

The Anchor

Barrhead Housing newsletter



Out and about!

Our Customer Services Officers have been out and about in the estate, carrying out home visits to our customers to check in and see where we can help. We are offering visits to all our tenants in this financial year, to see how you are doing and whether there is anything we can do to help.

We can help with referrals to welfare benefits and money advice, support if you're struggling with the cost of living crisis, links to external support agencies, resolving neighbourhood issues and repairs/inspections to your home. Get in touch if you want your visit brought forward to meet with your Customer Service Officer to discuss any issues with your tenancy.

Photo: Our Customer Services Officer Ashley Burns and Customer Services Manager Kim Quinn out and about with the Mixed Tenure Team



In this edition: Meet the Assets Team, Mixed Tenure Project, Community Investment – 1 year in...

Summer 2023

Welcome..



Barrhead Housing



You may well have spotted some of the team out and about recently. Our Customer Services Officers are visiting customers to check in on how they are doing and to link them up with any support or assistance they may need. We are also regularly visiting our neighbourhoods to check on common areas and open spaces. Please say hello if you see us in passing – we are always keen to hear what’s going on for you and how we can help.

In this edition of our newsletter you’ll find updates on a new innovative partnership with East Renfrewshire Council to look after open spaces and common areas. You can also read about how we are developing our factoring service, meet our new Assets Team, learn about the work and impact we are making in local communities, and much more.

We are proud to share that our performance and customer satisfaction levels are high, although we are always looking to find ways to do more and better for you. See all the details on how we performed during 2022/23 in our special feature starting on page 13.

Please let us know what you think of our newsletter and share any ideas for future editions by emailing enquiries@barrheadha.org or messaging us on facebook. I hope you like the read, and enjoy the sunny days ahead!

Lorna

Barrhead Housing Engagement Plan 2023/24

Every year, the Scottish Housing Regulator publishes an engagement plan for every social landlord.

This engagement plans describes the Regulator's work with landlords.

Each engagement plans set out:

- why they are working with a landlord
- anything we need to do
- what we need to send to the Regulator
- what the Regulator will do
- our regulatory status.

The Regulator may ask some landlords for more information and assurance.

Our engagement status for 2023/24 is "compliant", meaning that we meet all the regulatory requirements, including the Standards of Governance and Financial Management.

You will find a copy of our current engagement plan here:
<https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/landlords/barrhead-housing-association-ltd/engagement-plan-from-31-march-2023-to-31-march-2024>

Happy to Translate

Barrhead Housing is a member of Happy to Translate , which is an award winning national scheme which enables organisations like us to engage effectively with customers who speak little or no English.

The team has the skills and knowledge needed to provide assistance to customers who speak little or no English. We can do this by offering our customers access to both telephone and in person interpretation services, and we can also offer translation services where required.

So as a member of Happy to Translate, we are ready to handle any language issues that arise confidently and professionally.



Meet the Team

In previous newsletters we started to feature our new teams. In this edition, we are providing information on our Assets Team, who look after our buildings (your homes!), including day-to-day repairs and our investment programmes.

Scott Stewart joined us from Parkhead Housing Association in July 2022 and was recently promoted to the role Director of Assets and Communities. In this role, Scott has overall responsibility for Strategic Asset Management, Community Investment activity, Procurement/ Investment and Health and Safety.

Supporting Scott in this role is Richard McLean who is the Asset Manager and who manages the day-to-day operations across repairs, investment and the management of our property assets. Richard joined us in November 2022.

Working with Scott and Richard is a team of 3 experienced and dedicated asset officers:

Siobhan Kelly is one of our longest serving employees and has responsibility for cyclical and compliance activity including fire, electrical, gas safety and other compliance requirements including legionella and asbestos.

Claire Yeudall recently joined us in the role of Asset Officer and supports the delivery of the main planned/ cyclical/reactive/voids maintenance projects and service contracts across our housing stock. This involves providing technical and compliance assistance as well as undertaking pre and post inspections to support the delivery of the relevant contracts.

The final member of the Assets Team is Janice Peters who is another long serving employee of Barrhead Housing. Janice undertakes a role similar to Claire, and Janice and Claire cover for one another in the event of staff holidays etc.

The Assets Team is pictured opposite (L-R Scott Stewart, Janice Peters, Siobhan Kelly, Claire Yeudall and Richard McLean)



GEM Programme

Our Team are supported each year to undertake appropriate learning and development opportunities. This investment in our staff development ensures that our team have the up to date skills and experience to continue to provide high quality services to our customers.

As an example of this, one of our team, Karen Devon is currently undertaking the “GEM” Programme, which is a year-long part time course which offers a unique and challenging learning experience in the world of housing and gives opportunities to build connections and share good practice, innovative ideas and identify any gaps within our organisation.

The workshops Karen attends are exceptional experiences and Karen says

“ I have had the opportunity to meet some huge influential campaigners in areas such as homelessness, domestic violence, and equality. The workshops are designed to develop my world view, push my boundaries, grow emotionally, and progress my leadership skills. I have had the privilege of visiting many places including spending a day at Westminster speaking to MPs about housing policy and having the opportunity to represent Barrhead Housing in the Houses of Parliament. ”

Karen will gain a professional housing qualification at the end of the course, but the heart of the GEM programme is the passion for change within housing.

Karen says

“ I am privileged and humbled to be part of this exceptional programme and excited about the possibilities this could provide for our tenants, staff, and the wider community. ”

(Karen is pictured with other GEM colleagues taking part in a Q&A session in the Halls of Westminster)



Good News Corner



Welfare Advice

Last year, our Welfare Advice Officer Vivien Betteridge worked with 227 customers and recovered a total of £310,711.50 for them. Viv is available for any Welfare Advice support by ringing 0141 881 0638, or by visiting our office Monday to Wednesday to arrange a suitable appointment.

Recently Viv supported a customer who had been asked to submit a Personal Independence Payment review last year as their PIP award had ended despite their chronic health conditions becoming harder to manage. The customer had several health conditions which resulted in them giving up employment and they were studying full time to help their mental health and live a better quality of life. Due to the PIP award ending, the customer was struggling financially and approached us for help and support. A home visit was carried out and an appeal was submitted along with supporting evidence. As a result the decision was overturned, which was fantastic news for our customer and their young family as this resulted in a backdated payment of over £3,500 and a total award of over £57,000 over 8 years.

We advise our customers always to appeal any benefit decision they are not happy with, and Viv can offer advice and representation to appeal any benefit decision – these can be quite complicated and your chances of success will be better if you are represented. So please get in touch, as we are here to help

Back 2 School Bank

We understand the cost pressures that come with providing new school uniforms, especially in the weeks leading up to children returning to school after the school holidays. We have an established partnership with Back to School

Bank East Renfrewshire, who are able to provide brand new uniforms. Please get in touch with our Tenancy Readiness Officer Hilary Smith on 0141 881 0638 or by email at hilarys@barrheadha.org to see where we can help.

TPAS National Good Practice Awards

Barrhead Housing received national recognition recently as the staff team won the Runner Up Award as the ‘Champion of the Year: Organisation’ for our Community Investment activity. Lorna Wilson, our Chief Executive, said “This success demonstrates the exceptional work

of our Community Investment Team, who have developed a wide range of local partnerships and work tirelessly to strengthen and grow our community anchor role for the benefit of our customers and the wider community.”



Our Community Investment Team receiving the award from Michelle McManus

Significant Performance Failures

If you are a tenant, you can report a significant performance failure (SPF) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

An SPF is where a landlord:

- consistently and repeatedly fails to achieve outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter or outcomes agreed locally with tenants; or
- has not reported its performance annually to its tenants or the annual reported performance does not reflect actual performance; or
- has materially failed to meet our Regulatory Standards; and
- the landlord's action(s), or failure to take action, puts tenants' interests at risk and this significantly affects a number of the landlord's tenants.

Examples

An SPF could happen where a landlord:

- fails to carry out health and safety requirements, such as annual gas safety checks;
- is not maintaining tenants' homes or carrying out repairs in line with its legislative duties and published policies;
- does not consult tenants about issues such as proposed rent increases and other policies that affect tenants.

If you think there is an SPF you firstly need to raise the issue directly with us. You should give us the chance to respond within our timescale and a reasonable time to address the issue. If we do not deal with the issue then you can report an SPF to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

To report an SPF, you should complete a form which we can provide to you or you can get an our reception. You should tell the SHR exactly what the issue is and demonstrate that it significantly affects a number of our tenants. You should also tell the SHR when you raised it with us and how we responded.

The SHR will then contact you within five working days to tell you what they will do and their timescales.

What they will do if they decide it is an SPF will depend on the circumstances. They will decide whether they need to engage with us to ensure we take action to address the issue and they will publish the findings on their website.

If you would like further information on this, please contact us and we can provide you with a leaflet. Alternatively, you can get a leaflet at the SHR's website

www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-tenants/how-we-regulate-information-for-tenants/significant-performance-failure-reporting-form

Barrhead Housing News and Updates

Factoring

Our Factoring services have now transferred from Lavern Property Services to our core team at Barrhead Housing. This will enable us to dedicate our staff team to specific areas, so that our factored owner customers have access to a single point of contact to raise any concerns. We recently carried out a survey of owners which showed an impressive satisfaction level of 70% of owners happy with the service provided. We hope to develop our

Factoring further and get an even higher score next time!

We will be carrying out regular visits to check on the quality of services delivered such as close cleaning and landscaping. We will also be undertaking annual inspections of all buildings and common areas, to which our Factored customers will be invited. If you have any questions about the Factoring service, please drop us a line at enquiries@barrheadha.org or contact us by phone on 0141 881 0638.



Pride 2023

We were delighted to be present for the Pride flag raising service at East Renfrewshire Council in June this year. Participating in this service was important to us, as it reflects Barrhead Housing's values and commitments contained within our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Vision which was approved by our Board in 2022.

Community Investment Team – Our First Year

Since our Community Investment team was set up in April 2022, the team has tackled poverty and inequality for local families with a coordinated partner and community volunteering approach. Across our communities, the team have delivered cooking, exercise and craft workshops, employability workshops and supported people through the cost-of-living crisis. Highlights include:

- Tackled poverty and inequality for local families, engaging with 1200 people
- 139 people took part in either cooking, exercise and arts and craft workshops
- £16,000 has been awarded to various community projects in Barrhead, through a Community Fund 2022 voting event, with over 380 community members voting on projects.
- Worked with 22 young people through ERC's Young Persons Guarantee project on an intense employability course and created 2 internal paid work placements, one of which has become an extended 12 month role
- 82 people accessed a warm welcoming space either in the ARC Café or Totnosh premises
- Created a Tenant Support Fund with £30,425 distributed to 164 customers to help with the cost



- of living crisis and £5,200 paid to 26 customers to help with fuel debt
- Distributed £30,000 to customers to have carpets installed in their homes through a local business: Flooring Solutions Scotland, Barrhead
- Purchased and distributed £10,450 of food vouchers and kitchen equipment to customers in need
- 17 referrals to Back 2 School Bank ER to provide new warm clothes, school uniforms, and supplies
- Bought a £15 Christmas present for every young customer under 15 and held a Christmas party for 80 young customers
- Ran a tenancy sustainment course for 250 Young People from local high schools

Brighter Futures – Barrhead

Earlier this year, we were awarded a grant of over £260,000 through the Scottish Government’s Investing in Communities Fund for our Brighter Futures Barrhead project to tackle poverty and inequality in our most deprived communities. With a coordinated and community-led approach, we will work with 11 of our grassroots community partners to deliver a range of projects to reduce poverty and support those experiencing difficulties in the local area over the next three years. The Community partners include:



- **Dunterlie Food Share:** provision of food that would have become food waste
- **Dunterlie Babies and Tots:** Safe space for children to socialise, play and develop
- **Dunterlie Arts and Craft:** Volunteer-run group that teaches art skills and re-uses materials by recycling into new products
- **Dunterlie Parent Peer Group: Bumps, Births and Boobies:** Focus on breastfeeding and supporting families in our communities from pre-birth to post-birth
- **Back to School Bank East Renfrewshire:** Provision of school uniforms and essential school equipment to families who are struggling to meet these costs
- **East Renfrewshire ASN Parent Action Group:** Support group for activities in the Waterworks with a focus on food growing, gardening and outdoor play
- **Totnosh:** Family cooking programme in community centres engaging families at risk of food poverty and engaging parents and children to cook together and tackle holiday hunger
- **InCahootz:** Drama group which uses issue-based theatre that focuses on developing confidence, social skills, empathy, and theatre skills
- **Prestige Analysis:** Health and wellbeing and exercise programme in community venues
- **East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure:** Digital Inclusion Workshops in the Community
- **Steph Davidson Textiles:** Community-based upcycling and recycling workshops for our customers to make household items
- **Our Tenancy Readiness Officer** will create and deliver a tenancy independent living skills course designed to improve the skills and confidence of vulnerable young people taking on a tenancy. We

will work with pupils in 2 of our local High Schools (Barrhead and St Luke’s High School) to complete the course and run the course as well as providing tenancy support to new young customers who have experience of homelessness or are risk of becoming homeless, during the first 6 months of their tenancy.



Partnership with East Renfrewshire Council's Mixed Tenure Team

We know that keeping your neighbourhood neat and tidy is important to our customers. To help with this, we're carrying out regular visits to the wider estate, checking on common areas and open spaces. Our team will be targeting hotspot areas for fly tipping and misuse of common areas. We are delighted to be working closely in a new innovative partnership with the Mixed Tenure Team at East Renfrewshire Council to get on top of problem areas and to take action against those responsible for fly tipping. We are also trying to prevent any build up of bulk items in backcourts and gardens. Get in touch with your Customer Service Officer if you have any problems in your area.

Colin McCulloch, Director of Customer Services said "We know our customers value their neighbourhoods being clean and tidy. We are delighted to be working in partnership with East Renfrewshire Council to help improve our open spaces. We have entered into joint working with the Mixed Tenure Team so we can act quickly and flexibly to respond to any issues that arise in the estate. Our team will work closely with Council colleagues to deal with problem areas and to help identify repeat offenders so we can take any necessary action."



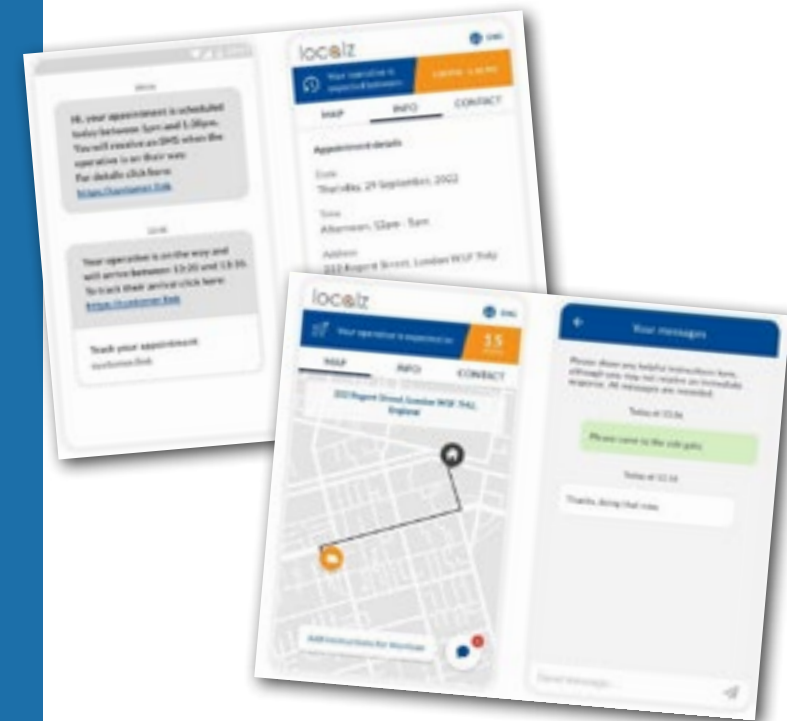
Mixed Tenure staff hard at work

Cllr Danny Devlin, Convenor of Housing and Maintenance Services, East Renfrewshire Council says "This partnership between East Renfrewshire Council and Barrhead Housing will allow us to work together to target problem areas using our shared resources to help keep Barrhead as a great place to live. Getting our teams to work together will help cut down on fly tipping and will improve our open spaces and backcourts so residents can fully enjoy these."

Gas Servicing Update

Our gas servicing contractor, James Frew, have developed a new system which will make it easier for you to track and communicate with your gas servicing engineer. All these services allow you to stay in control, with real two way chatting with the engineer and direct instant feedback.

You can see how this looks below:



For further information you can contact James Frew on 01294 468113

Getting to Know You

During a recent home visit, one of our staff met a customer who clearly had a talent for art. Our staff member was so impressed with the quality of their work, and it occurred to us that we must have many customers who have a talent, so we thought we could give over some space in our future newsletters to showcase our customers' work. So if you want to tell us about it - whether it be drawing, painting, knitting, needlework etc, let us know and we will be happy to feature this in future newsletters. Just send us an email to enquiries@barrheadha.org

You said, We will...

We are always keen to learn from our customers. We do this in a variety of ways – by listening to complaints, undertaking surveys and through conversations and meetings with customers. Feedback gives us an opportunity to learn about how our services might be improved and helps us to focus our attention on the things which are most important to our customers. Below, you will find recent examples of positive action we have taken in response to feedback received.

Our customers told us that...	We ..
it was taking too long to speak to someone about my housing options	introduced a new housing options service including initial online service. Waiting time now within 5 working days for a review.
I can't get through on the phone	updated the phone system to offer "call back" & introduced a new performance monitoring system
I have damp in my home	put in place a new damp and mould policy & procedures and delivered training to the team
the repairs contractor didn't turn up, or it took too long for the repair to be carried out	established a new Asset Team and started a repairs project to redesign the service
there were piles of rubbish left out	agreed a new partnership with the Council's Mixed Tenure Team to keep our communities clean
I can't give you access to my home because it is inconvenient or because I don't want you to see it	visited customers at home through regular Customer Service Officers visits, and are starting new regular drop ins in Auchenback, Dunterlie and Neilston



Annual Performance and Value for Money Report 2022/23



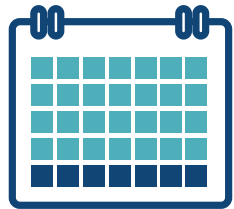
Our performance results in summary



86% of our customers have said they are satisfied with the overall service provided by Barrhead Housing

91%

of stage 1 complaints were responded to within timescales



28

days on average to relet each property



96%

of our stock meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard

0.95%

of rent was lost due to properties being empty



83

of our properties were let throughout the course of the year



2.61

hours on average was taken to complete emergency repairs

7.84

days on average was taken to complete non emergency repairs



95%

of our antisocial cases were resolved within timescales

Progress against last years actions

Action	Comments
We will carry out our next 3 year tenant satisfaction survey in 2022	We carried out a full tenant satisfaction survey in 2022 and received positive overall results
We will work with our members to look at ways we can improve levels of engagement	We carried out a survey of our members, and will continue to engage with our membership in future years
We will work with staff to improve stage 2 complaint response timescales	Senior staff have undertaken complaints investigation training, and we now have a wider pool of staff to investigate complaints
We will implement improvements to our repairs service	We are currently working across a number of areas to review how we can improve the repairs service we give to our customers
We will work with East Renfrewshire Council to look at refusals arising from referrals	We now meet regularly with ERC to discuss a wide range of matters including refusal rates, tenancy referrals, homelessness as well as a wide range of other relevant topics
We will implement new ways of working to get closer to our customers and listen to what they have to say	We have recently undertaken consultation with interested customers, and have engaged Tenants Information Service (TIS) to work with us to develop new ways of engaging with our customers
We will work with our consultants to develop a new rent structure which will be fair and affordable	We developed and implemented a new rent structure
Offer a range of ways for our customers to tell us what they want	We have developed a number of ways including: text polling, meetings in community venues, one-to-one discussions, surveys, focus groups, social media, participatory budgeting processes, and a new Service Improvement Group
Continue with our service design approach to review and improve our services	This work has continued throughout 2022/23, with further service design activity planned for 2023/24

Our Customers and Communities



86%

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



98%

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



91%

of stage 1 complaints were responded to within timescales

By investing **£101,076** of external funding, we generated a total of **£1,047,292** in Social Value through our community investment activities.

Charter Performance	BH 2022/23	BH 2021/22	East Renfrewshire Council	Scottish Average
Tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed	97%	94%	78%	90%
Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale	91%	100%	99%	95%
Stage 2 complaints responded to in timescale	100%	89%	100%	93%
Total membership of the Association	51	51	n/a	n/a

Proposed actions this year to improve performance:

1. We will ensure all new team members receive complaints training
2. We will monitor complaints performance monthly to ensure we are meeting our targets
3. We will continue to communicate with our customers through a variety of means and will regularly ask customers to update their communication preferences.

Our Properties, Your Homes



87%

of our tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home



83

of our properties were let throughout the course of the year



7.5%

of our stock became vacant throughout the year

Proposed actions this year to improve performance

1. We will continue to invest in our homes by delivering our investment strategy and targets
2. We will engage with all our contractors regarding levels of service provided
3. We will monitor performance monthly to ensure our performance targets are being met, and will take immediate action where necessary

Charter Performance	BH 2022/23	BH 2021/22	East Renfrewshire Council	Scottish Average
Stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	96%	98%	59%	78%
Average hours to complete emergency repairs	2.61	1.76	2.77	4.11%
Satisfaction with repairs service last 12 months	82%	83%	81%	87%
Average number of days to relet empty homes	28	28	63	56

The quality of services we deliver



89%

of our tenants are satisfied with the management of their neighbourhoods



10.6

days on average was the time taken to respond to stage 1 complaints



59%

of the repairs we carried out were completed right first time

Charter Performance	BH 2022/23	BH 2021/22	East Renfrewshire Council	Scottish Average
Tenancies offered which were refused	21%	35%	47%	32%
Anti-social cases resolved within timescales	95%	97%	94%	94%
Tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by us	86%	87%	82%	86%

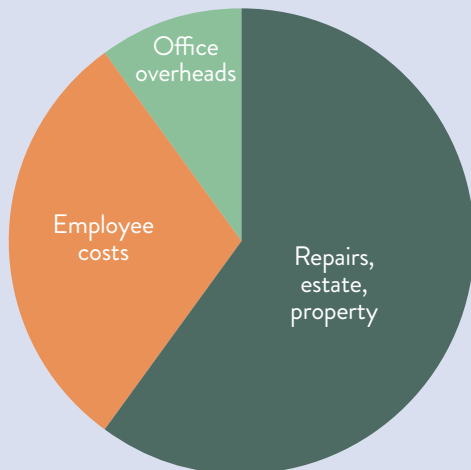
Your Rent and Value for Money

Charter Performance	BH 2022/23	BH 2021/12	East Renfrewshire Council	Scottish Average
Rent lost due to empty homes	0.95%	0.5%	0.95%	1.4%
Tenants who think the rent charged is value for money	82%	79%	80%	81%
Gross rent arrears	4.8%	3.7%	7.4%	7.3%
Total amount of former tenant arrears	£10,533	£31,073	n/a	n/a

How your rent is spent

Below you will find a breakdown of how we spend your rent money.

- Repairs, estate, property 53%
- Employee costs 35%
- Office overheads 11%



Proposed actions this year to improve performance:

1. We will continue with our service design approach to review and improve our services
2. We will work with our contractor(s) to ensure that repairs are carried out effectively and efficiently, reducing the time taken to repair empty homes
3. We will ensure our staff tackle rent arrears sensitively, yet robustly, to ensure that rent arrears are kept to a minimum



We believe that everyone deserves to live in a secure, good quality, well-maintained home within communities that are safe, supported and inclusive.

We are always here to help

Call us: 0141 881 0638

Email: enquiries@barrheadha.org

Web: www.barrheadha.org

Out of hours repairs: 0800 652 0633

Download the Barrhead Housing App from the Google or Apple Stores.

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