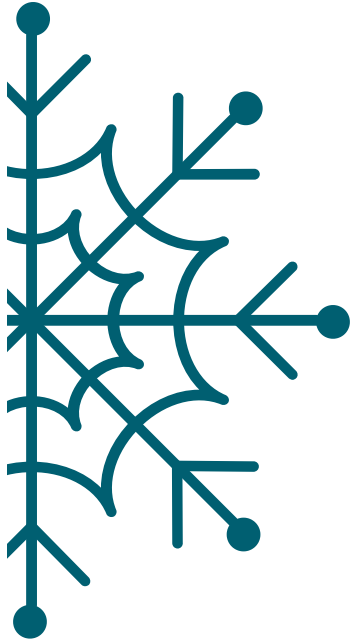




CLYDE VALLEY
HOUSING
ASSOCIATION

Welcome to CONNECT

Winter 2021



Welcome to your Winter edition
of the Newsletter.

FEATURED INSIDE:

Have your say on the Annual Rent Increase
consultation

Important Health and Safety advice

Fuel advice and help

Get involved with CVHA

Emergency contact Information



A message from the Chief Executive

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I am writing this message as we approach the end of 2021 and face yet another period of uncertainty because of the pandemic. I feel now more than ever, it is important that we reflect on the positives at this festive time and what we have achieved during the year.

I continue to be amazed at what we can do when we all put our minds to it and how we work together to make the difference. Hopefully this newsletter gives you a flavour of what that really means, and you enjoy reading it.

At this time our offices continue to remain closed with only a limited number of colleagues working there as we continue to make the safety and wellbeing of our team a priority. Our friendly and committed team are still available for you to contact using a variety of communication channels.



We were delighted to open our Contact Centre in August to provide you a reliable, consistent service that focuses on meeting your needs and providing you with the best customer experience. Already we are seeing increased satisfaction rates from our customers which is fantastic. I would like to personally thank the team for making such a resounding impact in such a short amount of time. You can find out more about the team on page 8.

Other key items I want to draw your attention to in this newsletter are:

- **Your rent consultation** - make sure you have your say (Page 3)
- **Gas, electrical and fire safety** - working with you to make sure we gain access to your home to carry out these essential services (Page 5)
- Fantastic work from our **Wellbeing Team** (Page 12)
- **Making a difference** at CVG (Page 17)

It's an important time to give our customers support with fuel advice, top tips and how to get help towards your fuel bills.

Everyone is faced with rising energy prices at the start of what is forecast to be a cold winter. Please take the time to read Page 14 for some valuable advice.

I am also delighted to tell you that we have recently secured funding to employ a fuel advisor so look out for more information on this on our website.

Please continue to stay safe and follow government guidelines.

Wishing you every happiness this Holiday Season and throughout the coming year.

Lynn Wassell CEO



Allan Murray
Chair CVHA Board

We want to assure you that we now have a valid gas safety certificate for every one of our homes. We have reviewed our processes, worked closely with our gas contractor City Technical Services and put a range of improvement actions in place.

One of the things we have done is create a more robust system to ensure that we allow more time before the 12 month deadline to get access to homes.

We take your safety very seriously and we want to continue to work with you to complete your annual service on time, every time. Whilst the pandemic continues to impact on access to your homes, when you receive a letter please respond immediately.👉👉

“We have said in our Annual Assurance Statement that we have improvements to make in relation to gas safety.

We want to provide you with more information about what this means. Gas servicing should be done at least every 12 months for each tenancy where there is gas in the home.

During our performance reporting year 2020/21 we told you that we missed 139 services due to covid and challenges with obtaining access. Before this only 1 late gas service occurred in the previous 6 years.

This current year, from April 2021 to mid-October 2021 we missed the 12 month anniversary date and completed the service late for around 200 homes.

“I can confirm that CVHA comply and continue to aim for excellent governance and this can be evidenced through the publication of our Annual Assurance Statement to The Scottish Housing Regulator.

I have signed this statement on behalf of the Board and you can read a copy of the statement on our website, please scan the QR code to access.

”



Join our Board

If you are interested in this opportunity and want to find out more, please contact us for more information.

Annual Rent Increase Consultation

Clyde Valley Housing Association (CVHA) would like to involve you in our Annual Rent Increase process for 2022/23. You will have received a letter outlining our plans in more detail, please read this carefully.

We want to hear your views on our proposed **2.5% Rent Increase** for 2022/23.



Please take this opportunity to tell us your views by:

CONTACT US

- Sending us an email to cvha@cvha.org.uk
- Calling one of our team on 01698 268 855
- Sending us your views in the post
- Completing the Form Submission on our Website
- Sending us a message on Twitter or Facebook
- Completing our Survey Monkey question by scanning the QR code



Help

We know this can be a financially challenging time of year for many people.

We want to assure you that we are here to help and if you have any concerns about managing your finances then please get in touch with us.



Christmas is coming!

We all deserve a holiday and a welcome break to spend time with family & friends.

Christmas can also bring a lot of pressures and make it extra hard to make sure bills are paid and we do not fall into debt.

Please do not let the holiday put you under financial pressure, prioritise your rent and other bills.



Contact us:

E: cvha@cvha.org.uk
Phone: 01698 268 855

If you are worried about paying your rent and need help, please contact us.

CVHA rent is charged four weekly over the entire year so there is no 'rent free' period at Christmas. You should continue to pay as normal.

Our office is shut over the holiday period, the telephone payment service is available 365 days per year. Active Direct Debits, Standing Orders and Card payments are also operational as usual over the holiday period.

We can arrange a referral to free impartial Debt advice. If you need help and information about Benefits we can also arrange a referral to our Income Maximisation Service and refer you to Fuel and Energy Advice.

Citizen's advice, Local Authority Money Matters Advice Services and Step Change (Debt Advice Charity), are all free, impartial and accessible. You can contact them on-line, or if you do not have internet access, give us a call and we will help you find the relevant numbers.

Start 2022 with peace of mind. Dont hesitate to contact us if you need help!

Electrical Testing & Fire Safety Measures



Putting our customers first is at the heart of what we do.

Keeping you safe in your home is a key part of this and is a key commitment we make to you. This means ensuring all safety checks are up to date within your home at all times.

We are in the process of renewing electrical certificates for some of your homes and in some instances this will also involve the installation of an interlinked smoke alarm or an upgrade to your existing one.

You will either have received a letter from us or will receive this letter shortly. Please take time to respond to this letter by contacting the number on the letter to make an appointment or change the appointment provided for the work to be carried out on your property.

By responding and making an appointment you get to be in control of when this happens.

By not responding, this may lead to a forced access appointment which means this will happen at the time we arrange for you.

These are critical works to maintain the safety in your home so please respond and provide access to allow this work to take place.

We will minimise disruption to you as much as possible.



Contents Insurance

At a time of year when there is an increased fire risk and weather related home issues, make sure you protect your home and belongings.

Christmas is a time when your home is likely to be full of people, and it's in the excitement of the season that accidents can easily happen.

Safety Tips

Cooking



Don't leave food cooking in the oven whilst you are out shopping, or when you are sleeping.

Christmas Trees



Artificial is best! If you must have a real tree, purchase trees in soil and ensure they are kept watered to reduce the risk of fire.

Candles



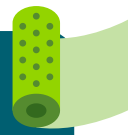
Never leave a candle lit if you are not in the room. Keep candles away from trees, cards and never under a wall mounted TV.

Christmas Pudding



Have a jug of water close to hand if you are lighting your Christmas pudding, and clear away any paper hats/crackers before lighting.

Wrapping Paper



It gets everywhere on Christmas morning and can easily get knocked into the fire place, or lit by a cigarette – so please bag it up.

Don't overload plug sockets



Make sure to avoid overloading your plug sockets with extensions and instead just use one plug per socket.

Fairy Lights

If you have been using your fairy lights for a few years, it might be time to replace them. Newer models such as LED lights will meet higher safety standards and are more energy efficient. Remember **always** switch these off when you are not at home or are in bed.



Scan the QR code to find out more about Thistle insurance

Our dedicated Team will:

- provide you with a service between 9am and 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.30pm on Friday
- answer your enquiries with specific timeframes
- always tell you their name
- treat you all with courtesy and respect and in a professional and friendly manner
- treat all your contacts in the strictest of confidence
- quickly establish the reason for you contacting us and tell you how best we can assist you
- deal with the enquiry if they can, if not, they will pass it to the right person or department
- tell you the name of the person or department to which your enquiry is being referred to
- always give you clear information when dealing with your enquiry
- offer to take a message if the person you wish to speak to is unavailable and ask them call you back or contact you on your preferred method

Monday's are our **busiest** days for customer's contacting the team. Wait times may be longer than other days so please be patient if you are phoning us.

Our dedicated Team



Julie Cairns

Senior Contact Service Officer

I love to travel and experience different cultures. My most adventurous holiday to date has been to India. Seeing the Taj Mahal was spectacular.



Charlene

I love my cat and my cat looks cooler than me these days!



Graham

I enjoy playing for my local football team.



Kerry

I volunteer for a small cat charity and foster abandoned cats and kittens.



Arlene

I enjoy long walks with my daughter and our dog, spending time with my friends.



Gayle

I have a love of horses and enjoy riding and spending time with my horse in my spare time.



Sandra

I enjoy hill climbing and pride myself having tackled both Ben Nevis and Helvellyn.



Holly

I am interested in arts and crafts and am currently developing my florist skills.



Leigh

I like going to the theatre and eating out.

Customer Experience Update



In early 2021 we embarked on a Service Design project to help us gain a better understanding of customer needs and expectations. In order to make this an independent piece of work, we appointed a research company, called Research Resource, to carry out the research for us.

Research Resource carried out a range of workshops, in-depth interviews, focus groups and telephone interviews to speak with Clyde Valley Group customers about their needs and expectations of what a good and bad service looks like.

The outputs from this research project were incredibly interesting. The results showed that there are a number of common things that all good service providers have in common.

These are:

People make the difference

You told us that dealing with properly trained staff that are able to do a good job for you makes for a great customer experience.

Increased effort equals poor experience

You told us that when you have to put in a lot of effort in order to get a service, your experience is lesser than when it is easy.

Keep commitments

You told us that keeping commitments helps to build trust and increase your experience. If we say we are going to do something, then we need to do it.

Outcomes matter

You told us about the importance of outcomes and the need to focus on what the customer is actually trying to achieve through their enquiry or request.

How you are treated is really important

You told us that the way in which an organisation and its staff treats you is really important. Kindness and respect go a long way in providing for a good customer experience.



We used the findings of this research project to inform our thinking on how to improve service delivery which has included recruiting more staff and focusing on training to give them the skills that they need to do the job.

We introduced a new Customer Contact Centre in 2021 to provide an easy and consistent method for all customer contact. We also introduced a new case-management system so that we capture all customer requests, helping us to keep commitments and focus on outcomes.

Another outcome of this customer research was to introduce a brand new set of Customer Promises. These are based on the main findings of the research and are as follows:



In order to measure our performance against these promises, we introduced a range of surveys to take place directly after customers have used our services.

The results of these surveys are used in a few different ways. The most important is that it gives us the opportunity to put things right if a customer's experience hasn't been good enough. We look at the results that we get through and we follow up with customers who tell us that they haven't had a good experience.

We also feed the results of the surveys into our Learning from Customer Feedback Group. This group meets once a month to look at customer feedback, complaints and anti-social behaviour cases.

The group identify common themes and issues that are coming from customer feedback and seek to find ways to improve. The group have implemented changes to the way in which customer feedback is used with our main contractors, ensuring that contractors are aware of their performance and what they can do to improve.

The group have recently set up a new Continuous Improvement Group to look at Complaints handling with a view to further improving our Complaints Management Service.



We will continue to look for new ways to engage customers and gain their feedback on our services. We introduced a new Wellbeing Hub into the organisation during 2021 which will focus on increasing opportunities for customers to engage with us on a whole range of topics, in ways that suit them best.

Thank you to all of the customers that took part in our research project. We really value your feedback and are committed to using this to improve our services to you.

Fin Smith

Customer Service Director

We have a range of customer engagement opportunities coming up in 2022 that we would love you to be involved in.

Some of these include helping design out new customer portal, joining our Customer Panel and Board and letting us know how your experience was signing up for your new home.

We will be publishing our 2022 engagement calendar for the year in January and will keep you updated on how you can get involved.

Customer Portal



Over the next few months, we will be busy working to develop you a new customer portal.

This platform will improve solutions for digital access and self service.

We need your feedback to make sure it works for you!

We need you!

Join Us!

We have a great opportunity for you to join our Customer Panel and/or our Board.

This is a great opportunity for you to meet new people, share your opinions and help us shape and improve **OUR** Services for **YOU**.

Contact us for an informal chat to find out more information.

HAVE YOU JUST SIGNED A NEW TENANCY?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU





Our Achievements

- 240 ipads delivered
- £1000 received from the Arnold Clark Fund to purchase Education Resource packs
- New Facebook page set up
- Digital workshops offered
- £1m in financial gains made for our customers
- Funding received for Energy Advisor post
- 10 families referred to our family support service
- £1,139 handed out in fuel vouchers

A message from our Wellbeing Team

The CVHA Wellbeing hub came into effect on June 1st with the following aims:

- Build and develop partnerships within our local communities
- Create & develop approaches to tackle a range of social, health and financial inequalities
- Enhance and develop a range of opportunities for customer engagement and participation

Over the last 6 months we are really pleased with the additional support services we have been able to offer to you, our customers.

Developing community partnerships like these are going to be key for us heading into 2022.

We are here to help and support you. If you think you, or someone you know could benefit from additional support please speak to your Housing Officer or contact our Wellbeing Team to have a chat.



Community Networks



Hello everyone!

I am Jose, I work for the Barnardo's Family Plus service, CVHA has brought this service to their tenants, and I am here to let you know about Family Plus.

Our service helps families in a wide range of areas, for example, we can support you and your children to settle within your community, provide emotional and practical support, we can help with housing, and we also provide financial advice.

Family Plus has been helping families in North Lanarkshire for number of years, families always express how helpful this service has been for them – never mind if you just need a little or a lot of support, we are here to help in any way we can.

I personally think that the best thing about our service is that we use a person-centred approach, which means that we will work on identifying your personal needs and then we will provide tailored support to your family. So please, if you think that you could benefit from using Family Plus, do not hesitate to contact CVHA and they will point you in the right direction.

We were delighted to be shown round The Blantyre Miners Community Garden by Anne Hartman and Pat Irwin, this project is the product of a fantastic community led effort which has transformed a neglected part of Blantyre behind the Miners Welfare into a wonderful community garden!

An incredible amount of work has gone into this project with local community businesses donating time, money and resources. Whilst some money has been received through funding, Pat's skill and vision has seen no waste, everything that can be reused has been used.

This multifunctional space has already benefited the community in so many ways including:

- Supplying boxes of fruit to the local nursing home
- Providing bulbs/seeds to local schools
- Community groups such as the Scout groups using the space to attend to their own plant beds
- Working with Shelter to provide food boxes to families

The group of volunteers behind this project have so many great ideas of what they want to do, its going to be exciting to watch this garden go from strength to strength!



Changes to energy prices

This winter, it's likely you'll notice your energy bills going up. But it's important to know why this is happening and what you can do to stay on top of increasing costs.

Why are energy prices going up?

Increased global demand has seen the prices of gas increase. This has led some energy suppliers to go bust.

As a result, Ofgem, the energy regulator, has increased the energy price cap from 1 October 2021. This means customers have a certain level of protection against the rising energy prices, as energy suppliers will only be able to charge you so much for your energy.

However, bills will go up for lots of households this winter. On average, default tariffs bills are expected to increase by £139 for the year. For those using a prepayment meter, the average increase will be around £153.

This also means the price cap which changes every 6 months could take a hike on 1 April 2022.

There are fewer tariffs on offer than usual, and switching might not save you any money. It's important to seek impartial advice before switching, for example from Citizens Advice Scotland - <https://www.cas.org.uk/BESW>.

We have outlined some tips to save on your energy alongside some additional support you may be eligible for to help you with your energy bills.



Coming Soon – Our very own CVHA Energy Advisor – look out for information on our website or social media.

Top tips from Home Energy Scotland to keep your home warm

- Set your heating controls to manage the temperature of your home. Remember to use the weekday and weekend settings
- Keep your radiators clear and avoid putting furniture against them. Drying washing on your radiator can make your house cooler and can also encourage condensation and mould growth
- Turning down your thermostat by one degree can save up to £55 a year
- Use heavier curtains during the winter months and make sure you close them when it gets dark to keep the heat in and cold out





Winter Fuel Payment

You could get between £100 and £300 to help pay your heating bills if you were born on or before 26 September 1955.

You will get your payment automatically if you are eligible and either get the state pension and / or get another social security benefit.

If you don't get either of these, you may need to make a claim by 31 March 2022. You can do this by phoning **0800 731 0160**.



Cold Weather Payments

You will automatically get a cold weather payment if the average temperature is recorded zero degrees or below over 7 consecutive days.

You may get cold weather payments if you're getting Pension credit / Income Support / Income based Job seekers allowance / income related Employment and Support Allowance / Universal Credit / Support for Mortgage Interest.

You will get £25 for each 7 day period of cold weather between 1 November and 31 March.



Warm Home Discount Scheme

You could get £140 off your electricity bill for Winter 2021 to 2022. This money is not paid to you, its a one off discount on your electricity bill between October and March.

You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity.

There are 2 ways to qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme:

- you get Guarantee Pension Credit - known as the 'core group'
- you are on a low income and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme - known as the 'broader group'

Contact your fuel supplier to check if you are eligible for a Warm Home Discount.



We continue to work with the **Fuel Bank Foundation** providing fuel vouchers to those most in need, the Foundation helps homes in fuel crisis by providing people with the breathing space they need to get back on their feet.

You can self refer to this service if you meet the following criteria:

- The client/household responsible for paying for their electric and/or gas
- Is the client/household close to or already using the emergency credit facility on their electric meter and/or gas meter or have they self-disconnected
- If you meet these criteria don't hesitate to get in touch with us by email, phone or via Facebook and one of our team will call you back.

If you want to find out more or apply for a fuel voucher give us a call to speak to your Housing or Revenue officer.



Making a difference at CVHA. What have we been doing?



Another successful coffee morning held to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Research.



£6,141.98 handed over to St Andrews Hospice as part of CVHA's fundraising efforts over the year.



Sharon, Janette, Carole & Lynn representing CVHA at the Inside Housing Development Awards in London. We were finalists in the Best Regeneration Project for our Glengowan development



Becky Cassidy Graduated with an MSc in Housing Studies from the University of Stirling



Katie Stewart Finalist in the CIH Scottish Housing Awards Bob Allan, Young Achiever in Housing Category



Lee Valantine received an award for the other passion in her life. British Horse Society Changing Lives Through Horses 2020 Coach Award

Emergency Contact numbers for over the holiday period

Our staff will be taking a break for the holidays from **2pm on Friday 24th December** and will return at **9am on Thursday 6th January**.

Whilst staff are not working and the offices are closed you can still report emergency repairs and tenancy related issues via the following numbers;

Repairs

Emergency Repairs	0800 073 0703
Scottish Gas (smell gas)	0800 111 999
Scottish Power (no electricity)	0800 111 4686
Scottish Water (no water/burst pipes)	0800 077 8778
Gas heating repairs (City Technical)	0844 579 6493
All other emergency repairs	0845 877 0411

Tenancy related

Anti social behaviour/dog fouling/vermin/roads

North Lanarkshire	0300 123 1382
South Lanarkshire	0800 389 1105
East Dunbartonshire	0300 123 4510

Anti social behaviour complaints should in the first instance be reported to Police Scotland by calling 101.

Paying your rent

Freephone number available 7am - 10pm
7 days a week, please have your card
details ready when you call

0800 158 3298



Thank you for reading

Have you enjoyed this issue of our newsletter?

As well as keeping you informed of the work we are doing and highlighting any issues that may affect you we are happy to consider any items you think are important.

Please let us know if there is anything you would like us to feature. You can send your comments to us by any of the methods below;



Facebook messenger
(scan our QR code to
view our FB page)

Please call 01698 268 855 or email cvha@cvha.org.uk if you would like to receive any of our information by email or in another format such a different language, large print, Braille or audio.

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**From all of us at CVHA we wish you a safe and
happy holiday period**