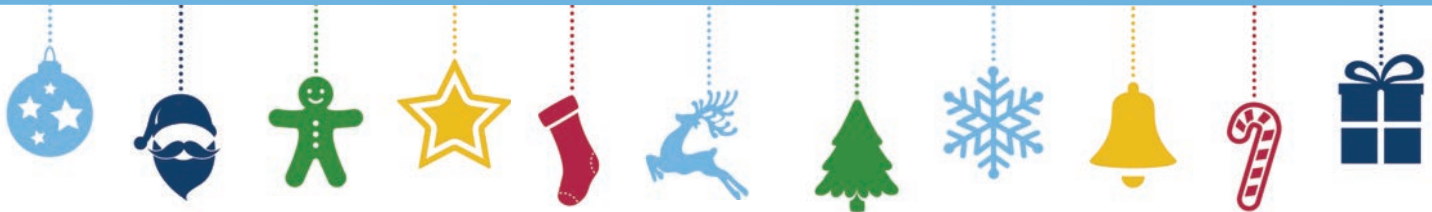


Christmas 2020



Rutherglen & Cambuslang Housing Association

Newsletter



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

The Staff and Committee of Rutherglen and Cambuslang Housing Association would like to wish our tenants and customers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in 2021.

Service over the festive period

The Association offices will be closed over Christmas and New Year from Thursday 24th December (from 1.00pm) until Wednesday 6th January 2021. During these times if you have an emergency repair please call the Freephone number listed below.

The Association would again like to ask that residents please take the time to look out for elderly or disabled neighbours living nearby who you may be concerned about to ensure they remain safe and well during the winter months particularly during periods of colder weather or periods of lockdown.



Emergency Repairs

Fire, Flood, Break In, Gas Escape & Power Failure

Telephone: Freephone **08001693379** or **0141 647 4917**



Stay Safe this Christmas

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS

Be safe this Christmas and make sure that you get your tree lights checked out by a suitably qualified electrician. Most Christmas tree lights are packed and unpacked once a year and it is easy for people to think that because they are only use for a couple of weeks once a year that they must be safe. This is probably true but we recommend that you check first so as to ensure the safety of your home and family.



SMOKE ALARMS

Tenants should be checking their smoke alarms periodically by pressing the test button. If your alarm does not sound contact the association immediately. Please ensure you have a battery in your smoke alarm at all times.

FROST ALERT

This time of year has fallen upon us once again – and once again it is time for the Association to remind all tenants about the problems that the freezing temperatures of this country can bring. Frozen water supplies or burst pipes are all too common at this time of year but tenants following a few simple steps can avoid all of these Christmas disasters.

- * **Keep your house warm day and night**
- * **Locate the stop valve in your house now, don't leave it too late (the Association will be happy to help if you require it)**
- * **If you go away in the winter turn off the main stop valve and drain the system. (again contact the Association if you need any help)**

If You Get a Burst Pipe

- * **Turn the water off at the stopcock**
- * **Switch off electricity at the fuse box**
- * **Switch off any water heaters**
- * **Switch off central heating**
- * **Open all taps to drain down your system**
- * **Collect water in your bath for washing and w.c flushing**
- * **Warn neighbours who may suffer damage. Contact the Housing Association for further assistance**

Message from the Associations new Director – Elaine Lister

Following the retiral of Dave Anderson last month, I am delighted to have started in my new post as the Association's new Director

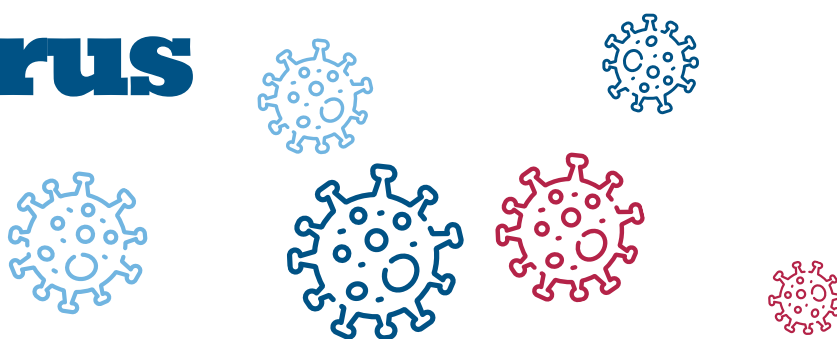
I started my housing career over 30 years ago, working with Scottish Homes in Castlemilk where I worked with our very own Geraldine Baird. Having learned from the best, I moved on to work in community-controlled housing associations in North Lanarkshire and Glasgow. When deciding to apply for the post at Rutherglen and Cambuslang, one of the biggest deciding factors for me was the reputation the Association had for putting its customers first and for seeing itself very much as a service provider. Having spoken to staff and members of the Committee it is very clear that there is a genuine desire to provide the best possible

standard of service to tenants, owners and applicants and to make a positive impact in the communities served by the Association. This commitment to tenants and communities was what I joined housing for all those years ago and it is a true pleasure to be joining an organisation who still adheres to these principles.

I realise that Dave left big shoes to fill and an amazing legacy to protect and I am looking forward to working with everyone involved with the Association, including staff, Committee, tenants and partners to continue building on the fantastic work already achieved.

I would like to wish Dave a long, healthy and happy retirement and to thank the Committee for giving me this opportunity to join the Association and become one of the team.

Coronavirus Service Update



The Association has been continuing to keep a close eye on advice from the Scottish Government on the services that we can provide to tenants and factored owners during the Covid-19 pandemic. As you know our office has been closed since the initial lockdown in March and staff have been working from home. We are regarded as a non-essential business, unfortunately our office will remain closed for the immediate future and we will continue to work from home until Government guidelines change.

Access to Services

Tenants and owners can still contact the Association by telephone, our telephone service will be available from Monday to Friday between the hours of 9.00 am and 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm and 4.00 pm. Those of you who have tried to phone us will know that the system can be a bit temperamental but if you don't get through first time please try again. We will always call you back.

You can still contact us by e-mail, the appropriate e-mail addresses are as follows:

Maintenance, repairs etc:	maintenance@randcha.co.uk
Tenancy and rent queries:	housing@randcha.co.uk
Factoring enquiries:	factoring@randcha.co.uk
General enquiries:	info@randcha.co.uk

Payment of Rent

Tenants should continue to pay rent and abide by all other terms of their tenancy agreement to the best of their ability. The government has a strong package of financial support available to tenants, and where you can pay the rent as normal, you should do. Tenants who are unable to do so should speak to the Association at the earliest opportunity to avoid future complications with your tenancy.

All the existing options for paying rent will still be available. For

tenants that use the post office, if this is closed or you cannot get out, you can call the office and make a secure payment over the phone. Tenants can also register on the Associations website and make a payment. If you are having any difficulties paying your rent please contact the office.

If you lose your job as a result of Coronavirus or you are having financial difficulties you can claim Universal Credit from the Department for Work and Pensions which includes support for



housing costs, if eligible. The Government has introduced some temporary changes to make this easier. We would also urge you to apply for Statutory Sick Pay where you are eligible. Further information can be found at:

www.gov.uk/coronavirus

General Services

Some of these, such as close cleaning and open space maintenance were initially suspended but we are glad to say that these are all up and running again and we will endeavour to keep these going whilst following Government advice.

The Association realise that the current pandemic will have had an effect on everyone and we would like to thank you for being patient with us while we try to provide as full a service as possible in the circumstances.

Repairs

Government advice states that our work to maintain tenants/owners safety is essential and therefore our contractors are continuing to provide an emergency and urgent repairs service and this includes gas servicing.



**Please contact us on
0141 647 4917
if you have an emergency
repair in your home.
Emergency/urgent repairs
include:**

- **Fire**
- **Break In – lack of security**
- **Flood**
- **Power Failure**
- **No Heating/hot water**

When you contact us about your emergency repair we will ask you some questions about your current situation and whether you are self-isolating so that we can understand how best to protect you and your family, as well as the member of staff that attends your home. The questions may include:

- **Have you had contact with anyone who may be infected with the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?**
- **Do you have any of these symptoms – cough, fever or shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell?**

Please be patient with us while we ask these questions. These are required to protect the health and wellbeing of you, our staff and our contractors, which is essential in allowing us to maintain services. If it is deemed essential that a member of staff does attend your home, they will:

- **Ask some further questions at the front door before entering the property**
- **Distance themselves by at least two metres from anyone in the property**
- **Avoid touching surfaces where possible**
- **Wear protective gloves and other additional protection equipment where necessary**
- **Ask you if they can wash their hands before and after the visit, if you are happy for them to do so**

All tradespeople will show you identification when they visit your home. By following these steps, we want to reassure you that there is a low risk of infection from a home visit by a contractor.

If you have a repair issue to report but it is not in the list above, then we are asking you to continue to report these issues so they can be logged. We will monitor government advice closely and seek to resume normal service as quickly as possible.

OUR REPORT CARD

Every year the Association submits data on its performance to the Scottish Housing Regulator who uses the information to assess how it is performing in key service areas when compared against other social housing providers in Scotland.

This year's report shows that the Association is performing well against the national averages. It also shows that although the Association has improved its performance in some key areas, there are other areas where performance has slipped slightly. The reasons and the actions needed to address this will be a focus for the Association during the coming year.

STATISTICS AS AT 31/3/20

Properties owned	855
Total rent due for the year	£3,637,448
Rent increase for 2020/2021	3.1%

RENTS & INCOME

Average Weekly Rents

	R and C HA	Scottish Average	
1apt	43.71	73.47	Our average rents for smaller sized properties remain well below the national average. Rents for our larger properties are still above the average and the Association is looking at ways to bringing all our rents more in line across the stock.
2apt	62.15	78.02	
3apt	80.92	80.10	
4apt	95.24	87.08	
5apt	119.41	96.18	

Rent Collected

This shows how much rent that was collected as percentage of the total due in the year including outstanding arrears.

R and C HA		Scottish Average	The Association improved its performance over the year and collected more than the Scottish average.
2018/2019	2019/2020		
98.1%	100.9%	99.3%	

Void Loss

This is the percentage of the annual rental income that was not collected due to properties being empty.

R and C HA		Scottish Average	Although the amount of rent lost is slightly higher than last year, it remains well below the Scottish average
2018/2019	2019/2020		
0.1%	0.3%	1.2%	

Re-Let Times

The average time between a property becoming empty and being allocated to a new tenant.

R and C HA		Scottish Average	The re-let period has increased significantly this year for a number of reasons, the main one being the excessive time taken by utility companies to change or reset meters. Staff are working hard to improve communications with utility providers and to improving our performance.
2018/2019	2019/2020		
9.03 days	22.0 days	31.8 days	

MANAGING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

This shows the percentage of reported cases of anti-social behaviour that the Association resolved within its target of 10 working days.

R and C HA	Scottish Average	Although we perform better than the Scottish average, we are committed to dealing with all cases of anti-social behaviour as quickly as possible and therefore continue to place responding to, and resolving, cases of anti-social behaviour as a priority.
97.1%	94.1%	

QUALITY & MAINTENANCE OF OUR HOMES

Scottish Housing Quality Standard

These are the minimum standards the social landlords in Scotland must achieve for their properties.

R and C HA		Scottish Average	Not all of the Association's properties can be brought up to SHQS and are therefore exempt. When the exemptions are taken into account, all of the remaining properties are now compliant with the required standards.
2018/2019	2019/2020		
92.3%	92.6%	94.4%	

Repair Response Times

Shows how long, on average, the Association took to respond to reported repairs.

	R and C HA		Scottish Average	Response times have improved over the year and we remain well below the Scottish average.
	2018/2019	2019/2020		
Emergency Repairs	2.2 hours	2.0 hours	3.6 hours	
Non-Emergency Repairs	3.9 hours	3.4 hours	6.4 hours	

Reactive Repairs Completed 'Right First Time'

R and C HA		Scottish Average
2018/2019	2019/2020	
91.2%	92.4%	92.4%

Although it is not always possible to complete a repair at the first visit due to parts needing ordered etc we have improved our performance this year.

TENANT SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

	R and C HA	Scottish Average
Satisfied with overall service provided	94.2%	89.2%
Feel the Association is good at keeping them informed about its services	98.5%	92.0%
Satisfied with the opportunities to participate in the Association's decisions making	95.7%	87.2%
Satisfied with the repairs service	93.6%	91.3%

Last year the Association carried out a comprehensive satisfaction survey of it's tenants. The results show that not only do we achieve higher levels of satisfaction than the national average across the board, we have also improved on all but one measure since the last survey was carried out.

Want to Know More?

If you want to know more about how the Association is performing, there is more information on the results of the Satisfaction Survey on the Association's website.

The full Annual Return on the Charter is also available on the Scottish Housing Regulator's website at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk where you can also compare our performance against that of other landlords.

Of course, if you have any specific questions, you can always contact the office. Although we are currently

closed and working from home, a member of staff will get back to you.

What do you Think?

Is the information presented in a way that is clear and understandable? Have we given you the information you want or need? Do you like the layout of the information?

If you have any suggestions on how we can improve the information on our performance, please contact the office or email in your comments to housing@randcha.co.uk.

The common stair is your only means of escape in the event of a fire.



Have you ever thought what you would do if fire were to break out in your stair? It may not necessarily be in your flat! A fire started in a common stair could kill you and your family. Even a small bag of rubbish can create enough smoke to fill a whole stair. Items left in a common stair are often deliberately set on fire.

Keep it clear

- Get rubbish, old furniture, etc out of the building
- Make sure storage areas are kept locked
- For advice on uplifting items contact your local Council

If fire does start

- Keep doors closed to prevent smoke filling your house
- Dial 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service, giving as much information as you can

For free home fire safety advice
CALL 0800 0731 999
 or visit our website at
www.firescotland.gov.uk



SCOTTISH
 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
 Working together for a safer Scotland

ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT

As part of its review of its regulatory framework, the Scottish housing regulator introduced a requirement for all social landlords to submit an Annual Assurance Statement.

This is statement of the level of assurance the Committee have that the Association is compliant with Regulatory standards and requirements.

The Association submitted its first statement last year which stated that Committee was "assured that RCHA is compliant with the Regulatory Standards and Regulatory Framework requirements, with the following exceptions:

- » Involving tenants in the preparation and scrutiny of performance information.
- » Agreeing on our approach with tenants on providing performance information.
- » Opportunities for feedback from tenants on our approach.
- » **The lack of a new committee member induction policy and procedure"**

To address these areas of non-compliance, the Association also submitted an action plan that it aimed to have completed by February 2020.

We are extremely pleased to report that all these actions were successfully achieved within the timescale and as a result this year's statement noted that the Committee was "**assured that RCHA is compliant with the Regulatory Standards and Regulatory Framework requirements"**

Annual Rent Review

The Association will soon be looking at its budget for the forthcoming year and part of this process involves looking at what income we require to manage and maintain our properties. Rents are the only source of our income and each year we set a budget based on our projected expenditure to ensure that we can manage our properties effectively. We must ensure that we are generating enough income to meet this budget.

As tenants you will be aware we are a Registered Social Landlord and a non-profit making organisation. Any surpluses that are made each year are set aside to re-invest in our properties to ensure that they continue to meet modern standards and will provide good quality housing for years to come.

The Management Committee of the Association continue to be very conscious of the pressure on household budgets as a result of current economic uncertainty and other costs of inflation etc. We always try to keep any increase on our rents to an absolute minimum and over the last few years we have managed to keep any increases in line with inflation and this year we are aiming to do the same. We will be writing to tenants early in the year outlining our rent review proposals for next year and will welcome tenants feedback on this.

Universal Credit and the Bedroom Tax - Important Information

Many of the Associations tenants have already moved over to the new Universal Credit(UC) system with many more set to follow moving forward.

If you move over to UC from Housing Benefit and you were receiving Discretionary Housing

Payment(DHP) to help pay the HB shortfall for unused bedrooms in the property(bedroom Tax) please remember that you will need to make a new application for DHP to ensure you get paid all the UC money you are entitled towards your rent payment. The DHP application can be easily completed by logging on the Councils website www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk or if you have any questions please call the Associations Housing management team and we can assist you in this process

For new UC applicants please be aware that the first payment of UC will usually contain payment towards the Housing Element (Your Rent). The Association would ask you to check your UC Journal to establish how much Rent Element is paid and ensure that this is paid to the Association towards your rent. To avoid arrears of rent and the associated problems please keep in close contact with the Association during the transition to Universal Credit. Please remember that when your rent changes/increases(1.4.21) you will need to notify this change to DWP through your UC journal to avoid a shortfall in your rent payment.

Packaging and bulk refuse removal

At this time of year we see an increase in packaging and discarded household items after the festive period. Could we again ask for everyone's co-operation to ensure removal of these additional refuse items is properly organised.

The Cleansing Department operate a free uplift service, they can be contacted on **Tel 0303 123 1020** to arrange removal.

This should help ensure at the start of the New Year our communities are kept clear of unsightly packaging/bulk items and any resulting problems.

Policy Review

The Association will be undertaking a review of our Housing Management Policies over the next few months in line with changes in the Housing Scotland Act, our policies are available online to view and we welcome at all times any comments about how we can improve our service delivery. Details of our review and any changes to Policy will be published early next year.

No Pantomime this year... but!

With all the uncertainty and restrictions around Covid a lot of the things we traditionally enjoy at this time of year such as our festive Pantomime have not been possible.

This has been an annual event that the Association has run for many years which has been enjoyed by many of the Associations tenants and their families.

While the Association is disappointed not to have been able to arrange anything this year our Management Committee wanted to do something for the school age children within our properties in the absence of the Pantomime trip.

We will be looking at options over the next few months and Covid restrictions allowing we will update everyone in our Spring Newsletter if we can make any alternative arrangement around Easter or during the Summer.

Christmas Word Search



O P R I N L I G G Q Q R G L U N H Z E F
 C H Z Q E J A O R E I N D E E R I R L Q
 M B M O L S Z T V W U P O B N D T T V V
 N H N J O L L Y N U Y E N M I H C C E U
 X P M N P P S F I A G K A C L Y V H S Z
 D L A E H X C E L B S F P G C E T Q E G
 Z O M N T H E D A Y S G N I T E E R G M
 S D Z I R V T Q P S G S B W C C P W V Q
 P U I Z O V A J A E O R U A C F S O G S
 G R E H N X R L B P Y N N N H R S O I L
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 Y M I S T L E T O E Y R D E E S M C I U
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|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| BELLS | RUDOLPH | ELVES | JOY |
| CANDLES | SANTA | FROSTY | MERRY |
| CANDY CANE | SEASON | GIFT | MISTLETOE |
| CARDS | SLEIGH | GIVING | NOEL |
| CELEBRATE | STOCKING | GREETINGS | NORTH POLE |
| CHIMNEY | TREE | HOLIDAY | REINDEER |
| CHRISTMAS | WREATH | JOLLY | |

Rutherglen & Cambuslang Housing Association



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 South Lanarkshire, G73 1DL

Tel **0141 647 4917** Fax **0141 647 5595**

Email **info@randcha.co.uk**

Website: **www.randcha.co.uk**

Emergency repairs outwith office hours **0141 647 4917**

Freephone **0800 169 3379**