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2013

# Abertalk



NEWSFLASH!

## Here to help

We are delighted to report that Abertay Housing Association and Angus Housing Association have been jointly awarded a grant from the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

The grant has been given to us so we can help you prepare for some major changes to the benefits system over the next few years. We will be working closely with Angus Housing Association over the next eighteen months to provide tenants with help and support in the lead up to the introduction of Universal Credit.

### What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit is designed to simplify the current system and will eventually replace all means tested benefits for **working age claimants**. You will need to prepare for these changes by:

- Opening and using a bank account if you do not have one
- Managing your Universal Credit claim online
- Managing your money on a monthly budget
- Paying your rent directly to your landlord yourself out of your Universal Credit

### We can help you to do this

**Housing Benefit as we now know it today will be totally changing**  
We will be working with you to ensure your rent account runs smoothly

**These changes are NOT going to affect pensioners**

Our Welfare Reform Officer Anna, will begin contacting people in the New Year to talk to you about what support you might need to help you prepare.

Look out for more information on Universal Credit and how to get help in future editions of Abertalk.

ABERTALK • WINTER 2013

Anna Lieske  
Abertay HA



The committee and staff of  
Abertay Housing Association  
wish their tenants a

## Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

### Christmas and New Year opening times

Close Tuesday 24th December 2013 at 2 pm

Re-open Monday 30th December 2013 at 8.30am

Close Tuesday 31st December 2013 at 4.30 pm

Re-open Monday 6th January 2014 at 8.30 am

### Christmas – paying your rent

Obviously at this time of year everybody feels the excitement of the festive season creeping up on us and the priorities that lie ahead.

However we must remind you that you should continue to pay your rent as you would normally do.

If you are having difficulty paying your rent please contact us as soon as possible so that we can help you. Our Welfare Reform Officer, Anna Lieske can assist with benefits issues and there are other agencies that offer free advice on how to manage your budget.

For further information or  
advice please call us on  
Tel No. 01382 513809

Sandie Fitzpatrick  
Angus HA



# Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results

**You will recall we included a tenant survey in your last Newsletter for you to complete. We would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you who took the time to complete this.**

The survey returns have been collated and the results analysed. Although pleased with high levels of tenant satisfaction in certain areas, we recognise that there is room for improvement. The following is a sample of some of the questions asked and the responses we received

Please find below some of the Questions asked and the responses we received to them	Very or fairly satisfied	Fairly or very dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Abertay Housing Association?	90%	4%	6%
How satisfied are you with opportunities given to you to participate in Abertay's decision making process?	75%	5%	20%
How satisfied are you with the way Abertay manages your enquiries generally?	93%	2%	5%
How satisfied are you with the way Abertay manages your complaint?	83%	10%	7%
Thinking about the LAST time you had repairs carried out, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the repairs service provided by Abertay?	92%	5%	3%
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your home?	87%	9%	4%
How satisfied are you with Abertay's management of the area you live in?	86%	6%	8%
Taking into account the accommodation and the services Abertay provides, do you think the rent for this property represents good or poor value for money?	Very / fairly good 79%	Neither good nor poor 13%	Fairly or very poor 8%

The Survey Report with full results can be viewed on our website. Alternatively you can request a copy by contacting Customer Services on Tel No. 903545 or at Reception in our Main Office, 147 Fintry Drive.

## "You said" We did

In light of your comments in the survey returns we have reviewed some of the services we provide you. You may be aware that Housing Officers previously specialised in one particular aspect such as antisocial behaviour or managing empty properties. Although we are

retaining the rent management team, we have made the decision for some of the Housing Officers to go back to managing their own area (or patch) which will include estate supervision. The changeover will come into effect from January 14'.

We are going to introduce Estate Walkabouts from Early Spring. This is so that any tenant if they

wish can accompany the Housing Officer and highlight any issues in their local area and agree any improvements required. Your Housing Officer will contact you towards the end of January to advise where and at what times these will take place.

Opposite are the Housing Officers and their areas of responsibility.





The lucky Satisfaction Survey prize winners received Scottish Hydro vouchers courtesy of Dundee Energy Efficiency Advice Project (DEEAP), Tesco and Asda vouchers courtesy of McGill Electrical Ltd.

**£50 Scottish Hydro Vouchers courtesy of DEEAP**

Teresa Prendergast, Kingsway West (Charleston) estate.

**£40 Tesco Voucher courtesy of McGill**

Mrs Irene Monaghan, William St estate.

**£30 ASDA Voucher courtesy of McGill**

Mr Frank Fagan, Dryburgh Gdns estate.

**£20 ASDA Voucher courtesy of McGill**

Ms Laura Edwards, Fintry estate.

**£20 Tesco Voucher courtesy of McGill**

Mrs Joan Cook, Caldrum St estate.

Here are some of the lucky winners who were presented with their vouchers



Mrs Irene Monaghan



Ms Laura Edwards



Mrs Joan Cook



Mr Frank Fagan

## "You said" We did

We noted from comments made in the survey that some of you felt that our management of your estate could be improved, in particular with the condition of some communal areas and overgrown gardens, damaged fencing and footpaths etc.

One particular issue raised was with the poor condition of the communal bins at Fintryside. This has now been addressed and a number of the bins have either been replaced or refurbished.

**before**






**after**








Melanie Martin Tel No. 513812	Heather Borland Tel No. 513810	Gaynor Arcari Tel No. 513808
Fintry South (part of) Rosebank Place Caldrum Street area Kingsway West area Lawrence Street area Kirkton area Kingoodie	Fintry North Dura Street area William Street area Craigiebank	Fintry Mains Fintry South (part of) Americanmuir area Pitalpin area Dryburgh Gardens Patons Lane area Gordon Street



Good	
Room for Improvement	
Cause for concern	

## We are committed to continuous improvement in the services we provide you.

One of the ways that we do this is by using performance indicators which cover key service areas which help us to measure and monitor how we are performing against the targets we have set. We also compare our performance against other Housing Associations in order to identify areas for improvement.

Performance Indicator	Performance for April-June 13'	Target	Actual Performance for April-September 13	How are we doing
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due for the year	2.5%	<2.4%	2.5%	
Percentage of repairs completed right first time	85.8%	>90%	88.5%	
Percentage of repairs appointments kept	94.8%	>95%	95.9%	
Average length of time taken to complete (make safe) emergency repairs	3.6 hours	7 hours	4.5 hours	
Average length of time taken to re-let properties	40 days	<25 days	38 days	

As you can see from the table above we are pleased with our improving performance in completing repairs. We are working very hard to reduce rent arrears and the time it is taking us to re-let our properties. This is important as it helps minimise the loss in rental income to the Association which could impact on the services we provide you.

## TECHNICAL TALES

### Abertay Housing Association Logo added to QAPM Vans

As QAPM have provided our Repairs & Maintenance Service over the last few years, which has led to a strong working relationship, we both agreed that it was about time that QAPM branded their fleet of vans with the Abertay Housing Association logo.

It was also agreed that one of the WRB Gas vans be done in the same way, as generally we have a dedicated Gas Engineer who covers the majority of Abertay jobs.

At first it was discussed that we use the colour adopted by Abertay, however, after much debate it was finally agreed that the logo looked much better in the same colour as the QAPM logo. No doubt you will all notice this change as the various tradesmen go about their business.





## PLANNED MAINTENANCE -

# Refurbishment Works at Dryburgh Estate

**We are currently carrying out major refurbishment works at our Dryburgh Gardens Estate to ensure that we comply with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) 2015.**

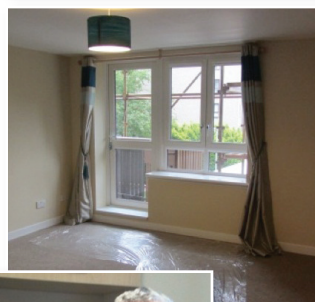
The work includes new kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, internal wall insulation, windows and upgrading the warden call system within the tenant's homes.

We are also fitting new roofs, insulating the ground floors (within the basements), replacing communal front entrance doors, fitting new communal windows and carrying out structural repairs; all to the common elements of the blocks.

In order to carry out the works we have had to decant each tenant for a period of 4 weeks.

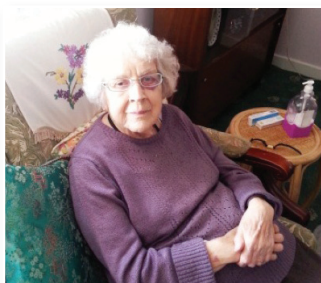
We have supplied a temporary common room for use by all residents to escape the noise and upheaval whilst neighbouring properties are being worked on.

Work is progressing well throughout the estate and by the end of December we will have renovated 37 properties and all properties will be completed by mid May 2014.



*"my flat is so much nicer and cosier and a lot brighter than before"*

**Mrs Zanre**



*"it is so much warmer and I am really pleased with my new home"*

**Mrs Peters**



*"I especially like my new kitchen. My move went great with no hiccups"*

**Mr Lawrenson**

We received some very positive feedback during a recent open day held for the residents. The tenants that we spoke to were delighted with the improvements made to their properties.

**We would appreciate if you could ensure that there are no obstructions such as bicycles/toys/prams or buggies blocking stairwells or routes towards front door exits.**

Residents should also note that smoking in communal closes is prohibited. The primary escape route to a safe area in the event of a fire is via the front of the building in

a block of flats. Abertay staff will soon be carrying out Housekeeping checks to ensure that the above guidelines are being followed. Loft areas accessible from the communal stairwell in blocks of flats are Abertay's responsibility and we will soon be carrying out clearance of these areas to ensure that there are no fire risks, but also to fix suited padlocks. Therefore, any

residents who have items stored in loft areas within the communal stairwells, with their own padlocks fitted, should remove them before the end of March 2014.

**STOP PRESS**  
**Fire Risk!!**



# Gas safety checks - who needs them?

**It is important that Abertay tenants are aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which have not been maintained properly. The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 place legal duties on landlords to ensure that gas appliances, fittings and flues provided for tenants' use are safe and have yearly gas safety checks.**

## ***What action is required to gain access to property?***

As your landlord Abertay HA has a right to reasonable access to carry out repairs in your property, as highlighted in the Tenancy Agreement and this right is further enhanced where necessary maintenance or safety check work is to be carried out. Abertay take 'all reasonable steps' to ensure this work is carried out, including giving written notice to a tenant

requesting access and keeping a record of any action, in case we have to demonstrate what steps have been taken. However, every year there is always a minority who make it difficult to achieve a 100% success rate, by refusing access and ignoring letters sent by both Abertay and our contractor WRB Gas.

Please be warned that in cases where a tenant continues to refuse access after repeated contacts, Abertay will now consider an action through the courts under the terms of the contract, or issue a 24 hours' notice letter, before forcing entry to complete this mandatory task. In such situations where we have to make forcible entry, the tenant will be liable for the costs of any damage caused and the price of the labour and materials used.

**Abertay would like to remind you that these checks are being carried out in the interests of safety of our tenants and their families. However, we will not tolerate tenants failing to permit access to our properties. Such a breach of the tenancy agreement MAY RESULT IN YOUR TENANCY BEING TERMINATED.**



## **STOP PRESS** **Telephone Disruption**

**You may have been aware that during the first week in December we had a problem with our main office telephone number which was out of our control.**

We would like to apologise to any tenants or customers that were affected, and to assure you that we will be working hard to avoid any problems like this in future.





## Abertay bid a fond farewell to Sheila Malcolm at the end of October.

**Sheila retired after working 23 years at Abertay as a Housing Officer, dealing primarily with voids and lettings.**

Sheila is looking forward to spending her spare time bowling and travelling.



## Gordon Street MacMillan Coffee Morning

**Everyone knows someone who has fought Cancer at some time so when Gordon Street sheltered tenant Margaret Cushnie, asked to host a Macmillan coffee morning in the lounge Margaret Braid, Scheme Manager, was only too happy to agree.**

This was in remembrance of her brother in law John who had been a regular visitor to the complex and had recently died.

Friends, relatives and other tenants came along on the day to give their support and £50 was donated by the Gordon Street Tenants from their comfort fund.

Well done to Margaret and a special thank you to Lyn Mair who was just too late with her request to host a coffee morning but was a tremendous support as £620 was raised on the day for this very worthwhile cause.



## Introducing Gaynor Arcari

**Gaynor joined Abertay as a Housing Officer on 4th November. She brings with her over 16 years of Housing Management experience having worked for both Dundee City and Angus Councils.**

Along with her day to day duties which included property inspections, rent management and estate supervision, she was involved in the regeneration of Mill o Mains, the demolition of multis in the Lochee area and has previously managed the Council's travelling persons site at Tealing.

Gaynor is looking forward to working with tenants in her patch to "enhance the quality of life in their community". Her new areas of responsibility are listed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

# Fire, Theft, Flood... are you insured?

**Did you know that Abertay does not insure your personal property and if there was a fire, theft, vandalism or water damage you would have to replace them yourself?**

This includes you having to replace floorcoverings and any damaged decoration in your home.

We strongly recommend that you insure your home contents and personal belongings.

With winter on its way, a rise in the number of home contents insurance claims can be seen as an increasing number of people worry about the effects of severe weather on their properties such as storm damage and flooding. Also with nights getting darker, the risk of burglaries increases during the winter months. However one of the biggest dangers of winter to the home is frozen pipes, which can burst and when thawed, can flood your home.

The cover – specially arranged by Abertay has been designed to help

tenants and residents insure many of their belongings against burst pipes and water damage, as well as theft, vandalism and fire, for the coming winter.

The minimum values of possessions insured are £9,000 (for those aged under 55) or £6,000 (aged 55 and over). Premiums start from just £1.43 per fortnight for a £9,000 sum insured or £1.09 per fortnight for a £6,000 sum insured. A £4,000 minimum sum insured is also now available for residents of sheltered accommodation from just 87p per fortnight. All premiums can be paid fortnightly or monthly by cash, on a monthly direct debit basis or annually.

Tenants and residents can also increase cover for an additional

premium to include extended accidental damage cover, cover for wheelchairs/scooters and hearing aids as well as personal possessions cover (for items away from the home).

If you are looking to arrange home contents insurance cover, please call **0845 601 7007** or **01628 586 187**. Alternatively, please email **tenantscontents@jltgroup.com**.

*Exclusions and limits apply to all covers; further details are available within the free information pack.*

Thistle Tenant Risks is a trading style of Thistle Insurance Services Ltd. Lloyds Broker. Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. A JLT Group Company. Registered Office: The St Botolph Building, 138 Houndsditch, London, EC3A 7AW. Registered in England No 00338645. VAT No. 244 2321 96.

Premiums vary depending upon your sum insured and postcode

## Feeling low, anxious or stressed?

Feeling low, stressed or anxious are common problems. Some people recover in a few weeks on their own, while others need more specialist help and support. That's where Living Life can help.

NHS Living Life is a free telephone service based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Our self-help coaches and therapists can help you understand some of the reasons why you are feeling low, address negative patterns of thinking and can teach new ways of coping.

Living Life can be accessed either through a referral by your GP or by contacting the service directly by calling 0800 328 9655.

### What type of support does NHS Living Life offer?

Living Life offers two types of telephone support:

- **Living Life Guided Self-Help** involves guided telephone support with a self-help coach over 6-8 weeks.
- **Living Life CBT** offers specialist support with a fully trained therapist over 6-9 telephone sessions.

### What happens after phoning the service?

After contacting the service, a questionnaire is sent for completion and return. Arrangements are then made to call and discuss the type of support best suited to your needs. For further information about Living Life call **0800 328 9655**.



**0800 328 9655**

**Mon to Fri 1pm - 9pm**



## How to Get Involved

Abertay is registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator (HAL 297), the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 (2517R(S)) and is a registered Scottish Charity (SC 030152)

All tenants and owner occupiers are eligible to become members of Abertay at a cost of £1 for life

membership. Members can stand for, and vote in, elections for the Management Committee.

For more information about the Management Committee or Association membership please contact Elaine Moyes, Telephone 513821.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

## Getting In Touch

Tel: **01382 903545**

Fax: **01382 903575**

Email: **queries@abertayha.co.uk**