

Westworld

Official Newsletter of West of Scotland Housing Association Group

December 2024 Edition

Here for you this winter



Inside: Results from our 2024 Tenant Satisfaction Survey, more on our priorities for 2025, support from Willowacre Trust available to you this winter, and stories from around our communities

Welcome



I hope you enjoy this latest edition of our popular Westworld newsletter. Inside you will find out about the many ways our teams can support you with a range of services across all our

communities. We are delighted to be able to present the results of our latest tenant satisfaction survey which show in the main high levels of satisfaction with our services. One area we want to improve however is satisfaction with our repairs service and we will be working hard over the next year to ensure that we provide a consistently excellent repairs service.

On a personal note, you may have heard that I will be retiring from my post as Chief Executive in the Spring. It's not a decision I have taken lightly as I love my job and remain very proud of everything we have achieved together to provide housing you call home. I also want to say thank you to all the tenants of West of Scotland who I have had the pleasure to meet and serve in the best way that I can over the last 5 years.

Best Wishes,

Brian Gannon
Chief Executive

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Having your say

Our 2024 Tenant Satisfaction Survey results

We recently commissioned an independent research company to undertake our annual tenant satisfaction survey. Over 900 West of Scotland tenants were interviewed face to face by Research Resource and they have provided us with a detailed report on their findings.

Interviewing took place between the 23rd of July and the 10th of September 2024 and was spread across the organisation's stock to ensure that a representative picture of customer satisfaction was collected. Interviews provide data accurate to +/-2.9% accuracy, which means that if the result shows 90% satisfaction then actual tenant satisfaction for all tenants is likely to be somewhere between 87% and 93%.

We are very happy with the high levels of satisfaction expressed with our services and homes by our tenants in general. One area where we want tenant satisfaction to improve however, is with our repairs service. 23% of tenants who have had a repair in the last 12 months weren't satisfied with our service. It will be a Key Business Objective for 2025/26 to improve our repair service (See page 5).

The key results from the tenant survey are outlined in the table below. You can also see how our scores compare to our 2022 survey and how WSHA compares to the average tenant satisfaction for all housing associations in Scotland:

Customer Satisfaction	% 2022	% 2024	Change	23/24 Scot. Ave.
% of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord	87.7%	91.2%	↑	86.5%
% of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions	93.4%	96.6%	↑	90.5%
% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes	96.2%	97.1%	↔	87.7%
The Home	% 2022	% 2024	Change	23/24 Scot. Ave.
% of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	86.2%	91.9%	↑	84%
Repairs & Maintenance	% 2022	% 2024	Change	23/24 Scot. Ave.
% of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	83.2%	77.2%	↓	87.3%
The Neighbourhood	% 2022	% 2024	Change	23/24 Scot. Ave.
% of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	88.1%	90.4%	↔	84.7%
Value for money	% 2022	% 2024	Change	23/24 Scot. Ave.
% of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money	83.7%	92.1%	↑	81.6%

Your priorities for your homes – annual rent consultation

Tenant Satisfaction survey results 2024

As part of our recent annual Tenant Satisfaction survey, we asked tenants what your priorities are for your homes in terms of rental costs, services provided and ongoing investment. The feedback from this survey is taken into consideration as part of our annual rent consultation process.

We also asked what areas tenants were feeling the most pressure around cost of living. As you can see from the table below, the main impact on tenants in 2023/24 hasn't been rents, but rather increases in food and energy costs:

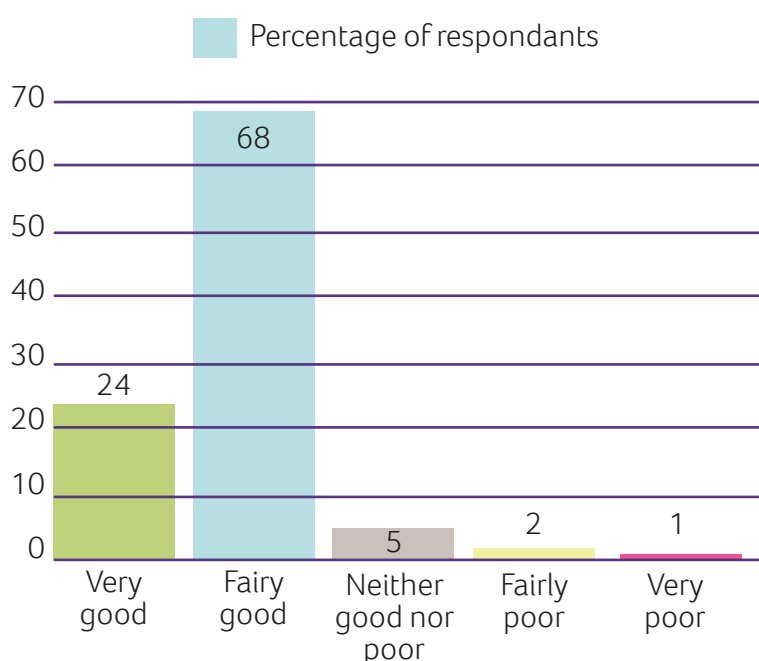
Are you struggling with any of the following? Select all that apply		
Base: All respondents. No. of total responses = 873	No.	%
Energy costs	220	25.2%
Food costs	135	15.5%
Rent payments	46	5.3%
Council tax	25	2.9%
Travel costs	22	2.5%
Child related costs	21	2.4%
Cost of socialising	10	1.1%
Debt repayments	4	0.5%
Other	3	0.3%
None	607	69.5%

Feedback from the survey indicated that, while affordable rents are important, we should maintain current services and investment by not having lower than planned rent increases. As you can see in the results below, the majority of WSHA tenants want the Association to ensure services and investment in their homes are protected by not having lower rents.

Tenant Preference - Low rents vs quality services & investment	Prefer lower rents	Balanced	Prefer high quality homes and services
Low rents vs high quality homes	23%	23%	54%
Low rents vs high quality repair service	22%	28%	50%
Low rents vs high quality housing service	23%	23%	54%

We also asked about the value for money they feel their rent represents. The table on the right shows that 92% in total feel our rent is very good or fairly good value for money, the highest for several years:

Taking into account the accommodation and services your landlord provides, do you think your rent for this property represents good or poor value for money?



The cost of living crisis has had a negative impact on all of us. Recognising this, to maintain affordability of rents, WSHA has increased rents by less than inflation over three of the last five years, rather than our Business Plan (visit https://westscot.co.uk/upload/download_document/d009a488-f394-11ec-b4a2-005056a3/file.pdf) assumption of inflation + 1%. The table below illustrates the rent increases applied over recent years against inflation.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Inflation	1.5%	0.7%	4.2%	11.1%	4.6%
WSHA Rent Increase	2.5%	0.5%	2.5%	5.9%	5.6%

This is despite the above inflation increase in costs all landlords have experienced. This year is no different and we are again facing significant cost increases - this means that the Association is losing money to invest in homes and to provide quality services. As a not-for-profit charity, this loss in income will impact on tenants and the services they receive. To mitigate this, we are proposing the rent increase below.

Proposals for 2025/26

Taking all of this into account, the Association is seeking your views on the proposal to increase our rents by **4.3%** (October CPI + 1%) from 1 April next year (unless you have a rent guarantee in which case this will be explained in your rent increase consultation letter if you are due an increase next year).

A letter will be sent as part of a wider consultation exercise and you can respond to the survey contained in it to give us your views on the proposed increase by 10 January 2025.

Please note, if you are one of our mid-market rent tenants, this does not apply to you as your rent does not change until June 2025. We will contact you separately.

Tell us your thoughts: our Key Business Objectives for 2025/26

Every year our Board of Management and Senior Staff hold a session to consider what our Key Business Objectives (KBOs) should be for the next financial year. In other words, our priorities for the year ahead. As a result of that session in Sept 2024, we drafted 8 KBOs which we believe will help make WSHA more efficient and also improve services and homes.

We have consulted with our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) on these proposed priorities and they confirmed they are happy with our plans. We will shortly issue a survey to get the views of all tenants. We will not finalise our KBOs these until February 2025, when we have received all feedback.

You can see our proposed KBOs and the reasoning for each in the table overleaf:



Key Business Objectives	Rationale for KBO
Implement and Monitor progress with our Plan for improving customer satisfaction with our Repairs Service	<p>Our recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey showed that only 77% of tenants were satisfied with the last repair they had carried out (this was 94% in 2019).</p> <p>3 main reasons for dissatisfaction: taking too long to complete, poor quality workmanship, repair not complete/still ongoing.</p> <p>We want to work with our main contractors to significantly improve tenant satisfaction with our repairs service.</p>
Develop a plan to identify and review inefficient working practices to benefit our customers and improve job satisfaction	<p>There are too many instances where staff have to regularly undertake time-consuming manual processing of data that is not only inefficient but must have a negative impact on job satisfaction.</p> <p>We also want to ensure that we free up resources to help improve customer services.</p>
Responding to and understanding the impact of the homelessness crisis whilst ensuring we maintain sustainable communities	<p>The Scottish Government have declared a Housing Emergency whilst cutting housing supply funding, and local authorities are encouraging us to make more of our homes available to those who present as homeless.</p> <p>What impact will this have on Associations like ourselves who have largely built sustainable communities through keeping control of who we let our houses to? How do we play our part in keeping tenants in their homes?</p>
Review our Development Strategy	<p>We need to start consulting with all stakeholders on our new Development Strategy.</p> <p>This strategy will determine, where we want to build homes, what type we build (construction and tenure type) and consider how many can we afford to build or renovate.</p>
Develop and communicate a 5 year management plan for mixed tenure blocks	<p>We are largely reactive to major repairs issues which arise in mixed tenure blocks, which makes it challenging to get owners' approval to proceed with essential works.</p> <p>Having a longer term plan will offer owners the necessary information (and time to save funds) to deliver what is required on their blocks over a 5 year period.</p>
Develop a plan for long term sustainability of Pre 1919 Tenements	<p>Pre 1919 sandstone tenements are valued assets that we hope will be here for many years to come. They need an investment plan however to ensure that they are safe and warm homes to live in for the foreseeable future.</p>
Implementation of our Data Management Strategy to improve data quality, management and reporting	<p>We want to get to a position where we make business critical decisions based on robust data.</p> <p>The Data Management strategy has been developed to address this and support the shift to more data led decision making.</p>
Implement a Growth Plan through optimising use of our Subsidiaries	<p>We think of growth in terms of more social housing tenancies to manage, but there are other ways to grow the business,</p> <p>Via Willowacre Trust that could mean growth through new or enhanced business/service development opportunities.</p> <p>Via Westscot Living that could mean growing our factoring business beyond existing stock, or looking to be a major MMR landlord across the West of Scotland.</p>

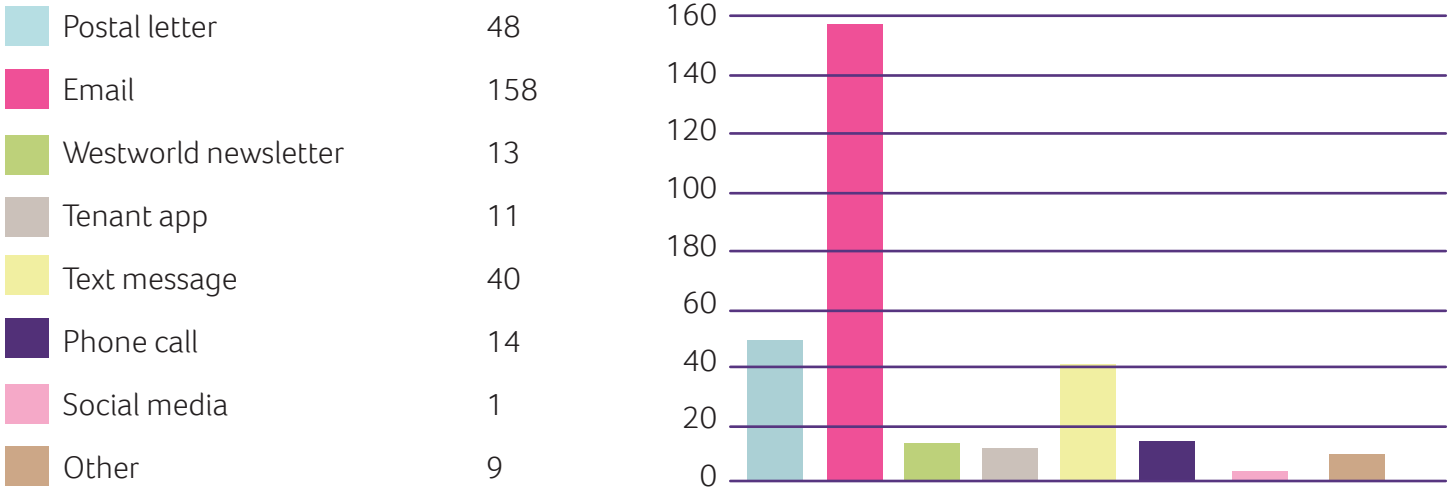
If you would like to let us know your thoughts on these proposed objectives, you can contact the Customer Service team via 0141 550 5600 or email haveyoursay@Westscot.co.uk

Changes to the distribution of the Westworld Newsletter

Earlier this year we reached out to tenants to ask them for their thoughts of how we communicated with them. We had a great response to this survey, with nearly 294 tenants getting in touch to tell us their preferences.

You can see some of the responses below:

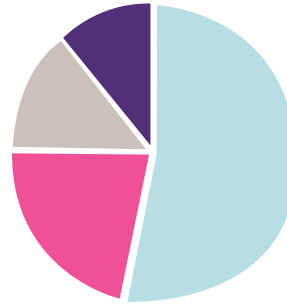
How would you prefer to hear from WSHA regarding news and service updates?



As you can see, email was by far respondents' preferred method of contact. This is also supported by the consistent and positive response to our monthly e-newsletter, which was introduced at the end of 2023.

Do you read WSHA's newsletter, Westworld, and do you find the information in it beneficial?

I read it and find it beneficial	157
I read it but don't find it beneficial	65
I don't read it	39
I wasn't aware of it	33



In terms of our tenant newsletter, Westworld, we were pleased that most respondents both read the content and found it useful (53%). However, we also recognise we could make improvements to be sure tenants get the information they want from Westworld, with many respondents mentioning they'd like more local news included.

Taking these conclusions into consideration, going forward we will be changing how we distribute Westworld to our tenants.

Monthly e-Westworld Newsletter

After this issue (Dec '24), Westworld will be moving to a primarily digital email format. Every month, tenants will receive a shorter Westworld e-bulletin, featuring news from across the organisation and hopefully more items local to them.

6-monthly printed/PDF Westworld newsletter

We will be reducing the number of full-size, printed Westworlds produced a year, from three to two, distributed every six months. This will round up the previous 6 months' worth of news and features, plus any more timely articles and will be available as downloadable PDF or as printed newsletter, based on customer preferences. Printed copies will be sent to all our sheltered and amenity sites, as well as our community hubs.

We hope this will make sure you are receiving news that is more timely and more relevant to yourselves. However, if you have any concerns about these planned changes, please contact Christine Irvine, PR and Communications Officer on communications@westscot.co.uk.

WSHA's 2024/25 Assurance Statement and how the Scottish Housing Regulator can help you

Our Assurance Statement 2024

As part of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Requirements, the WSHA Board have submitted their Annual Assurance Statement. The statement provides assurance that West of Scotland Housing Association group are fully compliant with the Regulatory Standards and Requirements. In particular, we confirm that we are compliant with the requirements around tenant and resident safety areas including fire safety, electrical safety, damp & mould and Legionella.

You can view our Assurance Statement here: <https://westscot.co.uk/regulatory-information/>

When creating our Assurance Statement process, we also consider what we can do to improve and feed this into our Annual Governance Improvement Plan. You can find this on the same webpage as above.

Working with the Scottish Housing Regulator

We always want to be transparent with you regarding all aspects of our business and your homes. One way we do this is by working with the Scottish Housing Regulator, who monitor, assess and report on the performance of all social landlords across Scotland (you can find the most up-to-date SHR landlords data here: <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlordperformance/>)

As a tenant, you can also contact the SHR if you feel WSHA (or any social landlord) has regularly and repeatedly failed to achieve the regulatory requirements for social housing. Read more about this process over on the SHR website: <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/fortenants/read-our-factsheets-for-tenants/complaints-and-serious-concerns-information-fortenants-and-service-users-of-social-landlords/#section-4>.

Would you like to nominate a staff member for a Values in Action award?

Have you had a really positive interaction with one of our team that you'd like them to be recognised for?

It is important to us that all tenants experience our values in any engagement that they have with us. WSHA values are:

- Respect- we treat everyone with empathy and kindness
- Integrity - we act with honesty at all times
- Improvement - we aim to continuously improve what we do to benefit our customers, staff and stakeholders
- Inclusivity - we aim to meet individual needs and recognise diversity
- Support -we will be supportive in our approach with customers, staff and stakeholders



If you feel that a member of staff has gone over and above to help you and you'd like to let them know, you can do this by nominating them for a Values in Action recognition award.

Nominate a team member by completing the form here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/kKOVfdAELZ>, or by contacting our Customer Service Team on customer.service@westscot.co.uk or 0141 550 5600. Just give details of the staff member's name and how they have helped you out. The staff member that you have nominated will receive a gift card and their nomination will be publicised internally and on our Facebook page.

Thank you!

Community news

Let's get together Cowlairs!

At our Cowlairs community event very early this year we had a great day speaking with tenants about their area. One of the main issues residents identified to us was a lack of a meeting place where groups, activities and meetings could take place.

Following that event and further consultations, we are delighted to announce that we have identified a suitable property which is being turned into a new community flat in Cowlairs!

Our vision is that the flat will be a welcoming space where we will work with local community members to deliver a range of groups and activities as well as provide a base for local groups.

We still have a few tasks to finish ok in terms of getting the space ready for use, but local residents should expect an invitation very soon inviting them to an open day at the new community flat. See you there!



Scottish Parliament visit

At the end of September, Willowacre Trust were proud to welcome members of the Scottish Parliament to the Barrowfield Community Centre in a very special community event as part of the Parliament's 25th anniversary celebrations.

We welcomed Presiding Officer Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP, alongside MSPs Annie Wells, John Mason and Paul Sweeney and Parliamentary staff in an informative afternoon of sharing and discussion. The Parliamentary team learnt more about the community who use the Barrowfield-based centre, what events, services and activities we run and what they mean to the users. The community then had the chance to learn more about the Parliament, feed back their thoughts on its successes and make their thoughts known on what they would like to see it do more of.



Happy Snappers at Charing Cross

This Autumn, tenants have been joining us at WSHA's Charing Cross Community Hub to learn the basics of digital photography with Glasgow Kelvin College.

Over the 10 week course, tenants have learnt how to get the best results with their phones and digital cameras, as well as some tricks of the trade. It's made for fantastic results, as you can see below. The group have selected a range of photographs which will be made into a calendar for the coming year. What a talented bunch!

The Beginners' Photography course will return to Charing Cross in the new year, **running for 10 weeks from Wednesday 8th January**. New attendees are very welcome.

The course is free to attend, but you must register as places are limited. To find out more, contact Sam Ross on sam.ross@westscot.co.uk or 07977 579093.



Gardening sessions at Arlington street

The garden at our retirement site at Arlington Street was once a colourful haven of tranquillity thanks to a couple of tenants who definitely had the gift of green fingers!

However, in recent years ill health prevented them from taking care of it the way they once had. Not to be deterred however, one tenant approached Willowacre Trust with an idea of getting a group together to bring the garden back to life and make it the colourful inviting place it had once been - many hands make light work! Tenants jumped at the chance of getting involved and formed the Arlington Street Gardening Group. Since then, with the help of a professional community gardener providing tuition and training and funding sourced by Willowacre Trust, the group have been clearing the ground and preparing the plots for the crops they will grow in Spring. We can't wait to see what they produce!

If you'd be interested in getting a gardening group up and running in your area, please get in touch with the Willowacre Trust Team, who would be happy to support you.



Christmas Fair at Charing Cross!

WOODLANDS & GARNETHILL

Christmas

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT
JOIN US FOR A FUN AFTERNOON FULL
OF ACTIVITIES AND TREATS!

SAT 7TH DEC, NOON - 3PM

**FRED PATON CENTRE, 19
CARRINGTON STREET, G4 9AJ
GLASGOW**

**Fred Paton Centre
19 Carrington Street
Glasgow, G4 9AJ**

Sat 7th December, noon-3pm

Join us for the Woodlands & Garnethill FREE Christmas Community event on Saturday 7th December!

The event will be a fun afternoon for all ages, featuring:

- Info about local activities, groups, organisations and services
- Winter arts and crafts
- Santa's grotto
- Henna and hair braiding
- Raffle and refreshments
- ... And much more!

This is a great chance to come and spend some time with your local community, make new friends and get ready for the Christmas season. All are welcome but children must be accompanied by an adult.

If you need more information, please contact Sam Ross on sam.ross@westscot.co.uk or 07977 579093.

Willowacre Trust - supporting you

Ways we can support you

Willowacre Trust is WSHA's charitable subsidiary and it is through this dedicated team that we can provide much-needed advice and practical help and support to our tenants.

You have easy access to a range of free services such as:



Energy advice



Fuel top-ups



Food parcels



Digital Lending Library and advice



Money & Debt Advice

We want to help you, so please do be in touch with us. It's never too early or too late to ask for support and advice, we will always help wherever we can. The earlier you contact us, the quicker we can assist you. Contact customer service on 0141 550 5600 or customer.service@westscot.co.uk

Energy advice: Do you have a radio teleswitch (RTS) electricity meter?

If you rent a property that has an RTS electricity meter, be aware the technology that supports RTS electricity meters will end on 30th June 2025. Without the technology to tell RTS meters when to switch between peak and off-peak rates, they may no longer work properly, and it may mean your heating and hot water supply stops functioning as normal.

You, as the electricity bill payer, will soon be contacted directly by your energy supplier to arrange for your RTS meter to be replaced with a Smart Meter. You must respond to this contact to ensure that the heating and hot water in your home continue to function.

Your property is most likely to have an RTS meter if it is heated by electric storage heaters. The radio teleswitch automatically switches the electricity between peak and off-peak rates in the morning and evening. See the photos below:

If you are unsure what kind of meter you have, or would like more information around this, please contact our Energy Advice team via 0141 550 5600 (option 3).



It's Panto season again... Oh yes it is!



WSHA has once again funded a limited number of Panto tickets which tenants were invited to apply for at the end of November.

Once applications are all received, we use a computer-generated number ballot to pick the successful tenants off the list. This year we were funded for tickets to the Pavilion Theatre Glasgow, Ayr Gaiety and Ravenscraig Regional Sports facility in Wishaw.

We wish all our tenants who were successful with the tickets a wonderful time at the panto!

Your homes

Scottish Government cut funding for medical adaptations – what it means for you

You may have recently heard news that Scottish Government funding available for medical adaptations to tenants' homes has been dramatically reduced for the current financial year, with a confirmed cut of 25%, from £11 million to £8.245m.

Every year, WSHA undertake a number of medical adaptations to our properties to assist tenants to live safely and independently. These range from small works such as fitting handrails, to larger scale works such as fitting wet rooms and adapted kitchens. This work is paid for through funding received from Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government.

Up until last year, WSHA has managed to undertake all medical adaptations requested of us. However, increased demand combined with this recent funding cut has now left us in a position where we will have a significant shortfall in the funding needed to carry out all requested adaptations. This means that there will be number of adaptation requests that we will be unable to undertake until more funding becomes available.

Many small-scale adaptations – such as hand rails etc – are our legal obligation to carry out under the Equality Act, and we will undertake these adaptations regardless of funding availability. However, we will not be able to undertake all larger-scale adaptations.

We very much regret this position and, alongside many other housing associations, have made our concerns around the detrimental impact this will have on tenants' wellbeing clear to the Scottish Government. If your adaptation works are liable to be delayed we will contact you directly to advise of the position.

In the meantime should you wish to discuss your adaptation request further please contact Claire Doyle, Assistant Technical Officer via Customer Service team on 041 550 5600 or directly: 0141 333 6329.



More buzz around our trials of electric wallpaper

As reported in the last issue, our trials of innovative new heating system 'electric wallpaper' continue. Working in partnership with both Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities, the project has recently received funding from Scotland Beyond Net Zero to allow us to explore the feasibility of electric wallpaper as a viable, eco-friendly replacement for gas central heating across our homes.

"It's been absolutely fantastic, it heats up really fast compared to the other heating. I usually only have to put it on for a couple of hours in the morning and that does me all day. It's never cold in here now. Before my heating was on 24 hours a day." – Mrs Henderson, tenant

Applied to ceilings (not walls) throughout a property, the wallpaper is a nearly-invisible 4mm thick and includes a layer of Graphene which emits infrared waves when powered by electricity.

When powered, the wallpaper heats a room from the top downwards, warming the residents and the surfaces of the home rather than heating the air like traditional heating systems.

You can read more about the technology over on our website: <https://westscot.co.uk/wshatenants-benefitting-from-promising-first-trials-of-new-energy-ekicient-heating-systeminfrared-wallpaper/>

Director of Development and Asset Management



WSHA are very pleased to announce the appointment of Karen Shaw as our new Director of Development and Asset Management.

Karen will oversee our ambitious ongoing development plans, as well deliver a rolling programme of investment to WSHA's existing 4300 homes.

On her new role Karen said: "I am absolutely delighted to be appointed to this role and look forward to leading the Association on growth and sustainability as we develop our net zero delivery plan and 5-year development strategy. Customers are at the heart of everything I do and I will do my best to ensure that we provide the best customer service and continue to improve and evolve to meet the needs of all our customers now and in the future to meet the needs of all our customers."

With over 30 years' experience in the housing sector, Karen began her career at Bearsden & Milngavie District Council as housing officer before moving to East Dunbartonshire Council where she worked for 20 years. She has been in role as Development Manager at WSHA since 2019, leading on project management for one of the busiest periods in WSHA's recent history. Her considerable experience and unfaltering positivity have been key drivers in the launch of over 200 new homes for WSHA in the last year, including the award-winning development of 90 Passivhaus standard homes at Dundashill, Glasgow.

Hazards of planting bamboo

Bamboo has recently become a popular addition to gardens in the UK. However, many species of bamboo can be aggressive and cause damage to your garden and your property.

This vigorous plant and has a deep, wide spreading root system which has the ability to break through tarmac, grow under patios and paving and spread into homes through cracks or weak mortar. Due to its aggressive nature, we'd recommend tenants refrain from planting it in their gardens.

If you would like to remove bamboo on your property, you should dig out the entire root and stem, shoots and leaves as much as possible. If treating the bamboo with a herbicide, glyphosate is the most effective.



West of Scotland Housing Association pays tribute long-serving colleague

Irene Robertson

West of Scotland Housing Association has paid tribute to popular, long-serving colleague Irene Robertson, who passed away suddenly in October after a short illness.

Irene worked with West of Scotland Housing Association for over 15 years, first in housing services before moving on to be much-valued member of the Income Maximisation team. In her role she was a friendly, knowledgeable source of advice and encouragement both to colleagues and customers and supported many hundreds of tenants over the years.

Her colleagues remember Irene as kind, intelligent and family-focused who always had time to help and support her teammates.

Colleague Jennifer Milligan said: **'Irene was a mentor to me throughout my whole career— she took me under her wing and I learned so much from her. She was always extremely passionate about her job and important issues surrounding the housing sector and was continually researching and learning. Family meant everything to Irene. Her face lit up every time we spoke about her son and the lovely family he has created. I'll never forget her.'**

Irene's kindness often took the form of creating beautiful crocheted and knitted gifts for colleagues' families: **'She could turn her hand (or needles) to any pattern; she made many blankets for staff members and they always looked amazing. It was definitely a passion of Irene's, and she excelled in it.'** Colleague Gillian Cairns said. **'She was always kind and thoughtful towards everyone.'**



Irene's funeral took place on 31st October at Glasgow (Maryhill) Crematorium, with many of Irene's West of Scotland colleagues in attendance to pay their respects.

The Association opened a Book of Condolence for Irene, which was gifted to the family as a mark of love and respect from her colleagues.

Reflecting Irene's passion for continual learning, from next year WSHA will establish a training fund for local young people to introduce them to careers in Housing.

Irene will be sorely missed by her colleagues and friends, and will be remembered for her kindness, her commitment to learning and her passion for helping others.



Winter health and safety pointers

Winter weather can cause all kinds of disruption and damage to your home. Find some tips on how to prevent common issues, keep your home safe and prepare for an emergency below:

- Keep your home as warm as you can – warmth offers the best protection against frozen pipes. In severe weather, or if severe weather is forecast, you should leave your heating on day and night at a low temperature, especially if you are going to be away from home for a length of time.
- Do checks on your heating and hot water system now – don't wait until a cold snap. Locate your stop-cock and check that it shuts off your water and hasn't seized up.
- Frozen water from external overflow pipes can be very hazardous. Report water leaks from overflows as soon as you notice them and provide access to our team for repair.
- If your neighbours do not have a key for your home, make sure they have contact details for someone who does, in case of an emergency, or ask a friend or relative to visit your home every day if you are going away. This will mean if you do suffer a burst pipe, it will be noticed as soon as possible and any damage will be minimised. Alternatively, if you are going away for a long period of time you should turn off your water supply and drain the system – contact our repairs team for more details on how to do this.
- Make a list of emergency contact numbers to keep to hand. These might be friends and family who can come and help if you have a problem at home, or the number for WSHA's out-of-hours emergency repairs service. Try and keep a paper copy of these numbers in case you don't have access to your mobile phone.
- If you have medicines that you take on a regular basis make sure you have enough supply should you be unable to go to the pharmacist for a few days. Over the festive season it is also important to know when your GP will be open.
- Ensure you have access to a shovel and salt or grit, for clearing snow and ice from paths and driveways.
- Make sure there's an ice-scraper in your car and you have de-icer in the house in case the car doors are frozen shut.
- Be a good neighbour. When cold weather hits, keep an eye out for your neighbours, especially the frail, elderly and disabled.

Building for the future

New homes in Dundashill recognised with award wins

We were thrilled that our new development of 90 'Passivhaus' standard mid-market rent homes at Dundashill, Glasgow have been recognised with Excellence in Sustainability awards at both the Herald Property Awards and Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland Awards this autumn.

Launched in May this year, the Dundashill site makes use of cutting-edge energy efficiency technology, with the aim of providing incredibly efficient homes for tenants, lowering tenants' fuel bills and helping Glasgow City's transition towards Net Zero. We collected the awards alongside our partners CCG Scotland and Collective Architecture.



The Herald Property Award judges said the Dundashill development was: 'a true demonstration of what is achievable when a team has the goal of producing a highly sustainable development.'

Our redevelopment of former St Andrews Church site in Hamilton, providing 12 2-bedroom apartments for affordable rent, also gained plaudits, receiving the award for outstanding Individual New Build or Small Development at the Herald Property Awards. The development was described as: 'A truly unique residential development that demonstrates that with the right team, historical buildings can be brought back to life to serve the community.'

Planning submitted by WSHA for Glasgow's first 'modular' housing development



West of Scotland Housing Association and Connect Modular are pleased to announce that a planning application has been formally submitted to Glasgow City Council for the construction of 33 new affordable homes on Allander Street in Cowlares, Glasgow.

The proposal contains our plans to build a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses and flats using innovative 'modular' construction. This means the homes will be nearly 90% constructed off-site, at Connect Modular's 120,000 sq ft manufacturing facility in East Ayrshire. They will then be delivered to Cowlares with kitchens, bathrooms, plumbing and electrics already installed, significantly increasing the rate of production and reducing carbon usage for the project.

Benefits and welfare rights updates

Great result as our Welfare Rights team secure WSHA tenant £27k in backdated Universal Credit

Our Welfare Rights and Income Maximisation team work incredibly hard with tenants to make sure you get every penny you're entitled to, and we frequently see awards that significantly improve tenants' circumstances. One fantastic story from this year saw one of our Welfare Rights Officers, Gillian, provide advice and support to a tenant living with the effects of a brain injury. Through sheer determination, expertise and hard work, Gillian picked apart the tenant's Universal Credit award, going back six years, which resulted in the entitlement being revised to £27k and a sizeable backdate being made to our tenant. This backdate and award is lifechanging for our tenant, who has been struggling to make ends meet.



This is one of many cases where Gillian and her colleagues, Garry & Kirsty make a huge difference to our tenants lives. Well done to the whole team for their hard work.

Who are the Income Maximisation and Welfare Rights teams?

These two teams work together to help make sure WSHA tenants are receiving all the benefits they're entitled to, and that their rent accounts remain clear.

The role of the Income Maximisation team is to help tenants keep their rent accounts clear by providing advice, referring tenants for assistance and working out manageable, individualised repayment plans.

You can contact our Income Maximisation team via IncomeMax@westscot.co.uk, or by direct dial on 0141 550 5059.

Our Welfare Rights team offer tenants advice and information relating to welfare benefits administered by Social Security Scotland, HMRC, DWP and local authorities and help make sure you are receiving the benefits you're entitled to. **You can contact our Welfare Rights team by email at welfare.rights@westscot.co.uk or by direct dial on 0141 550 5662.**

Universal Credit reminder

Universal Credit has been gradually replacing other benefits such as tax credits and housing benefit. Claimants of Income Based Job Seekers Allowance are the latest group to receive an invite to apply for UC - you should have received your migration notice in September.

If this is you, PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE THE NOTICE as you need to act and apply for UC before the deadline stated or risk having your payments stopped. Your move to UC is not automatic.

Additionally, letters are going out to Tax Credit claimants who have reached state pension age, inviting them to claim Universal Credit or Pension Credit, depending on their circumstances.

Claims can be made online through the GOV.UK website, by phone through the Universal Credit Migration Notice helpline at 0800 169 0328, or in person at a local Job Centre.

If you would like further help or advice, please be in contact with welfare.rights@westscot.co.uk or 0141 550 5662.

If you find yourself in difficult financial circumstances, our Income Maximisation and Welfare Rights teams will always do our best to help. Contact our Customer Service team on 0140 550 6600 in a first instance, and they will be able to pass you onto the department most able to help.

Cost of Living – Supporting you, in 2024 and beyond

Early in 2023, in response to the ongoing cost of living crisis, we undertook a survey of all our tenants to better understand the issues they were struggling with and where WSHA could provide support. Over 700 tenants responded to this survey – the largest ever response rate to a WSHA survey.

These responses helped us to create an action plan of immediate and longer term support we could provide to best meet our tenants’ needs. This action plan involved our entire organisation, particularly our Community and Support Services team, based within our charitable arm, Willowacre Trust (see page 5).

You can read our full report on the Cost of Living project survey, the results of our action plan and how we will continue to support you over on our website <https://westscot.co.uk/tenants/>.

Unfortunately, the societal challenges we are all facing aren’t going away. Please be assured our support is ongoing, and we will always work to support our tenants as best we can.

Type of referral	Instances of help provided	Percentage of total help provided
Money advice	86	15.69%
Food support	63	11.50%
Handyperson	39	7.12%
Starter packs	2	0.36%
Tenancy support	56	10.22%
Digital support	44	8.03%
Older person support	1	0.18%
Energy support	168	30.66%
Upcycling	9	1.64%
WSHA / WT Groups e.g. health and wellbeing/ ASN /women's	4	0.73%
WSHA / WT activities - e.g. bus trip/panto	9	1.64%
Other WSHA / WT support	20	3.65%
Referrals to other organisations	29	5.29%
Income maximisation	1	0.18%
Housing support	2	0.36%
Welfare rights	15	2.74%
Total number of types of support provided*	548	100.00%

We know Christmas isn’t always easy

There’s a lot of pressure for Christmas to be magical, but the reality is that for many people it can be a very difficult or lonely time of year. If you find yourself struggling—even if you’re not in crisis—having someone to share your thoughts and worries with can make them easier to manage at a stressful time of the year.

Some organisations that can help:

Samaritans: 116 123 / www.samaritans.org

Breathing Space: 0800 83 85 87 / www.breathingspace.scot

Childline: 0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk

Telephone friendships from Age UK:
www.ageuk.org.uk/services/befriending-services



Winter opening hours and emergency contact numbers

WSHA offices will be closed over the Christmas break between 5pm Tuesday 24th December 2024 and 9am Monday 6th January 2025.

If you need an emergency repair during this time you will be able to contact our emergency line On 0141 550 5600 and you will be transferred to our out-of-hours service.

Performance updates

Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

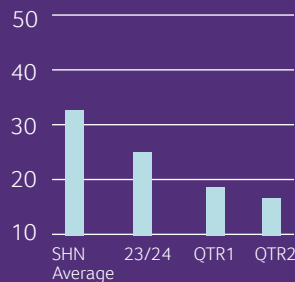
We are committed to listening to your views so we can deliver services more effectively, or where we can, do more things that you want us to do. Where an issue comes up as part of a complaint, or is fed back to us, we will look to make changes to how we work.

Below you can see some of the actions we took in response to customer complaints in the previous quarter. You can also see a selection of our performance statistics for the first two quarters of 2024/25.

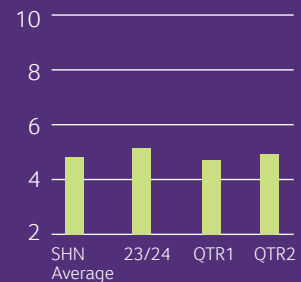
You Said	We Did
We received a complaint relating to our processes for arranging a decant for a tenant when significant repair works are required	We have reviewed our decant procedures and made improvements around how we will communicate. We have also updated our procedures for handling repairs to factored blocks.

Our Performance 2024/25

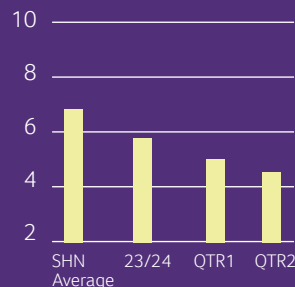
Average time to relet property (Days)



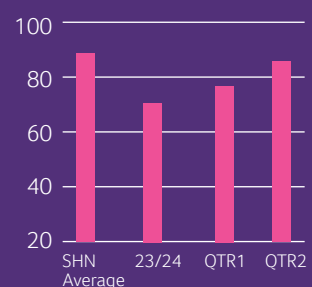
Gross rent arrears as % of rent due



Average time to complete non-emergency repairs (Days)



% of repairs completed Right First Time



For more information please contact:

t: 0141 550 5600

w: westscot.co.uk

e: customer.service@westscot.co.uk

f WSHAScotland

t WSHAScotland

