uplift can be arranged by contacting

Clackmannanshire Council on 01259 450000 or if you are a Fife resident, by contacting Fife Council on 03451 55 00 22.

Gas and Electrical Quality Assurance

The Association carries out 10% post inspections on all gas servicing, repairs, electrical safety checks and electrical reactive repairs.

These visits are carried out by auditors from NICEIC and the purpose is to ensure that our gas and electrical contractors are carrying all works out as they should.

You may therefore receive a text message or letter asking for access into your home for this.

If you wish to discuss this further, contact Ashleigh Brown Property Services Officer on 01259 722899.



Budget Update

To maintain a strong financial position, we had to make some tough decisions on our investment plans for this year with most projects being postponed until 2024-25. We are proceeding in some areas where investment is required now, as below:



Kitchen Upgrades - £132,000



Boiler replacements - £61,000



External decoration - £78,000



Energy Improvements - £72,000

If you have any questions on this, you can call and ask for Andrew Gibb or Alastair McGowan.



Have you heard of Dogs Trust? They provide a range of services, including:

A free and confidential dog fostering service for people fleeing domestic abuse

Virtual interactive support on training tips and guidance for a happy dog

The opportunity to foster dogs in your own home



**Contact them on 0808 169 4315
www.dogstrust.org.uk**



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

Margaret Hall, Tenancy Sustainment Officer



INCREASE IN MAXIMUM CHILDCARE PAYMENTS IN UNIVERSAL CREDIT COME INTO EFFECT ON 28 JUNE 2023

In addition, the DWP have confirmed that, from the same date, claimants will be able to receive help with their childcare costs up front when they enter work or significantly increase their hours.

Following the announcement in the Spring Budget, the maximum amounts will be increasing to £950.92 per month for one child and £1,630.15 for two or more children – up from the previous limits of £646.35 and £1,108.04 respectively.

THE GATE GRAND REOPENING

The Gate Charity, based at Ludgate in Alloa, had it's grand reopening after a long refurbishment over the winter. Our Tenancy Sustainment Team were invited along as part of the reopening and given the opportunity to tour the new facilities.

In addition to the foodbank, the Gate also has larders at various locations throughout Clackmannanshire as well as running the Soup Pot and meals for pensioners.

As part of their latest expansion, the Gate will be opening a new shop on Mill Street, Alloa which will include a School Uniform section all year round.

For more information on The Gate, or if you'd like to volunteer to help, please visit <https://the-gate-charity.org/>

THE ENERGY PRICE GUARANTEE AND PRE-PAYMENT METERS

As announced in the Spring Budget, from 01 July 2023, the average pre-payment meter user will no longer pay more for their energy than those on direct debit, saving around £21 per year.

This saving is being delivered through the Energy Price Guarantee by applying a unit rate discount. This discount equals the difference between pre-payment meter and direct debit costs in unit rates and standing charges.

From 01 July to 30 September 2023, the discount will be applied to gas unit rates only, as the combined unit rate and standing charge for electricity pre-payment meters will already be less than the equivalent for direct debit users. The gas unit discount will be 0.249p/kWh for gas (excluding VAT) – the specific pre-payment meter unit rate varies by region

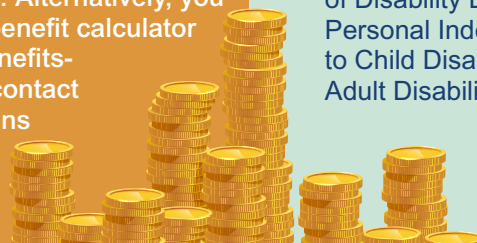
The discount will be reviewed every 3 months in line with future changes to Ofgem's price cap and will be applied automatically to the price that is set on the meter. You do not need to contact your supplier to apply for this.



EVERY YEAR, BILLIONS OF POUNDS IN BENEFITS GOES UNCLAIMED BY PEOPLE IN THE UK

Benefits can help with basic needs like housing and care costs, or give you a bit more freedom to do the things you enjoy. Even a small amount can make a big difference, and receiving some benefits, such as Pension Credit, means you are eligible for other sources of help too. If you're entitled to it, you should be receiving it.

If you are unsure if you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to, contact our Tenancy Sustainment Team and they will be able to help you. Alternatively, you can use a free benefit calculator (www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators) or contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau.



Looking back over the past 3 months:

- 1: Cost of Living Payments 2023-24**
The first payment of £301 has been sent out to all those who are eligible, during April and May. The separate Disability Cost of Living Payment (£150) was sent out at the end of June 2023.
- 2: More than 300,000 children receiving £25 weekly Scottish Child Payment**
The Scottish Child Payment is now being received by the families of more than 300,000 children and young people, according to official statistics.

Looking ahead over the next 3 months:



- 1: Cost of Living Payments 2023-24**
The next payment of £300 is due in Autumn 2023 and the final payment of £299 is due in Spring 2024. The Pensioner Cost of Living Payment (£150 or £300) will be sent out with the Winter Fuel Payment from November 2023.
- 2: Energy Price Cap**
From 01 July 2023, the Energy Price Cap will be reducing. This will mean that energy bills for a typical household in Scotland, England and Wales will be around £2,074 per year – around £420 lower than currently. However, energy bills are still higher than they were before the pandemic and they're predicted to remain high until the end of the decade.
- 3: Changes to Universal Credit**
From September 2023, changes to in-work conditionality will require people earning the equivalent of over 15 hours per week at the National Living Wage, but less than full time hours, to look for more work or better paid work.
- 4: Migration to new Benefits**
The DWP is continuing to migrate claimants of legacy benefits (except those on ESA) to Universal Credit. Social Security Scotland is continuing to migrate claimants of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment to Child Disability Payment or Adult Disability Payment.

Staff News

In our last edition, we mentioned we were appointing two temporary Customer Services Assistants to cover maternity leave. And here they are!

Say hello to **Nimi Sodeinde** and **Justine Elder**.



Speaking of maternity leave...we were absolutely delighted to hear that **Katie McPhait** and **Joanne Reid** have both given birth to beautiful baby boys. Katie welcomed Lewis Samuel David into the world on 5th May and just four days later, Joanne gave birth to Noah Andrew. Both boys and mums are doing very well!



We said goodbye and good luck to Ailsa Sadowski as she left Ochil View Housing at the end of April, after a fantastic 15 years' service at the Association. Ailsa was an outstanding Property Services Officer and will be much missed by tenants and staff alike. She leaves to work on her family business, and we all wish her the very best.



With Ailsa leaving, we carried out a recruitment process for her replacement and are delighted to welcome our new Property Services Officer **Alistair McGowan** into the role.



"I am Alastair McGowan, and I will be taking on the mantle of Project Services Officer (planned). I have been working in the housing sector for over 20 years, working with the military, local authorities and housing associations. I am looking forward to working on our adaptations program and asset replacements over the coming years.

Outside of work I can mostly be found trying to keep up with my children and their inexhaustible supply of energy. I try to find time to enjoy the odd hobby here and there, I enjoy archaeology, ancient history and painting wargaming models."



Career ready student

We also say a big hello to **Anthony Worrel**, who joins us as part of our Career Ready programme over the summer. Here's Anthony to tell us all about himself:

Hey, my name is Anthony and I'm a student of Alloa Academy, I'm here at Ochil View for my 4-week internship. I am a participant of the Annual Career Ready Program which opened the door for this wonderful opportunity to work and be apart of the Ochil View Housing Association team which is filled with a lot of great people.

My goal with this internship is to gain more insight on the world of work along with developing my skills and building a network for myself as a young man. My hobbies are listening to music, playing video games, and playing basketball and football. I play football for my school and Sauchie Juniors Football Club U18s where I play as a left winger or Striker.



Unsure how to get started with our My Home Service?
 Our My Home Service is an online portal that helps tenants easily report repairs, make secure payments, instantly receive our latest news and much more!
 If you need a hand getting started, our Digital Champions are here to help. Just get in touch to chat with us about what My Home can do for you.
 Call us on 01259 722 899 or email: Housing@ochilviewha.co.uk

COMPETITIONS

In our last edition, we had our Easter and our Mother's Day competitions and we were delighted to present two lucky tenants with their prizes.

Lucie from Tullibody won a beautiful Easter chick and plenty other goods to share with her sisters!



For our Summer edition, we have another two fantastic competitions for Ochil View tenants!

SCHOOL HOLIDAY COMPETITION

With the school holidays in full swing, it is the perfect time to give away some goodies for one lucky young Ochil Viewer! To win a selection of toys, all they have to do is tell us their favourite thing about summer. Please send their answer, along with their name and age to us by email: tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk, by text to 07874 864 323 or via our social media channels.

COMPETITION CLOSES ON MONDAY

24th JULY



GARDEN COMPETITION

Our 2023 Garden Competition is well underway, and we've already had some lovely pictures sent in by Ochil View tenants. We have prizes for the best displays, including window-boxes, so don't delay in sending us in your colourful creations! We can also pop out and take a picture for you, if you prefer. You can get in touch by email: tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk or text: 07874 864 323 or via our social media channels.

COMPETITION CLOSES ON MONDAY

7th AUG



OUR SUPER MUM FOR 2023

was Janet Hutchison from Cambus.

She was nominated by her daughter, who said: "She welcomes everyone with open arms and always puts everyone before herself"

Janet won a lovely Dove beauty set – well done super mum!

FATHER'S DAY COMPETITION

We also held our annual competition to find our Ochil View 'Super Dad' in June. We received lots of nominations and the winner of our Lynx gift set was Andrew Truesdale from Tullibody. Andrew is a bit of a camera-shy superhero but was delighted to receive his Father's day prize!



Play Safe this Summer!!



With the school holidays started we expect more children will be playing outdoors and enjoying the better (hopefully) weather.

Can all residents be mindful to your neighbours and ensure that when children are playing outside they are staying away from roads and parking areas. This will help to prevent any accidents and damage to property and cars. Play safely and respect others.

Don't forget to stay safe in the sun – use sunscreen and drink plenty fluids (that goes for pets too!). And be mindful of your neighbours when having fun outside. That way everyone can enjoy the weather!

Make the most of your garden this summer

With the weather hopefully staying lovely this summer why not get out and enjoy your garden. See below tips from our landscapers ID Verde to get the most out of your gardens.

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!

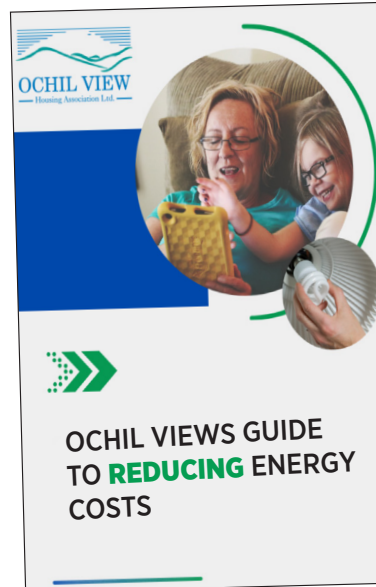
Ochil View Housing Energy Advice Booklet

We have created a detailed, easy-to-follow guide designed to help tenants reduce costs within their home and highlight sources of support available to them.

The guide covers topics such as staying warm in your home, how to be more energy efficient and managing your energy bills.

Tenants can read the guide in full on our website, or can request a copy by calling the office. We also have staff on hand to chat about financial matters, such as paying a bill, so don't hesitate to get in touch if you need to talk.

Our office number is 01259 722 899.



Gas servicing and Electrical Safety Checks

The Association has a legal obligation to carry out a gas service at your property annually, and an electrical safety check every 5 years.

It is really important that you allow us access to complete these as if we don't get into your property we may need to force entry.

If you have received a letter about an upcoming gas or electrical appointment that's not suitable we may be able to change the date of this, please contact Tara Hamilton on 01259 722899.

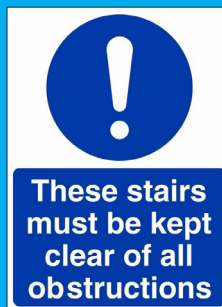
Keep Communal Closets **Clear** IS THE COMMON CLOSE YOUR ONLY MEANS OF ESCAPE IN A FIRE?

Have you ever thought what you would do if a fire were to break out in your stair? It may not necessarily be in your property. A fire started in a common stair could be fatal. Even a small bag of rubbish can create enough smoke to fill a whole stair.

Items left in a common stair are often deliberately set on fire.

KEEP IT CLEAR

- Get rubbish, old furniture etc out of the building
- Make sure storage areas are kept locked
- For advice on uplifting items contact your local council



Alteration and Adaptation **Permissions**

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

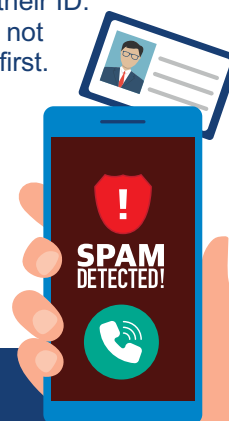
Written permissions can be requested via My Home, email customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk or by letter.

Bogus callers

When someone comes to your door it is important to check their ID. All staff and contractors will be happy to show their ID so do not be shy, just ask. Never let anyone in without seeing their ID first.

We have been made aware of bogus callers/scammers, please under no circumstances give away any personal information over the phone that could aid fraudsters.

If they claim to be from Ochil View or on behalf of Ochil View and you're not sure, end the call or tell them to wait until you can call the office to check.



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.



Tenant Engagement News

Tenant Handbook Survey

Every Ochil View Housing tenant receives a Tenant Handbook upon moving into their home. This handbook provides a wide range of information around topics such as keeping safe in your home, reporting repairs and owning pets. The handbook is being reviewed this year and, as part of this work, we sent a short survey to a sample of our tenants. This was to get their thoughts on what we currently produce and if there's anything missing that we could add. We look forward to sharing the outcomes of this survey and any changes to the handbook once the review is complete. If you have any comments you would like to make about the handbook, please get in touch.



Call us on 01259 722 899 or email: tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk

Tenant Scrutiny Group Update

The Ochil View Tenant Scrutiny Group are continuing to work hard on their first review – 'The Life of a Repair'. The group have reviewed our current repair policies and information, seen repair reporting 'in action' and created a survey to get tenants' thoughts on how Ochil View delivers its repairs service. Once the group have finished their review, they will publish a report with any recommendations and this will be given to the Board to consider. One of the tenants on the group, Tom from Tullibody said:

"It's been good getting to know people and staff have been so good in ensuring its independence and that we are all on the same team. It's an opportunity for tenants to get the best from their Housing Association."

If you would like to learn more about this group and the work they do, just get in touch with Chris McShane, who is the Tenant Engagement and Communications Officer. He can be contacted via: tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk or by calling 01259 722 899.

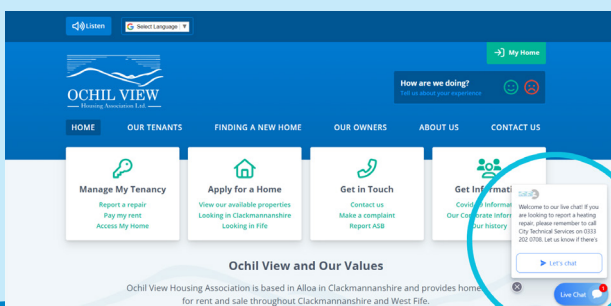


Chat Service

Ochil View recently teamed up with Smartsupp to launch a live chat function on our website and since this has been operational, it has proved to be a great function for service users.

We have responded to **193 chats** in total. 39% relating to a reactive repair, 20% general housing enquiries, 15% rent, 14% applicant/these homes, 7% my home tenant portal, 3% planned maintenance, 2% tenancy sustainment, 1% anti-social behaviour and 1% finance related. Our average response time is 1 minute 39 seconds and 36 users have provided feedback following their chat and we have achieved a **100% happy score!**

Our live chat is operational between our normal opening hours and will get you in touch with Customer Services staff! **Just log on to our website at www.ochilviewha.co.uk and the live chat bubble will appear at the bottom right. Any questions on this, please contact us on 01259 722 899 and ask for Ashleigh, our Property Services Officer.**



Annual Tenant Engagement Report

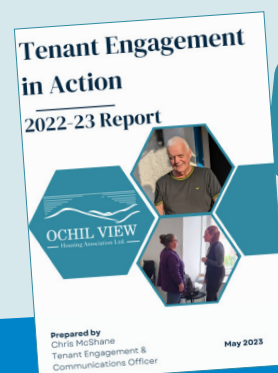
We were delighted to launch our Tenant Engagement Annual Report for 2022-23 back in May.

This report highlights the many different ways Ochil View Housing Association tenants have contributed to the work of the Association. This includes one-to-one communication with staff, attending our events, being part of the Tenant Scrutiny group and much more.

We highly value all participation as it helps us continue to shape and deliver the best possible services for you as tenants.

You can read the report visiting our website.

If you would prefer to receive a paper copy of the report, just get in touch.



Thank you to everyone for their contributions.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE