



**FRAUD ALERT!**

2



**New Projects**

4



**Superhero Charity Day**

8

**Summer 2016**

# Abertalk



## A celebration was held to mark the opening of a new garden at Dryburgh Gardens sheltered housing.

This was a joint project between Abertay and Helm Training with funding from the People's Postcode Lottery. The garden was planned and built by trainees from Helm Training. The opening was attended by around 30 residents with the ribbon being cut by Dryburgh Gardens oldest resident, Mary alongside James from the Helm project.

## Date for your Diary

The Fintry Gala Day is to be held in the grounds of Fintry Parish Church at 11am on Saturday 27th August 2016.

As well as sponsoring the Climbing Wall, Abertay have agreed to sponsor archery this year which should prove to be a very exciting and popular free attraction for children.

Hope to see you there!!

## It's survey time

Please take the time to complete our Tenant Satisfaction Survey which you will have received through the post over the last few weeks.

We have provided a freepost envelope but if you prefer, you can complete the survey on-line at:

[www.abertayha.co.uk](http://www.abertayha.co.uk).

The primary aim of the survey is to gauge satisfaction with our services, understand Customers Priorities, and identify any areas for improvement.

All completed questionnaires will be entered into a lucky prize draw for a **£50 voucher** of your choice.

**Optional** - you do not have to provide your contact details. You can remain anonymous if you wish.

Be assured that all of the information collected through the survey will be treated as **strictly confidential**.



**Please return your completed questionnaire in the freepost envelope provided (no stamp required) by Friday 24th June 2016.**



## Estate Walkabout Survey Results



Thanks to everyone that took the time to complete and return our Estate Walkabout questionnaire. As you can see, the feedback was extremely positive.

### Walkabout with us

At Abertay Housing Association we want to get you as involved as possible in making your estate a nice place to live in. Our estate walkabouts give you the opportunity to have your say and help improve the appearance of your neighbourhood.

If you have not received a timetable from us then the revised timetable can be viewed on our website at [www.abertayha.co.uk](http://www.abertayha.co.uk). Alternatively the Customer Service Team will be happy to give you details of the next walkabout in your area.

- 55% attended or are interested in attending the walkabouts
- 80% are happy with the frequency of the walkabouts
- 80% are happy with the level of resident input that they have
- 70% are happy with the feedback received from the walkabouts
- 80% are happy with the assistance provided by the Housing Officer and Maintenance Officer
- 75% are happy with the improvements to their estate due to the walkabouts



70% of people feel that their community is much or slightly better directly as a result of the walkabouts.

## Rent Consultation Feedback

Abertay's Management Committee decided in December 2015 to consult tenants on rent increase options for the Financial Year 2016/17. Two options were proposed for tenants to consider:

- Option 1** 1.0% increase. To deliver £6m of improvement works to over 300 homes.
- Option 2** 1.5% increase. As above, but also set up a handyman service to help tenants with small jobs in their home.

All tenants were given the opportunity to have their say in a number of ways including by email, text or by returning the freepost postcard. The total number of responses received was 145 which accounts for 8% of the tenants surveyed. This compares to 147 responses (8.3%) received the previous year.

Of the responses received, **63%** (92) were in favour of the lower increase of 1.0%. The proposal to set up a handyman service (option 2), was a popular option for **34%** (49) of responders.

Based on the outcome of the survey it was recommended that committee approve an increase of 1% which took effect from 1st April 2016.

A more detailed report on the outcome of the consultation can be viewed on our website at: [www.abertayha.co.uk](http://www.abertayha.co.uk) under Downloads then Survey Results 2016.

The winner of our rent consultation Prize Draw was Ms Ferguson from Dryburgh Gardens. Many thanks go to all tenants who responded.

## Fraud alert!

We have been made aware that a woman has been calling at properties in the Fintry area pretending to work for Abertay Housing.

Please be extra vigilant when answering your door. All members of staff will carry photographic ID, and if you are still unsure don't hesitate to contact us at the office on **01382 903545** to confirm someone's identity and reason for being at your property.

**Do not let anyone enter your property unless you are sure of who they are!**



The UK at the end of March 2016 had 225,002 people claiming Universal Credit. Dundee went live on 2nd November 2015 and recently achieved around 1,100 claimants.

Musselburgh have the Full service and Highland Council are scheduled for it over the next year. There is no definite date for Dundee to receive the full service, however the DWP suggest that the transition will be complete by mid-2018.

**Housing benefit backdating** – From 1st April 2016 the length of time a backdate of housing benefit can be requested for has reduced from 6 months down to 1 month. It's important not to delay claiming and to take advice on entitlement as soon as possible.

**Family premium** will not be included in the housing benefit applicable amount from 1st May 2016. This may affect you if you have a child after 30th April 2016 or become responsible for one.

**Pension Credit** assessed income periods are not being

issued or renewed after 6th April 2016. This may affect you and result in you receiving less council tax reduction and housing benefit.

**DLA is ending**, Disability Living Allowance is ending and being replaced by Personal Independence Payment. This is a completely different benefit with different criteria. Because of this, there is a possibility of people being invited to re-apply missing out on money and potentially no longer being eligible for a Motability vehicle. There is a package available to certain people who lose their Motability vehicle due to not being entitled to the enhanced mobility rate of PIP. By the end of September 2017, everyone between 16-64 will have been invited to apply. Once you receive the letter it is vital that you consider the information provided so that you understand the differences between DLA and PIP or contact Abertay and we will explain the differences and assist with the application where appropriate.

**If you think you will be affected or have any questions please get in touch.**

## Dealing with Anti-social behaviour

Everyone has a different idea of what anti-social behaviour means. It can range from playing loud music to racial and other forms of harassment, including threatening behaviour, acts of violence or abuse.

### Our zero tolerance approach

We are committed to ensuring you can enjoy a quiet and peaceful life in your home. We will not tolerate tenants being abused, harassed or subjected to noise, nuisance or other anti-social behaviour from those around them.

### Contacting Abertay

We take all complaints seriously and act swiftly to resolve problems at an early stage. If you would like to report anti-social behaviour please contact Abertay on 01382 903545. Or you can email us at [customerservice@abertayha.co.uk](mailto:customerservice@abertayha.co.uk).

Your complaint will be acknowledged or responded to within 3 or 5 working days depending on the Category it is placed in. Our Categories are:

**Category A – Serious/Extreme**  
(response within 3 working days)

**Category B – Noise/Nuisance**  
(response within 5 working days)

**Category C – Estate Management**  
(response within 5 working days)

### Investigation

The Housing Officer will investigate your complaint and this may involve interviewing other witnesses such as your

neighbours and taking statements. Your identity will not be disclosed without your permission.

The Housing Officer will take all reasonable steps to resolve the situation. Sometimes this may involve other support agencies that can help.

### Be patient

Solving serious anti-social behaviour takes time and effort from you and us. We will keep you advised at all stages of the investigation.

Abertay has a locally agreed target for completion and closure of cases which is within 28 days for categories **B and C**. Category **A** has a longer timescale for case closure and may not be closed for up to 122 days. This is because requesting police reports, starting legal action, such as serving Notices of proceedings or applying for a possible court order to evict can be an extremely lengthy process.





# New Projects



## Abertay are delighted to have submitted plans to Dundee City Council for the construction of 60 new homes at Finavon Street in Fintry.

There will be a mix of house styles and sizes, providing much needed homes for both general and special needs tenants.

Our Architect, Barton Willmore, have worked hard to produce a design that gives generous and spacious homes, good sized gardens, ample parking and an attractive

appearance, combined with the energy efficiency, quality of finish and low running costs everyone expects.

We hope to start construction around November and anticipate completion some 15 months later. We will of course be keeping the immediate neighbours informed throughout the process.

A selection of drawings and images of the design are available to view on our website, Facebook page and in Reception.

# Planned Maintenance

## Abertay intend to make a record investment in planned maintenance in 2016/17 of around £6.4million.

Last year, working in partnership with Robert Gordon University to improve our steel framed houses in Craigiebank, we completed 13 pilot homes. This success has allowed us to enter into a contract with local contractor Go Sustainable to modernise the remaining 75 over the next two years.

These homes were built in the 1920's and although popular with tenants they have always been hard to heat and keep warm in the winter. The initial findings from the pilot scheme shows very positive improvements, which we will continue to monitor.

Last year we also delivered a programme of external improvements such as new roofs and triple glazing to 120 homes, this programme will continue this year with a further 160 homes in line for improvement.

Finally our programme of internal improvements such as kitchens and bathrooms which improved around 300 homes last year will see a further 140 homes upgraded this year.

Overall this ambitious programme shows Abertay's commitment to improving the condition of our homes and the lives of our tenants.

We will of course contact tenants involved as these projects progress.





## Abertay Open Space Winter Maintenance Works

Every winter Abertay carries out work to trees and shrubs in open and public areas which have become overgrown or cause nuisance to our residents.

In the autumn, we look at the areas suggested during the year, to agree the best way of tackling them that winter. If you know of any problem

areas let us know so we can try to include them next winter.

If you have a problem tree in your garden, it is your responsibility to deal with it. However, if you are physically unable to manage this, we may be able to help, but we would expect you to pay the costs involved.



## Home Start

Support and friendship for families

## Do you Have Parenting Experience?

Could you help make a difference to a family?

All parents know that those early years are vital in a child's life and at Home-Start we believe parents have the key role in creating a secure childhood for their children.

It's just that sometimes they need a bit of help... your help.

Your experience as a parent can help other parents.

Home-Start Dundee is a voluntary home-visiting organisation, working with families with at least one child under five.

### Volunteers benefit too by:

Personal Development, On-Going Quality Training and Support, Confidence to Move on to Other Things i.e. Further Education or Employment, Meeting New People and many more.

### Become a Home-Start Volunteer

A short course of Preparation starts soon.

For more information please contact:

Home-Start Dundee on 01382 202040

or visit our website

[www.homestart-dundee.org.uk](http://www.homestart-dundee.org.uk)



## Asbestos

You may have heard about asbestos and its possible dangers.

Don't worry – when properly managed, asbestos does not pose a risk to health.

### What is it?

Asbestos is the name given to a material that was commonly used in homes from the 1950s to the mid-1980's before being banned in 1999.

### Is it dangerous?

No, providing it is in good condition, sealed or not likely to be damaged or worked on.

### What do Abertay do about asbestos?

Abertay has a procedure for managing asbestos and uses specialist contractors to test suspected asbestos and carry out surveys. This is done before we carry out any improvement works in your home.

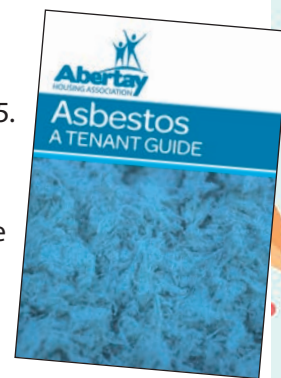
### What happens after a survey?

We will let you know the results if we need to take any action. We will usually remove it but if we decide to leave it in place, we will regularly monitor its condition.

If you have any concerns or need further advice please contact us on 01382 903545.

A new leaflet has been produced which you can download from our website [www.abertayha.co.uk](http://www.abertayha.co.uk).

Copies are also available from the office.



## End of the Right to Buy



The Housing Scotland Act 2014 signals an end to the Right to Buy Scheme.

Those tenants who retain the Right to Buy have until 31 July 2016 to submit a fully

completed application. Remember if you are considering buying your home, as well as the purchase price, you will also have to pay other ongoing costs such as buildings insurance, repairs and maintenance and factoring charges. For further information and guidance please go to the following link

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/11/8564](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/11/8564)

# How did we do?

We are working hard to improve our services to you and provide value for money. We thought you would like to have a look at how we performed from April 2015 – March 2016 compared to last year.

PERFORMANCE UPDATE	Target	This Year to 31/03/16	Last Year	Average performance of other Housing Associations*	
Emergency repairs completed on time	4 hours	1.9 hours	1.9 hours	2.9 hours	😊
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	6 working days	4.9 days	5.1 days	5.7 days	😊
Satisfaction with the repairs service	95%	99.6%	92.2%	94% satisfied	😊
VALUE FOR MONEY					
Gross rent arrears as at end of March as a percentage of rent due for the year	<3.3%	2.8%	3.3%	4%	😊
Average length of time taken to re-let properties	<21 days	13.0 days	16.3 days	27 days	😊

\* Other landlord performance taken from Scotland's Housing Network Benchmarking data as at 23/05/16

Number of evictions for arrears from 01/04/2015 – 31/03/2016	7	😞
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Abertay offers a firm but fair Rent Arrears Policy, which offers advice and assistance to those who fall into arrears. Eviction is always a last resort; however there are occasions when we have had to evict tenants who have failed to engage with us and keep to suitable payment agreements. Tenants who do not pay their rent mean that we have less to spend on improvements and services.

Number of evictions for anti-social behaviour from 01/04/2015 – 31/03/2016	2	😞
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We are committed to ensuring tenants can enjoy a quiet and peaceful life in their home. We do not tolerate tenants being abused or subjected to noise, nuisance and other anti-social behaviour. This has led to Abertay having to take legal action against a small number of tenants, with two being evicted for their anti-social behaviour in the last year.

## Complaints

Between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 the Association received 202 1st stage complaints and 6 2nd stage complaints. These related to a variety of issues. Abertay records any expressions of dissatisfaction and we use these to improve our processes or procedures in the future.

COMPLAINTS	Dealt with within	Target	Within timescale	Previous year	
Stage 1 complaint	5 days	90%	97.0%	87.7%	😊
Stage 2 complaint	20 days	100%	100%	100%	😊

We aim to provide excellent customer service to all our tenants; this includes measuring the time it takes to answer your calls. It enables the Customer Service Team to have the right number of staff to deal with your enquiry so that you are not left holding on for too long. Below is our performance for the Year 2015/16.

PHONE CALLS	Target	To 31/03/16	Previous year	
Average ringing time	<10 seconds	8 seconds	9 seconds	😊



## Views of a resident

**Over the last 3 months at Abertay, our welfare officer has assisted tenants to maximise their income through benefit claims, applied for blue badges, assisted with budgeting and rent arrears.**

Here are a couple of statements that tenants have made about the service and impact of this work:

*'I moved to an Abertay flat in... and had very few possessions to help me settle in. With a bit of help from Abertay, I have been able to furnish and carpet the flat so my kids and I have a safe and happy home to live in.'*

*'We moved to an Abertay sheltered scheme and met Richard prior to us viewing the property and he assisted us with checking affordability for our new property as it was more than our current rent.'*

*All of our questions about benefits were answered for us. He then did the paperwork to have the rent paid on our old address and the Abertay property so that we didn't accrue any arrears.'*

*'We were turned down for benefits last year, we spoke with Richard who assisted us filling out the form and were recently awarded it.'*

What is clear and important when dealing with many aspects of social security benefits is that getting appropriate advice is key. Whether this is guiding you through the ever changing minefield or supporting you through a new claim, then we have a member of staff who will happily help you through the situation.



Research recently published by the BBC has found that 21% of Britain's population does not hold the basic digital skills and capabilities required to realise the benefits of the internet.

We hope that the use of Dundee City Council's Digital on the Move package will help anyone who is interested to gain access to the internet in the Community Flat at 87 G/R Fintryside. Through these sessions we will demonstrate potential savings available from using the internet to cut costs on household services/insurance and find a job. In the near future you will also need to be able to complete and manage your claim online for

**We are hoping to run some 'Computer Clubs' from the Community Flat at 87 G/R Fintryside.**

certain types of benefits, so this process will be demonstrated and explained. We will also use the budgeting game from Dundee City Council to help people understand the choices they may have to make with their household budget if they get a single monthly payment instead of weekly or fortnightly payments, which is a key difference under Universal Credit. This change can be significant to the way you manage your money but support is available to assist.

**Keep an eye out for dates and if you're interested or have any questions contact Richard on 01382 513826**

## Social Media / Communication

**We realise that many of you work during the day and find getting into the office or phoning during office hours difficult. It also makes it harder for us to communicate vital information to you. Did you know that there are a number of ways that we share information and that you can get in touch with us here at Abertay at a time and place that suits you?**

Our Facebook page has been live for over 6 months now and is proving a popular method for many residents to get in touch with us. We post important information and useful links regularly. Comments, likes and shares are a good way for residents to communicate with each other as well as with us! They also let us know which posts you find interesting and those that you don't.

Find us on Facebook and Like or share our page.

Our website is another useful source of information for you to keep informed of what is happening within our Estates at your convenience. It has comment boxes for you to leave a message or ask questions. Did you know that you can also pay your rent, report a repair or report cases of anti-social behaviour through our website? [www.abertayha.co.uk](http://www.abertayha.co.uk)

Again we have a general email address that you can contact at any time - [queries@abertayha.co.uk](mailto:queries@abertayha.co.uk)

If you would prefer us to send communication via email or would like to join our emailing list with regular updates then please contact the office to ensure that we have your correct contact details.



# Register of Interested Tenants



**At Abertay, we are constantly looking to improve the services that you receive. In order for us to do this, we require feedback from all our residents on areas that concern them.**

We have a Register of Interested Tenants that consists of volunteer members. We consult with members on service matters throughout the year. The consultation can be carried out through a variety of methods like mail, email and telephone surveys – we understand not everyone has the time to commit to joining a formal group.

If you would like to give feedback, share your opinions on how we operate or suggest any service improvements that you would like to see Abertay make, then join our Register today. The more residents

that are on the register the wider the consultation and the more feedback we receive!

## What is in it for you?

Apart from improved services, the opportunity to see that we value our residents' input and a chance to become involved in Abertay, we occasionally offer a prize draw with entry for all participants with a gift card for the lucky winner!

If you think this is something that you might like to become involved with then please contact our office on 01382 903545 or email [customerservice@abertayha.co.uk](mailto:customerservice@abertayha.co.uk)

**SUPERHERO CHARITY DAY**

**We raised £215 to help tackle Holiday Hunger by dressing up, down and from a fundraising quiz and a cake sale.**

**On Friday the 13th of May in support of Cash for Kids, Abertay staff donned their Superhero outfits to raise money for local children.**

**POW!**

**OUCH!**

**At Abertay we aim to enhance the quality of life in our communities and this is another way that we felt we could contribute !**

## Voucher Reward and Free Prize Draw!!

### Switch to Direct Debit

Don't delay, set up your Direct Debit today and you could be rewarded with a £25 voucher and free entry into our prize draws for Direct Debit payers!

**For further details please contact the Customer Service Team on Tel No. 01382 903545.**

Congratulations go to Ms Carrie from Fintry, the latest lucky winner of a £50 voucher.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

## STAFF CHANGES

We welcomed Angela Robertson, Accountant and Business Analyst, Richard Pinner as our new Welfare Officer and Calum McLeod as Senior Project Officer. They have all settled in and are already making a positive impact.

**Newsletters:** We are always on the lookout for contributions to our Newsletters. If you have any interesting articles or want to tell us something that is happening in your local area, please let us know and we will include it in a future newsletter.

## Getting In Touch

Telephone:

**01382 903545**

Fax:

**01382 903575**

Email:

[queries@abertayha.co.uk](mailto:queries@abertayha.co.uk)

