



West Granton

Housing Co-op

Our tenants are paramount
in everything we do

AUTUMN 2022

newsletter

Performance Report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter

Our Report to our Tenants

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This was updated again in 2017. The Charter sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve. As a social landlord we are responsible for meeting the standards and outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Charter.

Each year we are required to report to you how we have performed in delivering these Outcomes and Standards detailed in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Our performance report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter for 2021-22 will soon be available on our website and shortly thereafter, will be posted out to all tenants.

6 month Rent Freeze and temporary hold on Evictions

On 6th October 2022, the Scottish Parliament passed the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Bill which has now come into force. The Bill places a temporary hold on evictions (with certain exceptions) and a rent freeze for tenancies for 6 months in response to the cost of living crisis. Ministers have the option to enforce a rent freeze or rent cap for 2023/24. They have until 14th January 2023 to decide whether they will enforce this or not.



However, Scottish Housing Co-operatives and Housing Associations will soon be putting forward to Scottish Ministers that a rent freeze or cap for 2023/24 will cause serious consequences for them as rents are



their only source of income. These rents are critical to the survival of social landlords as this income pays for essential services for its tenants and enables continued investment in tenants' homes by replacing kitchens, boilers, bathrooms and providing various initiatives to support tenants. With inflation floating around 10% and soaring prices of labour and materials, a rent freeze or cap will affect landlords' service provision directly. And this will have a direct impact on tenants.

West Granton Housing Co-op is aware of the effects of the current cost of living crisis on its tenants. We take this very seriously. On page 2 of this newsletter you can find out about the various financial assistance and support services that WGHC currently offers its tenants.

Very soon we will be consulting all WGHC tenants on a proposed rent increase for next year. This will be tenants' opportunity to have their say. All feedback is provided to the Committee of Management before a decision is taken. However, a rent freeze or rent cap may supercede this. We will keep all tenants informed by posting updates on our website and write out to all tenants to inform them of any changes which will affect them directly.

Out of Hours Emergency and Central Heating Repairs

For Out of Hours Emergency Repairs contact Hanover Telecare on **0800 917 8039**.

For Central Heating Repairs contact **LOTHIAN GAS** on **0131 440 4666**.



Cost of Living Crisis *WGHC can help*

Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Bill



Inflation rates are hovering at just under 10% and the highest they've been reported since October 1990. Interest rates are 2.25% the last time this was the case was in December 2008.

Utility charges (gas/electricity) are at their highest rates with Ofgem recently announcing the energy price cap set at £2,500 from 01st October 2022.

With Winter fast approaching and goods and services increasing in cost at rates not seen for many years, it is clear that some WGHC tenants may begin to feel the true impact of the current crisis that is affecting many.

Tenancy Sustainment Fund

WGHC has a budget approved by committee that is set aside to help tenants with various issues – a **tenancy sustainment fund** – that, for example, can be used in the event that a tenant has a genuine need for an appliance that has broken (fridge, cooker, kettle, microwave etc.)

It has also been used to provide food vouchers, on occasions, to tenant's who have made a request and justified their need as they have had no food in their home to eat.



Fuel Support Fund

WGHC also has a budget approved by committee that is set aside as a **fuel support fund** to help tenants who may be struggling with their gas or electricity charges. We also work with and make referrals to 'Changeworks' to assist with this. This is open for tenants to self-request, or via a referral from a WGHC Housing Officer who becomes aware of a particular need that is, again, justified and approved.

New Tenancy Fuel Support Initiative

For every new tenancy agreement signed, whether it be for a new or existing internal transfer tenant, WGHC will put £50 on the household's gas/electricity account to help them get started in their new home. Tenants do not have to apply for this. WGHC arrange this directly with each tenant.

Welfare Rights Service & Debt Advice Service

Through joint working with ARCHIE, (Alliance of Registered Co-operatives and Housing Associations Independent in Edinburgh), WGHC provides free, independent and confidential welfare rights and debt advice services.

Helping our Tenants *Open to All*

The above are open to all WGHC tenants, on a justified needs basis.

Sadly, it is not possible for us to knock the door of every tenant to ask if something is wanted or if help is needed – so we publish articles on the website or within the quarterly newsletters and hope tenants will respond to our offers.

So please get in touch if you are experiencing any problems with debt, utilities, welfare support or any issue linked to the above and you think WGHC can help.

Your information or situation will only be known to those staff or committee members who need to know the information in support of their job role or official function with the co-op.

Please get in touch, **0131 551 5035** or mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk

Further information can be found on the WGHC website at www.westgrantonhousing.coop



Annual Complaints Report for Tenants



Most public services in Scotland must follow a 2 stage process when dealing with complaints.

This is required by the Scotland Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

As a social landlord, WGHC has to adhere to the same process.

The SPSO's 2 stage process is explained below:

STAGE 1 Early Resolution

Make your complaint directly to the organisation. They will try and resolve your complaint within **5 working days**. If you are unhappy with the response, you can ask them to consider your complaint at **STAGE TWO**.

STAGE 2 Investigation

The organisation will look into your complaint in more detail. At stage two you should be given a final decision after no more than **20 working days**, unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time. Once you have the final decision from the organisation, if you are still not happy, you can then bring your complaint to us.

WGHC is also required to report to tenants about the complaints it has received.

The table opposite gives information about the complaints we received in the period 2021-22 and comparative figures for 2020-21 are also provided.

There were 21 complaints recorded in the complaints management system within the cumulative period. Of the 21 recorded, all were resolved within the required timescales.

Information regarding complaints, outcomes and resolutions provided are managed by David Mills, WGHC's Chief Operating Officer.

	01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022	01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021
TYPE		
Stage 1	19	20
Stage 2	2	4
SPSO Referral	0	0
TOTAL	21	24

SUBJECT		
Maintenance	8	15
Housing Management	7	7
Other	6	2
TOTAL	21	24

OUTCOME		
Upheld	10	17
Not upheld	3	7
Resolved	8	0
TOTAL	21	24

New Housing Manager

West Granton Housing Co-op is delighted to welcome **Donald Martin**, as its new Housing Manager. Donald has worked within the social housing sector for over 30 years and so joins us with a wealth of knowledge and experience.



Donald reports directly to the Chief Operating Officer and has overall responsibility for the day to day management of the Housing Management Team. Donald is looking forward to making some positive changes within his team's working practices.



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w www.westgrantonhousing.coop

Out-of-office emergencies: 0800 917 8039

Committee Matters

Your new Committee of Management from September 2022 are:

Colin Fraser (Chairperson)
George Thomson (Vice Chair)
Wendy Riordan (2nd Vice Chair)
Elizabeth Robertson
Stacey Powch-Scott

Amanda Aitchison
Joe Moir
Jim Hemphill
George Nicol
Morag Orr

Remember, you can find copies of Committee meeting minutes on our web site
www.westgrantonhousing.coop/about-wghc/work-of-the-committee/

Interested in Becoming a Committee Member?

If you would like to find out more about becoming a Member of the Committee of Management please contact **David Mills**, Chief Operating Officer or **Larke Adger**, Chief Executive Officer on **0131 551 5035** or email mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk David or Larke will be happy to have a chat through with you about what

is involved and how you can join. They can either speak with you on the phone or arrange to see you in the office or visit you in your home.



Larke Adger
CEO



David Mills
COO

Annual General Meeting 2022



Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2022 was held at 6.30pm on Monday 05 September at the Prentice Centre. WGHC Committee of Management would like to express its thanks to all those Members who attended.

This year, we were *just* able to hold the meeting with the exact amount of required members present. We needed the attendance of a minimum of 38 Members (10%).

We achieved 38, but only after staff chapped doors and Committee Members phoned friends and neighbours!

Moving forward, we would like to find out from members what would encourage them to attend the AGM. It is only 1 hour a year that we are asking you to take out and support *your* Co-op, but we do **need** Members to give us their time.

Please email your suggestions or comments to us at mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk or use the online contact form on our website at www.westgrantonhousing.coop

We'd like to hear from you