

A vibrant autumn-themed illustration on a dark purple background. The scene is filled with various seasonal elements: large pumpkins in shades of orange and brown, scattered autumn leaves in yellow, orange, and red, several mushrooms with brown caps and white spots, and various food items including a chocolate cupcake with white frosting, a round chocolate cookie, a cinnamon stick, and a small bowl of red berries. In the center, a large, stylized pumpkin is the focal point. Below it, a cup of hot chocolate with marshmallows and a cinnamon stick is visible. The overall composition is dense and festive, with a warm, cozy atmosphere.

# HOMING IN

Fife Housing Group

[fifehg.org.uk](http://fifehg.org.uk)



# Contents

In this issue...

3	Kirkcaldy tenant homes in on a prize!
3	Festive opening hours
4	Join the Home Hub 750 Club and you could win a tablet
5	How to register for the Home Hub
6	Resident Voices Review
6	Annual tenancy visits
7	Garden Competition Winners
8	Who lives in your home?
8	Christmas tree competition time
9	Glen Albyn launch
10	Landlord Report 2022/23
12	The Big IDEA Project
13	Five simple steps to help you stay safe during severe weather
14	Considering complaints
15	Preventing frozen and burst pipes
16	Fire safety this winter
18	How to heat yourself... not your home
20	How to save some cash on Christmas dinner
22	Keep cosy this winter with these top tips
24	NEXTGEN; Community Connectors
25	Protect yourself
26	Christmas crisis contacts
27	Team news
27	Spotlights
27	Fireworks
28	Giving Something Back Grants 2023
30	Recipe
31	Wordsearch



## Kirkcaldy tenant homes in on a prize!

**A while back, we asked for your help to give this magazine and our e-magazine a new name.**

We had lots of entries and, after careful consideration, chose 'Homing In'!

Kirkcaldy tenant, **Jacqueline Young**, came up with this clever name, explaining that 'Homing In' represents a focus on our residents' homes and other important related topics, receiving a £25 gift voucher for her efforts.

Congratulations to Jacqueline and a huge thank you to everyone else who entered!

## Festive Hours 2023/24

Please note that although our office will be closed over the festive period, colleagues will be available and providing services as detailed below:

**Friday 22 December: 8:30am - 4:30pm (office open)**

**Monday 25 December: CLOSED**

**Tuesday 26 December: CLOSED**

**Wednesday 27 December: CLOSED**

**Thursday 28 December: 8:30am - 5:00pm**

**Friday 29 December: 8:30am - 5:00pm**

*(our office will remain closed on both of these days, however, a reduced number of colleagues will be providing services from home)*

**Monday 1 January: CLOSED**

**Tuesday 2 January: CLOSED**

**Wednesday 3 January: CLOSED**

**Thursday 4 January: Normal office opening hours resume**

## 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 Tweedie, on **07970 801007** or via **alex.tweedie@fifehg.org.uk** to request a large print copy or enquire about alternative copy formats.

## Join the Home Hub 750 Club and you could win a tablet

Over 650 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 750th person to register will receive a brand new tablet.

In the Spring edition of our magazine, we held a competition for the 550th person to sign up to the Home Hub. The lucky winner was Robert Murray of Rosyth.

You could be the next lucky winner...simply sign up to our Home Hub to be automatically entered.

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 or by visiting our website.



Robert Murray of Rosyth was the 550th person to sign up to our Home Hub and won himself a tablet. Pictured with his Housing Officer, Stephanie McCulloch (left) and wife Catherine Murray.

## Fife Housing Group Home Hub

Join today for 24/7 access to our services

at home with...  
fife housing group

The Home Hub is an application designed specifically for Fife Housing Group tenants just like you and it is here to make your life easier.

Using the Home Hub gives you 24/7 access to our services, putting you in control - and it only takes a few minutes to register!

To create an account, visit [portal.fifehg.org.uk](http://portal.fifehg.org.uk) or scan the QR code on this page. Then, just click the 'Create account' button and you are ready to sign up - It's as simple as that.

All you need to do is fill in a few details, including your tenancy number, which you can find on any of your statements or in your monthly e-newsletter.

If you are having issues or simply want to ask us a question, please get in touch with our team at **08000 274 007** or via [engagement@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:engagement@fifehg.org.uk)



To access your Home Hub scan the QR code, type [portal.fifehg.org.uk](http://portal.fifehg.org.uk) into your browser or visit our website for the link

### Top 5 reasons to register...

1. Gives you 24/7 access to our services
2. Pay your rent and see your statements in seconds
3. Report repairs easily...even when our office is closed
4. Raise any issues...from estate management to anti-social behaviour
5. You're in control – no more waiting for your call or email to be answered to get things done!



## Resident VOICES Review

Your Resident VOICES group has been delighted to welcome some new members recently, particularly as this helps to widen both their impact and insight.

They have been working on a topic which looks at the satisfaction levels Fife Housing Group tenants have with the quality of their home.

This topic was chosen after the group reviewed Fife Housing Group's most recent Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) as the members felt that it offered the greatest scope for influence and represented an area where valuable recommendations for improvement could be made.

Following several months of research, a report was submitted to the Board of

Management who have asked Director of Housing, Beverley Graham, to work with the group on the next steps for implementing a number of the recommendations made.

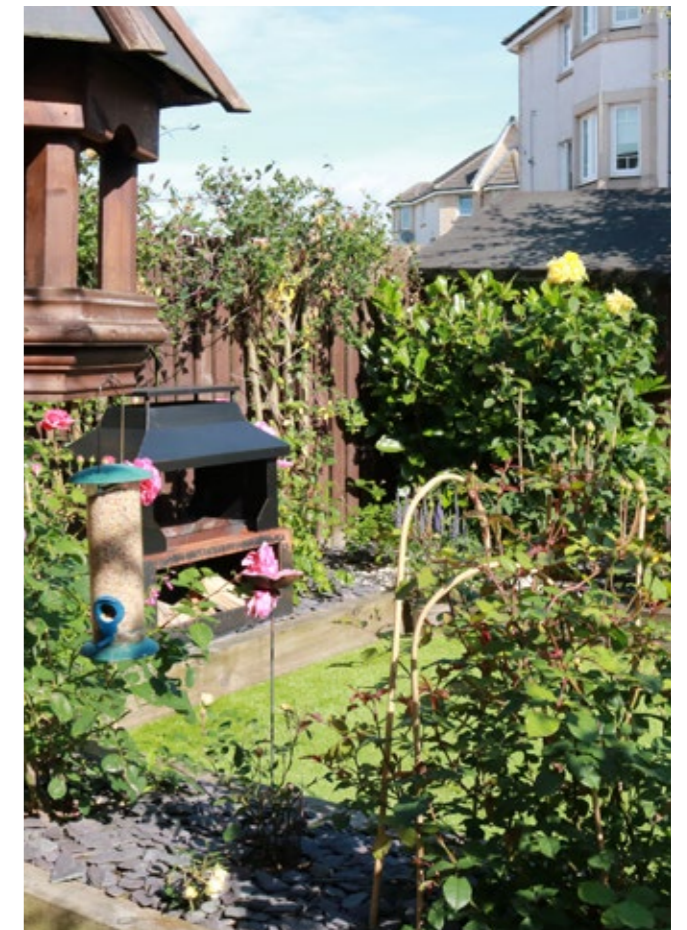
Being part of Resident VOICES is your opportunity to have your say and influence decisions and policies within Fife Housing Group. The group are welcoming and friendly and would be keen to hear from any tenants who might like to join them and help to make a difference too.

Should you be interested in becoming involved with Resident VOICES, please contact Helen Miller on **01383 608127** or alternatively by email at [helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk).

## Garden Competition Winners

Our annual Garden Competition was a huge hit again this year. Once again we were amazed by the talent and dedication of our tenants and the range of stunning outdoor spaces on display.

This year's winners, who all received gift vouchers to spend on their gardens, were **Kirsty and Brian Smith** from Crombie in third place, **Brian Crawford** from Dunfermline in second place and **Joan Gray** from Dunfermline in the coveted top spot.



## Annual tenancy visits

With COVID restrictions well and truly in the past, we have re-introduced annual tenancy visits.

Every year, you will get a visit from your Housing Officer. This is one way we can make sure your home remains safe and is in good condition. It is also a great opportunity for you to raise any concerns you have about your home, neighbourhood or any change in circumstances.

It is important that we keep up-to-date contact details for you and your household, and for your next of kin.

If your Housing Officer is in your neighbourhood, they may knock on your door to say hello – if you're free, they'll ask to come in but you can also arrange another time if it's not convenient.

You do not have to do anything before your Housing Officer arrives.

If you'd like more information about annual visits, please get in touch on **08000 274 007** or contact your Housing Officer directly.



It was a tough competition to judge and we want to thank both the tenants who entered and all of you who take pride in keeping your gardens *beautiful* all year round.

## Who lives in your home?

We send out regular census forms so that you can keep us up-to-date about who is part of your household.

If you have had a change of household that you haven't informed us about, please contact us and keep our records up to date. This is important and affects your rights as a tenant to assign your tenancy or have a joint tenancy. In addition, it is a matter of health and safety and can affect your Housing Points if you are seeking alternative housing.

We also need your next of kin information, in the event something happens to you.

To let us know about a change in circumstances or your next of kin details, please contact our office at **08000 274 007**, email [info@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:info@fifehg.org.uk)



## Christmas tree competition time!

One of our favourite events each year is our annual Christmas tree competition, and we cannot wait to see what you come up with this December!

This is your opportunity to showcase your decorated Christmas tree and perhaps bag yourself a bonus gift before Santa has even started packing up his sleigh!

Last year's entries inspired us all. The amount of creative flair and effort that went into creating these beautifully decorated trees was incredible.

So now it's over to you again and our judges are keen to see what you come up with this year.

To enter, please send your photos to us along with your name, address and contact details. You could just scoop yourself a prize before the big day.

Entrants should send photos of their decorated Christmas trees to [melissa.birrell@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:melissa.birrell@fifehg.org.uk) or by post to our office by no later than 18 December 2023. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch or speak to your Housing Officer.

We look forward to seeing your trees – they certainly get us all into the holiday spirit!



## Glen Albyn launch

In June, we launched our brand-new housing development in **Glen Albyn, Kirkcaldy**.

This new community-focussed development comprises 49 energy-efficient homes – two, three and four-bedroom houses and a number of accessible bungalows.

The new houses feature a host of sustainability measures designed to meet energy and heating gold standards. Each home incorporates photovoltaic solar panels and enhanced wall, floor and roof insulation. Several houses are also being used to trial new, more environmentally friendly, electric battery storage technology.

To promote eco-diversity, bird and bat boxes have been installed on some of the properties. An existing wildflower meadow has been retained, with new

footpaths created to enhance the natural environment. The local playpark has also been upgraded as part of the associated community benefits programme.

To celebrate the completion of the estate, we held a launch event and hosted a visit with the Minister for Housing and would like to thank the tenants who were involved with these events.

At Fife Housing Group, we are committed to developing sustainable communities with affordable housing and we are really proud of Glen Albyn as an example of this. We hope to continue building more forward-thinking communities like this in the future.

# Landlord Report 2022/23

See how our performance last year stacks up...

## Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) Indicators

### Key

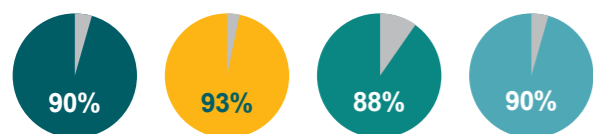
- FHG 2020/22
- FHG 2022/23
- Peer Group
- Scottish Average

### Tenant satisfaction

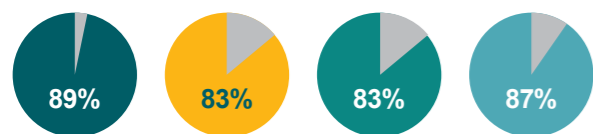
Tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord



Tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions

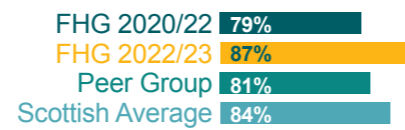


Tenants satisfied with the opportunities to participate in landlord's decision making processes

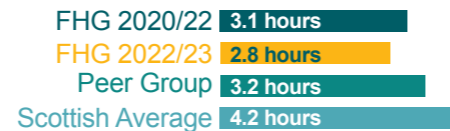


### Quality and maintenance of homes

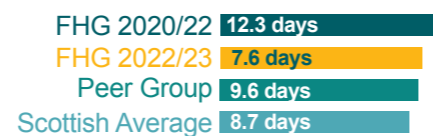
Tenants satisfied with the quality of their home



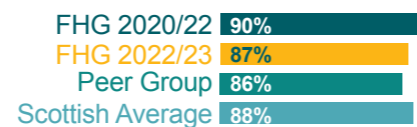
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs



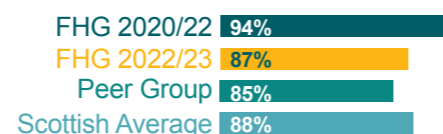
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs



Reactive repairs completed right first time



Tenants who had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months, who are satisfied with the service



### Neighbourhood and community

Complaints received per 100 homes



Complaints – Stage 1

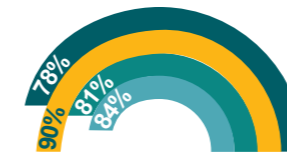


Average time for response (Target = 5 days)

Complaints – Stage 2



Average time for response (Target = 20 days)



Tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in

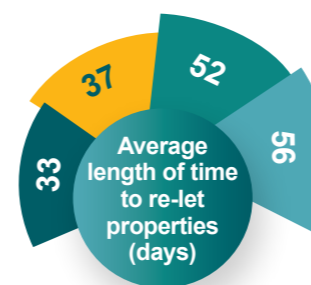


Anti-social behaviour cases which were resolved

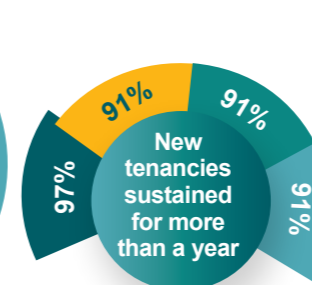


Court actions initiated which resulted in eviction

### Access to housing and support



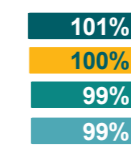
Average length of time to re-let properties (days)



New tenancies sustained for more than a year

### Value for money

Rent collected as percentage of total rent due



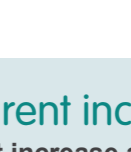
Rent due lost through properties being empty



Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March 2020 as a percentage of rent due

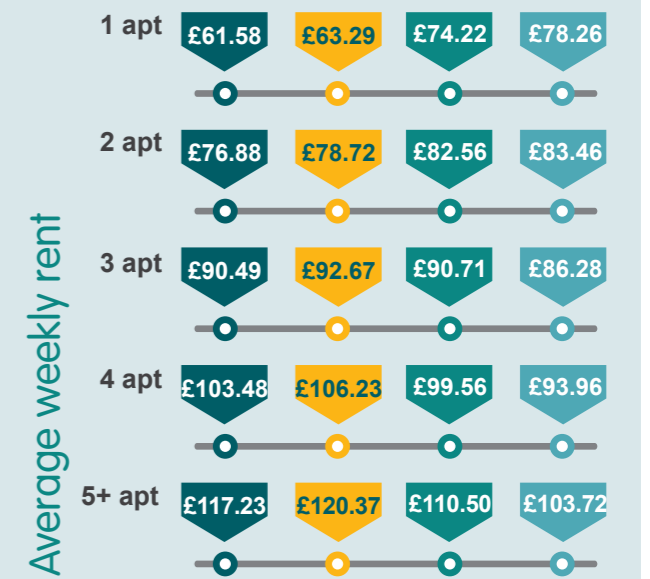


Tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money



### Average rent increase

Average rent increase applied



You can view this information in more detail and compare our performance against other landlords on the Scottish Housing Regulator's website - [housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance](https://housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance)

Our Annual Report is also available to view online, providing a snapshot of some of the steps we took to support tenants, improve service delivery and develop our business during the last financial year...



## The Big IDEA Project - helping you to save money...

We now have two Income Maximisation Officers on hand to help you with your finances – Carolyn McAllister and Gillian McHale.

Their employment is part of The Big IDEA Project, an initiative between ourselves, Cosy Kingdom and two other housing associations, that will help you save money in these key areas:

**Income** - We can check you are claiming everything you are entitled to

**Debt** - Independent support to deal with unaffordable debt

**Energy** - Practical help to reduce your usage and cut your bills

**Advice** - Free and impartial

If you would be interested in this service and wish to speak to one of our Officers, then please contact us at [thebigIDEA@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:thebigIDEA@fifehg.org.uk)



Carolyn McAllister



Gillian McHale

## Five simple steps to help you stay safe during severe weather



With winter officially on the way and snow likely at some point, it's worth taking a few minutes to do a little preparation BEFORE any potential severe weather hits.

As well as creating a household plan for emergencies we suggest taking these five simple steps to help to keep you and your family safe:

**1** Keep a mixture of salt and sand and a shovel handy to put on steps or paths in icy weather

**2** Stock up on your basic cold, flu and sore throat remedies and order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time

**3** Store three days-worth of water and basic food items in the cupboard or freezer in case you cannot get out to go shopping

**4** Ensure you have a battery-operated radio, torch and spare batteries handy in case there's a power cut

**5** Have a list of emergency numbers, such as your utility companies, by your home phone or store them in your mobile

You can find lots more advice about preparing for and dealing with emergencies, such as severe winter weather, on the Ready Scotland website ([readyscotland.org](http://readyscotland.org)).



## Considering complaints

When we receive complaints, our aim is to fully investigate these and offer a fair and reasonable outcome in the quickest possible timeframe. Additionally, we regularly review and analyse any trends identified and take steps to address these.

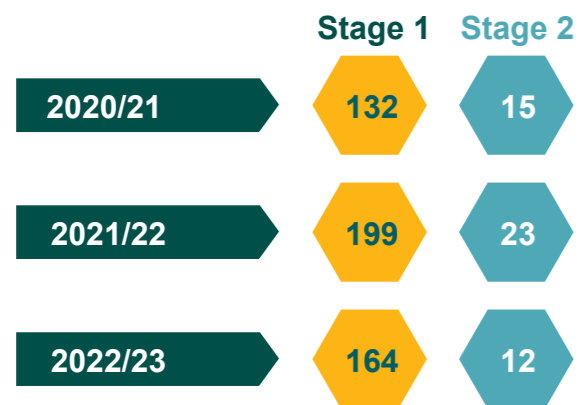
Recently we have recognised an increase in complaints relating to the service being provided by some of our contractors. We would like to reassure those who have experienced problems that we have met with the contractors concerned to discuss the

issues that have been brought to our attention and are taking the necessary steps to ensure that all contractual expectations are being met.

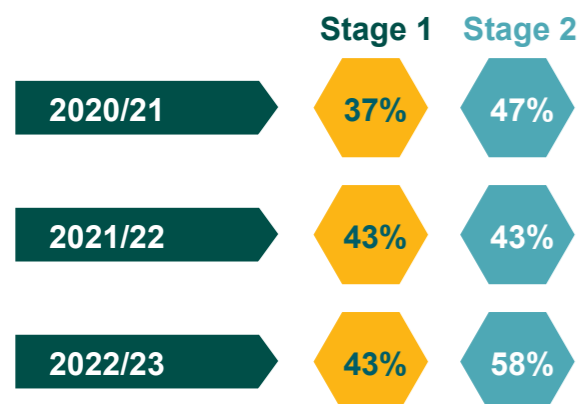
We understand there have been instances where the service may have fallen below your expectations, however, you should notice an improved level of service going forward.

Complaints are a unique opportunity to strengthen our relationship with tenants and we continue to welcome your feedback on how we are performing.

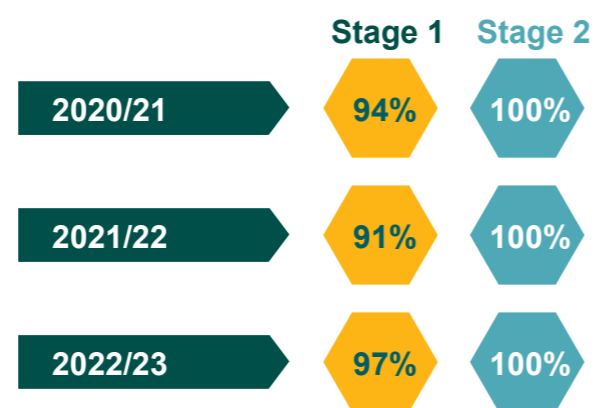
### Total number of complaints closed



### Percentage of complaints upheld/partially upheld



### Percentage of complaints resolved within timescales



## Preventing frozen and burst pipes

Frozen and burst pipes are often an issue during the winter months and could be an even bigger concern this year as we all try to reduce our heating bills and manage our energy costs. However, given the inconvenience and damage they can cause, it is important to take precautions. We have created a video with our top tips for preventing frozen and burst pipes this winter. Advice that could potentially save you a lot of money.

If you are planning a winter break, please let us know and ensure we have an up-to-date number for you in case we need to contact you while you are away.

We would also like to remind you not to flush toilet wipes, toilet paper or sanitary pads down the toilet, even if the packaging states they

are flushable. Several blockages have been reported recently due to these items.

For gas repairs and emergencies, please contact our gas contractor, City Technical, who are available 24/7, on 0333 202 0708. City Technical will contact you if your boiler is due for a service.

To view the video, scan the QR code below:





## Fire safety this winter

House fires and casualties increase during winter, with many incidents happening over the Christmas period.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) want you to join their fight against fire this winter and have compiled some information to help you be prepared.

Here is their advice, as well as some excellent practical tips to keep you and your family safe:

### Smoke alarms

Make sure you have working smoke alarms and fit a heat alarm in your kitchen. Test your alarms weekly.

### Take care when cooking

Especially if you suffer from any illness or disability or are taking prescribed medications that make you more forgetful.

### Look out for older people

Whether it be your grandparent, parent, aunt, uncle, neighbour or friend. You can call the SFRS for more advice on this using the contact information below.

### Alcohol and drugs

Drinking or taking drugs can make you less alert to signs of a fire. You are more likely to fall asleep, less likely to wake up should a fire start (especially if you don't have working alarms) and also likely to be more disorientated, making it difficult for you to escape.

### Smoking

Smoking is the number one cause of death from fire in the home. You are more likely to die in a fire if you have been smoking and drinking. In many fires caused by cigarettes, the person has also been consuming alcohol and has fallen asleep. Never smoke in bed and, if you are tired or have been drinking, do not smoke while on your sofa. Instead, go outside or smoke at an open window or door.

### Cooking

Do not cook if you are tired, have been drinking or have taken drugs. Never leave cooking unattended in any circumstances.

### Portable heaters

Keep these away from furniture, bedding and your curtains. Don't sit too close to them and remember to switch them off before you go to bed.

### Candles

Keep them away from anything that could catch fire and remember to blow them out when you leave the house, go to bed or even when you leave the room!

### Christmas trees

Real trees are pretty but they can be hazardous. It's vital that you keep the tree stand filled with water to minimise the risk.

### Fairy lights

Turn off your Christmas tree lights when you go to bed or when you leave the house.

### Keep in touch

With friends, neighbours and loved ones who you think may be at risk. A phone call or visit can make a difference.

#### For more information visit

Website: [firescotland.gov.uk](http://firescotland.gov.uk)

Social media: @SFRSYourSafety

#### For advice or to book a free home fire safety visit you can

Call: 0800 0731 999

Text: 'FIRE' to 80800

#### If you are worried about an older person and fire safety you can contact the SFRS or Age Scotland

Age Scotland: 0800 12 44 222

Website: [ageuk.org.uk/scotland](http://ageuk.org.uk/scotland)



# How to heat yourself... not your home

**Despite the government's price cap, this year, a lot of us will be drastically cutting down on our energy usage to save money, but, we still need to keep warm, for both our physical and mental health.**

We would always recommend using your heating system when you can and it is important to have it on at points throughout the day to keep things in good condition (for example, to avoid dampness or frozen or burst pipes which have huge cost implications).

**\*IMPORTANT\*** For those who are older, have asthma or other medical conditions, please ask your GP about how you should keep warm this winter.

For the rest of us, the team at Money Saving Expert have come up with some options if you want to limit your usage.

We agree that it is shocking and upsetting that we even have to consider options like these, however, we understand that people can't afford to turn on their heating as often and so these options will help to keep you healthy and warm even when the heating is off.

## 1. Hot water bottle or USB gloves?

Money Saving Expert have created a list of options (and their costs) so that you can choose what is best for you. We advise you to do your own research on these items.

These methods include using things like heated insoles, wheat bags, electric blankets and even an electric gilet. The list includes the initial cost of purchase as well as what it costs to run each item.

For the full list visit this link -

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/heat-the-human-not-the-home-save-energy/>

## 2. Layer your clothes to keep the heat in

A great trick for staying warm indoors is to follow the advice given to those spending time outside in cold, wintery conditions. This advice is to layer up.

You may find that you can do this with clothes you already have, but it is worth investing in some typically 'outdoor' clothing to keep as warm as you can. And you don't have to spend a lot of money to do this.

Stores such as Decathlon, Sports Direct and Mountain Warehouse offer some of the cheapest outdoor clothing for you to layer up and not break the bank.

**Ideally, you want three layers:**

**A base layer** – it should fit well, lock in heat and wick away sweat. Avoid cotton as this traps moisture and will cool you down.

**Cost - £4 - £8.50**

Men's and women's thermal long-sleeve tops cost around £6 at Decathlon and Sports Direct. Thermal leggings at the same shops cost between £4 and £8.50.

**A mid-layer** – a lightweight fleece is a good option for this.

**Cost - £5 - £8**

Again, Decathlon and Sports Direct have cheap versions of these for men, women and children.

**An outer layer** – a second jumper, fleece or even a padded jacket are the best options for this layer.

**Cost - £11 - £20**

Both Mountain Warehouse and Sports Direct have the best value options for padded jackets. Don't forget to check out their sale options too.

## 3. Eat throughout the day and have a hot meal

The NHS recommend drinking hot drinks and eating throughout the day to keep warm. At least one of your meals should be a hot one. Cheap options include soup (store-bought or batch-cooking your own to save money) or good old porridge (you can get 1kg of oats in Tesco for under £1).

If you are struggling to afford food please speak to your Housing Officer or visit one of the many local foodbanks or community pantries throughout Fife that offer free food parcels.

## 4. Use slippers and rugs to keep your feet warm

If your feet are cold, it's more difficult to warm up the rest of your body. Layer socks and make sure you have slippers with hard soles to keep the heat in. Supermarkets like ASDA have great options for affordable slippers.

Having a small rug in areas where you regularly stand is another great way to keep warm. At the side of your bed or in the kitchen are good places as well as a bathmat in the bathroom. Shops like B&M and other bargain stores have small rugs for under a tenner.

## 5. Buy the right socks

Layer up your own socks or invest in a pair of thermal or ski socks which will do an even greater job of keeping your feet cosy. If you can afford to invest in a pair of these it's worth it. Sports Direct and Decathlon sell them for around £4.

## 6. Try the hot water bottle in a sleeping bag trick

Many people have reported this as their favourite way to keep warm. So consider getting your sleeping bags down from the attic and give this a go.

## 7. Warm up by moving around

A walk at lunchtime will get the blood pumping and warm you up. Avoid strenuous exercise that will make you sweat as this will quickly cool down your body.



# How to save some cash on Christmas dinner

**With the drastic increase in the cost of living this year, we are all even more anxious about the Christmas season. Besides buying gifts for all of your loved ones, the cost of food and refreshments tends to make a big dent in all of our bank accounts.**

**With the help of Beehive Money and BBC Good Food, we have put together our top ten tips that will hopefully help you cut the cost of your Christmas grub.**

**1. Don't look up** – In the supermarket we mean! Supermarkets at Christmas time use a variety of cheeky tactics to get us to buy more, and it's often things we don't need that end up getting wasted or sitting in cupboards for months. A simple trick is to look down to the bottom shelf. More expensive items are usually placed at eye level and often a better-value pack of either the same or a similar brand sits lower down.

**2. Homemade is where the heart is** – Making things from scratch is more time-consuming but it can save you money. Consider making your own versions of Christmas classics by using own brand and freezer ingredients, such as Yorkshire pudding or roast potatoes.

**3. Ignore the fancy packaging** - We tend to go all out at Christmas and buy the 'best' of everything to treat our loved ones. However just because the packaging looks fancy doesn't mean the food inside is the best. Marketing experts want us to believe it is, however, if you check the list of ingredients for yourself you will see they usually aren't that different. Make some swaps and see if your family can tell the difference.

**4. Look out for yellow stickers and special offers** – Head to the shops near closing time and grab those yellow sticker items. Keep an eye out for special offers too, lots are going on across the season. You may need to visit more than one supermarket but you can save some serious pennies.

**5. The freezer is your friend** – In the weeks before Christmas start to buy yellow sticker items and freeze them. This is a good way to spread the cost and you will be smug that you are prepared well in advance! Cheese freezes well, as do pastries (and these can be found for a fraction of the price near closing time). A lot of food in the freezer section tends to be cheaper too. Frozen party food, like mini quiches and spring rolls, are perfect for Boxing Day buffets and don't forget the frozen prawns and veg!

**6. Plan ahead** – Remember, Christmas is only one day. Buy only what you can afford and what you can reasonably eat, to avoid waste, and plan what you will do with those leftovers (turkey curry anyone?) Make a meal plan for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day to avoid overspending.

**7. Make a list and check it twice** – It sounds obvious and links to the previous point, but, we recommend setting a budget, then making a list of items and going through it again to make sure you are not buying anything you don't really need. Then be strong and stick to your list.

**8. Shop online** – The best way to stick to your list is to not step inside a supermarket! Instead, do all of your Christmas food shopping online. It's a lot easier to ignore all of those pricey extras.

**9. Don't shop on an empty stomach** – A classic tip that applies all year round. Do not shop when you are hungry, it can affect what you buy and will make sticking to your list more challenging. Go after dinner to avoid tempting treats and to catch those yellow sticker bargains.

**10. Buy what you love best** – Can't stand cranberry sauce, Brussel sprouts or Christmas cake? Then don't buy them! A lot of people buy all of the festive foods... even if they don't particularly like them. Most of us are guilty of buying food items just because it's Christmas or to please our guests and we end up with a lot of food waste. Spend your money on what you do like, you won't be sorry.



## Keep cosy this winter with these top tips

Everyone would like their home to be warm and cosy this winter, particularly as many of us will find ourselves staying in a lot more than usual, but, increasingly expensive energy bills can make this difficult. There are, however, steps you can take to help reduce these costs and our partners at free and impartial energy and debt advice service **Cosy Kingdom**, have kindly shared their top ten tips to help you stay warm and save money this winter.

### Use your heating controls

Using your heating controls effectively can help you warm your house efficiently and save you money this winter. Turning your thermostat down by just one degree can save up to £85 a year and using all of your heating controls, can cut your fuel use by up to 42%, ensuring you're getting the benefit of your heating when you need it most.

### Consider thermal curtains



### Do some draught-proofing

Draughts account for around 10% of heat loss in our homes. Consider using draught-excluders at your doors, you don't even need to buy one, you can easily make one out of old clothes, find out how on the Cosy Kingdom website - [cosykingdom.org.uk](http://cosykingdom.org.uk)

### Switch your furniture around

Moving furniture out of the way of radiators is an easy way to help your home heat more efficiently as it lets the warm air circulate.

### Shut doors between rooms



### Opt for a slow cooker

A slow cooker is an energy-efficient alternative for cooking a meal, costing an average of 10p per day, as opposed to around 40p for an oven.

### Wrap up warmly

A slow cooker is an energy-efficient alternative for cooking a meal, costing an average of 10p per day, as opposed to around 40p for an oven.

### Look at your lighting

Lighting accounts for around 18% of the average electricity bill. If you haven't already, get some low-energy lighting (LEDs) which use 90% less energy and can last up to 25 years! Remember to switch lights off after you leave a room as well.



## Apply for the Warm Home Discount

If you haven't done so already, check if your supplier offers the Warm Home Discount. This is a grant for £150 towards your electricity bill if you're on qualifying benefits or struggling with your heating costs.

## Book a home visit with Cosy Kingdom

Anyone in Fife can book a free and impartial home visit with a Cosy Kingdom energy advisor by visiting their website ([cosykingdom.org.uk](http://cosykingdom.org.uk)), calling **01592 807930**, emailing [info@cosykingdom.org.uk](mailto:info@cosykingdom.org.uk) or texting 'COSY' then 'YOUR NAME' to **88440**. You can also find them on Facebook and Twitter - @CosyKingdom.



# Is there someone in your household aged 16-25?

## Why not tell them about NEXTGEN: Community Connectors?

A youth forum offering young Fifers the opportunity to plan a series of events in order to make a difference, meet new people and gain some valuable work experience.

# NEXTGEN: COMMUNITY CONNECTORS



**Could you be one of the next generation of Community Connectors?**  
If you're aged 16-25 and want to make a difference by having your voice heard then get in touch!

### What's it all about?

We're looking for a group of people like you to plan an exciting event, or series of events, that will benefit other young people in Fife. This is your chance to have a real impact and be a driving force behind something amazing for your community.

### What's involved?

We value your perspective and your ideas will take centre stage as you gain valuable experience planning, organising and delivering events, with us on hand to support you throughout the process.

### What next?

If you'd like to find out a bit more you can call or message Helen Miller on 07970 833359 or email [engagement@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:engagement@fifehg.org.uk)

**GET CONNECTED**  
**SHARE IDEAS**  
**SHAPE THE FUTURE**



# Protect yourself

Here are our top 10 personal safety hints and tips to keep you safe...

1.

When approaching your car, always have your keys in your hand

2.

Check your back seats and ensure your vehicle is empty before getting in. Ensure you lock your car doors once you are inside have your keys in your hand

3.

Don't walk with headphones in to allow you to be fully aware of your surroundings

4.

Look through a spy hole/window to see who is at your door before answering. If you don't know the caller, don't give away any personal information about yourself

5.

Don't leave keys where they can be seen from outside your home

6.

Before going out, consider how you will get home and be aware of public transport times. Ensure someone trusted knows where you will be going

7.

Look ahead when walking alone and look at people and surroundings to avoid any surprises

8.

Try to stay in well-lit crowded areas when out walking alone

9.

Ensure your phone is charged when out so that you can make contact with someone if necessary

10.

Be careful when taking money out of an ATM. Don't count the money in public



# Christmas crisis contacts

**Lots of people find the holiday period difficult so we have pulled together a list of contact numbers that you may find useful to ensure you have the support you need over the festive break:**

## HELP AND SUPPORT

Emergency - 999

Police - 101

Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111

Fife Council Public Protection Team (Nuisances, Noise, Light, Smell, Smoke, Dust, Barking Dogs, etc.) - 03451 55 55 50

## HOUSING ISSUES

Homeless emergencies (after 6pm and weekends) - 0800 028 6231

Housing information/advice - 03451 55 00 33

Frontline Fife (homelessness service) - 01592 800430

Fife Council - 03451 55 00 00

Scottish Gas Networks (gas leak) - 0800 111 999

Power cuts and safety helpline - 105

## DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE - In an emergency call 999

Fife Women's Aid - 0808 802 5555

Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline - 0800 027 1234

Abused Men in Scotland - 0808 800 0024

FearFree (Men, LGBT+ and BME communities) - 0131 624 7270

Revenge Porn Helpline – 0845 6000 459

National Stalking Helpline - 0808 802 0300

Rape Crisis Scotland - 08088 01 03 02 or text 07537 410 027

Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre - 01592 642336

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

NHS 24 - 111

NHS Inform - 0800 22 44 88

Samaritans - 116 123

Support in Mind - 01592 268 388

Sexual Health Fife - 01592 64 79 79

Touched by Suicide - 01294 274 273

Survivors of bereavement by suicide - 0300 111 5065

Adult Protection - 01383 602200

Social Work - 03451 55 15 03 (Out of hours emergencies - 03451 55 00 99)

Fife Gingerbread (supports lone parents) – 01592 725 210

## MONEY

Scottish Welfare Fund (Crisis and community care grants) - 0300 555 0265

Citizens Advice and Rights Fife - 0345 1400 095

Tax Credit Helpline - 0345 300 3900

Money Advice Scotland - 0141 572 0237

Universal Credit Line - 0800 328 5644



# Team news

## New starts

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

Peter McCormick – Joiner

Carolyn McAllister – Income Maximisation Officer

Maciej Jakubowski - Operations Advisor

Amber Lee - Operations Advisor

Chris Anderson – Joiner

## Farewells

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

Chris Currie - Skilled Labourer

Garry Davies - Electrician

Mairi Stewart – Ops Advisor

Sam Hendry - Joiner

Michael Henderson – Skilled Labourer

## New Roles

Congratulations to **Craig Brown** in his new role as Maintenance Officer, **Gillian McHale**, who is now a part-time Income Maximisation Officer alongside her usual role as Operations Advisor and finally, **Gail Dick**, who has moved to the role of Operations Officer.

# Spotlights

If you are planning to install, or already have installed spotlights in your home, you must fill out an alterations form.

Along with the alterations form, we also require a Minor Works Electrical Certificate to be completed and the lights need to be fire-rated.

There have been some instances recently where spotlights have not been wired correctly and this is a fire hazard.

Please get in touch with our Operations Team to find out more - **08000 274 007**.

# Fireworks

Firework season is upon us. We would always suggest you attend an organised display. However, if you cannot attend one of these events and plan to purchase fireworks, please be aware of the following:

- **It is a crime to let them off before 6pm and after 11pm**
- **The Fire and Rescue Service would ask you to consider the impact of fireworks on people and animals. It is often children rather than adults who are injured by fireworks**
- **The noise and lights that fireworks emit can also be overwhelming for people with a sensory impairment and those with neurological differences such as autism**
- **Animals can also find fireworks particularly distressing**

Therefore, we urge you to be a good neighbour, be responsible, be safe – and enjoy the season!

# Giving Something Back Grants 2023 - Pitches, prizes, pizza and the Provost

**Our Giving Something Back Grants returned this year with another fun-filled community event to celebrate the recipients of £20k+ worth of funds.**

The grants are in their third year now and were set up to recognise and support some of the incredible organisations making a difference across Fife and are made possible by the generosity of contractors who join our charitable framework, donating 2% of their invoiced costs to benefit good causes.

Successful Giving Something Back Grant applicants were invited to the 'Pitches, Prizes and Pizza' event, to 'pitch' their project to local residents and a panel of judges who determined the amount of funding they would receive.

Amongst the guests were Sandra Stock, Chair of Fife Housing Group's Board, Cllr. Cara Hilton, Scottish Labour and Co-operative Cllr for Dunfermline South, and Provost of Fife, Cllr. Jim Leishman MBE.

Following the pitches, we were delighted to be able to award nine community organisations with funding. The well-deserved recipients were:

**Raith Rovers Community Foundation**  
£4,020

**Cariad Pet Therapy**  
£1,600

**Seescape (Fife Society for the Blind)**  
£1,500

**Kennoway Star Hearts girls football team**  
£1,500

**BreatheEasy Fife**  
£1,500

**Aberlour Children's Charity**  
£5,000

**Beanstalk Family Nurture Centre**  
£2,000

**The Kings Theatre Kirkcaldy**  
£2,000

**West Fife Woodlands Group**  
£1,500

*'It was a fantastic event and a real honour to hear from some of the local charities and organisations making a difference to the people of Fife. From people living with lung conditions and blindness to school children being taught coding to break down the barriers to higher education, there is such a range of impressive projects happening all across the region.'* - Provost of Fife, Jim Leishman

Other highlights of the evening included delicious pizzas and bagpipe music provided by Piping Hot Pizza, outdoor games for the kids and a game of bingo. The event was held at the Fire Station Creative in Dunfermline.

*'This was a fantastic event and the pitches were a brilliant way to hear from these groups in person, providing a fun and informative opportunity for them to showcase the inspiring work that they do in our communities. This format complimented the ethos of our Giving Something Back Grants and we look forward to building on their success again next year.'* – Sandra Stock, Chair

The next round of Giving Something Back Grants is expected to launch in Spring 2024, so if you are involved in a group that could do even more with a bit of extra investment, please look out for their launch. More information will be available on our website and social media channels closer to the time.

Our Giving Something Back Grants are made possible thanks to the generosity of the contractors we work with including; Rogerson Plumbing and Heating, Eurojet (Scotland), Shine Cleaning Services, Mitie Group, City Technical, Kingdom Maintenance Services and Ritchie Builders.



# Cosy comfort food

## Sausage and mash pie

A purse-friendly recipe that takes bangers and mash to the next level. On the table and ready to eat in less than an hour, it's perfect for any night of the week and the kids will love it too.

### Method

Put the potatoes in a medium pan and cover with water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes or until tender. Drain, then return to the saucepan and leave to dry out a little before mashing.

Meanwhile, heat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6. In a large frying pan, heat a spoonful of oil, then fry the onions for 6-8 minutes. Add the sausages and fry over a medium-high heat for 5-8 minutes until browned.

Add the gravy to the pan, simmer for 3-4 minutes, season, and then pour into the baking dish. Top with the mashed potato and sprinkle with cheese, if using.

Bake for 25-30 minutes until the top is golden and crisp and the filling is hot. Serve with steamed green vegetables.

### Top tip

For a creamier topping, mash the potatoes with a knob of butter and a generous splash of milk.



### Ingredients

- 3-4 large potatoes (about 700g), peeled and chopped into chunks
- 3 red onions, thickly sliced
- 8 sausages, cut into thirds
- 250ml ready-made thick gravy
- 15g grated cheddar (optional)

### From the cupboard

- Olive oil for frying

### To serve

- Any veggies (broccoli, carrots, Brussels sprouts etc.)

### You'll also need...

- A medium to large sized baking dish

(Credit: Delicious magazine).



### 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

7 Pitreavie Court  
 Pitreavie Business Park  
 Dunfermline  
 KY11 8UU

## WORDSEARCH

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Enter our AUTUMN/WINTER competition and you could WIN a **£25 gift voucher**.

To enter: Complete the wordsearch, cut along the dotted line and send your entry to the address below by **30 November 2023**

- |               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| SNOW          | PUMPKIN   |
| LEAVES        | AUTUMN    |
| ACORNS        | FROSTY    |
| GLOVES        | SCARF     |
| ICE           | HALLOWEEN |
| COSY          |           |
| HOT CHOCOLATE |           |
| HAT           |           |
| PUMPKIN SPICE |           |
| CHRISTMAS     |           |

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TEL: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to Fife Housing Group, 7 Pitreavie Court, Pitreavie Business Park, Dunfermline, KY11 8UU.





