

# Housing Brief

Advising and supporting our tenants to enjoy their homes

## Support for our tenants with fuel costs

We are pleased to announce that we have secured £190,000 from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund to support our tenants.

Our Chief Executive, Margaret Moynihan, said, "We are extremely pleased that during these difficult financial times this fund will allow us to provide additional support to our tenants through the provision of fuel vouchers, direct financial assistance as well as providing energy efficient products. In partnership with ALLenergy we will be working to help our most vulnerable tenants during an unprecedented increase in fuel costs."

The Association will be targeting financial support to tenants over 65 and those reliant on benefits with a direct £250 payment towards fuel. Where funds are available, we will also be able to consider help to those in employment who are experiencing financial difficulties or energy debt, through fuel vouchers and payment for oil, logs, coal or towards fuel debt.

We will also be making available a variety of domestic items and furnishings to help tenants to reduce their cooking costs and retain heat in their homes. As part of our Winter Campaign our aim is to help as many people as possible, particularly those most at risk. As well as referring people to the local ALLenergy advisor for advice and support, we can provide details of online self-help which is available during the cost of living crisis. We would also encourage our tenants who are struggling and in crisis to contact us on 01397 702530 or email [housingmgt@lochaberhousing.org.uk](mailto:housingmgt@lochaberhousing.org.uk)

The project has been funded as part of the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund, administered on behalf of the Scottish Government by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations. The Association will be working with our partner Argyll Lomond & the Islands Energy Agency (ALLenergy) in supporting tenants through the Lochaber Affordable Warmth Scheme (LAWS). The project will be running from December to the end of March 2023.

You can also access help and support by clicking on the links below:

Highland Council website advice and support - [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20022/cost\\_of\\_living](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20022/cost_of_living)

Scottish Government website comprehensive links and advice - <https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/>

Citizens Advice Scotland - <https://www.cas.org.uk/help-cost-living>



## Rent Consultation

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our tenants who responded to our recent consultation relating to proposed rent increases for 23/24. We received 176 responses which represents a 25% return.

We hope that the information provided to you, gave an idea of how these options would impact on the operational activities of the Association; in particular in relation to our ability to undertake major repairs.

Your views and comments will be presented to our Board of Management for consideration at our next meeting and we will inform you of the decision in the New Year.

Following the conclusion of the consultation, the names of all those who had responded were entered in a prize draw. Mr & Mrs MacInnes were the lucky winners and have received £100.



## Christmas Jumper Day

Staff at the Association have again supported the Save the Children fundraising activity Christmas Jumper Day.

For a donation, staff wore a Christmas jumper and took part in a sweepstake.

To bolster funds, we were also able to combine our successful annual Christmas carolling session in the High Street. Our carollers were all willing volunteers who under the careful tutelage of our conductor Sheena Coull were able to raise a tune but not the freezing temperatures.

Thank you to all those passers by who kindly donated and joined in.

We successfully raised £162.73



## Lochaber Foodbank

Staff across the LHA Group were recently invited to donate to the Lochaber Food Bank.

Items included tins of soup, puddings, biscuits and chocolates.

We would like to thank the Foodbank for the wonderful work they do in the community and wish them a Merry Christmas.



# Energy Bills Support Scheme

The Energy Bills Support Scheme provides a £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households to help with their energy bills over winter 2022 to 2023.

The discount will be applied to your monthly household electricity bill for 6 months starting in October 2022. You'll get:

- £66 in October and November
- £67 in December, January, February and March

You'll get the discount monthly, even if you pay for your energy quarterly or use a payment card.

If you have a prepayment meter, you'll get the discount from the first week of each month. You'll get the discount automatically in **one** of the following ways :

- redeemable vouchers, sent by SMS text, email or post addressed to the occupier
- an automatic credit when you top up at your usual top up point.

For more information visit:

Energy and bills - Cost of Living Support Scotland - <https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot>

Please be aware that some of the energy companies have sent out the vouchers in envelopes addressed to the occupier, tenants have thought these envelopes were junk mail and have disposed of without checking.

## Are you cold weather ready?

There are many ways that cold weather can be prevented from causing damage to your home and it's contents. Try and avoid burst pipes and damage to your home this winter by keeping your home reasonably warm day and night. In particularly cold weather keep the heating on during the night at a low temperature.

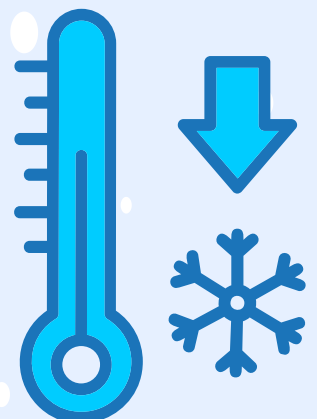
A few do's and don'ts:

- ✓ If you have a burst pipe, turn off the water at the mains stop valve. Turn off the central heating and open all the taps to drain the system.
- ✗ If your water supply becomes frozen, **do not** open the hot taps because the hot water cylinder may collapse if the pipes feeding it are frozen.
- ✗ **Never** attempt to thaw out frozen pipes by switching on your immersion heater or boiler.
- ✓ Contact Lochaber Housing Association for a plumber at the earliest opportunity.

If you do not report a repair which then gets worse and causes further damage to your property, you will be recharged for the cost of putting this right. Further guidance is given in our leaflet Frost Alert Advice.

LHA **does not** insure your furniture, belongings and other personal items within your home against theft, fire, vandalism, burst pipes and other household risks. We strongly advise you to take out contents insurance so that if the worst happens your insurers would cover the costs for you.

For further information and application pack speak to your Housing Officer or telephone **01397 702530**.






**Lochaber  
Housing Association  
would like to  
wish you a  
Merry Christmas**

**For general enquiries  
our telephone lines will close**

**4:00pm Friday 23rd December  
and re-open**

**9:00am Thursday 5th January**

**For out of hours emergency repairs**

 **01349 886691**

## **Rent Account**

**If you view your rent account between 1st and 5th January, please note that the January rent will not have been applied.**

**However, payments can be made in the normal way and the correct rent balance will be available from the 5th.**

## **Calendar**

This year we have created a handy calendar which you can download by clicking this link:

**<https://lochaberhousing.org.uk/2023-calendar/>**

If you would like a hard copy of the calendar please contact us by phone or email and we will arrange to send out.

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.



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