

# Housing Brief

Advising and supporting our tenants to enjoy their homes

## Housing Management Update

We would like to welcome a new addition to our Housing Management team, Mairi Clare Mackay will be replacing Tony Dickson as Housing Officer and covering South Lochaber, Peninsula, West Lochaber along with Inverlochy, Caol and Lochyside and some smaller areas within Central Lochaber.

Tony will now be working on a part time basis and assisting the team in administering our allocation process and tenancy engagement along with some remote support for tenants requiring tenancy sustainment. Along with Jin Huang our Rent Officer and Melody Robinson our Housing Officer, we are looking forward to engaging with you in your community, on local matters that you care about, early intervention for rent arrears, and assisting those managing their home.

The team will be progressing with household surveys over the coming months to ensure the information we have is up to date and relevant.



This helps us deliver more targeted services for you. Part of the process will be to understand the household composition, by verifying tenant identification to confirm the correct occupancy. This will also be an opportunity to meet and discuss any problems you may be experiencing and to enjoy a general chat with your Housing Officer. It is anticipated that the household surveys will be completed every two years. Look out for contact from your Housing Officer to arrange a survey visit from November onwards.



## Scottish Social Housing Fuel Support Fund

As part of our winter campaign we are pleased to advise that we have been successful in obtaining further funding to contribute towards fuel bills for tenants who are on housing benefit, Universal Credit or of pensionable age. Whilst these payments of £100 will be less than last year, we are sure they will non the less be very welcome and those eligible will be contacted shortly.

We will be also able to help tenants who are experiencing fuel debt through funding we have allocated to Allenergy. The continuation of the Winter Campaign is welcomed and only possible through Scottish Government funding to the SFHA, of which the Association has managed to obtain just over £300k to help tenants in need through advice, assistance, direct payments for heating costs and food vouchers, provision of devices to keep warm and/or reduce cooking costs.

## Also in this issue....

- Estate Management Consultation
- Preventing Mould and Condensation
- Reporting Repairs
- Upper Achintore Update
- Tenant Engagement and Communication Strategy Update

# Estate Management Consultation

We recently consulted with **Your Voice** members using a light touch online survey, to find out their thoughts and concerns about the use of communal parking areas to store caravans, trailers, camper vans untaxed and unroadworthy vehicles. Three scenarios were given and the approach LHA would like to take. **33%** of the respondents said that they had concerns with the use of communal parking, whilst **47%** said they didn't.



## We asked...

### 'To ensure resident parking is kept clear for tenants and their visitors'...

1. In the event that LHA identified a caravan or trailer, we would issue a sticker and notice giving 28 days to remove it. In the event that the caravan or trailer remained, LHA would remove and store the item for a further 28 days before disposal.
2. In the event that LHA identifies an untaxed or unroadworthy vehicle we would take reasonable steps to identify the owner and negotiate removal, after which we would take steps to remove it.
3. We also asked if they agree that LHA recharges the full costs including storage, release fee and disposal to any person identified as the owner responsible.

## We listened...

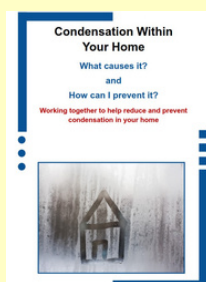
For each of the scenarios, an overwhelming **93%** of **Your Voice** respondents agreed with the proposed approaches. We will now review the additional comments received, implement these changes and formalise the outcome of the consultation into our estate management policy and procedures.

**If you have a caravan, trailer or unroadworthy vehicle (no tax, mot, SORN or in disrepair) in our communal parking areas or you know someone who has (maybe they aren't a tenant or sharing owner), please ensure it is removed or inform the person you know to remove it. This will save valuable time and effort for our officers that can then be better spent elsewhere helping tenants.**

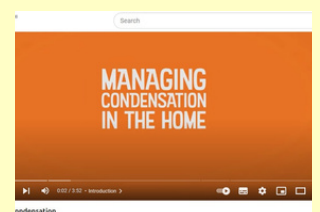
## Preventing Condensation and Mould

Condensation is caused when moisture held in warm air meets a cold surface like a window or a wall and condenses into water droplets. If this happens on a regular basis, mould will start to grow. If you start to notice mould spores starting to grow on windows, ceilings or walls, spray and wipe down with a mould prohibitor to stop the mould spreading as soon as you notice it.

For more advice on how to reduce condensation, this leaflet can be downloaded from our website. Click on the picture or follow the link:  
<https://bit.ly/CondensationWithinYourHome>



This handy video from the Energy Saving Trust also gives lots of helpful advice on how to reduce condensation in your home. Click on the picture or follow the link:



<https://bit.ly/ManagingCondensationandMould>

**If you are concerned about mould in your home, please contact us immediately.**

# Reporting Repairs

## During office hours (9am – 5pm)

It is important to report a repair at the first instance so we can fix it before it gets worse. Repairs can be reported:

 online via your **My Home** account, or  Maintenance department on **01397 703165**

You will be required to provide your address and as much detail of the problem as possible. Many repairs can be diagnosed without an examination, if this is not the case then a Technical Officer or tradesman may have to visit to identify how to fix the problem.

## Reporting a Repair out with Office Hours

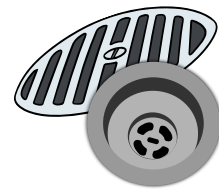
**Emergency repairs** are categorised as repairs that can cause potential health and safety risks or serious structural damage to the property, for example:



**Burst Pipes**



**Blocked toilets**  
(if only one toilet in house)



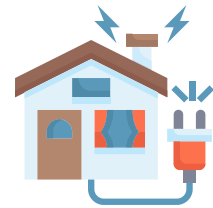
**Blocked drain causing leak or sewage into home**



**Loss of ALL heating**



**Serious leaks**



**No electricity/lighting**  
(does not include power cuts)

If you experience an **emergency repair** out with office hours you must:

 **01349 886691** for our out of hours service.

### Remember..

- You are responsible for reporting repairs
- Access to your home may be required to help diagnose a repair.
- Only emergency repairs will be carried out outside office hours.
- You may be charged for missed appointments.
- We have set response times for each type of repair which can be found [here](#).

LHA are required to complete a stock condition survey on all its properties on a rolling 5-year program. During 2021 and 2022 this was impacted by COVID-19 restrictions which has resulted with the Association playing catch-up to complete all surveys. If your property is on the schedule for a survey, you will be contacted by LHA's Asset Department to arrange a suitable time to complete it. The process usually takes around an hour. If you have any issues with your property, the Technical Officer completing the survey will discuss this with you, give advice and if required report the issue to maintenance.

# Upper Achintore Project Update

Lochaber Housing Association are pleased to announce that the Upper Achintore development in partnership with Link Housing will see the first 10 properties handed over later this year and a further 44 properties handed over in the first half of 2024.

These houses offer great space and we would encourage applicants to consider adding Upper Achintore to their areas of choice when applying through the Highland Housing Register online (ensure you mark LHA as the holding office). If you already have an application registered, you can also amend your choices to include Upper Achintore.

As part of the development there will also be mid market rented properties and a small number for shared equity purchase.

Please pass onto family and friends the opportunity to apply for this development and keep an eye out for further information on progress. To apply online, visit:

<https://bit.ly/applyforahouse>



Property types available to apply for in first phase	Bedrooms
One-bedroom, two person cottage flat	8
Two-bedroom, four person cottage flat	8
Two-bedroom, four person house	16
Three-bedroom, six person house	14
Three-bedroom, six person bungalow(designed to be wheelchair accessible)	2
Three-bedroom, six person house(designed to be wheelchair accessible)	3
Four-bedroom, seven person house	4

## Our Tenant Engagement Strategy Gets a Revamp



We have now completed our new strategy and will be presenting it to the Board of Management in November. We would like to thank all tenants who fed back to us and participated in our consultations by attending the TPAS healthy engagement session and follow up focus groups as well as those who consulted with us online. All these invaluable engagements have contributed to the updated strategy.

The new strategy not only defines how we engage with you but also how we communicate, to ensure that you are not only kept up to date, but to ensure that you understand too. We will also implement new response timescales that were supported by all those responding. We will provide further details of these timescales when we send out the rent consultation in December.