

SPRING 2015



LINKHOUSING

housing news

The newsletter for Link tenants

Inside:

- Tenant Scrutiny Panel recommendations
- Help with using computers
- Universal Credit update

www.linkhousing.org.uk

Hello from the editor



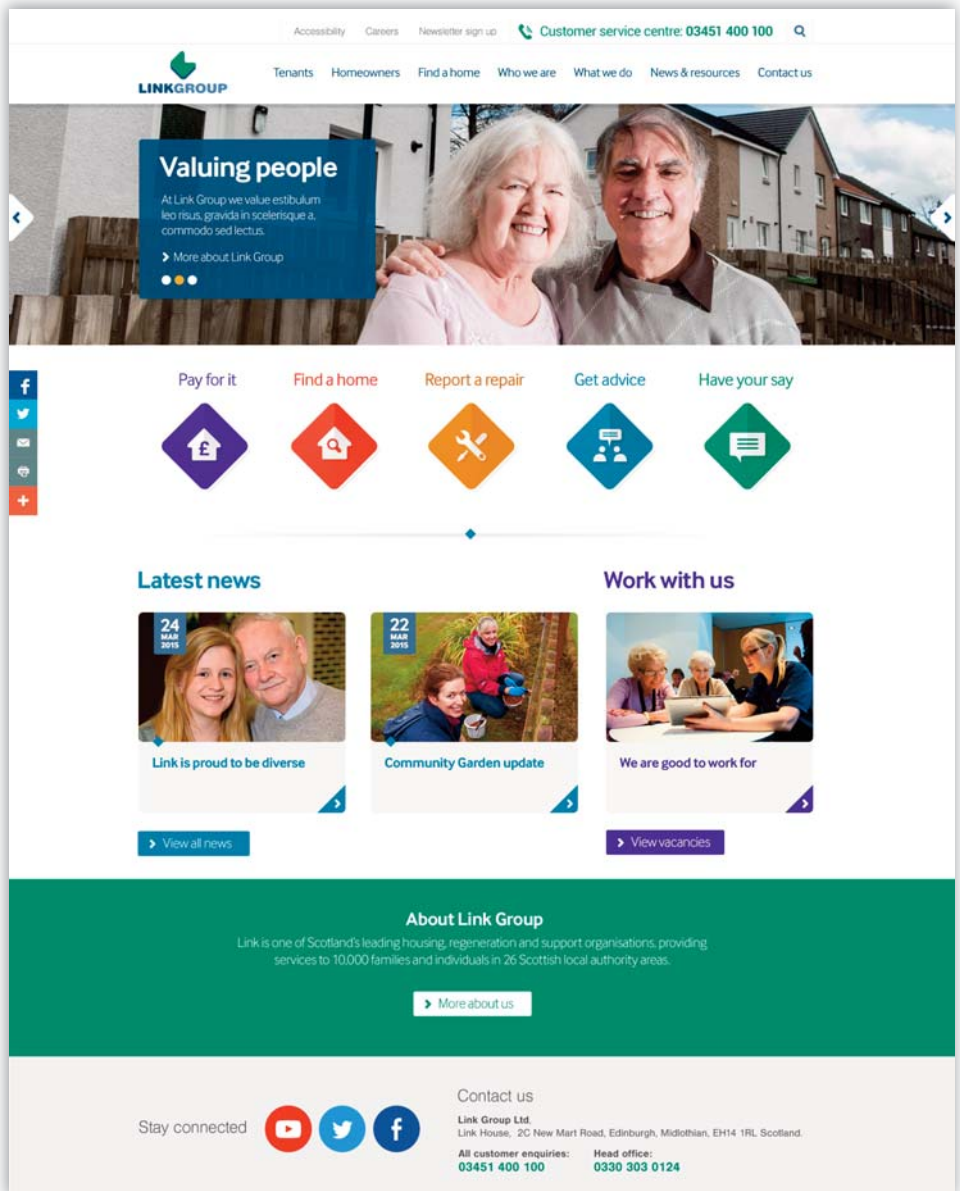
Welcome to the Spring edition of Housing News. Our regular Link Listening section shows we are committed to learning lessons from your feedback. We also include articles to highlight examples of positive work with tenants, for example, help with using computers and finding employment.

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel has completed its first report on communication and you can read its recommendations for improving tenants' experiences of contacting Link.

We include the latest edition of the Quids In supplement giving you all the latest money-saving advice and tips.

We are inspired by the work that tenants get involved in and want to hear from you about any community work, charity fundraising or stories from your area. Please contact me at getinvolved@linkhaltd.co.uk or **03451 400 100** or on the Link facebook/twitter pages.

Leah Webb
Tenant Liaison Officer



New Link website goes live in April



As part of our commitment to improve communication, we are changing our website to allow us to engage more effectively with our customers.

The new site responds to the growing number of our customers who want to access information online about their tenancy, make a payment, report a repair, or find a home on mobile devices, such as phones or tablets. The new website will be accessible from standard desktop computers and laptops as well as being 'mobile responsive' which allows mobile phones and tablets to access information too.

The new website will have a fresh, uncluttered design, an easy to navigate layout and high levels of accessibility.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2014



The new Housing Act makes changes in a range of ways. The key areas are:

- Landlords will have more flexibility when allocating houses
- New rules around joint tenancies and subletting
- More tools for landlords to tackle anti-social behaviour
- Changes to Short Secure Tenancy rules
- Abolition of the Right to Buy
- Changes to the Scottish Housing Regulator's powers
- Changes to Private Sector letting rules

Link will consider the impact of the new legislation when it is reviewing policies and procedures and will offer tenants the chance to take part in consultations. Contact us at getinvolved@linkhaltd.co.uk or **03451 400 100** if you would like to find out more.

If you would like further information see the Scottish Government's website <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing>



Right to buy is ending for all social housing tenants in Scotland on 1 August 2016.

A few Link tenants still have the right to buy their home. If you have the right to buy you would have been told this when your tenancy started and we will send you a letter giving you more information later this year.

As a result of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 a bill was passed that will end the Right to Buy for all council and housing association tenants in Scotland from 1 August 2016. This means that if you want to buy your house you need to apply before 31 July 2016. The Scottish Government has produced a leaflet that gives you more information. You can download it from <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/11/8564> or telephone **0141 242 5496** or email rtb@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

DIGITAL EMPLOYABILITY WORKSHOP

We offer Link tenants the chance to attend a one-day computing course to learn the skills to find and stay in a job.

The majority of job-searching is now done online and we can provide tips and tricks to find adverts for the type of job you would like and how to apply. We can also help with the skills you need once you become employed such as learning to send emails, doing stock control to recording timesheets – and much more.

For those who are already online, we give advice on online identity and how to use security settings on social media such as Facebook – and tell you what you should allow prospective employers to see!

If you are interested in either the Digital Employability Workshop, or in a Computers for Beginners 6-week course we are planning for spring in Clydebank, please contact Suzi or Natelle on **0330 303 0106**.

City and Guilds computer course

Link is running a 13-week City & Guilds Basics Online course in West Lothian College in Livingston, and the Kirkshaws Neighbourhood Centre in North Lanarkshire.

The course covers using a computer, using the internet, email, job-searching and how to find the best money-saving deals online. At the end of the course tenants will sit the City & Guilds exam and also keep the laptop they trained on.

We hope these courses will help tenants gain the skills and confidence to use government online services such as Universal Jobmatch and Universal Credit.

Link tenant Diane McNally decided to put any fears of computers aside and join the



course. By the third week she had completed the Online Safety Certificate, the Starting Online Certificate, and the Online Basics Certificate from the UK Online Centre.

Diane says that although she used internet on her phone she was unsure about using laptops or other computer equipment and really wanted to learn about them.

Diane said: "I managed to get the last place out of 20 and was really pleased. The process to book the course was simple. It only took one telephone call and there were no forms to fill in. The tutor is very nice and really supportive. She encourages everyone and allows you to go at your own pace. I learned about things I never knew you could use the internet for that will make life a lot simpler, such as finding respite places for my Dad or paying my driving licence online. I encourage anyone to have a go, do it and don't be afraid."

Another tenant managed to find employment from the skills he learned attending the course in the Kirkshaws Neighbourhood Centre and using the Routes To Work service available there.

Low Cost Internet Broadband Deal

Are you wary about getting internet access in your home because of the cost? Or do you have it but think it is too expensive? If so, we might be able to help.

In partnership with Happus and TalkTalk, Link tenants can benefit from a low cost broadband alternative.

The monthly cost is £11.85 – for broadband service and line rental. The contract is for 18 months. The first 12 months costs £11.85 per month, after which this rises to £20.20 (although you can cancel the service at any time in the first 12 months without penalty).

To find out more about this deal contact Happus on 03300 10 33 00.

The Happus deal is only for an internet connection and is not designed for telephone use. Happus can add on a call plan if tenants would prefer to use a landline telephone. Lots of people use their mobile phones for calls and no longer want a call package with the landline.

There are no installation, set-up, or activation fees. All Link tenants are eligible for this deal, irrespective of employment or household income. It's worth noting that other companies also provide deals especially for new customers, or special tariffs for people on benefits or low income so it is worth shopping around for the best price.

TalkTalk



REGIONAL ROUND-UP



Training to learn gardening and heritage skills Fife



Link, and partners in Fife, have received funding from the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative (IFLI) to run a Heritage Skills project. This will offer a range of free training and education opportunities and community events over the next three years at the Scottish Mineworkers Convalescent Trust, Blair Castle, Culross, Fife. This is part of £2 million in funding that IFLI received from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help protect historic sites, connect fragmented wildlife habitats, improve access routes, and provide learning and volunteering opportunities. There are a number of training opportunities available including:

- Herb identification – 7 May
- Growing your own vegetables – 23 April
- Making full use of the edible borders
- Tool refurbishment
- Harvesting produce
- Strimmer training – Operating & maintenance
- Rag rug making
- Willow weaving and coppicing (a traditional method of woodland management)

If you are interested in taking part, contact Sheila Maxwell, Community Regeneration Officer on 01324 417161. For further information see www.innerforthlandscape.co.uk



Local Tenants Group News

Local tenants meetings were held in Cherrybank Gardens, Newton Mearns, Dalmeir and Cumbernauld.

Tenant meetings are being planned for the Borders and other remote Link areas in 2015.

Tenants and staff went on a trip to Whitecrook and Bellsmyre Community Gardens. Thanks to East Dunbartonshire Council for organising this.

‘Growing Beardmore’ is a new group of keen gardeners in Dalmeir who are planning a consultation day with residents in May to discuss the development of a community garden. If you are interested in finding out more, contact Rose by email on dormanrose@gmail.com or Leah on 03451 400 100 or getinvolved@linkhaltd.co.uk



Alec at Whitecrook Community Garden with Batman the hen.



Beardmore tenants visiting Bellsmyre Community Gardens, Dumbarton.

Dreams come true – new homes customer feedback

As part of our aim to improve the quality and design of the homes we build, we ask residents to complete a Customer Feedback Survey. This is used to shape future developments and to improve design and accessibility to increase customer satisfaction.

The feedback survey was sent to 155 residents across five different developments. Thank you to those who returned their forms and provided feedback on their new homes. Congratulations to Alison Adams who won a £100 M&S gift voucher.

From the feedback we will:

- Regularly update the New Home Manual which contains information on the key features of new or refurbished homes and how to use them.
- Create a new process for ensuring defects are dealt with within the agreed timescales.
- Address difficulties in using heating systems. For newer developments, information on how to use the systems is described in section 8 of the New Home Manual. If you have been in your new or refurbished home for less than one year and need assistance with setting your heating or hot water system, please contact the Development Team on **01324 417 160**. We will then arrange for someone to visit you.

'Initially I found it strange not having a window in the kitchen but now I like it. Kitchen is small and compact which is perfect for one person, with plenty of storage space.'

'It's the best thing that's happened for my kids and myself. I will never move, we LOVE IT!'

'The pack was really helpful and it helps with settling into the flat.'

Tenant feedback from new developments

'The design of the house is excellent. The services are excellent and they got me the help I needed. I am very happy with the design and services. I got my dream house thanks to Link.'

SHORTBREAD COURT, EDINBURGH

The development is to the west of Granton Square and comprises 27 one and two-bedroom flats for 'Intermediate Rent' – aimed individuals and households who have higher household income and are unlikely to secure social tenancy or are unable to buy in their local housing market.

Each flat has carpets and vinyl flooring as well as an integrated oven, hob and cooker hood fridge freezer and washer / drier.



THE MOORINGS, RATHO

This courtyard development comprises 10 flats for Social Rent (including two for wheelchair users) and nine flats for Intermediate Rent.

The design is consistent with the wider development of private family housing and in keeping with the character of the village buildings. There is also a marina and quality public open space.



FORTHQUARTER, EDINBURGH

The development is situated 4km from Edinburgh city centre and forms part of the Edinburgh Waterfront Masterplan. The design has created a light and contemporary building in an excellent location.

There are 32 two-bedroom flats for Intermediate Rent which are furnished, and include kitchen appliances and floor coverings.



All properties benefit from high thermal insulation and double glazing, along with efficient gas central heating and hot water systems.



Universal Credit launches

Universal Credit is replacing a range of benefits and Tax Credits and will combine them in one single monthly payment.

Universal Credit will replace:

- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

It is for anyone of working age on a low to moderate income. It doesn't matter whether you are in work or out of work, caring for someone, or too ill to work. It is means-tested so entitlement depends on your income, savings and personal circumstances.

When is it being introduced?

Universal Credit is starting for all **new single-person claimants** in job centres in several council areas between now and July 2015. This is for **new** claimants only. This means Universal Credit is not yet applicable to you if you already claim any of the above benefits.

The list below shows the areas where Link tenants are affected:

- Highland
- City of Edinburgh
- North Lanarkshire
- West Dunbartonshire
- East Lothian
- Midlothian
- North Ayrshire
- Scottish Borders
- Clackmannanshire
- Falkirk
- Stirling
- Glasgow
- Renfrewshire

How will it be paid?

Universal Credit will be paid once a month into a bank, credit union current account or post office card account. When you first claim, your first payment will be made one calendar month and seven days later, and then calendar monthly after that.

What about Housing Benefit?

Most Universal Credit claims will include money to pay your rent. You will need to pay your rent to Link so that you do not fall into rent arrears. If you are two months or more in rent arrears, Link can request that an amount be taken out of the Universal Credit award and paid direct. If you feel that you cannot cope with paying your rent yourself, you can ask the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to consider paying it to Link direct.

What are Alternative Payment Arrangements?

These are generally made where it is in the best interests of the claimant and/or family:

- **Paying Universal Credit more frequently – generally twice a month**
- **Splitting the Universal Credit payment between a couple**
- **Paying housing costs direct to the landlord**

How Much?

Universal Credit is means-tested so how much you get depends on your circumstances. For most claimants it's the same amount as the benefits it replaces but there are some winners and some losers.

Claiming Universal Credit

You can claim Universal Credit online at **www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit**

If you do not have internet access at home, you can use the computers in the Jobcentre or

local council offices where someone will be available to help you claim. Claimants who cannot make a claim online or at the Jobcentre or local council offices can claim by telephone.

What is the Claimant Commitment?

Every claimant (and his/her partner) will need to sign a claimant commitment to be entitled to Universal Credit. The claimant commitment outlines what you need to do in order to be paid your full Universal Credit.

If you are fit for work, you will be expected to work 35 hours a week. If you are not working, you will be expected to spend 35 hours each week looking for work. If you are working but not earning what you could be by working 35 hours a week, then you will be expected to look for extra hours / more pay.

Failing to keep to your claimant commitment will mean losing some (or all) of your Universal Credit – this is called a sanction. Sanctions can last for up to three years.

What are monthly assessment periods?

Universal Credit claimants will have a 'monthly assessment period' based on the date the claim is made. If you claim on 10 November, your monthly assessment period runs from 10th of one month to the 9th of the next.

What happens when someone on Universal Credit has a change in their circumstances?

You must tell DWP immediately if your circumstances change. The change will be implemented from the beginning of the monthly assessment period in which it occurred – unless it is a change that would mean more benefit and it was reported in a later assessment period. Late notification can lead to overpayments which will be recoverable by DWP.



Link's Advice Service can help you with claiming or any questions you have about Universal Credit – call them on **01324 417174** or by email **advicesteam@linkhaltd.co.uk**

Tenant Scrutiny Panel



The Link Tenant Scrutiny Panel (the Panel) has completed its scrutiny into tenants' experiences of contacting Link.

The Panel's role is to scrutinise Link's performance in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter). The Panel wants Link to adopt a 'right-first-time' approach to communication and the evidence it gathered demonstrates some improvement is required.



Leah Webb, Shona Gorman (Vice chair) and Elsie Boyce (Chair). Tenant Scrutiny Panel presented to the Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland conference at the SECC in March.

The Panel welcomes the focus the Charter has on communications and it wanted its scrutiny to assess how easy tenants find it to communicate with Link. The aim was to follow the tenants' journey to see how they get the information they need.

This work focused on tenants' contacts with the Customer Service Centre and Housing Officers. The Panel carried out mystery shopping, a tenant satisfaction survey, and staff focus groups to assess tenants' experiences of communication – it found both positive results and improvements needed.

Link managers, front line staff and the Board have been very supportive in looking at these areas of concern and have responded to the recommendations with an action plan and resources to achieve this.

The Panel will report progress to implement the recommendations in future newsletters. If you would like a copy of the full report (detailing the methods, findings, and action plan) contact Leah or Eleanor on getinvolved@linkhaltd.co.uk or 03451 400 100.

Some of the recommendations are:

- Improve front-line communication – Customer Service Centre staff should be empowered to inform tenants when their enquiry will be responded to. Tenants should have a clearer idea of what is going to happen with their enquiry and response times.
- Publicise and promote response times and customer service standard commitments to tenants.
- Update the handbook with new response times and phone numbers.
- Develop formal customer service training and induction for all staff.
- Empower Housing Officers to take more ownership of all tenant enquiries within their area. Good customer service is about listening and getting the information the tenant is asking for regardless of which Link department is responsible.
- It is important for tenants to be able to contact and have effective communication with their Housing Officer. Tenants want to be able to do this in a range of ways, in their home, in their estate, on the phone and by email.
- Link should not replace the opportunity to have face-to-face contact with a fully digital approach.
- Measure tenant satisfaction on communication more regularly.
- Increase the number of calls resolved first time and promote the role of the Customer Support Team to tenants.
- Review the Housing Officers' areas and workload to give them more time to communicate with tenants in neighbourhoods, homes and on the phone/email.
- Promote individual tenancy reference numbers to speed up telephone enquiries.
- Prioritise new handheld computers that Housing Officers can use in tenants' homes to fill in forms, make payments, and report issues.
- Upgrade the phone system to improve management of calls – for example, information when tenants are on hold.



JOIN THE TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL

The Panel is looking for new members to work together with Link to provide the best possible customer service. This is a great opportunity for tenants who want to develop skills and help improve services. It is looking for people who can commit to ten meetings per year, be open minded, objective and able to listen to others. Expenses are paid and support provided.

The Panel is planning a series of information sessions over the summer. If you are interested in finding out more, contact Leah or Eleanor on **03451 400 100** or **getinvolved@linkhaltd.co.uk**

Meet the Customer Support Team



Jonathon, Lynsey, Lichelle, Roxanne, Yvonne and Lorna.

We are based in the Customer Service Centre and you can contact us on

03451 400 100

The office is open Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.

We deal with all the general enquiries which come into the Customer Service Centre – if you don't know who to speak to, you'll talk to us! If we can't resolve your query, we will log the call and pass it on to someone who can. To prioritise call-backs, it is important you give us as much information as possible. We will try our best to get the information you need and respond as quickly as possible.

Our jobs include:

- Log all calls to Housing Officers to ensure their work is prioritised
- Log complaints on our system and get the right person to respond if we can't
- Take rent payments over the phone
- Ensure all emails are sent to the right people to respond
- Answer voicemails
- Send letters to tenants from Housing Officers and the Rent Enquiry Team

Tenancy reference numbers

Did you know all tenants have a unique reference number?

You will see this at the top of every letter we send to you. When you call us please have this number at hand. This will speed up your call and help us get the information you need.

Response times improved for general enquires

We have improved our response times for general enquiries to a maximum of three days for phone calls if you ask for a call back. We will respond within three days where possible and no later than five days to e-mail and written correspondence.

If it's going to take longer, we will acknowledge your query or make a phone call to advise you how long it will take us to respond. Please note this does not cover repairs, complaints or anti-social behaviour response times.

Customer Service Standards

If you call us, we will:

- Answer the telephone within 20 seconds when the office is open
- Respond to telephone messages – left on our voicemail facility when the office is closed – within four hours of opening the next working day
- Call you back – if you have asked us to – within 24 hours where possible and within three days

If you write to us, we will:

- Respond within three days where possible and no later than five days to email and written correspondence
- Inform you if it's going to take longer
- Include a contact name and telephone number, together with any other information needed (e.g. reference number)

If you email us, we will:

- Acknowledge receipt of your email within 24 hours
- Respond within three days where possible and no later than five days to e-mail and written correspondence



LGBT Health is a unique community initiative that promotes the health, wellbeing and equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Scotland. It provides support, services and information to improve health and wellbeing, to help people connect with one another, and to support community groups and volunteering.

Despite the many improvements in the life of LGBT people in Scotland, there is still much discrimination. LGBT people are more likely to experience harassment, bullying, social isolation, poor mental and physical health. The initiative provides a wide range of services and a varied programme of events, most delivered in central locations in Edinburgh and some in Glasgow.

Learn more about LGBT Health and Wellbeing at www.lgbthealth.org.uk or call its office on 0131 523 1100 (Edinburgh) or 0141 271 2330 (Glasgow).





Link listening – get involved

Developing new standards for Link neighbourhoods

Link is working with tenants to draft new standards for improving neighbourhoods. The consultation is still under way and more than 40 tenants took part in meetings. They discussed with senior staff their views on what makes a great and well maintained neighbourhood, and how tenants, Link and other partners must share responsibility to deliver this. Tenants also took part in discussions about resources for effective estate management and taking tough decisions about budget priorities. Initial feedback from tenants highlights interest in developing a 'Rate your Estate' model which involves tenants setting standards for assessing environmental quality.



Tenants and staff discussing the new standards for Link neighbourhoods.

The consultation meeting also included a presentation from the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (www.farmgarden.org.uk). This gave tenants and staff an insight into current good practice and joint working with housing associations. A study visit to existing community gardens in West Dunbartonshire is being organised to explore this idea further. This will include community consultation and an options report on different types of community growing, including flowers and food. This is a new approach whereby tenants take on more responsibility for managing the estate, working closely with local staff and other partners.

Tenants have their say on payments

Late last year we consulted with tenant groups on our Tenants Payments Policy (TPP). This sets out when and how much we pay out in certain circumstances (for example, when we need to move a tenant in a emergency, how much decoration allowance we give new tenants at the start of their tenancy or how much disturbance allowance we give following upgrades to properties).

Prior to consultation we sourced comparable information from six other landlords and this helped with our discussions. We asked the groups if they felt our current allowances were fair and, if not, what they thought they should be.

We circulated to tenants information on what other landlords did in similar circumstances to aid discussion. A full and lively discussion took place and the views and opinions of tenants were collated and circulated to all those who attended the focus groups for approval.

The policy was amended, reissued to the focus group and has now been approved by Link.

The key changes to the policy were:

- Clarification of who is eligible for payment
- Increases in the amounts payable under subsistence payments
- Changes to the amounts given as decoration vouchers for specific rooms
- Increases in disturbance allowance payments following improvement works

For a copy of the new policy contact us on
getinvolved@linkhaltd.co.uk or

03451 400 100



Responding to customer feedback



We use your feedback to help us improve the way we deliver our services and, in the case of compliments, to reinforce good practice when our staff do things well. The number of complaints has continued to reduce this year and our performance in terms of meeting the required timescales has improved – we achieved a 94% success rate in the last quarter of 2014.

It is also pleasing to note that the number of complaints received about repairs has been reducing over the past nine months. This is backed up by satisfaction levels with our in-house repairs service, Link Property, consistently around 98%.

Where we have failed to deliver acceptable levels of customer service, we circulate “case studies” to staff teams so that we can all learn from these mistakes. This is the most important aspect of the whole process and we would encourage you to let us know when our service is unsatisfactory. You can do this over the phone, by text, email, via our website or speaking to any member of staff.

We really do value your feedback.

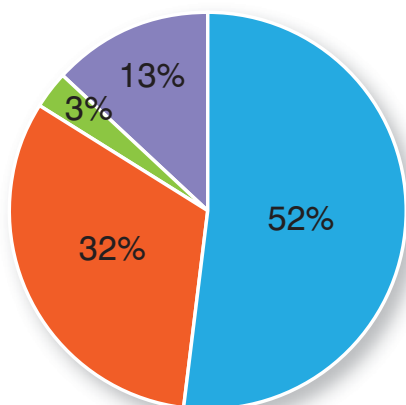
Complaints by category	
Failed action	153
Standard of service	125
Communication	37
Contractor attitude	31
Policy	24
Staff attitude	23
Staff error	13
Missed appointment	11
Failed procedure	10
	427

Landscape Maintenance Survey Results

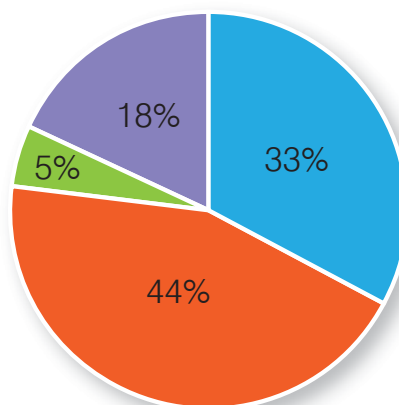


In the last winter newsletter we told you we were conducting a survey to find out what you think of our two landscape contractors. The results are as follows:

West Satisfaction



East Satisfaction



JMK Groundcare east contract area covers

Borders, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Perth, Stirling and West Lothian.

Land Engineering west contract area covers

Ayrshire, Dunbartonshire, Glasgow, Highlands, Inverclyde, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire.

How we will use this information

Thank you to all who participated in the survey. Your input is essential to help us improve the service provided and identify where improvements can be made. The feedback helps us manage the landscaping contractors more effectively, and we are planning more analysis to follow up on tenants' comments. We intend to carry out telephone and letter surveys throughout the growing season.

Sheltered Chatter



Housing Support Funding

We are registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide Housing Support. This is achieved by a series of tasks being undertaken by the Sheltered Housing Officer, such as morning calls and contact with other agencies we think can help you, e.g. social work, homecare, district nurses or your GP. This enables tenants to live independently in their home. In return your local council part-funds some of the service charges that you pay. This is shown as 'income reduction' in your rent increase letter. The amount in your letter is based on Housing Support funding levels we received last year.

Councils are being forced to make cost savings and we are concerned that funding for Housing Support may reduce in future. The amount of funding varies between councils and many of them have either reduced the level of funding, or kept it the same for a few years. Despite this, we have managed to provide the same level of service to all of our sheltered tenants. We are awaiting information from four councils about the level of Housing Support funding we will receive this financial year.

Glasgow City Council (GCC) Social Work Department has reviewed all sheltered housing provision and has advised us that our service only meets comparatively low levels of need. GCC is targeting its resources to meet priority need. As a result, housing support funding has been reduced. We have successfully negotiated with the GCC Housing Benefit team to pay the difference by covering the service charges for those in receipt of Housing Benefit. Nevertheless, we are aware that not all of our tenants receive Housing Benefit and that any reduction in funding may mean they have to contribute more of their income to maintain their rent payments and remain in their tenancies. Should you be concerned about this, you should contact our Advice team which is available to assist you with money and welfare advice. You can contact them on **01324 417174** or by emailing **adviceserviceteam@linkhalt.co.uk**

We will be consulting with sheltered tenants this year to consider the impact of the changes and future service provision.

PENDANTS AND PULL CORDS

Tenants are reminded of the importance of these two pieces of equipment. We are sorry to report a recent instance where a tenant who was not wearing the pendant fell and, as the pull cord had been tied up, she couldn't reach it. The tenant lay for some considerable time, before the fire service and paramedics arrived to rescue her.

UPDATING YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Your Sheltered Housing Officer (SHO) will check your contact details every six months. If there are changes to addresses or phone numbers during this time, we need to know, so please remember to inform your SHO. This is essential so our alarm service providers can access your home in the event of an emergency.



News from Sheltered Tenants activities

- Albany Court tenants are delighted with the redecoration of the complex and the standard of the work.
- Albany Court residents enjoyed Christmas dinner followed by a party. In February Denny Cross Burns Club returned to entertain the residents.
- Castings House residents enjoyed a Christmas dinner, also raising £275.00 for their funds by holding a raffle after dinner. In January tenants tucked into a Scottish lunch followed by an afternoon of musical entertainment. Tenants enjoyed tea and cakes at their 'techy tea party' – staff were on hand to give information on mobile phones, internet and computing.
- Our North Lanarkshire tenants in Ben Lui Place also enjoyed their Christmas festivities. Four tenants have signed up for a 13-week computing course. This gives them the opportunity to achieve the City and Guilds basic online qualification.



Techy Tea Parties.



Sheltered Housing Forum tenants with Rab Stevenson, Link Property Manager, and Mark Beetham, Programme Management Officer.



HOME INSURANCE

Link has negotiated a great rate for home contents insurance. The cover has been designed to help you insure your belongings against burst pipes and water damage as well as theft, vandalism and fire. Premiums for standard cover start from as little as **£1.33** a fortnight (tenants under 55) and just **£1.02** a fortnight (tenants over 55) and just **82p** a fortnight for residents of sheltered housing. These premiums are for standard cover. You can also increase cover for an additional premium to include extended cover for accidental damage for wheelchairs/scooters, hearing aids and personal possessions (for items away from the home). Exclusions and limits apply to all covers. All premiums can be paid fortnightly or monthly by cash, on a monthly direct debit basis or annually. Get a free information pack by visiting www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk or by emailing tenantscontents@jltgroup.com or telephoning **0845 601 7007** or **01628 586187**.

**LINKHOUSING**

WAYS TO PAY YOUR RENT

There are a number of options available to make it easier for you to pay your rent:



Direct Debit or Standing Order: If you wish to set up a Standing Order or Direct Debit, please contact Link's Rent Enquiry Team on **0330 303 0801** for advice.



Cheques and Postal Orders: Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "Link Housing Association". To correctly identify your payment please write your name and property address on the reverse of the cheque/ postal order.



Telephone: You can use your allpay card to make payments using a credit or debit card. Please telephone Link Housing on **0330 303 0801**, option 1 during office hours, or call the allpay 24 hour automated service on **0844 557 8321**.



Text: Debit or credit card payments can be made using your own mobile phone – register online first at www.allpayments.net/textpay/login.aspx.



Online: You can pay using your allpay card and credit/debit card at www.allpayments.net.

To download the allpay app for your mobile phone please refer to the www.allpay.net/app.

Emergency contact numbers for when the office is closed

Gas Boiler and Heating Repairs

- Gas Boiler or Heating less than 12 months old?
Call **Devine Energy** on **0131 660 22 99**
- Gas Boiler or Heating over 12 months old?
Call **Gas Sure** on **03451 400 100** and select option 1

Other emergency repairs

- Call **Link Property** on **0800 783 7937** (out-of-hours service provided by Bield 24) if you live in **West or Central Scotland**
- Call **R3** on **03000 99924** if you live in the **Borders, Edinburgh, East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian and West Lothian**
- Call **Lochaber HA** on **01397 702 530** if you live in **Fort William or Skye & Lochalsh HA** on **01478 612035** if you live in the **Highlands (Kyle of Lochalsh)**

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