

# The Anchor

Barrhead Housing newsletter



New and improved for you:

- Latest updates
- Local news
- Our annual performance



Autumn 2022

# WELCOME!



At our AGM in September, we launched our new look for Barrhead Housing. You will see our new logo and colours in this newsletter and in all our communications. Our hope is that they show that we are friendly, approachable and here for you.

Our new identity has 4 “pillars” which represent who we are:

- a provider of affordable and safe homes
- a community anchor
- an organisation that cares for people
- and who works collaboratively with partners to improve lives.

Please let us know what you think of our new look by emailing: [enquiries@barrheadha.org](mailto:enquiries@barrheadha.org) or message us on facebook by [clicking here](#)

In this newsletter you'll find updates from the team, information about support and advice for you, and lots of opportunities for you to get involved in shaping our plans and services. I hope you enjoy it.

***Lorna Wilson, Chief Executive***

# Getting to Know You



**Last year, we updated our Equality and Diversity Vision for Barrhead Housing. To allow us to fully implement our vision, it is important that we know as much as we can about our customers. This is so that we can make sure we are delivering services to meet the needs of our diverse range of customers.**

In order to start the process of “Getting to Know You” better, we are carrying out an anonymous survey of all our customers to collect information on equalities “characteristics”. This survey will help us to continue to be a more diverse and inclusive organisation, one which puts our customers at the heart of what we do.

The equalities survey will shortly be sent to customers through your preferred communication method. You can also access the survey by either [clicking here](#) (or copy this address into your web browser) <https://cxfb.co.uk/sc/890D2C10/8A012E18>

If you would prefer to receive a paper copy of the survey, please contact us on [enquiries@barrheadha.org](mailto:enquiries@barrheadha.org) or by phone on 0141 881 0638 to request an equalities survey form, and we will send this to you by post, along with a pre-paid envelope.

This survey is completely anonymous, and you only need to answer the survey questions which you are happy to answer.

Should you need any more information about this survey, please feel free to contact Iain MacLean at [iainm@barrheadha.org](mailto:iainm@barrheadha.org), or by phone on 0181 881 0638.

## Barrhead Housing Equality and Diversity Vision

**At Barrhead Housing, we are committed to keeping equality and diversity principles and kindness at the heart of all the decisions we make as a business.**

We respect and highly value individual differences. Everybody is different and we aim to understand, value, respect and celebrate differences; to enable all customers and colleagues to contribute and realise their full potential, to make Barrhead Housing a safe open working environment and to ensure that we provide an excellent service for all people.

We are committed to ensuring that all of our colleagues and customers enjoy the same opportunities and receive excellent services. We will proactively aim to design our services and ways of working so that everyone can participate and feel like they belong.

All of our customers and colleagues are equally important, however we recognise that everyone has different needs which we respect and aim to meet through different services and engagement.

We will work to ensure that no individual or group experiences unlawful discrimination in the provision of our services, in recruitment or in any of our actions. To do this we will challenge our ways of working and thinking to aim to identify and remove potential barriers, through learning and development, through our service design and delivery, and in our day to day work.

For our customers, one of the key barriers to equality can be in relation to poverty. Poverty leads to inequalities in health, employment opportunities and life chances. As a community housing association we understand that we play an important role in the alleviation of hardship and we are committed to using our services and our wider influence to reduce inequalities.

We will not tolerate less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, gender, gender reassignment, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital/civil partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities, criminal record, place of residence, religion, faith or other beliefs, health status or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

We aim to reach out to seek input from those who are seldom heard, to see things from other perspectives, to listen, understand, design, act and learn.

In everything we do, we work with our values:

- **Respectful** – we are honest, trustworthy and reliable
- **Adaptable** – we are flexible and react to change
- **Dedicated** – we care about our purpose
- **Aspirational** – we are forward thinking and committed to improvement
- **Responsive** – we are efficient and accountable.



# Barrhead Housing updates and news

## New Board Members

In September, our Governing Board was strengthened by the arrival of 3 new Board members:



### Lesley Anne Junner

Lesley-Anne is from Barrhead, and is a finance professional who has been working in senior management positions in the third sector and housing for the past 16 years. As well as being a qualified chartered accountant Lesley-Anne is also a member of the Chartered Institute of Housing. Lesley-Anne is currently Director of Finance and Corporate Service at Children 1st.



### Deborah McVey

Deborah lives in East Renfrewshire and has worked in Financial Services for 25+ years, successfully undertaking a number of different roles within Operations and HR and has a Post Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management. She is results orientated, has a high degree of energy and great commitment to getting things done. Deborah's current role is Senior Audit Manager, Performance & Quality, for the Internal Audit Team at Virgin Money.



### Alan Oliver

Alan is a Barrhead resident, has also been a Board member with Lavern Property Services since 2018. Alan is a Chartered Civil Engineering in the Transportation sector and is currently employed as a Senior Associate Director. Alan is also a Volunteer mentor for the Social Mobility Foundation, which aspires to provide opportunities, and networks of support for 16 and 17 year-olds who are unable to get them from their schools or families.



## Sustainability

Over the coming months we will be further developing our approach to sustainability, aiming to reduce our carbon footprint and develop sustainable communities, through our ways of working, services and partnerships.

If you have an interest or expertise in this area and may be interested in joining our sustainability group to help take this forward, please get in touch with our Chief Executive: [lornaw@barrheadha.org](mailto:lornaw@barrheadha.org) to find out more.

## Meet the Team

As we have welcomed a number of new team members in recent months, we thought it would be helpful to provide you with details of our new teams.

Over the next few editions of our newsletter, we intend to provide you with further detail of our teams – who they are and what they do.

In this Autumn edition of the newsletter, we are featuring our Customer Services “Hub”, who are the team that deal with our day to day enquiries, repairs and maintenance requests, general phone calls, allocation queries and prospects interviews and all reception enquiries made by our customers.

### Featured team: Meet team Hub

Our Hub Team comprises 4 members of staff. Jade, our Senior Customer Services Adviser in the Hub is about to head off on a period of maternity leave, so during her absence Jade’s role will be undertaken by Lauren Graham. Working with Jade/Lauren are 2 Customer Services Advisers (Mark MacLean and Kimberley Whitten) and Nicola Roy, who is our Customer Services Assistant.



Jade



Mark



Kimberley



Nicola

# Support for tenants

## Energy Bills Support Scheme

The government will give every household in Great Britain £400 off their electricity bill. This is called the Energy Bills Support Scheme. You don't need to do anything to get the money and you won't have to pay it back. The £400 will automatically be added to your energy account over 6 months starting from October 2022.

Account holders/billpayers with traditional (non-smart) prepayment meters will receive the Energy Bill Support Scheme discount of £400 via Special Action Messages (SAM) or vouchers which will be sent via SMS text, email or post and so it's important to ensure your energy supplier has the right contact details for you, or if a carer/family member is going to redeem the discount then their details will need to be given to suppliers too.

Further information can be found by [clicking here](#).



## Adult Disability Payment

Adult Disability Payment is now open for applications across Scotland. You can apply if you:

- Are between 16 years old and state pension age
- Need help with the extra costs of being disabled or having a long term health condition

Adult Disability Payment replaces Personal Independence Payment (PIP). If you already get PIP from the DWP, you don't need to apply as your payments will transfer automatically.

Find out more at: <https://www.mygov.scot/adult-disability-payment>

## Tenant Support Fund – Opening Monday 7th November

We have set up a fund totalling £24,000 for our Tenants to provide support with the following:

- Payment for tenants in need of financial support for a particular need such as utility bills, urgent white goods (repair or replacement)
- Fees for clubs, classes or membership for adults or young people
- Education such as evening classes, courses or extra tuition
- Skills development related activities
- Clothing for a specific event or need e.g. a job interview, winter coat, shoes
- Tenants can apply once, up to £200. Applicants exceeding that amount will be considered if there are exceptional circumstances (such as significant utility debt or White Good replacement)
- If the application is for a utility bill debt, then copies of bills showing the debt will be required
- It is open to all Tenants, with no particular priority groups, but Tenants will need to have a bank account for it to be paid into if the application is successful
- There is no paper application. Hub staff, Customer Service Officers and the Community Investment Team will be able to complete an application via a phone call on 0141 881 0638 (option 7) or in person at the office
- **The fund will open on Monday 7th November and remain open until it has been exhausted**



# Good news corner

## A bright future for local Barrhead resident

A local resident, Shannon, got in touch with Shay Young (our Community Investment Officer) after receiving a text from us about our new employability project for young people - *The Brighter Futures Barrhead Course* which was funded through East Renfrewshire Council and the Scottish Government. Shannon had been to college and been involved in volunteering, but had limited work experience and was looking to find a job to build her confidence and to become more independent.

After meeting Shay and hearing more about the course, Shannon agreed to join our first *Brighter Futures Barrhead Course*, which started in January 2022. During the course, Shannon updated her CV, created a cover letter and took part in job application workshops and mock interviews, which improved her confidence as it helped her understand what kind of answers to give and how to structure them, both for interviews and applications. Shannon also gained three certificates over the 6 weeks: First Aid at Work, IOSH Working

Safely and Elementary Food Hygiene, which also boosted her confidence as well as giving her new up-to-date qualifications to add to her CV. The course also covered a range of life skills and relaxation techniques, which allowed Shannon to practice communication and teamwork skills with the rest of the course participants, as well as have some fun and relax.

At the end of the course, Shannon received support to apply for jobs and prepare for interviews, and she also re-engaged with volunteering by returning to work in a local charity shop. Not long after this, Barrhead Housing had the opportunity to recruit for an administration post, funded through East Renfrewshire Council's Long Term Unemployed programme. Shannon applied for the post, was interviewed and was successful! She started working with us shortly after and has quickly settled in to her new role. Shannon will continue to engage with Shay towards the end of her contract to update her CV, and look for another job- which will be easier now with 6 months of paid work experience in her chosen field.

## Barrhead Housing support towards Benefit Award

A tenant attended our Welfare Rights Service to seek help for their Personal Independence Payment as they had been knocked back after attending a medical.

After meeting with one of our specialist Welfare Right Advisers an appeal was submitted and in turn led to the DWP changing their decision and making an award for PIP. This resulted in a backdate of over £7500 for the tenant and a 3 year PIP award totalling £14,414.40. Our tenant was able to provide us with comments in which they reported that "The Welfare Rights Service was outstanding and was overwhelmed with gratitude".

Life has become much easier for the tenant now and they are more positive about the future. impact on both them and their life.

# Local project updates

## Kitchens update

Barrhead Housing has procured a kitchen replacement contract for the next 4 years.

The successful contractor is Everwarm. Everwarm come with vast experience in carrying out these works and we look forward to working with them on this project. This year we will be installing 70 new kitchens within selected properties in Barnes St, Cogan Street, Gladstone Avenue, George St, Henry St, Mill Rd and a small number on Cross Arthurlie Street.

If you have been notified regarding your new kitchen and you have any questions please contact Scott Stewart, Director of Assets and Communities at [scotts@barrheadha.org](mailto:scotts@barrheadha.org) who will be happy to help.

## Bathrooms update

We are pleased to announce that the successful bathroom replacement contract at Rankin Way and Rankin Court is due to be completed by the end of October. The project has been a great success thanks to our contractor Everwarm.

We would also like to personally thank all the tenants for providing access and being extremely helpful to Everwarm while the works were carried out. We will send out a survey to tenants who have a new bathroom.

If you receive a survey, we would appreciate it if you could fill it in as it will inform future programmes.

## External Doors

We have upgraded external doors in our properties in McCulloch Way in Neilston. The project has been very successful and was carried out by Everwarm. We would like to thank all the tenants for their assistance in getting this project completed and hope that you like your new doors.

## Gas & Electrical Safety

Over the last few months, we have seen increasing cases of electricity and gas abstraction, commonly known as 'fiddling' or 'rigging' meters. Devices used to fraudulently reduce or eliminate energy unit costs are very dangerous and can cause electric shock, fire or gas explosion. These devices are illegal and the fitting of them not only places occupants at risk, but places neighbours at risk too. Energy abstraction is a serious offence and offenders can be prosecuted by law and may face custodial sentences.

We understand that you may be facing rising energy costs, particularly as winter is coming. We can help. Please get in touch and our team can put you in touch with organisations who offer free impartial advice on how to reduce your energy bills.



## Christmas Party for Tenants

We are planning to host a Christmas Party for our tenants! More information will follow in due course, so watch this space for further details.....





### Team Litter Pick

On Wednesday 21st September, our full team stepped away from their desks to participate in litter picks throughout various parts of Barrhead where our customers live.

We were able to collect over 60 bags of litter. We hope you will think that the areas surrounding your home are looking a bit cleaner.

If you would like to participate in any future litter picks with the team then please get in touch with [shayrony@barrheadha.org](mailto:shayrony@barrheadha.org) or ring 07436 251 798

# Give us your opinion and be entered into a prize draw!



### Are you getting value for money?

Do you feel that are getting value for money from the rent you pay? Or do we need to do better to provide you with value for money?

**Either way, we would love to hear from you.**

We want to meet with some of our tenants to discuss how we can ensure that we are giving you value for money.

We are planning to run a workshop, where tenants will meet with Lorna Wilson, our Chief Executive and Bryan Dando, Community Investment Manager, to discuss and share ideas about how we might provide best possible value for money.

If you are interested in taking part, please email [enquiries@barrheadha.org](mailto:enquiries@barrheadha.org) with your name, address and contact details by **18 November 2022**.

We expect that the workshop will take a couple of hours – we will provide refreshments, and each participant will be entered into a prize draw as a thank you for taking part.

SPECIAL FEATURE

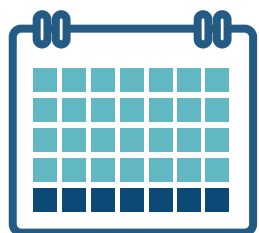


# Annual Performance and Value for Money Report 2021/2022

# Our performance results in summary



Almost **9 out of 10** tenants have said that they are satisfied with the overall service provided by Barrhead Housing



**28**

days on average to relet properties



**0.5%**

of rent was lost through properties being empty



**1.76**

hours on average was taken to complete emergency repairs

**6.57**

days on average to complete non emergency repairs



**4.02**

days on average to respond to stage 1 complaints



**80.58%**

of our properties met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard



**70**

of our properties were let throughout the course of the year



**97%**

of our anti social behaviour cases were resolved



# Progress against last years actions

Action	Comment
We will carry out our next satisfaction survey in 2022	Survey was completed in September 2022
We will work with our members to look at ways we can improve engagement	We wrote to all members this year asking them for suggestions to improve levels of engagement
Work with staff to improve stage 2 response times	Our stage 2 response times reduced from an average of 29 to under 23 days
We will implement improvements to our repairs service	We have implemented some improvements, but this is an area of work we have carried into the current year
We will continue to invest in our homes	Our investment programme has continued, with a year on year increase in levels of investment
We will work with East Renfrewshire Council to look at tenancy refusals arising from referrals	We continue to work with ERC to improve performance in this area
We will implement new ways of working to get closer to our customers and listen to what they say	We have undertaken a number of service design projects jointly with our customers
We will work with our consultants to develop a new rent structure which will be fair and affordable	A rent harmonisation project has been undertaken and a new rent structure has been agreed
Offer a range of ways for our customers to tell us what they want	We have carried out an increased number of customer surveys this year across a range of areas

# Our Customers and Communities



87%

of our tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided to them by Barrhead Housing



93%

of our tenants are satisfied with the opportunities to participate in the work on Barrhead Housing



100%

of stage 1 complaints were responded to in timescale

## Proposed actions this year to improve performance:

1. We will review the results of the 2022 resident satisfaction survey and agree any necessary actions arising from this
2. We will speak with our customers regarding our 2022 results
3. We will provide our team with further training on complaints handling and investigation.

Charter Performance	BHA 2021/22	Previous Year	East Ren Council	Scottish Average
Tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed	94%	94%	76%	91%
Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale	100%	100%	100%	97%
Stage 2 complaints responded to within timescale	89%	71%	100%	94%
Total membership of the Association	51	51	n/a	n/a



# Our Properties – Your Homes



79%

of our tenants are  
satisfied with the quality  
of their homes



70

properties were let  
throughout the course  
of the year



7%

of our stock became  
vacant throughout  
the year

## Proposed actions this year to improve performance

1. We will continue to work with our contractor to improve repairs performance
2. We will continue to invest in our stock through our planned investment programmes
3. We will work with our customers to look at ways to further improve our repairs service.

Charter Performance	BHA 2021/22	Previous Year	East Ren Council	Scottish Average
Stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	81%	98%	96%	75%
Average hours taken in to complete emergency repairs	1.76	1.88	2.66	4.16
Satisfaction with repairs service	83%	84%	70%	88%
Average days to relet empty homes	28	26	100	52





# The quality of services we deliver



**88%**

of our tenants are satisfied with our management of their neighbourhoods



**4.02**

days on average to respond to stage 1 complaints



**87%**

of our tenants are satisfied with the overall service we provide

Charter Performance	BHA 2021/22	Previous Year	East Ren Council	Scottish Average
Tenancies offered which were refused	35%	42%	51%	33%
Tenants satisfied with the overall service we provide	87%	87%	72%	88%

## Proposed actions this year to improve performance

1. We will work with East Renfrewshire Council to look at tenancy refusals arising from referrals
2. We will work with our customers to implement new ways of working across the services we provide.

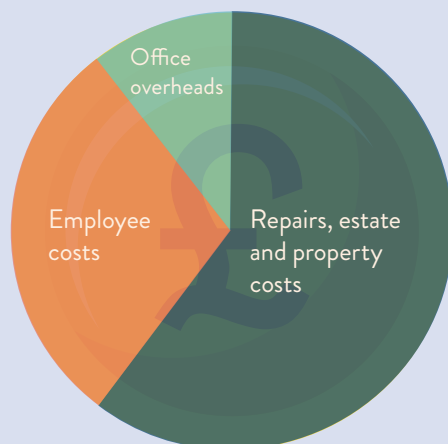


# Your rent and value for money

Charter Performance	BHA 2021/22	Previous Year	East Ren Council	Scottish Average
Rent lost due to empty homes	0.5%	0.4%	1.4%	1.4%
Tenants who think the rent charged is value for money	79%	79%	70%	83%
Gross rent arrears	3.7%	4%	10%	6.3%
Former tenant arrears as a % of rent due	0.79%	0.72%	2.92%	1.96

## How we spent every £1 of your rent money in 2021/22

- Repairs, estate and property costs – 60p
- Employee costs – 30p
- Office overheads – 10p



## Actions proposed to improve performance

1. We will implement a new, fair and transparent rent structure
2. We will work with our contractor to minimise the time vacant homes are empty
3. We will review our rent arrears policy and procedures with a view to improving arrears recovery.





**We are always here to help**

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Call us: 0141 881 0638

Email: [enquiries@barrheadha.org](mailto:enquiries@barrheadha.org)

Web: [www.barrheadha.org](http://www.barrheadha.org)

Out of hours repairs: 0800 652 0633

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