

Fife Housing Group

SPRING

Magazine 2023



Contents

In this issue...

4	Join the Home Hub 550 Club and you could win a tablet
4	New out-of-hours call handling service
4	Speaking to our colleagues
5	Resident VOICES review
6	Become a member and make a difference
7	Garden Competition 2023
8	Housing Officers' new areas
10	Giving Something Back Grants 2023
12	A quick catch-up with some of last year's Giving Something Back recipients
14	Burning candles
14	Video doorbells
15	The importance of having home contents insurance
16	Estate Inspection Calendar
17	Considering complaints
18	Upgrades to your home
19	Removal of charges for bulky uplifts
19	Universal Credit - Managed Migration
20	Time for a spring clean
22	Senior Sessions
24	Annual Assurance Statement
26	Noticeboard
27	Area updates
27	Team news
28	Repair statistics
30	Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2023
31	Recipe

Readability



Can you read our other articles ok? If not, you can ask for your magazine to be provided in a large print format. Or, if you know of a tenant who does not have English as their first language and might struggle to read information from us, did you know that we can arrange to translate it for them?

Contact our magazine editor, Alex McCue, on **07970 801007** or via **alex.mccue@fifehg.org.uk** to request a large print copy or enquire about alternative copy formats.



Welcome

We need your help to name our new magazine!

You may have noticed our newsletter has a new look this year. We have given it a bit of a makeover and turned it into a magazine. To celebrate this change and the launch of our e-newsletter last summer, we want to give these a new, shared name – and we need your help.

We would love you to get involved in the renaming process, so if you have any suggestions please send them to us at engagement@fifehg.org.uk. The winner will receive a £25 Scotland Loves Local voucher. We can't wait to see what you come up with!

Join the Home Hub 550 Club and you could win a tablet

Over 459 tenants have already signed up for the Home Hub and there's never been a better time for you to join them, as the lucky 550th person to register will receive a brand new tablet.

The Home Hub offers 24/7 access to our services from the comfort of your own home, meaning that you can make payments, see a statement, book a repair or send us some feedback at any time.

So what are you waiting for? Sign up using the QR code below or by visiting our website.

**WIN A
TABLET!**



New out-of-hours call handling service

On 1 March, we switched to a new out-of-hours call handling provider.

If you need to reach us when our office is closed you should still call the main office number (freephone **08000 274 007**) which will now divert to City Technical, who already look after our gas repairs.

If you are calling out-of-hours because you have an emergency issue with your gas heating, City Technical will be able to deal with this themselves. For all other out-of-hours emergency repairs, they will make arrangements for one of our trades team to attend within the standard 4-hour time frame.

Non-emergency repairs will be recorded and dealt with the following day.

Speaking to our colleagues

Our colleagues work hard to provide you with safe, affordable and comfortable homes. In turn, we ask that you treat them with courtesy, kindness and respect.

The Fife Housing Group team has faced many verbally abusive calls, messages, and face-to-face interactions over the last few months. Please be aware that this sort of behaviour is in breach of your Tenancy Agreement and will not be tolerated.



Resident VOICES review

Our Resident VOICES members have worked hard over the last few months to understand and scrutinise the results from last year's Annual Return on the Charter (ARC).

Focusing on the quality of home indicator, members have been scrutinising satisfaction levels from previous and current surveys, interviewing Fife Housing Group colleagues and observing trends across our tenant groups to identify recommendations for service improvements.

In addition, members have been working with the Communications and Engagement Team on their personal development reviews. These annual reviews highlight each group member's achievements and help develop their skills in areas relevant to their role. Being a member of Resident VOICES requires a generous donation of time. We are keen to

recognise this by supporting each member to achieve their aspirations within their role with a personalised learning and development plan.

Members have also recently had the opportunity to become more involved with our Mystery Shopping programme, Resident Inspections and community events and will be focusing more of their time on developing new initiatives going forward. We hope this will expand tenant engagement, helping us continue improving our services and enhancing our customer experience.

This friendly group is always eager for new members and would love you to join them in working to positively impact how we deliver our services. So, if you feel this is something you would like to get involved with, please get in touch with Helen Miller or Melissa Birrell for further information via engagement@fifehg.org.uk



Become a member and make a difference

Have you ever thought about becoming a member of Fife Housing Group? Our members are important as they help us shape the organisation's future. If you are interested in the work of Fife Housing Group and want to help influence change, why don't you join us?

Being a member means you can attend our Annual General Meeting, allowing you to interact with our Chief Executive and Directors and ask them questions on specific topics that interest you. It also gives you the chance to vote on important issues and have your voice heard.

Additionally, it is an excellent first step to becoming a member of our Board or other tenant groups such as Resident VOICES, which allow you to actually be involved in the decision-making process and address key areas within the business.

Anyone can become a member of Fife Housing Group, as long as you are aged 16 and over if you are a tenant and over 18 if you are not a tenant. All you need to do is purchase a £1 share in Fife Housing Association Ltd and have your application agreed upon by our Board of Management. Your application must meet the essential criteria detailed in our Membership Policy and align with our Model Rules, copies of which are available on request.

We are keen to ensure that membership is representative of the communities in Fife that we serve. Therefore, we welcome membership applications from tenants of Fife Housing Association Limited and its subsidiary, Yourplace Limited. We would also welcome membership from tenants' and residents' organisations that operate in those communities.

Should you be interested in finding out more about becoming a member or any other opportunities we offer, please do not hesitate to contact a member of our team directly at **01383 606162** or via **info@fifehg.org.uk**.



Garden Competition 2023

Creating a welcoming outdoor space takes commitment, love and often, hard work. Over the years, our tenants' devotion to maintaining and improving the areas outside their homes has inspired and impressed us. We can't wait to see the results of your latest efforts as we launch our 2023 Garden Competition.

This year, we also have a brand new category as we wanted to give the little ones a chance to get involved as well.

The first category is our tenant category, so whether you have a shared garden area with your neighbours, a private garden or even a potted area within your veranda, we welcome your entries and look forward to seeing all your efforts come into bloom. Judging of these entries is scheduled for **18-19 July 2023**.

The second category is for children. If your little one already has their own fairy garden or miniature garden or would love the chance to make one, then why not encourage them to enter? Whether they decide to create their masterpiece inside a shoe box or in an area outside, all you need to do is send us a photo of their efforts to be in with a chance of winning a prize. Judging will be based on the photograph entries; we will not need to visit your home to consider these applications.

This competition rewards tenants who take pride in the presentation of their outdoor spaces and recognises the positive impact these attractive garden areas have on the broader community. We are blown away by the entries each year and are sure 2023 will be no different.

Entry for the competition is open NOW. The closing date for entries is **7 July 2023**.

If you would like any further information on how to enter the competition, please get in touch with our Engagement Officer, Helen Miller, on **01383 608127** or via helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk



2023 Garden Competition - Entry Form

Please talk to your Housing Officer or contact Helen Miller on **01383 608127** or via helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk to register your interest.

Alternatively fill in your details below and return this form to Fife Housing Group, 7 Pitreavie Court, Pitreavie Business Park, Dunfermline, KY11 8UU.

Judging will take place on 18-19 July, with prizes awarded to the top three gardens.

Name:.....

Address:.....

Phone:.....

Email:.....

Closing date for entries - 7th July 2023



Housing Officers' new areas

At the beginning of February, our Housing Officers switched things up with most changing the areas they manage.

If you haven't met your new Housing Officer, you can find out who they are and how to contact them below. Please feel free to introduce yourself if you see them out on-site. You can also contact them directly using the details supplied or through your Home Hub (if you haven't signed up yet, you will find the QR code in this magazine or a link on our website).



Audrey Cameron

07747895965 | audrey.cameron@fifehg.org.uk

Buckhaven, East Wemyss, Glenrothes, Kennoway, Leslie, Leven, Markinch, Rosyth (Admiralty Road, Queensferry Road, Backmarch Road, Castlandhill Road).



Gavin Waddell

07771776679 | gavin.waddell@fifehg.org.uk

Blairhall, Crombie, Culross, High Valleyfield, Inverkeithing, Limekilns, Oakley, Rosyth (Boyle Drive, Rannoch Road), Wellwood.



Greg Turner

07811393822 | greg.turner@fifehg.org.uk

Kirkcaldy (Pentland Place, Valley Gardens, Cheviot Road, Morven Grove, Cairnwell Place, Findhorn Place, Sidlaw Street, Lomond Gardens, Carnethy Crescent, Redcraigs, Dunearn Drive, Fair Isle Road).

Rosyth (Selvage Place, Newton Crescent, Fairyrkirk Road, Selvage Street, Craig Street, Parkside Street, Harley Street, Newton Place, Crossroads Place, Hillwood Terrace, Parkside Square).



Karen Gilruth

07825855224 | karen.gilruth@fifehg.org.uk

Burntisland, Dalgety Bay, Dysart, Kinghorn, Kirkcaldy (Glen Lyon Road, Linton Lane, Valley Gardens South, Glen Isla Road, Glendale Park, Glen Esk Place, Glen More Gardens, Glen Feshie, Benarty Street, Almond Place, Bridge Street, Cedar Avenue, Cleish Gardens, Lismore Avenue, The Fairway, Church Street, Roomlin Gardens, West March Street and Glen Albyn - new development).



Lynn Mather

07973827628 | lynn.mather@fifehg.org.uk

Dunfermline (except Allan Crescent, Duncan Crescent, Dunn Crescent and Islay Road).



Ross Glancy

07970804740 | ross.glancy@fifehg.org.uk

Cowdenbeath, Hill of Beath, Lochgelly, Lochore, Lumphinnans, Rosyth (Middlebank Street, Park Road, Holborn Place, Burnside Street, Parkgate, Woodside Avenue, Lowry Place, Pinkerton Place, Woodside Street, Burnside Place).



Stephanie McCulloch

07811439905 | stephanie.mcculloch@fifehg.org.uk

Dunfermline (Allan Crescent, Duncan Crescent, Dunn Crescent, Islay Road). Rosyth (Castlandhill Road, Booth Avenue, Gillway, Cromwell Road, Primrose Lane, Leslie Road, Whinnyburn Place, Brankholm Crescent, Syme Place, Webster Place, Primrose Avenue, Primrose Court, Forker Avenue, Kings Road, Daniel Place, Brankholm Brae, Carson Place, Caledonia Court, Alexander Place).



William Earnshaw

07525260447 | william.earnshaw@fifehg.org.uk

Cellardyke, Ceres, Methil, Rosyth (Kings Place, Aberlour Street, Burney Place, Hamilton Place, Findlay Street, Norval Place, Backmarch Crescent, Kings Crescent, Findlay Crescent, Albert Street).

Giving Something Back Grants 2023

In 2021, we launched our Giving Something Back Grants to support and recognise organisations and local projects doing fantastic work across Fife.

These grants are made possible by the generosity of the contractors who sign up to our charitable framework, donating 2% of their invoiced costs to benefit good causes.

Last year we supported thirteen local projects working to improve their communities with £20,000 worth of grant funding.

These included Linton Lane Centre, Dunfermline Men's Shed, Valleyfield Community Club and The Karate Initiative.

The grants are back in 2023 and we are delighted to be able to support even more local charities and projects with the fantastic work they do.

To enter, all you have to do is fill in the application form on the following page and return it to us at 7 Pitreavie Court, Pitreavie Business Park, Dunfermline, Fife, KY11 8UU or complete the equivalent version on our website before the deadline of **Friday 30 June**.

Applicants will then be invited to pitch their ideas to Fife Housing Group colleagues at our Dragon's Den-style event in August/September.

The grants are part of our ongoing commitment to making a difference in our local communities and we cannot wait to see what this year brings.

We thank our contractors who have made this possible – Rogerson, Eurojet, Shine, Kingdom Maintenance and Mitie.



Last year's recipients of a Giving Something Back Grant at our summer event.

If you are involved with a local project or charity that could do with some extra investment, please apply for our Giving Something Back grants using the form opposite.

We encourage new applicants and welcome all different kinds of projects.

Priority will be given to local groups and projects working within the towns and villages in Fife where we have homes.

Giving Something Back Grants cannot be used to fund employment opportunities.

Please fill out ALL of the following sections of the application, giving as much detail as possible and return it to us by **Friday 30 June**.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

If you need more space, feel free to include additional information on paper or in an email.

Thank you.

Giving Something Back Grants 2023 Application form

Name:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Name of group:	
Charity no. (if applicable)	
Size of grant requested:	
Please tell us about the work your group does (please continue on a separate page if necessary):	
Please tell us what you would like to use the Giving Something Back grant money for (please continue on a separate page if necessary):	
Please tell us who would be the beneficiaries of the project should you receive the grant:	
Please detail any barriers or limitations that your project faces:	
Please provide a specific breakdown of how the funds requested will be spent:	

Please provide additional details on a separate piece of paper.

A quick catch-up with some of last year's Giving Something Back recipients

Last year's Giving Something Back Grants were a massive success. We had over 60 grant applications and gave funding to 13 incredible projects doing inspiring work across Fife.

We caught up with some of them to see what has happened since and how the grant they received has helped their projects.

Valleyfield Community Club Received £1,220

Valleyfield Community Club is a local charity run by volunteers who seek to improve the local area through community-based projects.

'The funding we received was for new benches to replace the ones falling apart in Valleyfield Woods. With the Giving Something Back Grant, we were able to replace three and add a further two. These should be good enough for safe use for the next 30 years. We were able to stretch the grant even further by doing the work ourselves. The grant came at the perfect time and was greatly appreciated.'

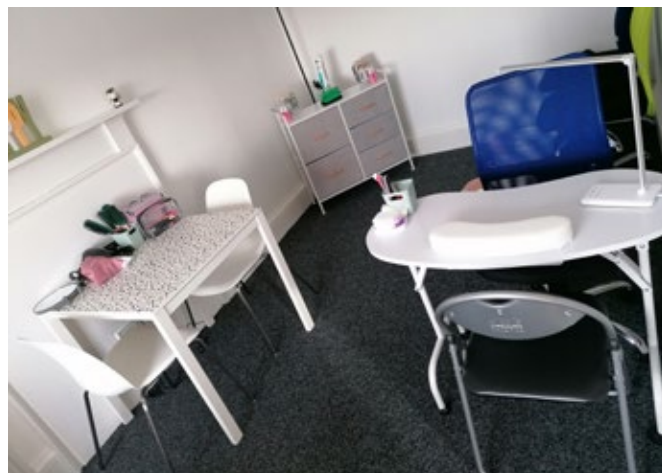


EATS Rosyth Received £1,500

EATS Rosyth is a community-led charity in Fife, Scotland. They grow and share food, reduce waste, help the environment and improve food education.

'The new Rosyth Community Hub is well on its way to completion and the funding from the Giving Something Back Grant has been hugely helpful in helping us to

purchase furniture and furnishings – including chairs, tables, paint for the walls and kitchen equipment. As we mentioned in our pitch, the funding has paid for items that local community members use and sit on and eat from! So it has gone a long way in helping us make our Hub come to life. Thank you.'

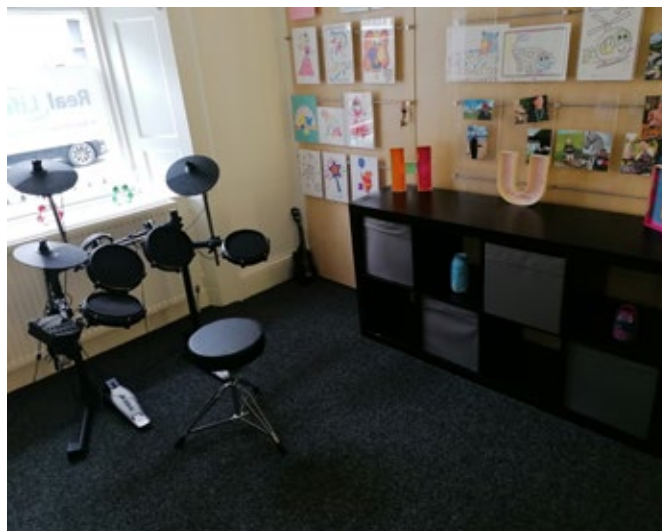


Real Life Options Received £1,900

Real Life Options supports people with learning disabilities, autism and age-related needs to have a strong voice and a real choice in how they live their lives.

'The grant we received has helped our Hub so much. We have been able to purchase a drum kit and musical instruments for the people we support, and they love using them.

We've also set up a mini nail salon for those that can't cope being in busy environments, so we have the full kit and they can have their nails done in a quiet, relaxed environment.'





The Karate Initiative Received £2,500

The Karate Initiative provides free equipment, training and grading to people who wouldn't normally be able to afford to do this sport, allowing them to reap the benefits of karate - improved health, confidence, discipline and a sense of community.

'Following our grant, our students have gone from strength to strength and continue to perform to the highest of standards.

One of our students, Holly, competed to represent Scotland in the JKA European Championships being held in Switzerland on 1 April. Not only did Holly manage to get herself selected but so did another two of our students, Raj and Caitlin. As you can imagine, with the charity hoping to pay for all their expenses for this trip we are now frantically fundraising towards this goal. No money from the grant was used for this event, given that we have already spent it providing much-needed equipment for our students. However, it was a significant milestone for Carnegie Dojo and the Giving Something Back Grant allowed us to concentrate purely on fundraising for the Europeans and not divert money away from other club needs.

On behalf of the charity, can I again express my thanks to all at Fife Housing Group for your grant. It took a huge amount of pressure off the fundraisers who can concentrate on raising funds for competitions and other things if we know we have the money in the bank for all the different day-to-day needs. Without grants like yours, small charities would struggle in today's climate where money is extremely tight.'

Linton Lane Centre Received £2,500

Linton Lane Centre has supported the people of Kirkcaldy for nearly 100 years, providing charitable support, a range of activities and acting as a hub for social and educational groups. It is regarded as the 'heart of the community.'

'Over the last few months, we have had a steady rise in people needing support with food and fuel top-ups. Kirkcaldy Foodbank has had to reduce the number of food parcels it can give out to once a week as they struggle to fulfil demand. So your grant has helped us to bridge the gap.

Recently a young mum whose partner had left her contacted the centre in despair. She has two young boys and found herself in a position where she had run out of gas and electricity. This was late on a Friday afternoon so no Foodbanks were open and Cosy Kingdom and Fife Council could not help until Monday. One of our team met them and was able to top-up their power cards and do a food shop for necessities like milk, bread, fruit, toilet roll etc. to the value of £50. We managed to buy a few treats for the boys too! The boys were excited to come along and help with the shopping and we received a message over the weekend saying they could relax and keep cosy with food in their tummies.

A man in his fifties came in to ask for help with food as he had to wait for over three weeks for his Universal Credit. He has to look after himself, his disabled wife and his teenage son. He had no petrol to get his wife to her appointment in Dunfermline and came to us in a state of panic. We bought vouchers for Asda to a value of £100 and £40 in petrol to ensure he could get to the hospital and feed his family.

If we hadn't received the funding these stories and many others would have turned out very differently. We could not have responded so quickly, which is why we seek funding so we can step in when other agencies are closed.

The centre is also supporting Ukrainian Families now. We have had two meal days with traditional foods being cooked by a lady who is already hosting a mum and her son. The first meal had eight people attend and the most recent had 30 adults and 13 children. We are using part of the funding to support these families as they have to go to the Foodbank, which we are trying to prevent. They have faced enough trauma from leaving their country and are still suffering so we want to make their lives here as simple as we can.

We want to keep supporting everyone in the community and continue to run our programmes. We have just started family cooking classes which saw over fourteen families attend the first session. We have many more on offer and lots of plans for the future. It's grants like yours that make this possible.

Our Facebook page is an excellent way to keep up with all that's on offer and we get many Fife Housing Group tenants coming along. We would be delighted to welcome more so please follow us to find out what's happening at the centre.

We can't thank Fife Housing Group and their Giving Something Back Grants enough for helping us to help the community at a time when the need is continuing to grow.'

Burning candles

Over the past few months, we have had several reports of mould on walls and ceilings, only to find when we visited the properties that it was staining from burning candles. If you do burn candles, please wipe down your walls regularly to avoid building up stains.

An unattended candle also recently caused a fire in one of our homes where, unfortunately, the tenants did not have contents insurance.

So, we wanted to take this opportunity to remind you about the importance of keeping safe when burning candles.

The safest way to enjoy candles is to invest in LED battery-operated ones. However, if you must use real candles, please follow these rules:

- Always make sure candles are in a suitable holder and kept away from anything flammable, such as curtains, furniture, bedding and books.
- Don't burn several candles close together as this might cause the flames to flare.
- Don't use candles in bedrooms or anywhere where you might fall asleep.
- Never leave lit candles unattended. Put burning candles out when you leave the room and make sure they are out completely before you go to bed.
- Place your candles carefully. Ensure they are on a stable surface, out of the reach of pets and children.
- Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.
- Do not move candles once they are lit.
- Avoid using candles altogether when tired or drinking.
- Burn candles in a well-ventilated room away from drafts, vents or air currents. This will help prevent rapid or uneven burning, soot and dripping.
- Always put scented candles in a heat-resistant holder. These candles are designed to liquefy when heated to maximise fragrance.
- Fit smoke alarms and test them monthly. A working smoke alarm can buy you valuable time to get out, stay out and call 999.
- Make sure that everyone in your home knows what to do if a fire should occur and practice your escape route.



Video doorbells

We want to make you aware that you need permission to install a video doorbell at your home. This is because these doorbells are similar to CCTV, which brings up privacy issues that could affect your neighbours, especially in blocks of flats. To obtain permission, a Fife Housing Group colleague will need to come out and inspect your property to ensure it is suitable.

We understand that you may wish to install one of these smart doorbells to help protect your home so if this interests you, please get in touch with the office to discuss it further.

The importance of having home contents insurance

Do you currently have contents insurance? If the answer is no, ask yourself; if something happens do I have enough money to replace my belongings?

We have had several incidents recently, including a house fire in Rosyth, where the tenants did not have contents insurance and had to replace all of their belongings. This included expensive items such as electrical appliances, sofas and beds.

Losing your belongings in a flood or a fire and not having insurance coverage can result in severe financial consequences and most of the time people cannot afford to replace all of the lost items.

When it comes to your home, there are two types of insurance to keep in mind; buildings insurance and contents insurance:

- **Building insurance** – covers anything that is the material of the building, the walls, the roof, the windows etc.
- **Contents insurance** – is anything you take into your home – floor coverings, sofas, televisions, beds, jewellery, computers etc.

Living in a Fife Housing Group property, you can trust that we have buildings insurance and will carry out any repairs to keep your home wind and watertight. Therefore, you do not have to take out buildings insurance.

Contents insurance, however, is not our responsibility. It's up to each tenant to decide whether or not to take out contents insurance.

Although contents insurance is not mandatory in your tenancy agreement, **we strongly encourage you to purchase contents insurance**. The cost of insurance can be as low as £1.80 per week.

Many of us think that 'it won't happen to me' – and perhaps it won't – but if you live in a flat, terraced or semi-detached house and a neighbouring property has a flood, you might be affected. Fires also spread quickly and accidents can happen at any time.

It is worth considering how affordable it would be to replace your homely belongings if you were the victim of a fire, flood or theft.

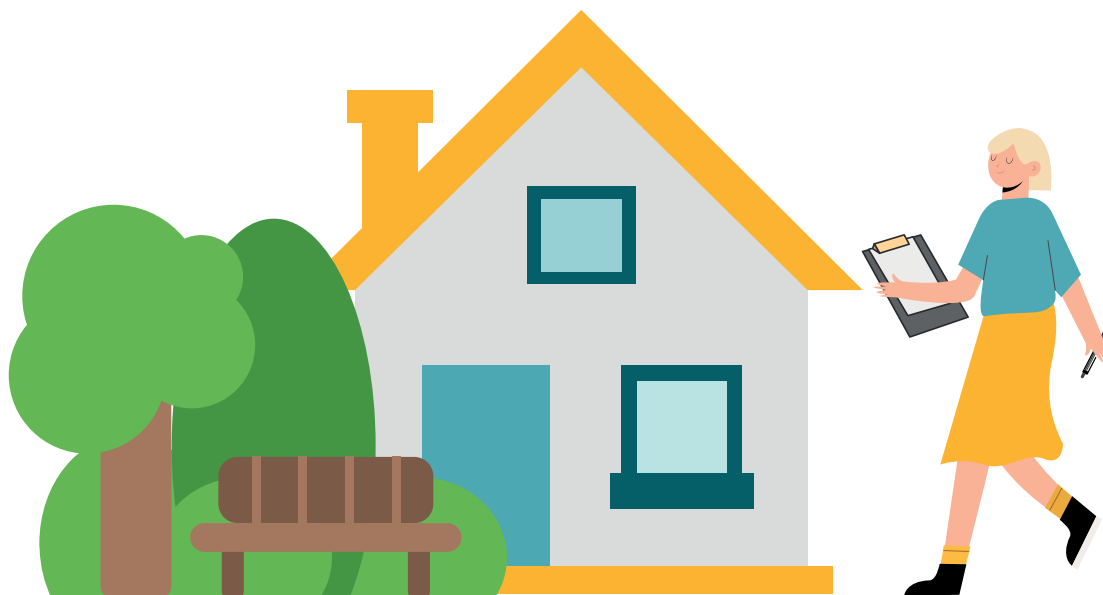
Visit [MoneySavingExpert](#), [Compare The Market](#) or a similar price comparison website to find a contents insurance plan to suit you.



Estate Inspection Calendar

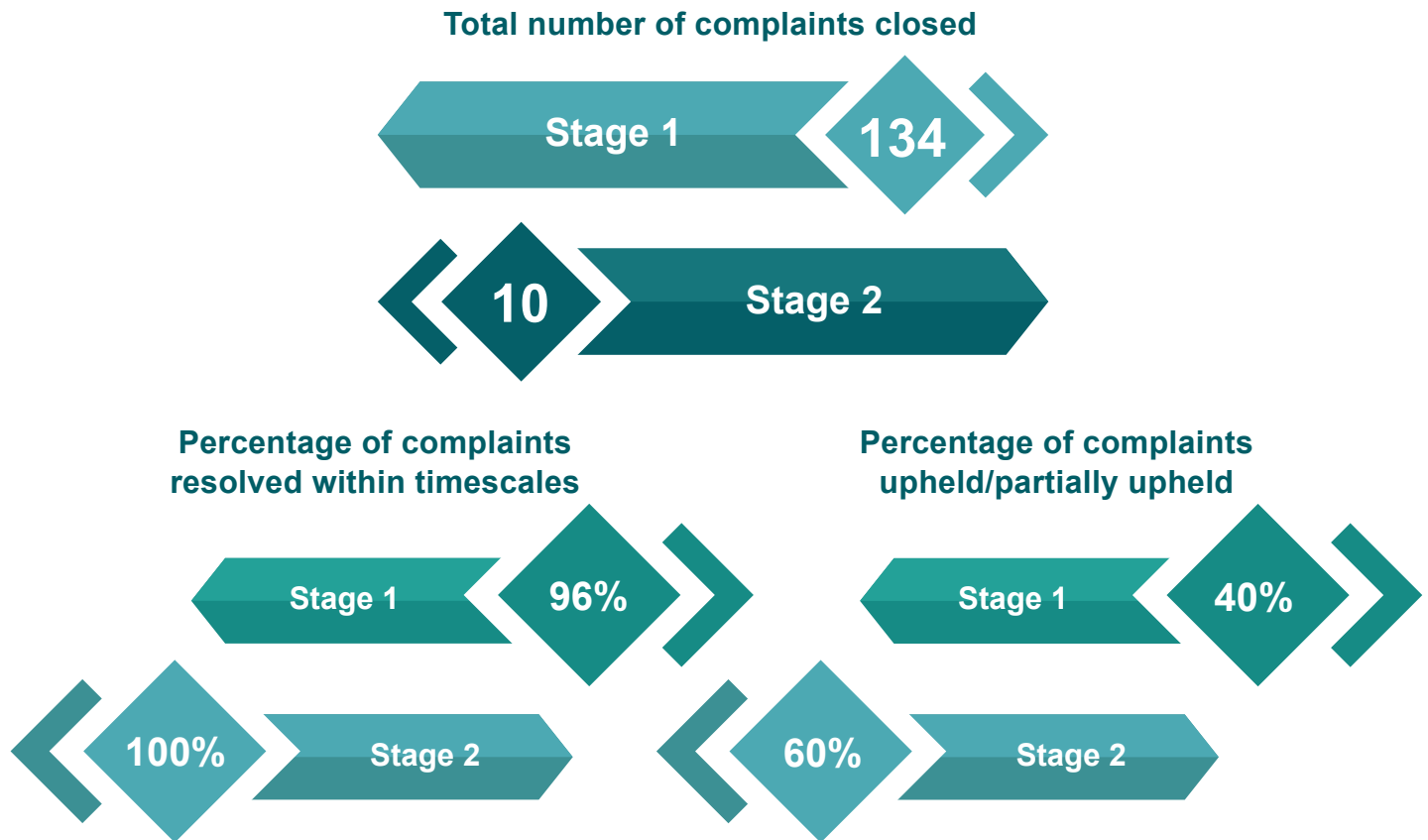
Here are our upcoming estate inspections. Mark yours in your diary and feel free to go out to speak to your new Housing Officer when they visit.

Date	Location	Housing Officer
May 2023		
Wednesday 17 May @ 2.00pm	DUNFERMLINE - Corbett Place, Husband Place, Mathieson Place, Russell Court	Lynn Mather
June 2023		
Friday 9 June @ 1.30pm	ROSYTH - Backmarch Road	Audrey Cameron
Monday 19 June @ 11.00am	ROSYTH - Kings Place, Aberlour Street	William Earnshaw
July 2023		
Tuesday 11 July @ 10.00am	KIRKCALDY - Linton Lane, Valley Gardens South, Benarty Street	Karen Gilruth
Thursday 20 July @ 10.00am	HILL OF BEATH - Allan Park	Ross Glancy
August 2023		
Wednesday 16 August @ 1.30pm	KENNOWAY - New Road, Leven Road	Audrey Cameron
Tuesday 22 August @ 10.00am	KIRKCALDY - Valley Gardens, Dunearn Drive	Greg Turner
Thursday 31 August @ 10.00am	LUMPHINNANS	Ross Glancy



Considering complaints

Here are our complaints statistics from April 1 2022 until January 31 2023.



Complaints learnings

Issue

A new tenant was unhappy with the condition of their property and claimed it was uninhabitable. We arranged a survey with our damp proofing specialist, Intona. The survey confirmed that there were no issues with damp and no reason to suggest the property was uninhabitable. The tenant also believed we had agreed to a three-week grace period on his rent, which they then asked to be increased to four weeks.

Investigation

Our investigation established that a grace period had only been suggested if the survey results had deemed the property unfit for human habitation, which was not the case. This conversation had been misinterpreted and the tenant expected that a grace period would be applied regardless of the survey outcome.

Outcome

We learned that we need to ensure all discussions with our tenants are clearly understood, with any agreements confirmed in writing to prevent situations like this in the future. Due to the confusion, we agreed to credit three weeks' rent charges to the tenant's account and will ensure conversations are more accurately recorded and understood going forward.

Upgrades to your home

The importance of Stock Condition Surveys and Energy Performance Certificates

In our last newsletter, we spoke about undertaking Stock Condition Surveys (SCSs) and Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs).

Here is a reminder of that information and why it is so important that we access your home:

We have appointed a consultant, Momentum 4, to complete independent surveys of your home on our behalf.

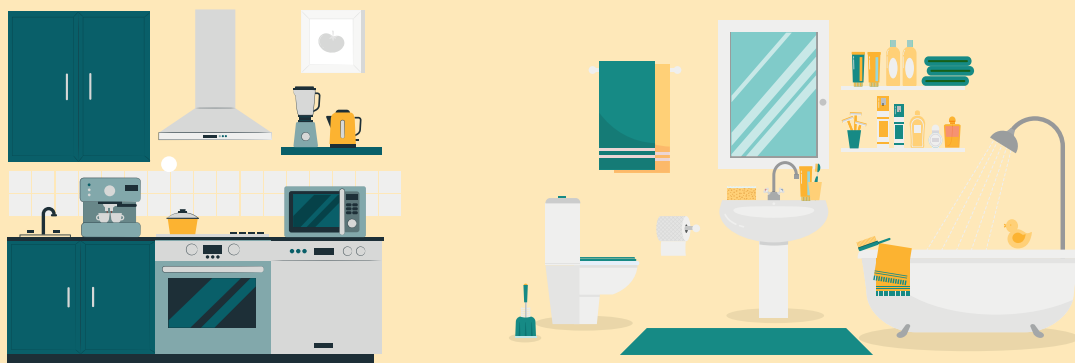
These consist of two different surveys that assess the condition of your home to help us plan what upgrades are required and when.

Firstly, the SCS will look at the quality of the property based on the Scottish Housing Quality Standards. We report our compliance to the Housing Regulator annually, so we must ensure your home meets these standards. The SCS also allows us to plan any upgrades or investments required for your property over the coming years by giving us the opportunity to assess the age and condition of critical components, including kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors, roofs, etc.

Secondly, our EPC programme looks at the energy efficiency of your property, taking into consideration the current insulation levels, windows and doors' functionality and identifying areas for improvement to ensure that the property meets the required standards. Meeting the standards will also mean that the cost of heating your home will be less and also let us meet ours and the Government's ambitions to reduce carbon emissions.

Our future investment and planned upgrade programmes are based on the data received from these surveys. Therefore, we ask that if you receive a letter from Momentum 4 with a survey date, you either allow access at this time or contact them to arrange a more suitable appointment.

Momentum 4 are reporting that only 20% of tenants are giving access to their properties, which is a really disappointing rate. We constantly get enquiries from our tenants about when upgrades will take place. For them to happen at all, these surveys need to be done. If you want your home to be in a high-quality condition you must give access to Momentum 4. Not allowing entry means you miss any potential upgrades in your home.



Removal of charges for bulky uplifts

Fife Council have removed charges for bulky uplifts from April this year.

This service collects large household items – such as couches and mattresses – that are too big to fit into a wheelie bin and cannot be transported easily to a recycling centre.

Residents can now benefit from having their unwanted bulky household waste items uplifted free of charge, reducing pressure on the recycling centres, helping residents struggling with the cost of living crisis and helping to keep our communities free from waste.

Bulky uplifts will continue to be ordered online via fife.gov.uk/bulkyuplift. Uplifts will be scheduled on a first come first served basis and 180 booking slots will be available daily to manage demand across Fife. The list of items that can be uplifted will remain the same and black bag landfill material will also continue to be accepted.

The council encourages people to recycle or check to see if any item can be re-used before an uplift is organised. Organisations like Fife Furniture Plus will collect furniture that is still in good condition, free of charge, so it can be resold.

Donating these items to charity is a positive choice, especially when many charities will collect from homes free of charge.

Universal Credit - Managed Migration

All residents who claim benefits are reminded that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are moving away from historic benefits such as Housing Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Income Support (IS). Eventually, these benefits will cease and be replaced by a new benefits system led mainly by Universal Credit (UC).

The system of moving everyone over to Universal Credit is called 'managed migration' and the DWP hope to conclude this for all claimants by 2028. Moving from old 'legacy' benefits to Universal Credit will impact your income – some tenants will have a higher income and some might have a lower income.

We encourage all claimants to remain on their current benefits until they receive their Migration Notice letter.

To help you adjust to your new income, the DWP currently have an 'income protection scheme' for the first three months of the migration. This means those eligible households with a lower calculated award in UC than their legacy benefits awards will see no difference in their entitlement when they are moved to UC, provided there is no change in their circumstances during the migration process. The transitional protection element will erode over time with increases in UC elements - excluding the childcare costs element - and will stop with certain changes of circumstances. If you move to UC voluntarily, you will not have income protection.

Before changing benefits voluntarily, it is always advisable to seek welfare benefits advice as it can be beneficial to move in some cases. As before, specific changes in circumstances can also prompt a move from old 'legacy' benefits to Universal Credit.

Time for a spring clean

Spring is the season of renewal and after a long winter, we feel energised and motivated to get things in order.

A spring clean is on many people's minds, but sometimes it's hard to know where to begin. We have created a detailed checklist for those keen to do a deep spring clean. Or, you could always take your time with it and tackle these as small jobs spread throughout the year.

However you decide to tackle it, a good spring clean and declutter brings more advantages than you think. Did you know it can have huge benefits for your mental health? Most people have the compulsion to improve the cleanliness, functionality and aesthetic of their homes and this can be a coping mechanism for daily stress and anxiety.

Cleaning gives a sense of control. It's intentional and can both calm and energise us at the same time. Even if you can't take on the whole house at once, tackle it a drawer at a time and see if you reap the benefits.



Where to start?

There are two parts to a spring clean. First, to declutter and then to clean.

You may be familiar with decluttering expert Marie Kondo's, mantra of 'does it spark joy?' This is good advice, and we think it is an excellent question to ask yourself while you go through your things. Another top tip is tackling one room or space at a time. Plus, focus on clearing surfaces first, as a cluttered kitchen or bathroom can feel claustrophobic and overwhelming, impacting the task at hand. So, sort out your surfaces first.

There is a lot of great advice for decluttering online. Take 10 minutes to read some of these articles and make a plan of action. It will make you feel more empowered and lead to success.

Then comes the cleaning part. Once you have tackled decluttering room by room, time to do the same with the cleaning. There is a Mrs Hinch in all of us. So dig out your rubber gloves and Zoflora.

If you need to stock up on your cleaning supplies, places like B&M, Poundland, other bargain stores and your local supermarket all have some fantastic options.

If you want to use more natural and environmentally friendly products, you can make your own cleaning supplies in refillable bottles. There are plenty of recipes for this online and we have included one for an all-purpose cleaner in this article.

It's a good idea to keep cleaning products to a minimum as this can also create clutter. A decent all-purpose cleaner and some microfiber cloths are a good start.

Encourage everyone in your household to get involved as this can help create good cleaning habits in the future.

Good luck and happy cleaning!

The ultimate spring clean checklist

Every room

- ☐ Clean/dust skirting boards, corners of ceilings, window sills, doors and walls
- ☐ Vacuum and wash vents
- ☐ Wash curtains
- ☐ Dust blinds
- ☐ Wash windows - inside and out
- ☐ Dust and shine overhead lights - replace any light bulbs that need changing
- ☐ Dust light fixtures and lamp shades

Kitchen

- ☐ Clean out cupboards – throw away any out-of-date food and make a list of what needs to be replaced
- ☐ Wash kitchen cabinets – inside and outside
- ☐ Deep clean oven
- ☐ Move fridge - Hoover and mop behind it
- ☐ Vacuum coils on the fridge
- ☐ Deep clean fridge inside, throwing away any out-of-date food - wash outside

Living room

- ☐ Dust and wash all mirrors, frames and decorative items
- ☐ Vacuum all upholstery
- ☐ Vacuum all lampshades
- ☐ Dust furniture and fixtures
- ☐ Wash all cushion covers and blankets
- ☐ Dust and polish furniture
- ☐ Hoover and shampoo carpets - mop and wax if necessary

Bedroom

- ☐ Wash all bedding and cushion covers
- ☐ Flip or rotate your mattress
- ☐ Get rid of anything stored under the bed you don't want anymore and Hoover

Home

- ☐ Change batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- ☐ Check all electronics, make sure they are plugged in, cords are untangled and everything is plugged into a surge protector

- ☐ Check the expiration date on any fire extinguishers
- ☐ Sweep and wash floors in vestibules/porches, sweep outside paths
- ☐ Store all winter items, clothes and decorations
- ☐ Disinfect your computer keyboard(s) and mouse – you can use compressed air to remove crumbs, dust and other particulates. Use a dampened microfiber cloth and wipe the keys down. Use dry microfiber to remove any leftover moisture. Disinfectant wipes are okay to use as well

Bathroom

- ☐ Clean and disinfect bath and shower
- ☐ Wash bathmats and towels
- ☐ Dust and replace decorative items
- ☐ Wash or replace shower curtains

Other

- ☐ Discard old and expired makeup. Clean your makeup holders, bags, and brushes and remove hair from hairbrushes
- ☐ Update all your house first aid kits. Toss expired medication while sorting other medication
- ☐ Dry clean winter clothing or items as required. Store all winter items for next year
- ☐ Donate any unused clothes and other items to charity shops or clothing banks

Make your own all-purpose cleaner

Perfect for spritzing on tiles, bathroom panels, mirrors, windows and bathroom and kitchen surfaces.

Ingredients

1/2 cup vinegar

1/4 cup bicarbonate of soda

2 litres water

Optional – a few drops of essential oils to add a scent

Method

Mix all ingredients together in a bucket of water. Decant into a spray bottle and keep.

Senior Sessions

March saw the launch of our Senior Sessions community events. A series of events specifically aimed at our tenants over 65 years old, hoping to encourage greater community spirit and ease the loneliness and isolation some people face.

More than 50 residents joined us for a lovely afternoon tea, provided by Ale & Pate, some great entertainment from True Tones and lots of advice and support from our local partner agencies including Cosy Kingdom, Alzheimer Scotland, Police Scotland and Fife Elderly Forum, to name but a few.

Thanks to generous donations from the Russell Trust and Babcock International, there were also plenty of free goodies and prizes up for grabs. Guests each took home a brand new pair of slippers to help prevent slips and trips, a meal kit and a prize from our giveaway, all chosen with the current cost of living crisis in mind.

The fun continued throughout the afternoon, with bingo, quizzes, manicures and the opportunity to meet the adorable dogs brought along by Cariad Pet Therapy.

The event was a great success and it was incredibly heartwarming to see our tenants and local residents come together and enjoy all of the activities and treats on offer. It also allowed us to chat with people about any challenges they were facing and identify practical ways to help.

The presence of COVID-19 during the previous two

years has limited our ability to provide regular engagement activities. However, this event demonstrates the importance of bringing our communities together, enabling us all to play a part in supporting each other.

Due to the success of this event, we are eager to offer a similar style event allowing our tenants in East Fife to enjoy many of the activities on offer. Watch this space for further details in the coming months.

Fife Housing Group would like to thank all local agencies and organisations who supported this event, making it a success for all to enjoy. A huge thank you to Ale & Pate, Fife Elderly Forum, Cosy Kingdom, HSBC, Next, Fife Shopping & Support Services, Cariad Pet Therapy, EATS Rosyth, Police Scotland, Alzheimer Scotland, Tesco Rosyth, Asda St Leonards, Carnegie Conference Centre, Stephens Bakery, Baynes, Babcock International, Russell Trust, Lollipop Lane Hire and True Tones.





Annual Assurance Statement

Each year, we need to tell the Scottish Housing Regulator if we meet their regulatory standards and requirements by submitting an Annual Assurance Statement.

You can see a copy of the current Annual Assurance Statement from our Board below.

Scottish Housing Regulator
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF

18 October 2022

Dear Sirs,

The Board have evaluated the performance of Fife Housing Association (FHA) in fulfilling its legal and regulatory requirements during 2022, whilst facing the challenges brought about by the increasing pressure from the cost of living crisis and the residual impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, and conclude that the organisation remains compliant and will continue to demonstrate this into the future, reacting swiftly to any change in policy at local or national level.

In considering the impact of emerging issues, such as valid Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs) throughout housing stock and demonstrating the existence of equality and diversity for tenants and colleagues, FHA declare that these are effectively managed and continual improvements are built into our ongoing strategies.

We confirm that all properties are subject to a continual review of its energy performance, incorporating annual gas inspections and validation of heating systems compared against the required standard. Our tenants have received clear communication on how this is achieved through our service delivery, whereby all necessary access and measures are taken at the earliest opportunity to renew EICRs. As reported in our Annual Return on the Charter, for those instances that have not been completed as a direct result of the pandemic, these properties are currently registered as 'in abeyance' for the purposes of Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

FHA has introduced the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group to, firstly, monitor our strategies demonstrate that the impact of equality and diversity is accounted for in our decision making and our actions across every level of the organisation. And secondly, to safeguard the principles of privacy for

tenants and staff, by ensuring that the retention, storage and use of personal data is safe, appropriate, strictly controlled and remains compliant with data protection legislation.

The Board are assured that the measures that have been put in place and the contingency planning that has been implemented have ensured that FHA are able to continue to meet the responsibilities to tenants, service users, regulators and funders. The Board utilises the evidence bank including all reports, policies and advice that it has established to substantiate the compliance opinion, the evidence bank includes information on how compliance is demonstrated and actions performed within the agreed timescales, including any changes to legislation or regulation.

In respect of corporate and financial governance, FHA continue to monitor our Business Plan and financial assumptions to ensure that our strategy, risk management and sustained growth remain relevant, viable and within context to the factors affecting the social housing sector. The internal and external audit process is risk based in order to mitigate any adverse impact on stakeholders due to process controls or adverse events. We have had only five low level improvement points raised in the last ten internal audits and no points raised in the last four external audits, demonstrating the high level of control and compliance.

Chair

**On behalf of the Board of Management
Fife Housing Association**



Noticeboard

Garden checks

With the warmer weather just around the corner, we will begin our regular garden checks again. Please ensure your garden is kept neat and tidy with no dumped items.

Smoking

A reminder that smoking in your close is a crime.

The Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005 made it an offence to smoke or permit someone else to smoke within enclosed or substantially enclosed premises.

Substantially enclosed means premises with a roof/ceiling where the openings are less than half of the area of the perimeter of the premises, including walls and any other structures serving the purpose of walls. (Please note that doors and windows are not considered to be open when determining the percentage of open areas in terms of this legislation).

Committing an offence under this act will result in a substantial fine. Please respect the law and do not smoke in your close.

Keeping your close clear

All closes and communal areas should be clear of any rubbish or dumped items.

Storing prams, buggies, bicycles and other large items is prohibited. This is a fire safety issue and is not acceptable at any time. Your Housing Officer will regularly inspect closes to ensure they are kept clear of dumped items.

If you have unwanted items you can book a slot at a Recycling Centre (see below) or arrange for an uplift if the item is bulky. The Council has now removed the charge for uplifting large items making this service completely free.

Recycling

You can book a slot at your local Recycling Centre through the Fife Council website -

fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/bins-and-recycling/recycling-points-and-centres



Area updates

Kennoway

Illegal dumping/fly-tipping continues to be a problem, especially at Leven Road. Please report this directly to Fife Council on 03451 55 00 22.

We recognise the need to demolish the rear bin stores at 5-15 New Road and will begin the process shortly. They are becoming dangerous and unsightly and are no longer fit for purpose.

We are looking into putting up new notice boards in all the closes at Leven Road and New Road and all updates will be displayed on these.

The issue with dog faeces at Leven Road is also being dealt with.

High Valleyfield

As better weather is now arriving, we want to highlight the beautiful walking and cycling routes in and around the area. Why not wander through Valleyfield, head to Balgownie woods or access the Fife Coastal Path at Culross? There is plenty to see and do out there. For further information visit woodlandtrust.org.uk

Oakley

Fife Council have asked us to remind tenants again that the office on Station Road is currently open by appointment only. If you require any assistance for Council-related matters, they have asked that customers call ahead using their main contact number, 03451 55 00 00, otherwise you may be turned away.

Team news

New starts

We want to welcome the following new colleagues to Fife Housing Group:

Sam Hendry, Joiner

Melissa Birrell, Engagement Officer

Michael Henderson, Skilled Labourer

Garry Davies, Electrician

Farewells

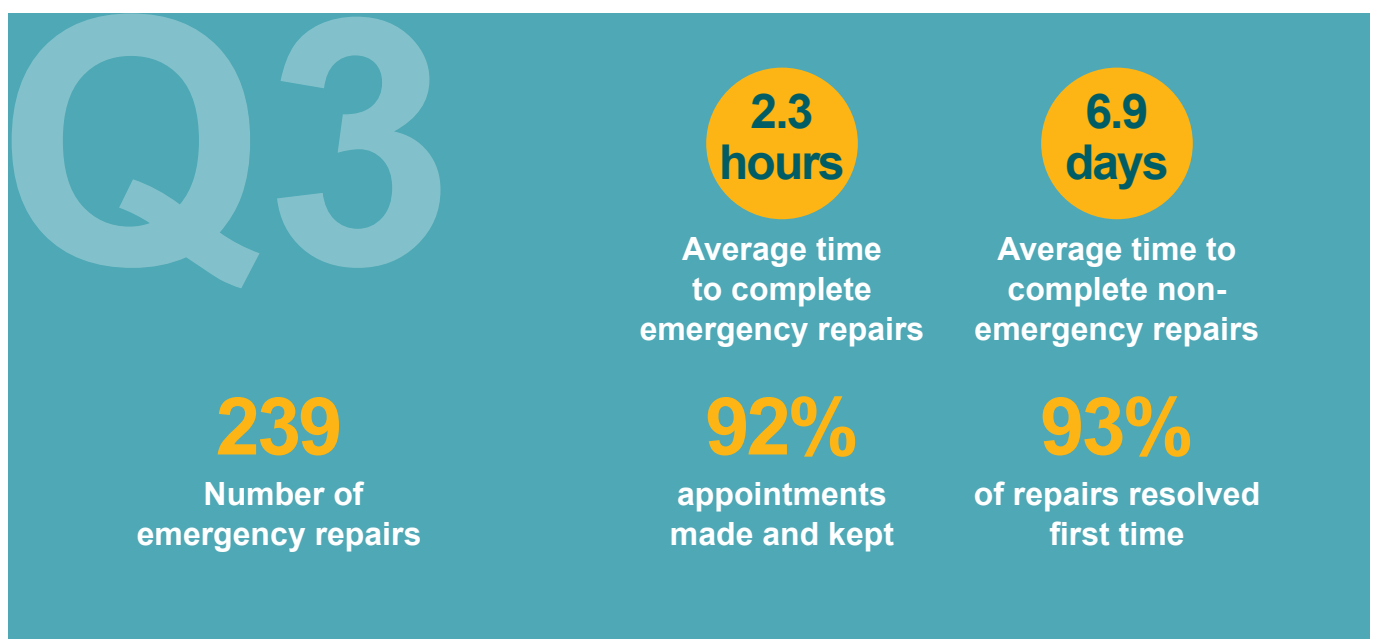
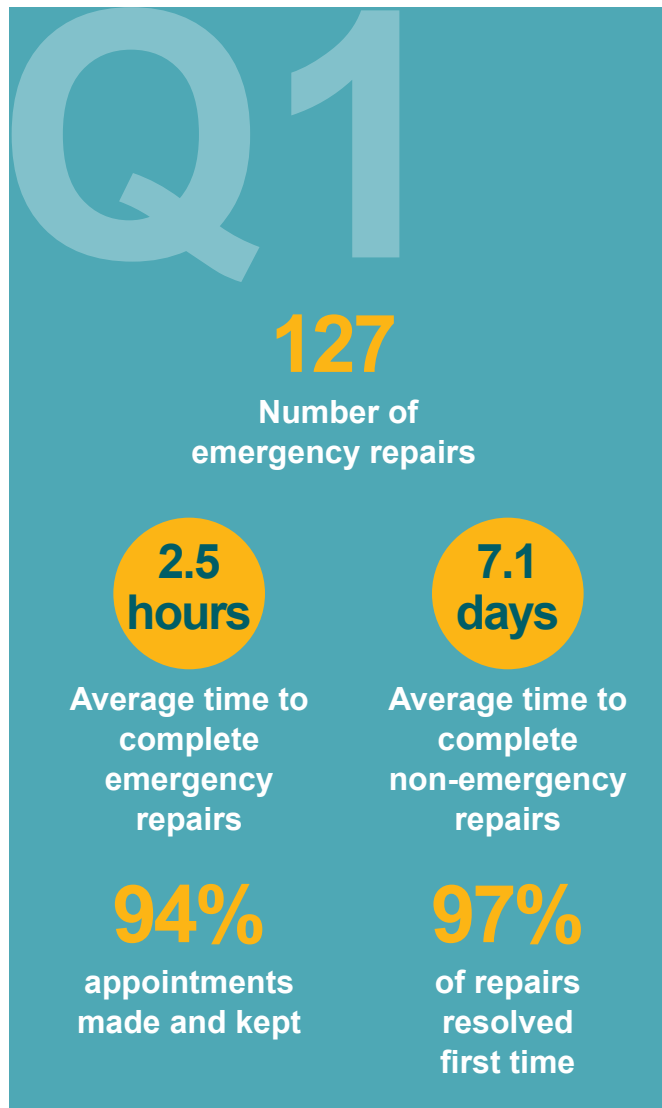
We also say goodbye to the following colleagues and wish them the best of luck in their new roles:

Marc Wilson, Skilled Labourer

Neil Gunn, Maintenance Officer

Repairs statistics

Below is a comparison of our repair statistics between our first three quarters of the year 2022/2023.



Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

At the end of 2022, we surveyed 550 of you to gauge your satisfaction with our services. Tenants from different locations, house types and age groups were included in the survey sample to ensure as wide a range of opinions as possible.

Below is a summary of the key results and we will be following these up with a number of tenant focus groups to understand how we can further develop our services to meet your needs.

A huge thank you to those who took part. Your participation will help us to continue improving into 2023 and beyond.

OVERALL SATISFACTION

88%

83% in 2020/21



HOUSING

87%

79% in 2020/21



REPAIRS

87%

86% in 2020/21



INFORMATION

94%

90% in 2020/21



NEIGHBOURHOOD

90%

78% in 2020/21



TENANT PARTICIPATION

83%

89% in 2020/21



VALUE FOR MONEY

81%

66% in 2020/21



Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2023

Last month we marked Scottish Apprenticeship Week by celebrating all of the hardworking apprentices out there, including our own.

We currently have three apprentices here at Fife Housing Group; Dylan and Camryn, Apprentice Joiners, and Owen, our Apprentice Painter and Decorator.

The theme this year was 'Unlocking Potential' and we are proud to be in a position to support young people at the start of their careers. Our apprentices add so much value and bring a lot to our team - we are lucky to have them.

'For me, university wasn't an option. I am much more of a hands-on person and enjoy being out working rather than sitting in a classroom, so this route suited me more.' - Dylan

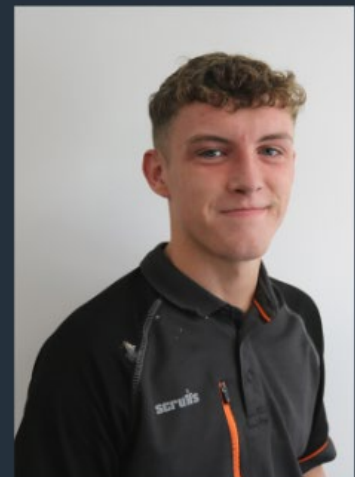
'I decided to become an apprentice because I could train and learn valuable skills whilst still earning a wage.' - Owen



Dylan
Apprentice Joiner



Owen
Apprentice Painter
and Decorator



Camryn
Apprentice Joiner

Meet our apprentices

Cheesy chicken bake with new potatoes

Prep: 15 mins
Cook: 45 mins
Serves: 4

An easy dinner recipe, all baked in one pan to save you on the dishes!

Method

STEP 1

Heat oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6. Carefully lift the skin on the chicken thighs and spread the soft cheese between the skin and flesh. Sit the chicken in a roasting tin, skin-side up, and surround it with the potatoes and halved tomatoes, cut-side up.

STEP 2

Scatter the tomatoes with the garlic and a light sprinkling of sugar (this helps to bring out their natural sweetness). Scatter the thyme leaves and sprigs over the tin, season and drizzle with oil. Roast for 45 mins until the chicken and potatoes are cooked through with crisp, golden skin.



Ingredients

- Eight chicken thighs, skin on
- 85g garlic and herb soft cheese
- 500g new potatoes, halved
- Four medium tomatoes, halved
- One garlic clove, crushed
- A large pinch of caster sugar
- Six fresh thyme sprigs leaves stripped from four or a couple of sprinkles of dried thyme
- Olive oil, to drizzle

(Recipe from
BBC Good Food)

at home with...



fifehg.org.uk

Contact us

Freephone: 08000 274 007

**For gas repairs and emergencies please
contact - City Technical:** 0333 202 0708

Text: 07520 632 740 **Email:** info@fifehg.org.uk

Our opening hours are:

Monday to Thursday 8:30am - 5:00pm

Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm

Fife Housing Group

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Pitreavie Business Park
Dunfermline
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