**WE HAVE PULLED TOGETHER A LIST OF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & RESPONSES WHICH WE HOPE YOU FIND USEFUL. INFO CORRECT AS AT 31st MARCH 2020.**

**However, please mindful that some of the advice out there is constantly changing and we would recommend checking out our website/government websites for regular updates.**

Are we still carrying out gas safety checks?

Our current legal duties as a landlord has not changed on this and we are still required to carry out a gas safety check every 12 months.

At present our gas contractor, Gas Sure has advised us that in the short term they will not be able to carry out gas safety checks.  BHA will monitor this situation closely and Gas Sure or a member of BHA staff will be in contact with individual tenants who require a gas service as soon as Gas Sure reinstate this service.  When the gas service programme is up and running again we will need your assistance and access to the property to carry out this necessary statutory service.  We understand that some residents at present have refused entry because they are worried about the virus spreading but we will require access to your home so that the service can be completed to comply with current Gas Safety Legislation.

The Scottish Government are aware of these issues and are currently looking at legislation on this matter.  However, please be assured that all outstanding checks will be picked up immediately and co-ordinated with our contractor once it is safe to carry them out.

Please ensure that access is granted on the first arranged visit, especially where your legally due date has already past.

What if I have no heating or hot water – is this classed as an emergency?

Emergency classification is changing on a regular basis but at present our Gas Safety Contractor Gas Sure are only dealing with Essential Gas Maintenance.  From today this includes: No heating, no hot water, no heating and hot water, gas leak, leaking boiler and significant water leak from radiator or water pipes that could result in significant damage to the property.

This has changed from previous information provided to us on the 26 March 2020 which stated that they would only deal with a gas leak or a leaking boiler/ radiator where the water can’t be contained and is causing significant damage.

If you report that you have no heating Gas Sure will attempt to repair.  If they are not able to do so then they shall leave temporary heating with you until parts can be ordered and fitted.  Unfortunately there is no facility available to provide temporary hot water and if hot water can’t be fixed at visit parts will have to be ordered and Gas Sure will contact you to arrange access direct to revisit.

What about other repairs to my home?

From Tuesday 24th March 2020 we had to change the way we responded to and carried out repairs, based on recommended government guidance and also due to the way contractors dealt with repair requests. We can currently only respond to Emergencies.

This will continue for the duration of government recommendations which restrict non-essential services. We will provide updates via all our social medial platforms when we know more.

All cancelled repairs will be picked up and re-prioritised once it is safe to do so.

Remember that our Contractors will only be able to attend your home in very limited circumstances for emergency only repairs. Furthermore, where they do attend please follow their guidance to keep safe which may include staying in another room until such times as they leave.

For emergency repairs out with office hours 5:00pm and 9:00am please call our call handing service on **0800 652 0633**

For gas heating breakdowns, call James Frew (Gas Sure) on **01294 468113**

For a suspected Gas Leak, call National Grid **0800 111 999**

Please see our website for information on how to report a repair. We have also prepared some helpful guidance on things to check in the event of an emergency before contacting us. (such as checking an appliance if you lose your power).

Are we still carrying out investment work?

We have required to put our planned and cyclical projects on hold whilst we work through these exceptional times.

This affects:

* The remaining bathrooms replacements at Southpark Avenue
* The upgrading of smoke alarm systems/heat sensors throughout our stock

Our contractor Everwarm will be going back to complete both of these contracts as soon as practically possible.  The Association also have a Planned Bathroom Contract proposed for 2020 which we still hope to progress but this could be later in the financial year.

Our cyclical paintwork programme for 2020 with J S McColl was due to begin in April but this has unfortunately had to be postponed and we hope to start the external works as soon as possible.

Other contracts that will be affecting by the virus include our landscaping contract. This has currently been suspended and these will resume as soon as Government guidance has confirmed it is safe to do so.

We are continuing to provide communal close cleaning services as this is deemed an essential service to keep our common areas clean. This is currently under review and may change.

What if I am due a rent credit refund? How will I get it?

If you believe you are due back rent as you have a credit on your account, then please contact your customer services officer. If money is due back to you, this can only be done via a bank transfer and the money will be placed directly into your bank account – unfortunately we will be able to distribute any cheques until further notice.

Are we still letting homes & processing applications?

During the Coronavirus outbreak, we have had to stop letting our homes temporarily and there will be restriction on processing any applications that may be received. This is for a number of reasons, including contractors being unable to undertake work to void properties; carry out necessary safety checks; accessing application forms that come into our closed offices; applicants and tenants being unable to move due to the lockdown.

We have also had to suspend the allocation on the new properties due to come off site at Neilston shortly, and all affected applicants have been personally notified.

How can I contact my customer services officer?

Our housing offices are now closed and our customer services team are fully-equipped to work from home. Although home visits are suspended, your customer services officer will remain in contact with you by telephone, email and text.

All appointments with our Welfare Rights Officer will be carried out over the telephone. We are urging all our tenants to let us know if, through being ill or self-isolating, they will find it difficult to pay their rent. We are here to help.

What is happening with bin uplifts? Have I to put my rubbish out?

This service is provided by East Renfrewshire Council and their most recent communications state the following: Please check their website for any changes to their services.

<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus>

*Due to significantly reduced staffing levels caused by Coronavirus, from Monday 6 April, we'll* ***only*** *be operating a weekly grey bin collection for each household.*

*We are extremely proud of our excellent recycling rates in East Renfrewshire, however we are currently operating with half our normal workforce among our refuse collection staff, so this decision has been taken to provide residents with as much waste collection as possible and to prevent any confusion over which bin to put out each week:*

* *All of your household waste can be put into the grey bin including cans, glass, plastic, paper, card, food, garden and general waste.*
* *All grey bin waste will be sent to a special recovery centre and converted to green energy - it will not be sent to landfill.*
* *Final collections of green bins (cans/plastic/glass) will be collected this week (w/c 30 March) - there will be no further blue, brown or green bin collections from next week (w/c 6 April) onwards.*
* *Please do not leave additional waste in bags beside your grey bin - it isn't safe for our staff to touch and it won't be collected.*
* *If you do have excess garden waste, we suggest finding an area in the garden suitable to allow it to compost naturally.*
* *If you have somewhere you can safely store your blue and green bin waste (paper, card, glass and plastic), please do so and it will be collected when normal service is resumed.*
* *No further requests for additional grey bins will be accepted.*
* *There will be no further special uplift bookings taken. Any pre-booked uplifts will be collected.*
* *We will still aim to collect your bin on the normal collection day.*

***Recycling centres***

*Our recycling centres at Greenhags and Barrhead are now closed, following the latest announcement by the government on Monday 23 March.*

***What to do with your waste if you have Coronavirus symptoms***

*If you've symptoms of Coronavirus or live with someone who does, you must store your personal waste such as used tissues and disposable cleaning cloths securely within disposable plastic bags.*

*When appropriate, these bags should be removed and placed into another bag and securely tied or sealed and kept separate from other waste.*

*This must be stored for at least 72 hours inside your property before being put in your non-recyclable waste bin. Other household waste can be disposed of as normal.*

What if I can’t go out to top up my meter?

What if I can’t pay my gas & electricity – what help is out there for me?

**Pay As You Go - Key and Card meters**

If you have a key or a card meter, you should top up your meter as soon as possible with as much as you can afford. You should also contact your supplier, as suppliers have plans in place to help customers through this period.

A list of suppliers’ phone numbers is included below.

**Pre-pay smart meter**

If you have a pre-pay smart meter, you should still be able to top up online or via the suppliers’ apps. If there any problems with this, you should contact your supplier in the first instance.

You can also ask the supplier to change the meter into billing mode until things get back to normal.

**Payment cards**

If you use a payment card, you should contact your supplier to find out if payment plans are being suspended or if there are alternative arrangements in place.

**Dry/credit meter**

If you have a dry/credit meter – that is, if you pay by bill or Direct Debit – the current situation with the Coronavirus shouldn’t affect you.

Here are some useful websites and phone numbers.

* [Energy Action Scotland website](https://www.eas.org.uk/en/coronavirus_56247)
* [Scottish Power website](https://community.scottishpower.co.uk/t5/Extra-Help/Coronavirus-COVID-19-information-for-ScottishPower-customers/ta-p/15029)
* [Money Saving Expert website](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/energy-firms-move-to-help-customers-unable-to-top-up-due-to-coro)

To find out who your electricity supplier is, phone 03301 010 300.

To find out who your gas supplier is, phone 08706 081 524.

You can also visit [www.findmysupplier.energy](http://www.findmysupplier.energy/)

Here are some helpful phone numbers:

* Scottish Power 08000 270 072
* Scottish Gas 03332 029 802
* SSE 0345 073 7969 or 03450 262 658
* Eon 03332 024 698
* NPower 08000 733 000
* EDF 03332 005 100
* OVO 03303 035 063
* Utilita 03303 337 442

How long will it be before we resume normal services following any closure and restriction of services?

We will be closely following the advice of the Government and will look to resume normal services as soon as possible.

I am worried about scams – what should I do to protect myself?

**Protect yourself and others from becoming victims of scams during the Coronavirus crisis.**

Be aware of people offering or selling:

* virus testing kits - these are only offered by NHS;
* vaccines or miracle cures – there is currently no vaccine or cure;
* overpriced or fake goods to protect yourself from Coronavirus such as anti-bacterial products;
* shopping or medication collection services;
* and home cleaning services.

Protect yourself and others:

* by checking any emails/texts you receive asking for personal details are genuine. They may be from the Government, Department of Work and Pensions or Universal Credit teams;
* don’t be rushed into making a decision. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is;
* only purchase goods from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information;
* don’t assume everyone is genuine. It’s okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you;
* if someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for ID. Be suspicious of requests for money up front. If someone attempts to pressurise you into accepting a service they are unlikely to be genuine. Check with family and friends before accepting offers of help if you are unsure.

For advice on scams call Advice Direct (Scotland) on 0808 164 6000.

To report a scam call Police Scotland on 101.

Contact your bank if you think you have been scammed.

To learn more about the different types of scams visit the [Friends Against Scams](https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/) website.