



**West  
Granton**

Housing Co-op  
sustaining and championing  
the co-operative way

SUMMER 2020

# newsletter



THANK YOU TO OUR  
NHS & KEYWORKERS

## Covid-19 Disruption to services

To help limit the spread of the Coronavirus, the office remains closed. Staff are working from home and can be contacted on our usual number **0131 551 5035** or by email at [mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk](mailto:mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk) during normal office hours. Please also see our website at [www.westgrantonhousing.coop](http://www.westgrantonhousing.coop)

The following services remain suspended:

- All non-emergency repairs. Any non-emergency repairs reported will be logged and we will schedule these as soon as normal service resumes.
- The upgrading of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Face-to-face meetings in the office and appointments in tenants' homes.

We continue to work hard to ensure that all other critical and essential services continue to operate.

We are re-starting our allocations process and void properties from all landlords will begin to be advertised again in Key to Choice from Friday 26 June with Starters being given priority.

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### Emergency Repairs

Whilst the office is closed please telephone your emergency repairs through to Hanover Telecare on **0800 917 8039**.

### Gas Emergencies

Lothian Gas on **0131 440 4666**

Please remember to only report emergency repairs outwith normal working hours.



# Rent payments

We recognise this is a challenging time.

We want to make sure you have the latest advice from the Scottish Government and information on benefit entitlement.

## Advice

- Continue to pay your rent as normal if you can do so.
- If you are unable to pay the full amount, you should pay as much of your rent as you can.
- Contact us – we can help you manage rent payments and provide certain advice on benefits that you may be entitled to.

Call us on **0131 551 5035** or email **mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk**



## Benefit Information

- **CEC Benefits & Coronavirus advice**  
Phone **0131 200 2360**  
[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/benefits-grants/advice-shop/1](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/benefits-grants/advice-shop/1)  
[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/coronavirus)



### → Universal Credit

You may be able to claim Universal Credit – Phone **0800 169 0130**

[www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

### → Discretionary Housing Payment

Apply online with Edinburgh Council to see if you are eligible for a Discretionary Housing Payment to top up Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/discretionaryhousingpayments](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/discretionaryhousingpayments)

### → Apply to the Scottish Welfare Fund

Phone **0131 529 5299**

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/crisisgrant](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/crisisgrant)

### → The Edinburgh Trust Grant

Depending on your circumstances, we may be able to apply for a grant to The Edinburgh Trust on your behalf.

Contact us to find out more.

### → Citizens Advice Scotland

Phone **0800 028 1456**

[www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)

# Complaints

WGHC received 27 complaints during the year April to March 2020 compared with 21 during the same period in 2018-19. 17 complaints related to the Maintenance service, 7 involved Housing Management and 3 were related to other service matters. In total we upheld or partially upheld 19 of the 27 complaints received.

25 of these were resolved at Stage 1 of the Complaints Handling Procedure and 2 resolved at Stage 2.

**STAGE 1:** 24 of the 25 complaints recorded as Frontline complaints were resolved within the target of 5 working days.



One was outwith target as it involved a number of issues requiring input from different staff members.

**STAGE 2:** The two Stage 2 complaints received were responded to within timescale of 20 working days.

There were no complaints referred to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) during the year.

We make use of complaints to improve our services so please let us know if there are any aspects of our service that you may be unhappy with.

# Gas serving during Covid

WGHC has a legal duty to repair and maintain gas pipework, flues and appliances in a safe condition, to ensure an annual gas safety check on each appliance and flue and to keep a record of each safety check.

During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, there is a balance between ensuring people, including the vulnerable, are protected from possibly fatal risks arising from carbon monoxide exposure or gas explosion, while doing what we can to protect people from COVID-19.

WGHC contractors have adopted a set of standard operating procedures to minimise risk.

## While in tenants homes

- A 2m distance kept from any occupants and good ventilation ensured in the working area by opening windows.
- Householders will be asked to stay in a separate room while work is carried out.
- Strict regimes on hand washing and respiratory hygiene will be adopted throughout the works, in addition to hands being washed or sanitised immediately prior to arrival.

# Upgrading of smoke alarms in WGHC stock



To meet Scottish Government requirements on fire protection in housing, WGHC appointed a contractor to renew smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Work began in January 2020 and to date, 133 properties

have been completed. Works are currently suspended due to Coronavirus. WGHC hope to restart this program in August 2020. Your co-operation in allowing access for this essential work is greatly appreciated.

# Fire safety check

It's important to know how to reduce the chances of fire happening in your home and, if it does, how to protect yourself.



To book a **FREE Home Fire Safety Visit** from the **Scottish Fire & Rescue Service** call **0800 0731 999**.

Text '**FIRE**' to **80800** or visit **[www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk)**

**Please see the enclosed leaflet for further information on fire safety in the home.**

# WGHC's cleaner is retiring

Irene Stuart, WGHC's longstanding office cleaner, retires on 30th June 2020.

Irene has been our office cleaner since January 2003, and was a much valued and very popular member of staff throughout her service.

Irene gave us nothing but the best during her time at WGHC and we would now like to take this opportunity to wish her all the best as she moves on to new endeavours and a well-earned retirement.





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e [mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk](mailto:mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk)

w [www.westgrantonhousing.coop](http://www.westgrantonhousing.coop)

**Out-of-office emergencies: 0800 917 8039**

# Committee Matters

**The Committee of Management of WGHC is its Board of Directors.  
As a fully mutual co-operative, all WGHC Committee Members are tenants.**

As at June 2020, WGHC had 8 full serving Members and 2 co-opted members.

If you have the time to volunteer and would enjoy a governance role why not think about joining us?  
Induction and training are given. Contact us to find out more.

## Special Thanks

In April 2020, George Nicol stepped down from the Committee of Management.

Our Chair, Lorna Brown, along with the rest of the Committee and WGHC Staff would like to thank George for his dedication and

unrelenting commitment to the Co-op over the last 8 years. George's insight, invaluable contributions and presence at the meetings will be very much missed. We wish him all the very best for the future.

Well, as we step into Summer 2020, we certainly find ourselves in unprecedented times. The lockdown has brought with it many challenges around how we communicate with tenants and others, how we provide services and how we receive reliable and credible information.

Digital connectivity and devices make up part of the solution to this issue, but this in itself is not without its challenges. However, over the past quarter the WGHC Committee have risen to the challenge and are holding their Committee Meetings virtually. Committee are advised at each meeting of the financial impact COVID-19 is having on cash flow and rent arrears.

In April, Committee agreed to temporary changes to our Financial Authorities within the organisation to allow critical business decisions still to be taken, but without putting WGHC at risk and were provided with a Business Continuity Update. In May, Committee approved a further 4 Data Protection related policies, were presented with the 4th quarter Financial Management and Operational Performance Reports and approved

the date for the external financial audit (being carried out remotely). The Internal Audit Sub-Committee met with our Internal Auditors to discuss their findings on how compliant WGHC are with allocations, rent arrears, performance and regulatory standards. Committee also noted that WGHC's CEO was appointed the Chair of ARCHIE (Alliance of registered co-operatives and housing associations in Edinburgh).

Due to COVID-19, the June Committee is being held at the end of June and unusually, there will be an additional meeting in July. The next newsletter will provide updates on these meetings.

Finally, we appreciate it is a difficult time for us all. Please be assured we are here to help you. We understand we cannot assist you in everything, but we will try our best to provide support and information during this time. Do not hesitate to contact WGHC staff to discuss any concerns you may have.

**You can find a copy of the Minutes of  
WGHC Committee Meetings on our web site  
[www.westgrantonhousing.coop](http://www.westgrantonhousing.coop)**