

# ORE VALLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Official Newsletter



## Introduction

Hello and welcome to our monthly newsletter. This newsletter is being provided to give you a regular update on how we are continuing to deliver services while still meeting the challenge of controlling and mitigating the spread of Coronavirus. If you have access to the internet, please visit our website and facebook page where we will continue to provide our tenants with regular updates.

## Help and Support

Remember, it is ok not to be ok, and we are still here to help and support our tenants at this difficult time. If you are struggling for any reason, or if you are having difficulty paying your rent due to having reduced working hours, redundancy or coming off furlough arrangements with your employer, please contact us on 01592 721 917.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

It's understandable if what's happening just now is affecting how you feel. Many of the emotions you have will be common given what is going on at the moment. However, it can become harder to deal with these feelings as time goes on. And it may also be more difficult to do the things you would normally do to keep yourself feeling well. Some of us will take longer to feel comfortable about going out and about – and that's ok too. It's important you take your time and feel safe when you do go out. [clearyourhead.scot/](https://clearyourhead.scot/)

Be kind to yourself and learn to recognise when you start to struggle with your emotions or feel low. Tips and self help guides available on the NHS inform website are designed to help you look after your mental health. You can find these online at [nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing](https://nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing)

NHS inform has advice on different aspects of your emotional health, like dealing with low moods, anger, fear and stress. Any time you start to feel overwhelmed, it's important to acknowledge your feelings and speak to someone you trust. That could be a friend, a family member or your GP. Or you may find it easier to call a helpline like NHS24 (111) or Breathing Space (0800 83 85 87).

If you have experienced mental health issues before, you might find that those difficulties have reappeared or worsened. If you're experiencing a mental health crisis and you already receive support, phone your GP or care team first. If you can't talk to them, call 111 to speak to NHS24.

If you are older and you find that there are times when you have no one to talk to, you can call the Age Scotland Friendship Line on 0800 12 44 222. This line is open Monday to Friday 9am -5pm and you can call them about anything that may be troubling you.

# Community Support

## Cardenden Community Fridge

Once again we would like to say a big thank you to the fantastic volunteers who are continuing to deliver this important service in Cardenden. Ore Valley is using funds from a grant that we applied to from the Scottish Government to provide enhanced financial support for the Community Fridge Project held at the Bowhill Centre in Cardenden, Monday 1-3pm and Friday 2-4pm.



## Family Fun

We are also supporting a regular 'family fun' event at the Bowhill Centre every Wednesday between 12-2pm, when anyone can pop along for a chat, a cuppa and bite to eat. It is our plan for our staff to pop along to these events so we can reach out once again to our tenants. Further announcements about this will be made on our Facebook page.

[facebook.com/orevalleyha](https://facebook.com/orevalleyha)

## Freedom Programme

Referrals are now being taken for the Freedom Programme. This 10 week online course is for any woman interested in learning more about the effects of domestic abuse and, in particular for women who experience/ have experienced domestic abuse. If you would like to find out more, please contact us or visit [sajescotland.org/book-a-course/](https://sajescotland.org/book-a-course/)



# Services/ Phase 3 & 4

Following the Scottish Government update on 24 August 2020, outlining further changes to the guidance on Coronavirus Phase 3: Staying Safe and Protecting Others, non-essential offices such as ours, should remain closed until at least 14 September, or possibly later than this date depending on the current coronavirus infection rates. The decision about re-opening our office will be subject to a further review and the implementation of relevant guidance, including physical distancing. Even at Phase 4, control measures and appropriate hygiene regimes will still be required, and working from home and working flexibly “will remain the default position” for workers in Scotland.

The team at Ore Valley are now working on arrangements that will allow a limited reopening so that some staff can return to work in our offices in Cardenden and Lochgelly. Hopefully, this will be sometime soon after the 14 September 2020.

Some of the things we are looking at so that we can make this happen are:

- What will be the purpose of the office (e.g. what tasks will be performed there)
- Can we limit the number of staff working simultaneously, how do we prioritise essential tasks.
- Which staff can continue to work safely and effectively from home and how suitable are our existing home working environments (e.g. space, equipment and privacy)
- How can staggered or flexible working hours for staff be accommodated
- How can effective team working be fostered when staff are working in different environments and/or different work schedules.
- Which staff are vulnerable or shielding
- Which staff have family members who are vulnerable or shielding
- Which staff have care duties or have experienced changes to childcare needs due changes to school opening times?
- What are the transport options available to staff (e.g. which staff drive, walk or cycle to work and which rely on public transport).
- What are the individual preferences amongst staff (e.g. anxiety about returning to office or personal circumstances).

In all this we recognise that we must continue to be available to provide a good service for our tenants and other customers, and we are working with the aim of being able to open our office to the general public as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, home visits are still not possible but we can offer an appointment system for office interviews where this is needed. We can also offer a 'virtual interview' with a member of staff using your own device at home, or you can make an appointment to use a laptop in the reception area of our office in Cardenden. If you would like to make an office appointment to speak to us, please call us on 01592 721 917 or email [housing@orevalleyha.org.uk](mailto:housing@orevalleyha.org.uk).



# Planned Maintenance

## Kitchens

Unfortunately, our kitchen replacement contract is still on hold. As this work is multi-trade and requires more than one operative onsite we need to ensure that our contractor (Everwarm) can provide satisfactory distancing measures. Tenants who were notified earlier in the year will still be on the same kitchen contract but at present we cannot give a timescale.



## Showers

There is no shower contract this year as all properties that previously had no shower should now have one installed. If your property does not have a shower installed, please contact us on 01592 721 917.

## Electrical testing

The 5 yearly electrical testing recommenced in July. Rogersons will be carrying out the testing and will complete any electrical work they pick up. Rogersons will contact tenants directly to arrange appointments.



## Painterwork

External painterwork is still on hold. Our contractor Novus hopes to recommence the programme as soon as possible. They will contact tenants directly to advise of start dates once the programme is back up and running.



## Smoke Detectors

The upgrading of fire detection systems restarted in mid August. Our contractor, RB Grant will contact tenants directly to arrange appointments. Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London there is now a legal requirement for all of our properties to have upgraded fire detection systems installed. The Standard requires:

- One smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for daytime living - normally the livingroom
- One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings
- One heat alarms insalled in the kitchen
- All alarms should be ceiling mounted and interlinked

Because there is a legal requirement for us to complete this work, tenants cannot opt out of having this work carried out in their home. We will do everything we can to work with you to cause as little disruption as possible, but if you have any specific concerns about providing access for this essential work, please contact us on 01592 721 917.



# Flooding in Cardenden and Lochgelly

The flooding in Cardenden on 12th August did have a significant impact on our services. We are delighted with the overall response of our Contractor, Rogerson who responded to the emergency as it developed in both Cardenden and Lochgelly. Unfortunately, four families in Ore Valley properties are amongst those who have been worse affected, and they have had to move into other accommodation. Fortunately, we have been able to house these families in the same villages so that they are close to their existing support networks. We will continue to support these families and individuals, so that where it is appropriate they can return to their own homes as soon as possible. Our sincere best wishes also go to anyone else who was adversely affected by this flood. We are now exploring options that may be available for us to support wider community initiatives aimed at helping the local area recover.



## Home Contents Insurance

If you are one of our tenants, you should consider the benefit of having home contents insurance policy cover, so that you can make an informed decision on whether you need one - as your landlord we won't cover your home contents and belongings for damage, loss or theft. To decide whether home contents insurance is right for you, you should understand what's covered and think about what you would do if you lost everything as a result of a fire or flood. Typically furniture, clothes, appliances and jewellery are covered in any basic policy, however there might be some limits and exclusions.

If you don't already have home contents insurance we would encourage you to take out a basic policy so that you are covered against fire, theft, flood and water damage caused by leaks. More information about how to make an application is available from the Thistle Tenant Risk Home Contents Insurance Scheme, who can provide cover to tenants in social housing that is easy to apply for and has flexible payment options. If you would like to discuss this option in more detail, please call us on 01592 721 917 or contact Thistle Insurance on 0345 450 7286 or visit [thistletenants-scotland.co.uk/](http://thistletenants-scotland.co.uk/)

# Staff Updates

## Alan Ross - Caretaker

The staff at Ore Valley would like to say a special thank you to our colleague, Alan Ross. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis Alan has continued to deliver our caretaking service and he is always available to help with the extra things that the rest of us cannot do at the moment due to the lockdown restrictions.

Alan has continued to clean our office in Cardenden along with Ore Valley Business Centre and the Miners Institute in Lochgelly. Within the Business Centre alone there are a number of service providers who are involved in the care sector. The work Alan has carried out has contributed to these essential services being able to carry on their operations without having to worry about the safety of their own working environment. Alan, is also carrying out regular inspections and some limited cleaning to ensure that our common areas are kept safe and clean for our tenants.



## Ryan Doyle (Housing Officer)

Special mention also goes to Ryan Doyle (Housing Officer). Ryan has been the sole person in our Cardenden office throughout this current crisis, often working long hours on his own to provide an essential link to the office for all the other staff members who have continued to work from home.



## Caitlyn McGowan - 2 Year - Modern Apprentice

Well done to Caitlyn who has now completed the first year of her apprenticeship. Since joining Ore Valley, Caitlyn has been an important member of our team and her positive attitude to working with our tenants has been widely recognised. Caitlyn completed the agreed distance learning course designed to be held over 2 years within the first year and has passed with flying colours. We are now working with Caitlyn to discuss additional training and development opportunities to take forward in the remaining period of her apprenticeship.



### Important Contacts

#### Fife Council

**Switchboard**- 03451 55 0000

**Environmental Health** (Rubbish collection, dog fouling etc)- 03451 55 0022

**Antisocial Behaviour**- 03451 55 0033

**Fife Council Welfare Fund Team**- 0300 555 0265 or email: welfare.fund@fife.gov.uk

#### Advice and Help

**National Grid**- 0800 111 999

**Scottish Water** - 08000 778 778

**NHS 24**-111

**Homeless Emergency Number (Free)**-

0800 028 6231

**Citizens advice & Rights Fife**- 0345 1400 095

### Ore Valley Online

Facebook /orevalleyha

Twitter @orevalleygroup

www.orevalleyha.org.uk

### Contact Details

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