

the people's news

Renfrewshire's magazine for council tenants

Autumn 2019

Inside this issue:



Convener Marie McGurk visited the Council's Dargavel development with representatives from Lovell Scotland and Renfrewshire Council.

Over 170 newbuild Council homes nearing completion at Johnstone Castle and Bishopton, see page 2

The People's News is going digital!

We have some big news - The People's News is moving online! We will continue to deliver The People's News to you and now an online version will also be available.

The new online edition of the newsletter will still include all of the content you love, keeping you up-to-date with the news in Renfrewshire that's important to you as well as any legislation and regulation changes you need to know about. It will be emailed to you every six months.

You will need to sign-up to receive The People's News digital newsletter.

To sign-up, visit www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/7753/Sign-up-to-e-alerts, type in your email address and select Tenants' News from the list of subscriber topics.



www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

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Renfrewshire
Council

Housing developments will create over 300 new Council homes in Renfrewshire



140 new Council homes to be built in Ferguslie Park and Spateston

New affordable housing will be constructed in Ferguslie Park and Spateston after contracts to build 140 homes were approved.

101 new homes will be built in the Tannahill area of Ferguslie Park with a further 39 properties on Auchengreoch Road in Johnstone. Both newbuild projects are expected to be completed by the end of 2021.

The detailed designs for the housing will be finalised following consultation with residents within these communities.

The two new developments form part of our commitment to providing high-quality, affordable homes and are being part funded by the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Programme.

Following completion of the contract awards, the new homes in Ferguslie Park will be built by A S Homes (Scotland) Limited and McTaggart Construction Limited will carry out the construction in Johnstone.

The contracts, worth more than £19million, were approved by our Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board in September.

The projects are part of our newbuild programme and Strategic Housing Investment Programme.

For more information on housing projects within Renfrewshire, contact the Planning and Housing team on strategyandplace@renfrewshire.gov.uk or visit www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/housing.

Work on two developments that will create over 170 new Council homes in Bishopton and Johnstone Castle is well underway.

We are building 80 new Council houses for rent across two sites at Dargavel Village in Bishopton, with the first homes set to be ready in late 2019.

Designed by Anderson Bell Christie Architect and built by Lovell Partnerships Limited, the new homes are a range of sizes which include nine amenity flats with lift access which will be perfect for older residents and people with mobility needs.

The homes are close to a range of local amenities, including shops, schools and Bishopton train station.

The Council is working with BAE on the regeneration of the former ROF Bishopton site. The new development is expected to be finished in March 2020.

We are also building 95 new energy efficient Council homes for rent in Johnstone Castle.

Work on site began in August 2018, with the first 19 homes in the development, including two purpose-built, wheelchair accessible bungalows in Spruce Avenue, due to be ready in late 2019.



Tenants who moved as part of the regeneration of Johnstone Castle will be given priority for these new homes initially, subject to satisfactory tenancy conditions.

The remaining homes at Johnstone Castle and all of the new properties in Bishopton will be allocated in line with the Council's Housing Allocation Policy.

If you want to put your name on our Housing List, contact the Housing Options team on 0300 300 0222 (option 2).

For more information on our Bishopton development, visit www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/dargavel.



Scottish Social Housing Charter Report to Tenants 2018–2019

HOW IS RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL PERFORMING AS A LANDLORD?

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the standards and outcomes all social landlords should aim to achieve.

In August 2019, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) published a report on Renfrewshire Council's performance as a landlord.

The report looks at 18 key indicators, such as service satisfaction, repairs performance and rent collection. You can read this on their website www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk.

We have produced our own version of the report to let you see how we are performing on a wide range of measures.

We want to let you see how we compare with last year's performance.

We also want to show you how we compare with other social landlords - we do this by using the Scottish Housing Regulator and Scotland's Housing Network averages.

SHN – Scotland's Housing Network figures relate to 26 local authority housing services and Glasgow Housing Association.

SHR – Scottish Housing Regulator figures relate to all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and local authority housing services.

Tenant satisfaction



INDICATOR 1

88.1%

of you were satisfied with the service we provide, over 2% better than the SHN average.

85.7% SHN

90.1% SHR



INDICATOR 6

87.8%

of you also said you were satisfied with opportunities to take part in our decision-making processes.

80.4% SHN

86.5% SHR

Re-let properties



INDICATOR 20

88.4%

of new tenants across Renfrewshire remained in their property for more than a year, this is similar to last year (88.5%)

89.1% SHN

88.8% SHR



INDICATOR 35

In 2018/19, we let 1,060 houses in an average of:

38 days

This is the same as last year.

34 days SHN

32 days SHR

Neighbourhood and community



INDICATOR 17

83.2%

of tenants are satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in.

83.6% SHN

87.8% SHR



INDICATOR 18

46.5%

of tenancy offers were refused, an increase of almost 9% on last year (37.7%).

39.9% SHN

36.3% SHR

Adaptations



INDICATOR 23

56.8 days

is the average number of days we take to complete applications for medical adaptations, an increase of 23 days on last year (33.6 days). We have put improvement measures in place and expect to improve this figure next year.

38 days SHN

49.4 days SHR



INDICATOR 19

96%

of anti-social behaviour cases reported were resolved within our targets, a slight improvement on last year (95%).

87.4% SHN

87.9% SHR

Rent and service charges

Last year, we collected more than £45 million in rent. Our rent arrears figure has increased slightly on 2017/18 but it is still below the average for local authorities.

Our annual management fee has remained the same for the last five years and satisfaction from factored owners has improved.

The amount of rent lost due to properties being empty has marginally increased by 0.1%. This is due to a higher turnover of properties.

£45 million+
collected in rent last year



INDICATOR 30

100%

rent was collected in the last year. Compared with 101% in 2017/18.

98.7% SHN

99.1% SHR



INDICATOR 31

5.8%

is the percentage of gross rent arrears we had at 31 March 2019, 1% less than the SHN average. The gross rent figure was 4.88% in 2017/18.

6.9% SHN

5.7% SHR



INDICATOR 34

1.4%

is the amount of rent we lost on empty properties, up 0.1% on last year (1.3%).

0.9% SHN

0.9% SHR

Value for money



INDICATOR 29

75.8%

In our last tenant satisfaction survey, 75.8% of you felt that the rent you pay us was good value for money.

81.8% SHN

83.2% SHR



INDICATOR 33

61%

of our factored owners are satisfied with the factoring service they receive, up over 4% on last year's figure (56.7%).

67% SHR

Repairs, maintenance and improvements

Last year, we carried out more than **50,000** housing repairs.



INDICATOR 11

5.1 hours

19,400 emergency repairs were fixed in an average of 5.1 hours, the same as last year.

4.1 hours SHN

3.6 hours SHR



INDICATOR 12

6.9 days

32,000 non-emergency repairs were fixed in an average of 6.9 days, better than last year (7.1 days).

7.5 days SHN

6.6 days SHR



INDICATOR 13

88.1%

of non-emergency repairs were completed 'right first time'. This is a slight reduction in performance from last year (90.2%).

92.8% SHN

92.5% SHR



INDICATOR 14

99.8%

of repair appointments were kept. This is better than the SHN and SHR average.

96.3% SHN

95.6% SHR



INDICATOR 15

99.99%

of 11,331 Council houses that required a gas safety check were completed by the anniversary date compared to 99.7% in 2017/18.

99.97% SHN

99.93% SHR



INDICATOR 16

92.5%

of tenants were satisfied with repairs carried out by us in 2018/19, better than the SHN and Scottish averages. The figure for 2017/18 was 98.3%.

90.6% SHN

91.7% SHR

We interviewed nearly **2,500** of you on your satisfaction with our repairs.

Almost **2,300** told us they were satisfied or very satisfied, with only 44 tenants saying they were dissatisfied with the service.

Housing Quality

Last year, we brought another 128 properties up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), bringing the total number of homes meeting the SHQS up to 11,341 out of 12,002.

After applying allowable exclusions and abeyances the Council is 100% compliant with SHQS. There remains 661 properties where the current tenant has refused internal works to their property or where we have been unable to get owner agreement to allow external works to be carried out.



INDICATOR 7

94.5%

of our properties meet SQHS, 1% more than last year (93.5%).

94.9% SHN

94.1% SHR



INDICATOR 8

99.8%

of our properties meet the appropriate National Home Energy Rating (NHER) or Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating, better than the SHN and Scottish averages (100%).

97.7% SHN

97.9% SHR



INDICATOR 9

93.3%

of tenants are satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in, up almost 5% from last year (88.6%).

83.2% SHN

90.8% SHR

Out of **343 tenants** who moved into their property last year and responded to our home satisfaction survey, **320** told us they were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the standard of their home.

Keeping you up-to-date

In the last year, we received a total of 661 complaints, all of which were answered in full. We are using your complaints to help us improve our services.



INDICATOR 3

82.2%

Our most recent tenant satisfaction survey shows 82.2% of you think we are good at keeping you informed about services and decisions.

85.5% SHN

91.6% SHR



INDICATOR 4

100%

of 1st and 2nd stage complaints (661) were answered in full this is comparable with last year.



INDICATOR 5

89.6%

of 1st stage complaints were answered in full within 5 days, This is slightly better than last year (87.4%).

83.8% SHN

86.9% SHR



85.7%

of 2nd stage complaints (12) were answered in full within 20 days. This was better than the SHN and Scottish averages but below last year (100%).

80.4% SHN

83.8% SHR

Homelessness

We want all people who present as homeless to have quick and easy access to help and advice. We make every effort to house people in suitable, good quality accommodation.

During the last 12 months, we supported 865 households in temporary accommodation including 581 in council short-stay housing, 76 in housing association properties, 152 in 'other' types of accommodation including supported housing and 53 in bed and breakfast accommodation. Bed and breakfast accommodation was only used because all other types of temporary accommodation was fully occupied at several points in the year.



INDICATOR 25

89.1 days

is the average length of stay in temporary accommodation, a decrease of over four days on last year (93.6 days).

102.1 days SHN

102.1 days SHR



INDICATOR 27

0.9%

of temporary or emergency accommodation offered was refused, up from 0.8% last year.

10% SHN

10% SHR



INDICATOR 28

92.1%

of homeless households were satisfied with the quality of temporary or emergency accommodation given, an increase of over 3% on last year (89%) and higher than the SHN and Scottish averages.

88.5% SHN

88.5% SHR

Right to Repair scheme lets tenants get small urgent repairs carried out within seven days

Did you know as our tenants you have to right to get some small urgent repairs carried out within seven days?

Our Right to Repair scheme covers certain repairs which cost less than £350.

Want to know what repairs are covered by our Right to Repair scheme and how quickly we'll respond to them? Check out the table on the right.

The timescales shown are the maximum length of time it will take us to fix your repair from the date you report it to us.

We'll let you know when you report a repair if it's our responsibility to fix it and whether it qualifies for our Right to Repair scheme.

If your repair does qualify, we'll tell you how long it will take to fix and explain your rights under Right to Repair, including the process for using an alternative contractor.

We'll also make arrangements to get access to your property to carry out the repair.

If our Building Services team fail to carry out the repair in the agreed timescale, you have the right to contact our back-up contactor, CGC, to have the work carried out. You can contact CGC on 0141 561 6500.

If we don't fix your repair on time you may be entitled to compensation. If this is the case, any payment will be

made automatically, you do not need to make a claim.

If we can't get into your home at the time agreed, your repair will be cancelled, and you will need to reapply for the work to be carried out.

Right to Repair does not apply where:

- the defect has been caused by a breach of your tenancy conditions
- the repair is delayed due to matters outwith our control
- the repair is not the Council's responsibility or is to the common parts of a building
- the repair costs more than £350

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the way we deal with your repair, or feel you did not receive the compensation you were entitled to, write to Communities, Housing & Planning Services, Clark Street Depot, 9 Clark Street, Paisley, PA3 1RX.

For more information on Right to Repair, call our Housing Repairs and Maintenance Team on 0141 618 6045 or visit www.scotland.gov.uk.

Repairs covered by Right to Repair	Days to complete
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks, or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Blocked sink, bath or basins	1
Loss of electric power	1
Partial loss of electric power	3
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns	1
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1
Loss or partial loss of space or water heating where no alternative heating is available	1
Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting	1
Loss of water supply	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Unsafe access to a path or step	1
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads	3
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working	7

Don't forget to book your gas safety check with us this year

Have you booked your gas safety check yet?

Gas safety checks are important for the safety of you, your family and your neighbours and, as your landlord, we have a legal duty to make sure one is carried out at your home each year.

We will write to you and ask you to make an appointment with us before your check is due. Please make sure you do this as soon as you can once you've received your letter.

If we do not hear from you, we can force entry into your home to carry out this vital check and you may be recharged the costs incurred for replacing the locks at your home and any other associated works.

For more information on gas safety checks, visit www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/2541/Gas-servicing-and-safety

Improve your digital skills by signing-up for one of our courses

Do you want to improve your digital skills? Our Digital Participation Officer Ross McNicol can help.

Ross runs digital courses for tenants which are designed to help improve your confidence and teach you new skills. He recently finished a block of weekly sessions with members of our Tenants Scrutiny Panel.

The innovative courses will show you how to get the most out of your computer, tablet or smartphone as well as providing helpful tips on using the internet, emails and social media.

Mary Logan, a member of our Tenants Scrutiny Panel who recently completed a digital

course with Ross, said:

“Ross really helped us understand how to make the best use of IT. This will help us a great deal for our scrutiny exercises.”

Plans for more courses are currently underway. If you're a member of one of the Council's registered Tenants and Residents Associations and would like more information on our digital courses, contact our development officers on **0141 618 2502** or **tenantparticipation@renfrewshire.gov.uk**.



Council tells Scottish Housing Regulator how it's performing as a Landlord

A statement about how we are performing as a Landlord has been submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

We submitted our first Annual Assurance Statement to the Regulator in October.

The statement is one of the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator's new framework which sets out how it regulates Registered Social Landlords and the housing and homeless services provided by local authorities.

Our statement shows we are complying with our legal duties, responsibilities and regulatory requirements. It also highlights areas where we can improve.

We have been looking at how we deliver our services, making sure our processes are up-to-date and meet our legislative and regulatory requirements, and feedback on this from our staff and tenants helped us prepare our first statement.

A report about our Annual Assurance Statement was presented to the Council's Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board in October.

We have also received our new Engagement Plan from the Scottish Housing Regulator, which shows the level of engagement the regulator plans to have with Renfrewshire Council this year.

The new plan says the Scottish Housing Regulator does not currently require anything from us except for our annual regulatory returns, which must be submitted by all local authorities.

Want to read find out more about our engagement plan? Visit www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Top tips on how to reduce the risk of fire in your home

Having at least one working smoke alarm in your property and keeping common areas in flats clear can help reduce the risk of fire in your home.

That's the advice of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service who are currently working with us to advise tenants on how to prevent fires.

The Fire Service says you can keep yourself and your neighbours safe by keeping any common areas, stairwells and landings clear and making sure your main doors are kept closed.

The service is also offering free home safety visits where officers will help you work out a fire escape plan and give you advice and information on smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms.

Mark Gallacher, Group Manager and Head of Prevention and Protection in Renfrewshire, said: *“We would always urge people not to leave rubbish or bins in common stairwells or landings, and to keep these areas clear at all times. Discarded items of furniture and rubbish can produce large amounts of toxic smoke and restrict access for emergency services.*

“I also cannot stress enough the importance of having a working smoke alarm. Every household should have at least one and residents should test these weekly.”

If you or someone you know could benefit from a free fire safety visit, you can book one by calling 0800 0731 999, texting FIRE to 80800 or completing a form at **www.firescotland.gov.uk/yoursafety**.

You can also call your local fire station directly to arrange a visit. Call 0141 889 2222 for Paisley, 01505 322 222 for Johnstone and 0141 886 2222 for Renfrew.

The Scottish Government has also brought in new building and fire safety regulations following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London.

The regulations require all Council homes to have a heat alarm in every kitchen and smoke alarms in hallways, landings and the most frequently used daytime room by February 2021.

These alarms need to be interlinked so you will know if they have gone off no matter what room you are in and must be either hardwired or use tamper-proof long-life lithium batteries.

Carbon monoxide detectors must also be fitted in any rooms that have a gas boiler, gas flue or gas fire in them.

Our programme to carry out these upgrades is well underway.

If your home requires an upgrade, you will receive a letter from us. After receiving your letter contact the Customer Service Centre on 0300 300 0300 to arrange an appointment. Installation will take no longer than two hours and there will be no disturbance to decoration.



Want to have your say on the work we do? Become a Tenant Participation volunteer

Calling all tenants... we're looking for new tenant participation volunteers in Renfrewshire.

The role allows you to get involved in our decision-making processes. You will also be able to tell us your priorities and have a say in how our services are delivered.

There are lots of benefits to getting involved, including meeting new people, having your say, gaining new skills, confidence building and making a difference in your community, and you can get involved as much or as little as you want.

To help our tenant participation volunteers, we can also provide travel and subsistence expenses and try to make sure meetings are held in halls that are accessible and close to where people live wherever possible.

We also work closely with local Tenants and Residents Associations to improve the quality of the service provided to our tenants.

Local associations are a fantastic way for tenants and residents to come together to help improve their community.

Our development officers can provide assistance to groups looking to set up a Tenants and Residents Association as well as advice on its day-to-day running.

Training is also available for volunteers who want to get involved in their local Tenants and Residents Association and an annual grant can also be paid for the running costs of the association so volunteers are not left out-of-pocket.

To become a tenant participation volunteer or for more information on contacting your local Tenants and Residents Association or setting up a group, call our development officers on **0141 618 2502** or email tenantparticipation@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Useful numbers

Housing Advice & Homeless Services
0300 300 0222

Housing & Council Tax Benefit (Council Tenants)
0300 300 0204

Housing Services
0300 300 0222

Intervention Team – Rent Enquiries
0800 085 9126

Out of hours Emergency Repairs
0300 300 0300

Performance Information
0141 618 6264

Repairs Contact Centre
0300 300 0300 (within office hours)

Social Work Area Office
0300 300 1199

Tenant Consultation Team
0141 618 6260

Adult Protection Renfrewshire
0300 300 1199

Advice Works helpline
0300 300 1238 (Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm)

Antisocial Behaviour Helpline
0300 300 0380

Child Protection
0300 300 1199
0300 343 1505 (evenings & weekends)

Current Benefit entitlement
0300 300 0288 (option 2)

Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre
0808 808 2282

Gas Servicing
0300 300 0300

Graffiti Reporting
0300 300 0380

Greener Renfrewshire
0300 300 0380

Homelessness & Social Work stand by service (24hrs)
0300 300 0222

Paying your rent

It is important that you pay your rent on time as your rent pays for the services we provide.



If you are having problems, there are several ways we can help. We can provide advice on the best way to pay your rent that suits your circumstances. We can also refer you to specialist advisors to give you support on money, employment and energy concerns as well as making sure that you maximise your income by claiming all benefits or tax credits due to you.

You can ask for a private interview or home visit. Call on **0800 085 9126** to arrange an appointment.

The People's News can be made available in braille, large print or audio.

If you would like information in another language please ask us.

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਸਾਹਵਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

0141 618 6264

tenantparticipation@renfrewshire.gov.uk

How do I complain?

We always welcome feedback from customers on the level of service you receive. If you are not happy with aspects of this service, then you should speak with that area of the service first to resolve. However if you are still unhappy, then you can complain by:

Phone: 0300 300 0300

Email: complaints@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Write: Complaints Officer, Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley PA1 1WB.

Online: Complete the online form on website www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Tell us what you think

Tell us what you think of the People's News, both its format and contents.

Email us at HousingStrategyQuality.hps@renfrewshire.gov.uk or call 0141 618 6264.