

# Westworld

Official Newsletter of West of Scotland Housing Association

Winter 2019 Edition

## New Tenants Welcomed at East Kilbride Development

**We have welcomed our new tenants to our new social housing development at the former Rolls Royce site in East Kilbride. In partnership with the Scottish Government, South Lanarkshire Council and Barratt Homes, we have invested £4million to create 31 new homes as part of a wider new-build development.**



Tenants are settling into their new homes and are already seeing the benefits. Nicola Glassford has been a tenant of WSHA for a number of years and received a transfer to the East Kilbride homes due to needing more space. Nicola commented: "I have three children and we were quite cramped in a two bedroom home so it is great to now have an extra bedroom. I really like it here and I have even saved money on my fuel bills due to the house being so well insulated."

A first time tenant Derek McCallum added: "This is my first time living in social housing after years of renting privately and it is nice to have somewhere to call my own. The flat is a great size and it is in a fantastic location – my son and I are very happy here."

Brian Gannon, Chief Executive Officer at WSHA highlighted: "We are delighted to have completed our homes in East Kilbride in partnership with Barratt Homes, the Scottish Government and South Lanarkshire Council. This is particularly pleasing for me for this development to be delivered in the town where I was born. More importantly it is reassuring to witness first-hand how we are able to continue to provide housing for tenants as their lives change. This development is a fantastic addition to the wider community and offers high-quality homes for families and individuals that meet a range of needs."



# Welcome



Welcome to the Winter Edition of our tenant newsletter. I have been in post since September and it has been a busy, but exciting, couple of months getting to know WSHA and the communities it serves. I have been out visiting many of our homes that are spread across the West of Scotland and it has been very interesting to see the mix of homes we provide including new build flats and family homes, pre 1919 tenemental properties and sheltered homes.

It was great to start my time at WSHA at the launch of our new homes in East Kilbride and to meet Derek and Nicola who both spoke of their positive experiences in their homes. Over the coming months I am looking forward to meeting more tenants and hearing first-hand about what we are doing well and where improvements can be made.

I am reassured to see the positive impact our services have on the lives and wellbeing of tenants which is demonstrated by Lily who has made full use of our Digital Participation Service to enjoy the benefits of the online world.

As we approach the end of 2019 it is a chance to reflect on our past year and start to plan for 2020 where we will continue to put your needs at the heart of service delivery and ensure we achieve our corporate plan objectives.

I hope you all have a very merry Christmas and wish you the best for 2020.

Remember you can also hear our latest news and events on our Facebook page (WSHAScotland).

Best Wishes,

*Brian Gannon*  
Chief Executive

## Christmas Closing

Our office will close on Tuesday 24th December 2019 and reopen on Monday 6th January 2020. If you have an emergency repair during that time you should call 0141 550 5600. We wish all our tenants and families a very merry Christmas a happy New Year.

## A BIG Thank You!

We would like to thank all of our contractors who kindly donated gifts to our annual staff raffle for our corporate charity which this year is North Glasgow Family Support (Action for Children). This year we raised £905 which will be added to our annual total and make big difference to the children and families supported. Thanks to:

ADA (Alan Shanks) - City Technical - Davie Gilmour Clerk of Works - Everwarm - Fraser Fire - G3 - GDN Contracts - Hoos Development Ltd - L&S Litho - Langmuir & Hay - McTaggart & Mickel Homes - McTaggart Construction - Reid Associates - RJ Potter Architects - Robertson - Springfield Cross - Tivoli - Turner

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# Lily Loves her iPad

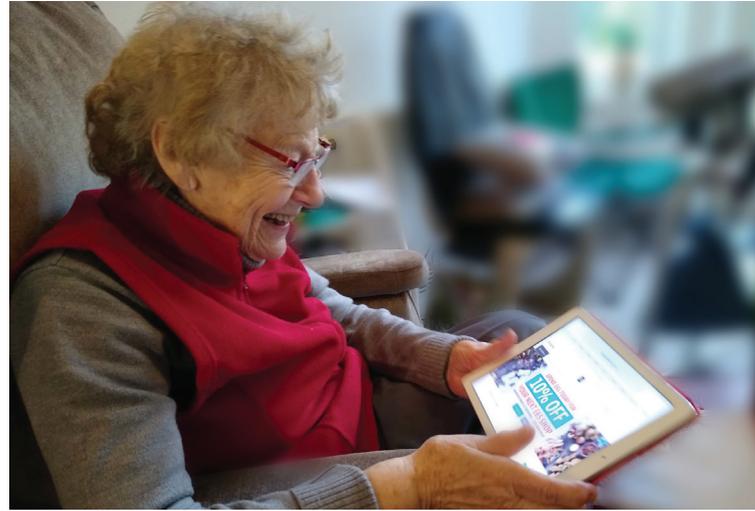
**Lily, 83, has been receiving home visits from our Digital Participation Officer to learn more about her iPad. Here she tells us what it's been like as she has taken her first few steps into a brand new digital world...**

## How did you find out about the service?

I found out about the service from WHSA's Retirement Assistant who knew I was keen to start using my iPad as I wasn't sure how to really use it.

## What experience of digital technology did you have before the training?

Very little, I could email a bit but I didn't do much else. My family thought it was good for me to get online, as everything's going to be digital soon so I thought I'd find out what it's all about. I didn't want to get left behind!



## What have you learned in the past month?

Quite a lot of things! I can use Facetime (available on Apple devices) to make video calls and it was such a nice surprise to find out that you can phone people all over the world for free. I have also been learning how to order my food shopping online which is brilliant.

## What do you enjoy most?

I like getting in touch with family, on email and Facetime. It saves me money rather than using the landline, and I have reconnected with friends and some of the nurses I used to work with. It also means I can receive photos – I got a lovely picture from my daughter when she was in Italy recently, and email makes it so easy to share these moments with her.

## What's next then?

I would like learn more about taking photos, so I can send some to other people too. I also want to learn how to complete forms online as they have started sending emails like that from the doctors which I will need to complete. It would be good to be able do my own banking and feel safe with it as well. Practice is important – I'm quite bad at it, but even just keeping my iPad handy next to my chair means I can do a wee bit each day.

## Would you recommend the digital training to others?

Definitely, it's very exciting! I didn't think I would ever manage it, but my teacher is very patient and I'm doing quite well now. I would tell people to give it a go, there's so much you can do!

We offer one-to-one support, and will also be running group sessions in certain areas depending on demand. To find out more please contact Sarah Neary, Digital Participation Officer on 0141 550 5078.

# New Homes Update

## Ayrshire

### Doonfoot, South Ayrshire

Work is due to begin on our new homes in Doonfoot in December 2019 with an expected completion date of March 2021. The 61 new homes are being built in partnership with MacTaggart and Mickel and will be a mix of 2 and 3 bedroom homes.

## Glasgow

### Dalmarnock Station Phase 1

We are working in partnership with Springfield Properties to deliver 114 new build homes in Dalmarnock. The site, which is located next to Dalmarnock Train Station, will include a mix of Mid-Market Rent and Social Rented homes ranging from 1 to 5 bedrooms. Planning consent has now been obtained and the development is expected to begin February 2020.



### Springfield Cross

CCG (Scotland) Ltd were awarded the contract for our first Passivhaus site via the HubWest Scotland framework. Work is currently underway to ensure value for money. Work on the 36 homes is expected to start in Summer/Autumn 2020 with a 15 months construction period.

### Dundashill

This Passivhaus development will consist of 90 homes - 15 town-houses for social rent and 75 apartments for Mid-Market Rent. Planning has been submitted and site start is programmed to take place in the Summer 2020.



### Fielden Street

Work is progressing well with our 52 new homes in East Glasgow with completion expected Autumn 2020.

## Sky Q Installation

We have had a number of enquiries from tenants who are having Sky Q installed which can involve work being needed before the installation. Please note we do not pay for upgrading communal satellite systems to allow Sky to carry out their installation of Sky Q. You should contact us prior to installing satellite TV so we can advise about local rules about whether it is permitted for additional dishes to be fitted, or restricted methods of how they are fitted (concrete slab, only to the rear or side etc.).

# WSHA in Bloom

It was great that so many of our tenants got involved in our 2019 Garden Competition which we ran in partnership with Tivoli, our grounds maintenance contractor. The judges were impressed with the high standard of all the entries and a winner was chosen from each of our areas – Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. Well done to the winners for having such fantastic gardens!

## Glasgow

Dawn McDermott



## Lanarkshire

Sandra Brown



## Ayrshire

Mr & Mrs Sneddon



# New Board Members Welcomed

We have recently welcomed four new tenant members to our Board who are all committed to putting tenants at the heart of decision making and service delivery. To find out more about our Board including a full list of members and minutes from previous meetings please visit our website [www.westscot.co.uk](http://www.westscot.co.uk)

## Ayrshire

### David Wark

David is a tenant in Symington, Ayrshire and works as a Support Worker with the NHS. He also has voluntary experience of working with the Red Cross and previously worked with the Red Cross. David wanted to become a Board Member as thinks it is important that tenants have a voice and he is passionate about community involvement.

## Glasgow

### George Kpodo

George is a tenant in East Glasgow and is currently employed as a Health & Safety Officer. He is also a leader in his local church on a voluntary basis. George is passionate about his community and feels that this is an opportunity to play a key role in shaping direction and services for tenants.

### Lorraine Preston

Lorraine is a tenant in the Broomhouse area of Glasgow and currently works with adults who are homeless and have addiction issues. She has also has voluntary experience of working in a women's resource centre. Lorraine believes it is important that tenants have a voice and that the Board promotes inclusion in relation to all the communities of WSHA.

### Paul MacNeil

Paul has been a tenant in South Glasgow for over 30 years and is currently studying for a Diploma in Writing for Business and has experience of marketing and also management experience. Paul thinks it is important that tenant's views are part of WSHA's decision making.

# Getting Involved

## Tenant Advisory Group

The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) continues to meet every two months to oversee our approach to Tenant Engagement, and to provide input on a number of policies that impact on tenants. The Group receives regular information from us about how we are performing, and have raised concerns with managers about our performance in relation to rent arrears and the days it takes us to relet homes.

TAG have also had presentations this year about a number of policy areas this year including:

- Estate Management Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Abandonment Policy
- Equality Policy

For each of the above TAG provided feedback to us about how they felt the policy was currently working, and suggested some improvements.

In 2020 TAG will focus on learning lessons from the rent consultation, support us to update our Corporate Plan, and hear about our approach to tenant safety.

## Tenant Scrutiny Trip

Our Tenant Scrutiny Group was keen to learn how other organisations approach scrutiny, and arranged a study visit to Aberdeen. The Group were pleased to meet with representatives from Aberdeen Council, Langstane Housing Association and Castlehill Housing Association. Thanks to all concerned for hosting the Group.

Our Group were able to learn about how each landlord approached tenant scrutiny and were able to learn about the key challenges and successes of each organisation. The key lessons identified were:

- Tenant Scrutiny works best where the Group and the landlord are open and honest with each other and adopt a partnership approach
- A Scrutiny Group should use a range of different measures to assess services
- If Scrutiny Groups from different landlords can work together they can achieve more
- Scrutiny Groups should be innovative in how they present their results – using videos as well as written reports
- Tenant Scrutiny Groups should do all they can to encourage other tenants to get involved in their activities



The Group agreed that one of their priorities going forward would be to develop a relationship with scrutiny groups from landlords across the areas where we have homes.

If you are interested in getting involved in our Tenant Advisory Group, or want to speak to our Tenant Engagement officer about other ways you can get involved, then please get in touch with Alistair Reid on 0141 550 5060, or at [haveyoursay@westscot.co.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@westscot.co.uk)

# Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy



**We have worked with our Tenant Scrutiny Group to develop a Customer Service Charter which sets out the standards that our customers should expect when getting in touch with us. Alongside this, we have developed an Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy which sets out the standards of behaviour from our customers that our staff and contractors should expect.**

We understand that tenants can sometimes be angry or frustrated when they feel we have not provided the service they expect and we will always aim to find a solution, however it is never suitable for customers to demonstrate unacceptable behaviour towards our staff.

The policy sets out the types of behaviour we would regard as unacceptable:

- Unreasonable behaviour – including recording meetings without consent, refusing to accept a decision made in line with our policy, making inflammatory or derogatory comments on social media, or making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with an issue.
- Aggressive or abusive behaviour – including physical violence or personal abuse, persistent swearing, unsubstantiated allegations or any sexist, racist, homophobic or other discriminatory comments.
- Unreasonable demands – including demanding responses within unreasonable timescales, insisting on meeting with only one specific member of staff, making persistent phone calls or persistently contacting us by other means.
- Unreasonable persistence – including persistently refusing to accept explanations relating to what we can or cannot do, and continuing to pursue a complaint without presenting any new information.
- Vexatious behaviour – including continually requesting information that has already been shared, or where requests are made with the intention of causing significant inconvenience.

The policy then sets out what action we may take when we feel that a customer is demonstrating what we regard as unacceptable behaviour. We do not anticipate using this policy frequently however when customers demonstrate the actions above, it means that staff are not spending time getting on with their job of helping other tenants.

You can read a full copy of the policy on our website.

## Safety Notice

**Triton, a supplier of showers in some of our properties, have informed us of a product safety notice relating to their electric showers. Under very rare circumstances and in a very small number of cases a part of the electronic circuit board of the Safeguard+ shower may develop a fault which could lead to overheating and a potential risk of electric shock or fire hazard. If you have a Triton Safeguard+ shower can you please contact our Repairs Team on 0141 550 5600 so we can arrange for the necessary safety checks to be carried out.**

# Service Charge Review – We want your views

Along with monthly rent, many of our tenants also pay a 'service charge', which is for additional services that we provide, specific to the block they live in. Service charges are separate from the rent charge, and are intended to ensure that only those tenants that benefit from extra services pay to receive them.

The kinds of services which are covered by this charge can include:

- Grounds maintenance service
- Stair lighting
- Back court maintenance
- Communal window cleaning

For those of our tenants living in sheltered housing there will also be a wider range of services provided.

Over the last year we have looked carefully at the actual costs for these services for each individual property. The changes we are proposing will make our approach to service charging fairer and more transparent.

## Common stairs lighting/landlord supply

Until now, we have not been separately charging customers for services such as the communal supply of electricity for stair lighting, and these costs have been paid by rents. Our proposal is that these charges should be met only by customers who receive the service, generally those who live flats. We believe that it isn't fair that tenants who live in houses should pay for this type of service. For those customers who receive this service we are proposing to charge a flat rate fee of around £1.25 a week.

## Ground Maintenance

Service charges for ground maintenance (including grass cutting) are currently based on average charges. We think it will be fairer to base charges on actual costs of ground upkeep in the area you live. This will mean increases for some and reduced charges for others.

## Back Court Maintenance and Communal Window Cleaning

Where this is provided our charges are already based on actual costs in your area and these charges will stay generally the same.

## Applying the New Service Charges

Where service charges have reduced we will reduce the charge from 1st April 2020.

Increases in service charges will be capped at a maximum of £12 a month, and for those small numbers of increases above this cost, we will phase in the increases over the next three years as we want to minimise the impact.

We will continue to ensure that all service contracts provide value for money for tenants by through competitive tendering processes.

Note: The vast bulk of service charges are eligible costs if you receive housing benefit or the housing element of universal credit.

## What do you think?

We are keen to get your views.

Is it fairer that tenants should only pay for those services that they receive?

Do you agree that we should phase significant increases over three years?

Do you think that it makes sense to charge a flat rate for the communal supply of electricity?

If you have any views on the above questions or would like to know how you may be impacted we would like your feedback. Please complete a short survey on our website or you can email us at [haveyoursay@westscot.co.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@westscot.co.uk) or call 0141 550 5060.

# Regulatory Assurance Statement

**We are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) who have developed a new framework in February this year which outlined the key requirements that all Housing Associations need to comply with. These requirements include Equalities and Human Rights, all legislative obligations e.g. health and safety, employment and housing legislation, our performance in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and how we comply with the regulator's standards in relation to Governance and Financial Management. As part of the new Framework, our Board is assured that we are complying with all of these requirements and have submitted our first annual statement to confirm this.**

While there were no areas of material noncompliance, the Board has identified a number of improvement areas which they will work on over the next year.

Following the submission of the Assurance Statement the SHR will consider the statement as part of their risk assessment process alongside other information they receive from us. This includes Charter submission, financial returns, risk register, whistleblowing, notifiable events and other information required as per our engagement plan. The SHR will communicate the outcome of their risk assessment by publishing a 'regulatory status' for each RSL as part of their Engagement Plan. We will be informed of our regulatory status prior to March 2020.

Our Assurance Statement and full improvement plan can be found on our website [www.westscot.co.uk](http://www.westscot.co.uk)

## Tenant Pledges Update

It has now been 2 years since we left the Gentoo Group. During the demerger process we made a number of pledges to tenants in relation to service improvement and we thought it would be good time to give an update:

Our Pledge	Progress Made
Build 500 new homes across our communities over the next five years	We have built the following new homes since 2017: Symington - 34 Troon - 64 East Kilbride - 31 We are on track to building 500 new homes in total by 2022.
Improve our tenant engagement and communication	We employed a Tenant Engagement Officer in 2017 and have focused our Communications Strategy on improving communication with our tenants. Our annual satisfaction survey results for 2019 demonstrated that 99.5% of tenants surveyed are satisfied with the opportunities that they have to participate and be involved in decision making. 99.25% of those tenants also said that they were satisfied with how we keep them informed about services and decisions.
Have our own IT System	Our new IT system has now been implemented and we are working to further develop the system to improve the efficiency of the services that we provide. The second phase of the new IT system will be develop a tenant portal which will allow tenants to access services online.
Develop a new, more accessible, tenant friendly website	Our website is now in place and has been reviewed and updated following the introduction of Freedom of Information legislation to Housing Associations. Through our website we aim to be transparent and open in relation to the information we provide and how we operate.

# Welfare Rights Update



## Best Start Foods:

Best Start Foods is a new Scottish Government scheme to help buy healthy foods for you and your baby, including plain cow's milk, first infant formula, fresh/frozen/tinned fruit or vegetables, fresh or dried pulses like lentils, beans, peas and barley and fresh eggs.

Parents over 18 can apply so long as you are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance

Applications can be made when you're pregnant, or any time up to your child turning 3 years old.

Payments are as follows:

- £17 every 4 weeks during pregnancy
- £34 every 4 weeks from your child being born up until they're 1 year old
- £17 every 4 weeks between the ages of 1 – 3

Claimants will be issued a card which can be used to buy healthy foods in large supermarkets, in smaller local stores, or online.

Applications can be made online at:  
<https://applications.socialsecurity.gov.scot/beststartgrant>

Or by calling Freephone: 0800 182 2222

Applications can be accepted in over 100 languages.

## Young Carer Grant:

The Scottish Government introduced the Young Carer Grant from October 2019.

It will be a £300 annual lump sum payment for:

- 16 to 18 year olds who provide care for 16 hours or more each week but do not receive Carers Allowance

It will be paid to young carers who provide care which is described as "promoting the physical, mental or emotional wellbeing of an individual".

This recognises that while some young carers help with physical care, others provide support such as reminding and supporting the emotional wellbeing of the person they care for.

The person receiving care must be in receipt of a qualifying benefit. These are the same qualifying benefits needed to claim Carers Allowance:

- The middle or the higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance
- Either rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment
- Either rate of Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance or the normal maximum rate paid with Industrial Injuries or War Pensions schemes
- Armed Forces Independence Payment

Only one young carer can claim the Young Carer Grant for providing care to a person with a qualifying benefit.

## Other support for young carers:

The support also includes a young carer element to the Young Scot National Entitlement Card and in 2021/22, concessionary bus travel.

**If you would like help with your welfare benefits please contact our Welfare Rights Team on 0141 550 5662 or [welfarerights@westscot.co.uk](mailto:welfarerights@westscot.co.uk).**

# Watch out for Winter

There are some precautions you can take in the event of cold weather, but despite insulation, in very cold spells, pipes can freeze and burst. Find some tips 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 your usual temperature setting, especially if you are going to be away from home for any length of time.
- 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 away.

This will mean that if you do suffer a burst pipe, it will be detected as soon as possible and any damage caused will be minimised. Alternatively, if you are going to be away for a longer period you should turn off your water supply and drain the system – contact the Repairs Team on 0141 550 5600 Option 1 for more information on how to do this.

- Keep furniture away from radiators and other heat sources so they do not block heat from circulating freely. Thick, lined curtains are very effective in slowing down heat loss.
- Be a good neighbour. When cold weather hits, keep an eye out for your neighbours, especially the frail, elderly and disabled.

## Recycling Tips



Recycling has a number of benefits to the environment and you can do some simple things to make recycling easier:

- Find out what you can recycle in your area
- Get dates in your diary for when your recycling will be collected
- Set up a system at home to sort out your recycling

You can help reduce the amount of rubbish sent to landfill by reusing and recycling as much as you can. Your council can give information on:

- what rubbish it collects
- what goes in your recycling bin
- how to report a missed bin collection
- how to find your nearest recycling centre
- ordering new recycling bins for your home

For more information visit [www.mygov.scot/bins/](http://www.mygov.scot/bins/)

# Performance and Complaints

## 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. To support us to do this we regularly monitor the complaints we receive, and also have an independent company Research Resource undertake monthly satisfaction surveys. Where an issue comes up as part of a complaint, or is fed back to us by Research Resource we will look to make changes to how we work.

## Complaints Update

Over the course of the second quarter of the year (July to September) we received a total of 87 complaints, 75 which were covered under stage one of our process and 12 under stage two. The vast bulk of the complaints we received related to our Grounds Maintenance service, and the relevant Managers continue to raise these with the contractor.

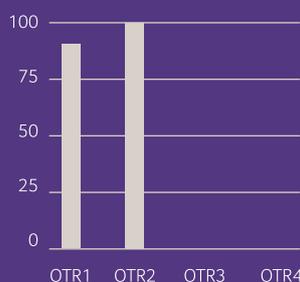
You Said	We Will
We received a complaint from a tenant as we had not shared information with them about an infestation at a property within their close.	We are reviewing our policy in this area so that in the future we can notify neighbouring tenants without identifying an individual.

## WSHA Customer Satisfaction 2019/20

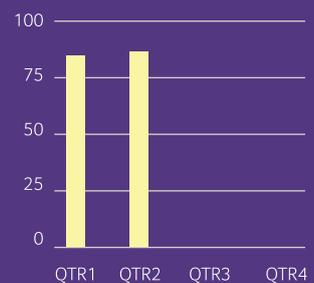
Overall, how satisfied were you with the repairs and maintenance service received?



% of tenants satisfied with planned maintenance



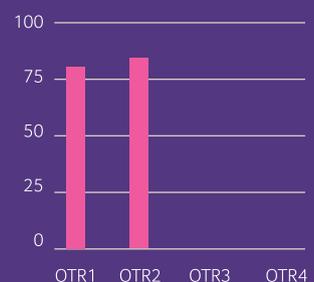
Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by West of Scotland Housing Association?



Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the landlords's management of the neighbourhood you live in?



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



**For more information please contact:**

t: 0141 550 5600

w: [westscot.co.uk](http://westscot.co.uk)

e: [info@westscot.co.uk](mailto:info@westscot.co.uk)

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