

Welcome to the Winter edition of your Irvine Housing Association newsletter

House & Home

Issue 03 Winter 2018



New Tenancy Sustainability Team

We are excited to introduce you to our newest team. The Tenancy Sustainability Team will support our most vulnerable customers, while continuing to offer the money advice and affordable warmth services that have saved our customers millions of pounds over the past six years.

Meet the team on page 2.



Your opinion counts



WIN
£50

Have your say and the chance to win £50 shopping voucher. Details on pages 4-5

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Contacting us over Christmas and New Year



Avoid the January queues by contacting us anytime over Christmas and New Year.

Our customer service advisors are on hand 24/7 to deal with any enquiries, emergencies or repairs you may have over the festive period.

Call the team anytime on 0345 112 6600.

You can also email the team via our website -

www.irvineha.co.uk

Our offices close on Monday 24 December and will re-open on Thursday 3 January 2019.

Best wishes to all of our customers over the festive season and in 2019.

Your new Tenancy Sustainability Team



Our Tenancy Sustainability Team was launched in November to provide proactive support to customers who are experiencing difficulties and who may be at a risk of becoming homeless.

The team will assist and support our most vulnerable customers to sustain their tenancies in the long term and to help them address wider support and health issues.

The team will continue to offer quality, confidential and comprehensive advice and assistance covering money and debt advice, welfare rights and affordable warmth, as well as identifying wider support needs such as mental health and addictions issues.

The overall objective of the team is to prevent homelessness, tenancy eviction and tenancy abandonment as far as possible by empowering customers with

the right skills and information to be able to sustain accommodation in the long term.

This team will also be the key route for all Adult Support and Protection and Child Protection referrals.

Clair Christie, Tenancy Sustainability Team Leader heads up the team of two officers, Kathryn Morrison & Jacqui Monaghan.

The officers are patch based with Kathryn covering Kilwinning & Dumfries, and Jacqui responsible for Irvine, Arran & Drongan.

Housing Officers can refer customers to the team, but if a customer feels they need assistance they can contact the team direct on 01294 316756 or 01294 316784.

Can we help you reach your goals?

In partnership with Riverside, a new 'Ladders of Aspiration' scheme has been developed to mark Irvine Housing Association's 25th and Riverside's 90th birthday celebrations. It's a way for us to help you achieve an educational or professional goal by paying for courses, training opportunities or other costs associated with this like childcare, course materials and transport to help you to move into employment.

The grant can also be used for supporting the development of a new business – this would include making sure you have completed all the necessary professional accreditations such as a health and safety course and professional business qualifications.

Our Tenancy Sustainability Officers will not only support you through the application process, but also during the course and help you to find a job when you have your new qualification.

Who can apply?

This scheme is open to you as an Irvine Housing Association customer. It's also open to your adult children if they live with you. You must be currently unemployed and looking to move into employment.

How to apply

If you are interested in applying for this scheme, please contact the Tenancy Sustainability Team on 01294 316756 or 01294 316784 and they will help you to complete the application form.

Be ready for new online services in the New Year

A few of our customers already using online rent accounts have been busy helping us test and improve your new online service offer.

In the New Year you'll be able to view your rent and charges account, and report repairs – all online, at any time, and on any device. With more to come!

How do I get it?

You'll need to have an email address registered with us. That's because when it's ready for you to sign up, the system will match the email address you provide against our records. So we know it's really you.

How do I register my email address?

Just call or email us and ask us to register it against your account. For security, we'll ask you to confirm your name and address.

Where we can, we'll also send your other service information by email too, including this 'House & Home' service update. And as always, we'll look after your information and follow our Privacy Policy – see <http://www.irvineha.co.uk/privacy-notice/> for more details.





Our newsletters are changing

We want to make sure we are sharing useful information that meets your needs.

In March 2019 we will be launching our new-look news update that keeps you up to speed with all the essentials. Each issue will include important service updates for you to be aware of.

Our new updates will be emailed out directly to our customers we hold a valid email address for. If we don't have a valid email address for you then we will post out a printed version.

Get news straight to your inbox

Receiving news updates from us via email makes it easier for you to stay informed.

If you haven't already provided us with a valid email address you can do so by emailing info@irvineha.co.uk or calling our Customer Service Centre on 0345 112 6600 and let us know you want to update your details.



We're looking for a tenant Board Member



We currently have a vacancy on our Board. We are looking for a tenant board member who is interested in contributing to the strategic leadership of the Association. The Board's role is to oversee the management of the business to ensure that it is financially viable, properly governed and complies with all relevant regulatory frameworks.

We are looking for board members with experience or an interest in the communities in which the Association operates. If you have a passion for the delivery of quality services that have a positive impact on individuals and the wider community, we would love to hear from you.

If appointed, you would be working with fellow Board Members and the Leadership Team to:

- Achieve the Association's vision to transform lives, revitalising neighbourhoods
- Make decisions about key policies

and strategies

- Carry out a monitoring and supervisory role

This exciting role is a great personal development opportunity for individuals with the appropriate skills and knowledge.

This opportunity will offer the chance to gain experience in governance and strategic leadership of a charitable registered social landlord, committed to providing a first class service to its customers. You will also gain a vast knowledge of the housing sector operating environment.

Board Members are unremunerated but we will pay all associated expenses.

To request an application pack, please contact Donna Boyle, Governance and Company Secretarial Assistant on 01294 316779.

Your opinion counts

The Future Delivery of Services Consultation 2018

You will have received a survey through your letterbox recently. We are consulting with customers on the future delivery of our services. We are keen to hear your views on how we communicate and how you would like to have your say in making improvements to the services you receive. You can provide feedback

by completing and returning the survey to us, or visit our website www.irvineha.co.uk and complete online. **All completed surveys will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 shopping voucher.**

The consultation ends on 21st December 2018.

Celebrating twenty-five years

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Apply for up to £1,500 community funding

In August our staff partnered up with Irvine Clean Up Crew to clean up the Harbourside.

The team cleaned up grass areas, pathways and car parks around the Harbourside and beach park. After one and a half hours we collected an impressive 18 bags of rubbish.

The activity was part of the Association's 25th anniversary celebrations.

Paul Hillard, Managing Director said, "We wanted to give back to the community in our 25th year and know that Irvine Clean Up Crew are really proactive in ensuring the beach and surrounding area are kept tidy. A lot of our stock is at the Harbourside so it made sense to team up and get our staff involved.

"As well as benefiting the environment it was an opportunity for some team building as we've welcomed a lot of new staff over the past year. Everyone enjoyed the afternoon and found it really rewarding."

IHA Community Fund

Local community groups in our areas of operation which are Irvine, Kilwinning, Lamlash, Drongan, Dumfries, can apply for funding up to £1,500 towards a project or event through our Community Fund.

Applying is easy, just contact Lyndsay McLaughlan, Customer Involvement Officer for an application form:

Email: Lyndsay.McLaughlan@irvineha.co.uk

Call: 01294 316785

Closing date for this round of applications is Friday 15th February 2019. Applications will be assessed with groups being informed of the outcome by mid-March 2019.

This year Irvine Housing Association celebrated its 25th anniversary. To mark this special occasion we offered funding towards events in the communities where we operate.

Groups and clubs were invited to apply for up to £500 towards an event. Applications were assessed and we are pleased to support:

- Kilwinning Community Events – Kilwinning fireworks
- Drongan, Rankinston & Stair Regeneration Group – Older persons Christmas party
- Pennyburn Regeneration Youth Development Enterprise (PRYDE) – 25 years community celebration
- SHOUT Kinship Support Group – Christmas party

Annual Rent Increase Consultation

Included with this newsletter is a copy of our Annual Rent Increase Consultation. Make sure you have your say and return your completed feedback form using the prepaid envelope enclosed. **Please include your name and address on the form to be included in the prize draw to win a £50 shopping voucher!**

All the feedback we receive will be

collated and taken to our Board at the end of January 2019 for consideration before a decision is made.

The Rent Increase decision for 2019/20 will be published on our website as soon as Board have made a decision. All of our customers will be formally notified of the change to their rent amount by letter, prior to the increase taking effect in April 2019.



Our special 25th anniversary booklet that looks over the history of IHA and features key milestones and events is on our website homepage.



Repairs Advice

Avoid frozen pipes and mould this winter.

Your safety and comfort is our priority, and as the winter weather approaches, here are some tips and guidance to help you avoid common issues around the home.

The winter weather brings cold air and frost, which can cause common problems like condensation, mould and frozen pipes. Condensation happens when warm air hits a cold surface, such as a window or a wall. It can cause damage and mould growth if it isn't removed.

Reducing condensation

Cover pans with lids when cooking.

Use extractor fans when cooking or bathing.

Wipe away any condensation from windows and doors to prevent mould.

Preventing frost damage and frozen pipes

Run your taps regularly to get the water flowing – moving water is less likely to freeze.

Keep your heating on a low setting at all times, even if you're out.

Leave internal doors open to allow warm air to spread through your home.

For more detailed guidance, visit www.irvineha.co.uk and search for "keeping warm this winter".

Investing over £2M In Your Homes

In our summer newsletter we gave details of the capital investment works we would be carrying out to our stock over 2018/19.

This investment is particularly noticeable in our Bourtreehill and Girdle Toll properties which have benefited from new roofs, windows and doors, guttering, external wall insulation, re-rendering and new boilers.



"The works have made such a difference to my home. It looks like a completely different house. I am so used to saying 'it's the wee red house', now it has been completely transformed! With the arrival of the cold weather I am already feeling the benefits of the new roof and external wall insulation and look forward to seeing a difference in my bills."

Mrs Fullerton, Girdle Toll



Mitie project

We have been working closely in recent months with our key repairs and maintenance contractor Mitie Property Services, to discuss how we can work together to better support our most vulnerable customers and improve the quality of our communities and neighbourhoods.

As a provider of repairs and maintenance services on behalf of many social landlords across the country, Mitie has a breadth of experience in supporting local communities and initiatives designed to; help vulnerable tenants sustain accommodation, promote access to

employment for customers of all ages, as well as projects aimed at enhancing the local environment by improving facilities and amenities.

Mitie is committed to working with Irvine Housing Association in the coming months to support our customers. If you are part of a local community group looking for a bit of support to get a project off the ground, or have any ideas or suggestions as to how this partnership could benefit customers please contact Heather Anderson, Head of Service Delivery on 0345 112 6600.

Garden Prizes

Our Harbourside in Bloom and Garden of the Week Winners.

Congratulations to our Harbourside in Bloom prize winners.

We were delighted that so many of you entered and brought a pop of colour to the harbourside.

Throughout the summer our housing officers were also on the lookout for tidy gardens and customers making an effort to brighten up the front of their property. A few of those are pictured below.



West Doura Donation

The residents at West Doura Court, Kilwinning have donated £70 worth of coppers and 5p's to Whitehirst Primary School in a way of thanks for their continued support to the tenants throughout the year.

Tarryholme update



In May work started on our latest housing development - 87 new homes in the Tarryholme area of Irvine, due for completion in Spring 2020.

Gailes Gardens and Gailes Wynd is a mixture of 2,3 and 4 bed

homes for rent, including bungalows and wheelchair accessible properties.

McTaggart Construction who is building the new homes for us has been working on various community benefit projects including an information session and construction workshop with every 2nd and 3rd year pupil at Greenwood Academy, and delivering careers sessions to assist with Glebe Primary school's World of Work programme.

The on-site apprenticeship programme is going well with

three students from The Wise Group's Cash Back for Communities Employability programme starting on 5 November.

We will also be supporting four civil engineering foundation apprentice students from Ayrshire College with on-site experience throughout the coming academic year.



Housing (Scotland) Act 2014



We wrote out to customers earlier this year about significant changes brought about by The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 which will impact on social landlords and tenants.

Most of these provisions come into force 1 May 2019, with the exception of the provisions on joint tenancy, assignation, subletting and succession for Scottish Secure and Short Scottish Secure tenancies, which come into force from 1 November 2019. The changes are:

Occupancy Requirement for Certain Tenant Rights

Under the Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) tenants have certain rights. Some of these are ones they can request, such as assignation, subletting and a joint tenancy.

The 2014 Act attaches a clear requirement for the tenant and potential assignee/joint tenant to have resided in the property for at least 12 months before the right can be exercised. Currently there are only limited occupancy requirements whereas the new Act makes it clear not only that there is this 12 month period of occupation but also that the landlord has been notified of the change in the household before the 12 month qualifying period can begin. If the Association has not been notified then they will have grounds to refuse.

Succession (Taking over a Tenancy after the Tenant's Death)

The 2014 Act changes some of the rules around when certain people can succeed to (take over) a Scottish secure tenancy on the death of the tenant. To ensure rights to succession are protected you must have told us that the person wishing to succeed to a tenancy has moved in with you at the time they do so.

Unmarried Partners, Family Members and Carers

Section 13 of the 2014 Act makes changes to the rules on succession for unmarried partners, family members and carers:

- the house must have been the proposed successor's only or principal home for 12 months before they qualify to succeed to the tenancy (previously this was 6 months and no qualifying period for family members); and
- the 12 month period cannot begin unless we have been told that the individual is living in the property as their only or principal home. We must have been told that by you, a joint tenant, or the person who wishes to succeed to the tenancy.

These changes will take effect for existing tenants from 1 November 2019 and we will be writing to all existing tenants individually to explain the changes in more detail

in the coming months. New tenancy agreements which incorporate these changes will be developed for all new tenants from 1 May 2019.

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

Within the 2014 Act the Scottish Government wanted to give landlords more tools to tackle ASB. The main changes around ASB are:

- A simplified eviction process where a tenant is convicted of certain offences in the locality of the property;
- The ability to convert a full Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) to a short Scottish Secure Tenancy where there is anti-social behaviour;
- Increasing the initial period of a short SST granted for ASB from six months to 12 months.

These changes will come into force from 1 May 2019 and the Association will be reviewing our current policies and procedures on ASB and the use of Short Scottish Secure Tenancies to reflect these changes in the coming months.

If you would like to discuss any aspects of these changes in more detail please contact us on 0345 112 6600.