

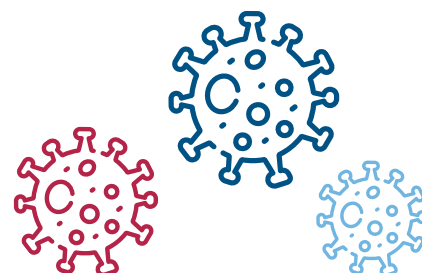
Autumn 2020

# Rutherglen & Cambuslang Housing Association



# Newsletter

## Coronavirus Service Update



The Association has been keeping 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 and therefore our office opening will fall into phase four of the Government's lockdown exit strategy. The recent announcement by the Government stated that we will remain in phase three for at least another three weeks i.e. until the end of September and it is possible that this will be extended beyond this date. Unfortunately this means that our office will remain closed for the immediate future and we will continue to work from home.

## 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:.....	<a href="mailto:maintenance@randcha.co.uk">maintenance@randcha.co.uk</a>
Tenancy and rent queries:.....	<a href="mailto:housing@randcha.co.uk">housing@randcha.co.uk</a>
Factoring enquiries:.....	<a href="mailto:factoring@randcha.co.uk">factoring@randcha.co.uk</a>
General enquiries:.....	<a href="mailto:info@randcha.co.uk">info@randcha.co.uk</a>

## Emergency Repairs

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

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

## 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.

## Payment of Rent

Tenants should continue to pay their 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 in 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](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)



# 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.

# **Dave Anderson, Association Director, retires after 37 years service**



The Associations Director, Dave Anderson, is retiring from the Association at the end of October. Dave started with the Association as a Development Officer in 1983 at a time when the Association was busy modernising over 500 below standard tenement properties in the Rutherglen and Cambuslang area. Many of these still had shared toilet facilities on half landings and some were scheduled for demolition. The tenements in Rutherglen today are a far cry from those in the 1980's thanks to the work of the Association during that period.

Dave became Director of the Association in 1991 and during the 90's he secured the transfer of properties in the Circuit Estate in Cambuslang from Glasgow City Council and this enabled the transformation of the estate through a programme of renovation and new build. A similar programme of redevelopment took place in the Cathkin Estate in the early 2000's. The 1990's also saw the successful transfer of the housing stock owned by Scottish Homes in Rutherglen and Cambuslang.

Dave also managed the developments of the Associations subsidiary, the Aspire Community Development Company. These include the Aspire Business Centre on the site of the old East Parish Church in Rutherglen and the Caledonian Centre in Cambuslang.

Dave said "I have thoroughly enjoyed my 37 years working for the Association. I have worked with wonderful staff and a voluntary management committee that has been supportive and should take the credit for the improvement in housing conditions in their community. A lot has changed since 1983 but the desire of the Association to improve housing conditions has not and I wish it every success for the future"

The Associations chair, Robert McLeary said "It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the retirement of Dave Anderson, Director, who has guided the Association to its current healthy position. The Committee and staff members of the Association are very aware of how much Dave has done for the organisation and its tenants over the years. It is typical of Dave that when he could have retired some time ago he carried on to see the Association through the appointment of a new Director and took us through the difficult past few months of lockdown. It goes without saying that we all wish Dave a long and happy retirement which is well earned"

The Associations new director, Elaine Lister, will take up post in November.





# Garden Maintenance

We are nearing the end of the Garden season but just a further reminder which we have mentioned in previous Newsletters about weeding driveways, paths and fence-lines which all remain the tenants responsibility to maintain. If these areas are not attended too or weeded properly this can not only detract from the overall appearance of an area but cause potential for hazard or contribute to other maintenance issues.

The potential for any future problems can easily be overcome by purchasing an inexpensive liquid weed-killer from the high street which can be applied by watering can or spray to the affected areas.

Anyone with problems relating to garden maintenance should contact a member of the Associations Housing Management team for advice at the earliest opportunity.



## The Association has its First Virtual AGM

Due to the current restrictions on public meeting places the Association had to convene its 40th Annual General Meeting by video conference. Unfortunately, this meant that we couldn't have our usual bingo, prize draw and refreshments! hopefully we will be back to normal next year.

The meeting was held on Tuesday the 15th September and the Associations Chairperson, Robert McLeary, reported that the Association had a successful year although the recent coronavirus pandemic had been a challenge.

He stated that the management committee of the Association understood that to keep our stock in good condition and up to modern day standards we must continue to invest in it. In the 2019/20 year we had invested almost £700,000 installing new windows, upgrading kitchens and installing new energy efficient heating systems in our stock. The Scottish Government continued to set high quality standards for social housing and therefore the Association must invest a fair amount of its rental income to meet these standards. This was something we have to do from our own resources and this added additional pressure to our budgets and efforts to keep our rents affordable.

With regards to the management of our stock, our performance continued to be excellent. Our overall arrears figure for the year was 3.16% and our rental loss through voids and bad debts was 0.77%. With regards to the maintenance of our stock we continued to provide a responsive repair service and invest in our planned maintenance programme.

Robert reported that during the year a site start was achieved to construct 18 flats in Hamilton Road, Cambuslang. This will provide amenity flats and should be completed in November 2020. He said that this new build activity is particularly pleasing as demand for good quality, well managed homes is still high and we were pleased to be going some way to meeting this demand in our community.

He said that another highlight of the year was the result of our tenants satisfaction survey which we carry out every 3 years. Overall satisfaction with the Association as a landlord was very high with 94% of tenants being either very or fairly satisfied. The proportion of respondents very or fairly satisfied with the overall service provided by the Association was also 94%. He said that although the committee were pleased with the results the Association was always endeavouring to improve on its performance.

Finally, he commented that the Coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lock down had taken effect at the end of our financial year and the last 6 months had been particularly challenging. The Associations office was closed and we had to implement our business continuity plan. He wanted to thank tenants for their patience in this difficult time and to staff who had maintained most services despite the challenges.

The AGM also heard from the Associations auditors who reported that the Association was in a strong financial position and that the audit of the 2019/20 accounts had been a clean one and no issues were raised.

# Home Contents Insurance



If you are a tenant who rents, then your landlord may not cover your contents as part of the tenancy agreement. It's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would cover you for in order to help you make an informed decision on whether you need one.

Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen so home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind. To help you decide whether home contents insurance is right for you, the SFHA, along with your landlord have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks, and Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance plc who provide the Diamond Insurance Scheme, a specialist Tenants Contents Insurance policy.

The Diamond Insurance Scheme can offer you insurance for the contents of your home including cover for items such as furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, electrical items, jewellery, pictures and ornaments.

## Want to know more?

- Ask your local housing officer for an application pack.
- Or call the administrators Uris Group on **0345 671 8172**

## Letter from Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning 7 July 2020

Open letter to Council, Housing Association and Housing Co-operative tenants in Scotland

In the short space of a few months, none of us could have envisaged the significant impact that Covid-19 would have on Scotland. I know this has been an extremely difficult time for you and your families and it has brought unprecedented challenges for our country.

I am writing to social housing tenants to provide information and advice, following the publication in May of Scotland's Route Map for moving out of the crisis, which sets out the steps that will help us to return to a more normal life. This is being done on a gradual basis, as quickly and fairly as possible, and is being matched with careful monitoring of the virus.

As we move through the different phases of easing restrictions we are providing clear guidance on what that will mean for individuals and families in Scotland. Individual landlords are also now beginning to plan for resuming services following the guidance available, and taking account of local circumstances.

During this crisis I have been particularly impressed at how people have come together to support each other and I greatly appreciate the inspiring community effort that we've seen up and down the country.

I want to thank every single individual, organisation and volunteer who has responded to the pandemic and helped to keep people safe, connected, and well and every social landlord in Scotland who has been working

tirelessly to maintain and provide essential and wider community services in these challenging times. The safety, security and wellbeing of all social housing tenants is a key priority for both the Scottish Government and social landlords, and we have been working closely together to address the challenges that have emerged in the social housing sector as the weeks and months have progressed.

**If you're experiencing financial difficulties or are having difficulty paying your rent as a result of coronavirus.**

If you are experiencing financial difficulties as a result of coronavirus, there is a variety of financial support available as well as advice on maximising income. You can access this through your local welfare advice agency including **Citizen's Advice Scotland** and the

**Money Talk Team** - The efforts that tenants are making to ensure their rent is paid during this difficult time is much appreciated and you must still continue to do so if you are able. If you have difficulty paying your rent at any time you should contact your landlord immediately as they will be able to provide or direct you to sources of financial advice and agree a plan with you to pay your rent.

**Protection from eviction during the pandemic**

In response to the public health crisis, the Scottish Government passed an emergency law to protect tenants from eviction during the pandemic. This requires landlords to give longer notice periods to tenants, of up to six



months, where they intend to take legal action in the Sheriff Court to re-possess a property and end a tenancy. To ensure landlords and the courts were able to continue to deal with serious antisocial and criminal behaviour, which cannot be resolved by other measures during the pandemic, shorter notice periods are in place for those cases.

**Support for victims of domestic abuse** - It is a Scottish Government priority to ensure that anyone who is a victim of domestic abuse gets access to the support services they need. For anyone who is or feels they are at risk of abuse, help and support is available to you, including police response, online support, helplines, refuges and other services. You can find further information here: <https://safer.scot/da/page-6/>

**Allocation of properties and mutual exchange requests** - The Scottish Government eased restrictions on house moves on 29th June and social landlords are now beginning to plan for resuming allocations safely and for processing mutual exchange requests. For some time to come, most landlords will however be prioritising allocations to those who have become homeless during the pandemic. If you have any questions about moving home, want to apply for housing or have submitted a housing application with a landlord you should contact them directly as they will be able to provide advice on all your housing options.

**Staff and contractor visits to your home** - I know that some tenants will be anxious about having staff, contractors and gas engineers into their home to carry out repairs and safety checks, however be assured that your landlord will have clear processes in place to ensure this can happen safely, in line with the current public health guidance and including any

Personal Protective Equipment required. If an appointment for a home visit is being made with you, you should let your landlord know if you are vulnerable, shielding, self-isolating, or having symptoms of the virus so that appropriate arrangements or rescheduling of the visit can be agreed with you. Appointments will be made in advance and you will be advised of the process that will be followed, and anything you need to do to prepare for the visit.

**Repairs, maintenance and planned improvement programmes** - Since the start of the pandemic, social housing landlords have been prioritising repairs and have been focussing on providing emergency repairs and other essential services. As we move forward, landlords are now starting to plan how they can safely resume routine repairs and planned maintenance work. This includes programmes such as window, bathroom and kitchen replacement, adaptations and installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and fire alarms. You should continue to report any repairs to your landlord as normal. As your landlord begins to work through any backlogs, your repair may take a bit longer than normal so please bear with them. Your landlord will get in touch with you if they require to get into your home to carry out any work and will have processes in place to ensure this can happen safely and in line with the current public health guidance.

**Gas safety checks** - Landlords are continuing to make every effort to meet statutory safety obligations, such as annual gas safety inspections. When you receive your gas inspection letter, please contact your landlord immediately if you are vulnerable, shielding, self-isolating or having symptoms of the virus, so that appropriate arrangements or rescheduling

of the visit can be agreed with you. Please do not ignore the letter as your landlord may not know about your situation and will continue to contact you to arrange a visit. These checks are essential to ensure the safety of your household and it is therefore very important that you allow access to your home so they can be carried out.

If you smell gas, or if you have concerns about the safety of your appliances, you should call the gas emergency service provider on 0800 111 999, and switch off appliances until the gas emergency supplier, or a registered gas engineer, has attended and confirmed that the appliances are safe to use.

**Anti-social behaviour** - Tenants in Scotland have displayed exceptional respect, care and kindness towards their neighbours in these difficult times but regrettably not everyone has done so and instances of antisocial behaviour are still going on. Social landlords take antisocial behaviour very seriously and have a wide range of measures, including legal remedies and liaising with other agencies, to deal with persistent antisocial or criminal behaviour which breaches the terms of their tenancy agreement.

If you experience anti-social behaviour you should contact your landlord in the first instance and if you feel that you are in any danger you should contact Police Scotland. Your landlord will be able to provide you with support and advice on what they can do to help resolve the situation. More information can be found online at

**<https://www.mygov.scot/antisocial-behaviour/>**

**Wellbeing** - The coronavirus outbreak has had an effect on everyone's daily lives and

information on wellbeing and sources of support can be found at the [mygov.scot](https://www.mygov.scot) website. This covers a wide range of issues including looking after yourself and others, how to look after your mental health, food, medicine and other supplies, work, unemployment and sick leave, domestic abuse and child protection.

**Further advice on coronavirus** - It is essential that we all continue to follow the current public health guidance, practise good hand hygiene and follow the guidelines on who, where and how we meet others. The Scottish Government guidance on Coronavirus is reviewed regularly so please check for updates at

**[www.gov.scot/coronavirus](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus)**

Advice is also available from the

Scottish Government's Coronavirus helpline - telephone: **0800 111 4000**,

Scotland's Citizens Advice helpline - telephone: **0800 028 1456** and

Shelter's Housing Advice helpline - telephone: **0808 800 4444**.

If you have any specific questions about your home or tenancy that need to be dealt with urgently you should contact your landlord directly.

I would finally like to take this opportunity to thank all social housing tenants and landlords in Scotland for everything you have done, and are continuing to do, to help control the spread of the virus, protect the NHS and save lives.

**KEVIN STEWART**

# COVID-19

## Community wellbeing telephone line

The Community Wellbeing Line will help you in the current COVID-19 Pandemic. It is not for emergencies such as when you might need Police or Ambulance services, or for enquiries about normal council services like bin collections. You should continue to make use of the usual telephone numbers for these.

It will link you to community volunteers in your area who can:

- Deliver food packs to you
- Help with other essentials such as baby milk or pet food
- Post letters for you
- Check you are okay in person or by telephone
- Possibly some other things, if you let us know what you need

Some of our volunteers may be able to help collect prescriptions for you.

Your volunteer will either have a council name badge or a letter from the Chief Executive to confirm who they are.

If you have an underlying health condition and have been advised to self-isolate for a period, then you should make us aware of this so we can assess what your needs are.

## Guidance for people who are being helped by community volunteers

We need you to help make sure both you and the volunteers helping you remain safe by:

- Only asking your volunteer to do the tasks that have been agreed in advance with the helpline
- To help with infection control, making sure you don't ask them or let them come into your home
- Not giving money to your volunteer to carry out tasks
- Following any current advice about infection control that is coming from the government

You may find that someone comes to your house to check you are okay. This could be because a neighbour or family member has contacted the telephone line with a concern. Please let the volunteer know that you are all right, or if you need any assistance, and they can report this back. You do not need to open your door to do this; make sure you keep safe in the ways you usually would. Volunteers will be able to have a conversation with you from behind the door or through a window.

**You can contact the Community Wellbeing Phone Line on 0303 123 1009.**

**The lines are open from 8.45am–4.45pm Monday to Thursday, and 8.45am–4.15pm on Fridays.**

**Can Do  
Community**

**We hope everyone working together to help will make sure you stay safe and well.**

If you need this information in a different format or language, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. **Phone:** 0303 123 1015 **Email:** [equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)  
**[www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)**

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# Association Website Are you registered yet?

**[www.randcha.co.uk](http://www.randcha.co.uk)**

Last year the Association introduced our new Website to improve the service that we offer our tenants and other service users.

**The site enables tenants to manage many of the issues relating to their tenancy without calling our office. The site enables you to pay rent online, view rent statements, report repairs, view repairs history, give feedback and update contact details.**

Registering and getting started is easy, on the Website ([www.randcha.co.uk](http://www.randcha.co.uk)) you can create an account on the top right-hand corner of the Home page at "Your Account" Login/Register, shown in the above image.

To create an account all you will need to give is the details here, once you have hit the register button at the bottom you will then be asked to create a Password enabling you access to the tenant portal with all the above information and options available to you.

Your tenant number will be at the top of any correspondence you receive from us, if in doubt we can provide you with this number on request.

If you have any other questions about the process, please contact a member of our Housing Management team.

You can now contact the Housing Management and Repairs section direct via email with any particular enquiries you have, the email addresses are:-

**[housing@randcha.co.uk](mailto:housing@randcha.co.uk)**

**[maintenance@randcha.co.uk](mailto:maintenance@randcha.co.uk)**



<b>Your tenant number *</b>
<input type="text"/>
<b>Your surname *</b>
<input type="text"/>
<b>Your year of birth *</b>
<input type="text"/>
<b>Your postcode *</b>
<input type="text"/>
<b>Your email address *</b>
<input type="text"/>

Register



## Rutherglen & Cambuslang Housing Association

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Email **[info@randcha.co.uk](mailto:info@randcha.co.uk)**

Website: **[www.randcha.co.uk](http://www.randcha.co.uk)**

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

Freephone **0800 169 3379**