

Housing Brief

Advising and supporting our tenants to enjoy their homes



Valuing the Voice of our Tenants

We appreciate in this modern age we are bombarded with requests for feedback and questionnaires, in our emails, through the post and on our mobiles. Amongst the bombardment of satisfaction questionnaires within our everyday lives, we recognise there is an increased reluctance to participate. In November 2023 our tenant participation group '**Your Voice**' approved an Engagement and Communication Strategy which we are committed in delivering and the Scottish Housing Regulator requires us to engage and consult with you, our tenants, more than ever before.

Following our previous review of **Your Voice**, it was recognised that tenants often preferred a more light touch approach and consulting via online questionnaires, rather than just the traditional face to face meetings for all. One of the sessions we are seeking to hold soon is to discuss how we can encourage more tenants to engage. We will be working as a team to plan consultations with you over the coming months both light touch via online questionnaires and some face to face sessions and events to be held within your communities and at our offices.



How much time do I have to give?

You may be wondering if being involved takes up much time? It won't, and any sessions we hold, we limit to no more than 90 minutes. And you don't have to commit to all sessions either, just the ones you are interested in.

We will keep any online questionnaires short and simple, and we will provide you with electronic copies of documents or links to information.

We will even cover reasonable costs to support you taking part, such as travel or child care expenses.

You may feel that others are feeding back so there isn't a need to respond. Remember, **Your Voice** is important as a tenant of the Association and we really do welcome your feedback, whether it's to agree, disagree or come up with different views and ideas, it's all about understanding the wide views of our tenants and seeing where we as an organisation can meet your expectations.

If you are interested, even if it's just to complete short questionnaires, please contact our Housing Services Co-Ordinator, Brian Pearson at: bpearson@lochaberhousing.org.uk who is happy to answer any questions you may have.

In this Issue

- Valuing Your Voice
- Triennial Satisfaction Survey
- Changes to HHR Allocations Policy
- Radio Teleswitching Service closure extended
- Rules on Keeping XL Bullies
- Winter campaign winners
- And lots more!

Triennial Satisfaction Survey

We will be conducting our triennial (three yearly) Tenant Satisfaction Survey between July and August. Although in previous years this has been carried out by LHA staff by telephone, the survey this time will be carried out by a research consultant. We will of course notify all our tenants of this year's process.



Your comments and feedback are essential to the services we provide you, and forms an important part of our annual return to the Tenant Charter for the Scottish Housing Regulator.

We listen to and value your feedback and from the previous triennial survey we held focus groups and subsequently made changes to our Engagement and Communication Strategy, by publishing our Communication Timescales along with improvements to our Letting Standards.

We also held follow up sessions with new tenants and senior management and the feedback received has fed directly into improvements to our void processes. This couldn't have been achieved without your involvement.



Important changes to the HHR and how points are awarded

The Highland Housing Register (HHR) is a Common Housing Register for the Highland Council and other housing associations in the Highlands, meaning applicants only need to fill in one application form. All applications are then assessed, and awarded points, based on the Highland Housing Register Allocations Policy.

The policy has been reviewed and focused on the changes required to ensure we took into account recent changes in the law, and to ensure we are allocating homes to applicants in the greatest housing need.

The review looked at:

- Ensuring that the needs of victims of domestic abuse are being addressed in line with best practice and the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill 2021;
- Ensuring that our accessible housing process meets the needs of people who require specialist accommodation; and
- Reviewing the points allocated for different housing needs.



All the changes should be in place by the end of the Summer 2024, so if you have a housing application registered with the HHR, you will receive a letter to update you on any changes to your points.

The new points breakdown can be found here: <https://bit.ly/the-HHR-is-changing>

Rules regarding ownership of XL Bullys in LHA properties

Under LHA's pet policy you are not allowed to keep an animal that is prohibited by the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or by any other law. This means you must ensure that you adhere to the following guidance and legislative changes, otherwise the Association will require you to remove the dog from the property, and may take action for breach of tenancy in the event you fail to do so.

The link to our leaflet is available here: [XL Bullys - What you need to know](#)

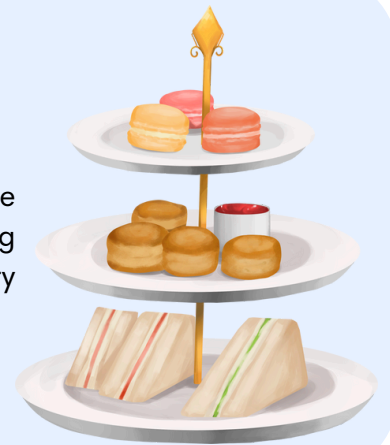
In enforcing our pet policy for XL Bullys, LHA will require you to have completed these key legal steps by the deadlines stated and adhere to the strict rules of ownership. Failure to adhere to these requirements will be a breach of tenancy.

LHA will require a copy of the **Confirmation of Neutering** form and **Certificate of Exemption** to enable you to keep the dog in your property. You **MUST** have these completed by 31st July 2024.



Staff at the Association have again been doing a bit of fundraising, this time for the Stroke Association, raising valuable funds with their healthy working lives lunch and a raffle. They have successfully donated £81.50 to this very worthy cause.

If you would like to know more about the Stroke Association, please visit: <https://www.stroke.org.uk>



Radio Teleswitching Service extended to June 2025

Energy UK has announced that the Radio Teleswitching Service (RTS) will now close down on 30 June 2025. The extension is intended to provide consumers with more time to move from RTS to smart meters.

What does this mean for you?

If you have a dual meter, the Radio Teleswitch signal will be switched off and you will lose functionality, which may affect your hot water and heating supply. Please contact, or respond to your energy supplier as soon as possible to arrange a smart meter installation.

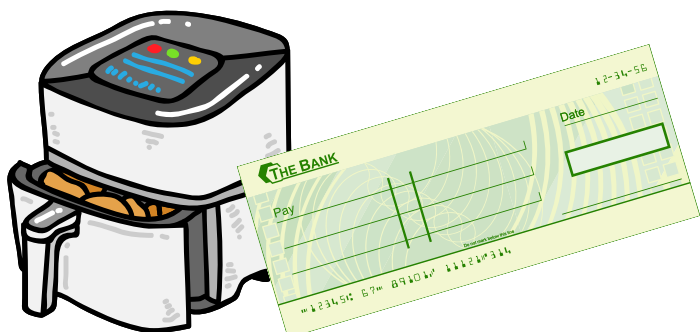
Some tenants in rural and remote areas are however experiencing delays where the electricity supplier won't be able to offer you an appointment for a smart meter upgrade just yet. If that's the case, speak to your supplier about when they will be ready to carry out the upgrade.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) have produced an information sheet which can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/The-RTS-Switch-off>





Thank you to all those who took part in our Rent Consultation and to those who visited one of our Winter Campaign events. We are pleased to announce that five tenants received airfryers and five tenants received cheques for £100!



Watch this space!

Is there anything you would like to see in our Housing Briefs?

Do you have a community group you would like to promote?

Do you have a compliment about our service?


This is your chance to let your inner journalist have a say!

We would love to hear from you with your suggestions.

You can easily get in touch with us by:

 **01397 702530**

or

 **info@lochaberhousing.org.uk**

and ensure you title your email 'Housing Brief'.



Your Housing Officer can be contacted directly on:

Mairi Clare Mackay: 07496 288 487

Melody Robinson: 07464 829 028

or by emailing: housingmgt@lochaberhousing.org.uk



Garden Competition 2024 Entries now open!

Nominations must be received by **Friday 5th July 2024**

Categories:

Best kept Garden

Best kept Tubs/Pots/Hanging Basket

Best Vegetable Patch


REMINDER

If you would like to enter, there's no forms to fill in, all you need to do is pick a category/s and telephone or email us. Simple!

Telephone: **01397 702530** Email: info@lochaberhousing.org.uk

We are committed to removing any barriers to communication. Upon request, this newsletter can be produced in another format e.g. braille or large print.

Where English is not your first language, LHA will provide on request, written information in your first language.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE