



# Rooftops

Issue 70

June 2022

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## 'Building a sustainable future' outlines Orkney Housing Association's Business Plan for the next 3 years

The plan, which is available on our website, was developed following input from staff and Management Committee taking on board feedback from tenants, residents and other stakeholders regarding affordability and availability of new homes in Orkney.



The principle actions include commitment to:

- Keep rents affordable by limiting rent increases to no more than RPI inflation
- Sustainably build around 20 new homes each year
- Ensure a positive work environment for staff
- Continue to provide a high level of service and support
- Be sustainable, considerate and efficient in all we do for our community and beyond

## New staff welcomed

Our Housing & Customer Services department have welcomed new members to their team. Samantha Thacker joined as Housing Services Officer, with Jenny Simpkins coming on board as Customer Services Assistant.



Samantha Thacker



Jenny Simpkins



Sandy Milne

We are also delighted to welcome Sandy Milne to the Development & Properties team as Senior Building Officer (Reactive Repairs).

## TENANTS RECEIVE KEYS TO NEW HOMES

Our newest housing scheme at The Crafty was completed recently.

The scheme comprises 12 rented properties and our Housing Officers were delighted to hand over keys to the new tenants.



The Crafty, Kirkwall



# VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

## Management Committee

Are you interested in supporting those within our community and the provision of affordable housing?

You could make a valuable contribution to our Management Committee, working with other like-minded individuals, setting strategy and making important business decisions.



Our Committee Members give their time for free and attend 6-10 meetings per year plus some training and networking events, both within and out with Orkney. All reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

Would you like to find out more about the work of our Committee, and possibly become a Committee Member yourself?

For further information or an informal chat please contact Mhairi Hughes: [mhairi.hughes@ohal.org.uk](mailto:mhairi.hughes@ohal.org.uk) 07739326922

## INFLUENCE THE FUTURE OF YOUR COMMUNITIES

### Residents Panel



**Residents Panel outing, 2021**

Meetings have continued online, with members getting together to discuss relevant issues. We've had joint sessions with the Caithness & Sutherland Interested Tenant Group. Our Housing Officers gave updates on the extra support being offered to tenants by way of the Tenancy Sustainment Fund or signposting to other agencies such as THAW for advice on energy costs and Orkney CAB for those facing financial difficulties.

The group has been extremely supportive to each other during the extended periods of lockdown and offered a friendly face and listening ear.

Have you ever wanted to influence decisions that affect your tenancy? Would you like to come along to a meeting of the Resident Panel to find out more about how you can influence changes?

We are looking for new members who would like to join our group and make improvements to our services and how we communicate with our tenants.

If you'd like to know more, drop Suzy an email: [suzy.boardman@ohal.org.uk](mailto:suzy.boardman@ohal.org.uk)

## ***Are You Struggling? We can help!***

Did you know that your rent pays for all of the services we provide as well as investment in your home? This includes new kitchens, bathrooms, windows and heating replacement as well as repairs and the upkeep of the estate. We don't receive any other funding to help with this investment so it's really important that rent is paid on time.

Like most social landlords, we are able to provide a lot of support for anyone who is struggling to pay their rent. Our Housing Officers are always available to help with setting up affordable repayment plans, assisting tenants to apply for benefits and helping with income and expenditure.

We are keen to help anyone who has financial difficulties and understand some tenants will have experienced reduced income due to COVID-19. If you feel that you would benefit from some advice, your Housing Officer can work with you to access existing routes to funding and income maximisation all of which can help you with things like:

- **Rent Payments**
- **Household Bills** (eg, Council Tax, electricity, food, school meals, etc)
- **Direct Payments** (eg, Council Tax, electricity, food, school meals, etc)
- **Welfare Benefits Advice**

## **Mental Health Support**

Orkney Blide Trust services are available from age 16 and include:



**THE DROP-IN CENTRE** - We are open every day of the year. We exist for the benefit of anyone in the Orkney community who is experiencing mental ill-health, and who would like a place to go where they can meet with others in a friendly, supportive environment, and access support and help from our staff.

**OUT AND ABOUT ACTIVITIES** - Our programme of activities runs throughout the year. We take advantage of the wide range of social, leisure, cultural, educational and physical opportunities which are available in Orkney. Our activities are planned by members and staff at monthly meetings.

**HOUSING SUPPORT** - We offer practical support to people with mental health problems to help them to live independently and to work towards recovery from mental ill health. You may access support through referrals from other agencies (such as General Practitioner, or the Community Mental Health Team); by request from carers, friends and relatives; or just by contacting us directly.

**BEFRIENDING SERVICE** - We provide companionship for those with mental ill-health who would benefit from the activity and company of a Befriender. We provide a link bringing people together to provide opportunities to get out and enjoy activities that they would not attend alone.

Contact your Housing Officer or Blide Trust direct (874874) for further details.

## Scottish Welfare Fund

This fund is being administered through Orkney Islands Council (OIC) on behalf of the Scottish Government and consists of two types of grant for people on a low income or benefits.

### Crisis Grants

Providing a safety net in the event of a disaster or emergency. A Crisis Grant may help if you are:

- In crisis because of a disaster like a fire or flood, or an emergency such as losing all your money or having to visit a sick child in hospital.
- Need help with costs that have arisen as a result of the disaster or emergency, to keep you and your family safe from harm. If you qualify for a Crisis Grant, the help you receive will depend on the particular difficulties you face. You may be given money or another form of support, for example, a voucher, fuel card, travel ticket or furniture.

### Community Care Grants

Providing help to leave care and live on your own, or to continue living in your own home. A Community Care Grant may help if you:

- Are about to leave care to live on your own in the community, for example after being in hospital or in prison, or face going into care because you don't have the things you need to continue living at home. A Community Care Grant may also be able to help if you are struggling to provide a safe and secure home for your family.
- Need help to get essential household items like a cooker or washing machine but don't have the money to buy it. As with the Crisis Grant, if you qualify for a Community Care Grant the help you receive will depend on your circumstances. You may be given money or you may receive support another way, for example, a voucher, fuel card, travel ticket or furniture.

Applications can be completed online at <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/S/scottish-welfare-fund.htm>. Or you can contact the team by emailing [swf@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:swf@orkney.gov.uk).

## Other Local Help

### Discretionary Housing Payments

To help keep up with rent payments or with one-off rent deposit/removal costs. Available to those receiving Housing Benefit and/or the housing costs element of Universal Credit.

Phone OIC: 01856 873535 (ext 2116)

Email: [benefits@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@orkney.gov.uk)

[www.bit.ly/orkneydhp](http://www.bit.ly/orkneydhp)

### Council Tax Reduction

If you are on a low income you may qualify for Council Tax reduction. Please phone OIC on 01856 873535 for how to apply.

### School Meals and Clothing Allowances

OIC provide assistance with free school meals and clothing allowances to families with a low income who meet the eligibility criteria. You can find the criteria by clicking this [link](#).

**If you need any help or want to discuss any of the above, please speak to your Housing Officer.**

## Financial Support



Social Security Scotland  
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

The Scottish Government can offer additional benefits through Social Security Scotland. Some of the payments and grants for children, young people and carers are listed below with full details found at <https://www.mygov.scot/benefits/>

- ⇒ **Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment** – One off payment of up to £600 from 24 weeks in pregnancy up until a baby turns 6 months for families who get certain benefits.
- ⇒ **Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment** – One off payment of £250 when a child is between two and three years and six months for families who get certain benefits.
- ⇒ **Best Start Grant School Age Payment** – One off payment of £250 when a child would normally start primary one for families who get certain benefits.
- ⇒ **Best Start Foods** – A pre-paid card from pregnancy up to when a child turns three for families on certain benefits to help buy healthy food.
- ⇒ **Carers Allowance Supplement** – An automatic payment made twice a year to people who get Carers Allowance through the DWP on certain dates each year.
- ⇒ **Funeral Support Payment** – Money towards the costs of a funeral for people on certain benefits who are responsible for paying for a funeral.
- ⇒ **Job Start Payments** – £250 for 16 to 24 year olds who have been on certain benefits for six months or more to help with the costs of starting a job.
- ⇒ **Young Carer Grant** – An annual payment of more than £300 for people 16-18 who care for people who get a disability benefit from the DWP for an average of 16 hours a week or more.
- ⇒ **Child Winter Heating Assistance** – Payment of £200 for children and young people up to the age of 18. To get the payment they must meet two qualifying criteria on at least one day in the third full week of September:
  - ◇ Get the highest rate of care component of DLA for children
  - ◇ Be resident in Scotland
- ⇒ **Scottish Child Payment** – A new, unique to Scotland, benefit that will give qualifying parents and carers £40 every four weeks to help towards the costs of looking after each child under 6. It is planned to be fully rolled out to children under the age of 16 by the end of 2022.

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## Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau

We would encourage all tenants to contact their Housing Officer in the first instance for support and guidance relating to:

- Debt
- Benefits
- Employment (including redundancy)
- Housing



If you are in need of more specialist advice we can make a referral to Orkney CAB who can offer free and confidential advice for anyone living or working in Orkney.

# Complaints & Compliments

During the year to 31 March 2022, we recorded 72 complaints:

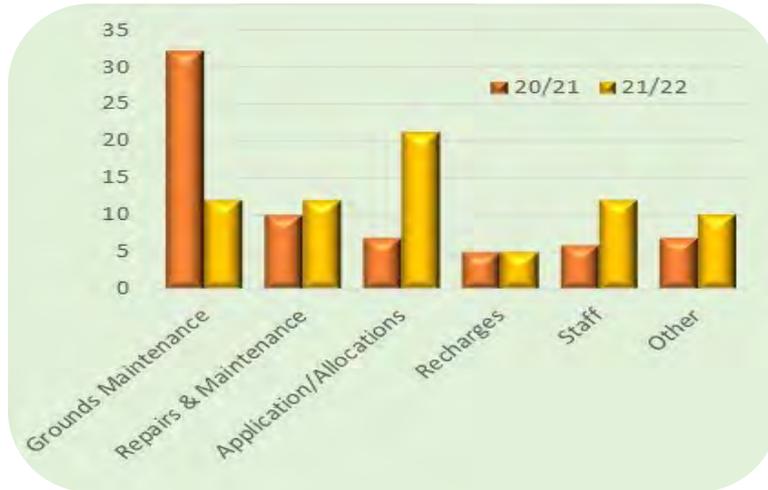
65 Stage 1 and 7 Stage 2.

*This is an increase of two since last year.*

How did we respond to the complaints?

- ◆ 94.4% of complaints were completed on time (94% last year).
- ◆ We upheld 34 (47%) of complaints (46% last year).

Complaints received by category



## Compliments

It is always nice to receive compliments and during the year to 31 March 2022, we received 192 compliments. These have been broken down as follows:

OHAL Tradesman Team	95
Repairs & Maintenance	34
Care & Repair	44
Services (general)	16
Grounds Maintenance	3

I am completely overjoyed by this fantastic house! I am so lucky. Its Gorgeous. Thanks to all at OHAL.

All my contacts with staff whether face to face or by telephone have been pleasant experiences. Thanks to friendly polite and professional staff. Please continue to maintain your high standards.  
[Care & Repair client]

This is just to express my appreciation for the gentleman who cut our grass yesterday at Liberator Drive. He started with a streamer, as should be, and did the most thorough job with it I've seen so far. Many thanks to him.

Your handman just got on with things. And fixed them in no time!! It's never a problem having the handymen in to see to things. They are always very kind and helpful. So thank you.

Thank for the work you did yesterday putting in hand rails. Mum asked me to tell you how much safer she feels and what a great job you did. I was very impressed by the way you listened to my Mum's needs and put in exactly what she needed. Thank you very much.  
[Care & Repair client]

## Are you happy with our service?

We aim to provide an excellent service at all times but recognise that there may be occasions when people are not happy with something we have done or failed to do. If you are unhappy with the level of service we have provided please let us know so that we can consider your comments and resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

If you wish to make a complaint about a service you have received there are 2 stages involved:

- 1) **Frontline Resolution (Stage 1):** Contact the person with whom you were dealing and see if it can be sorted out informally;
- 2) **Investigation (Stage 2):** This is for complaints that have not been solved at Stage 1 or are complex and require further investigation.

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)** to look at it.

**The SPSO can be contacted at [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk) or 0800 377 7330**

**Our Complaints Handling Procedure is available on the website or from the office on request.**

**SPSO**



**Scottish Housing  
Regulator**

The **Scottish Housing Regulator** is an independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and local authority housing services in Scotland. They were established on 01 April 2011 under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, and have one statutory objective, to:

*"safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities"*.

They regulate social landlords to protect the interests of people who receive services from them. They do this by assessing and reporting on:

- how social landlords are performing their housing services;
- RSLs' financial well-being;
- RSLs' standards of governance.

Further information on the Regulator can be found on their website:

[www.housingregulator.gov.scot/](http://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/)

## Programmed Renewals & Replacements for 2022/23

Below are the properties which have been identified as due for planned maintenance and property improvements this year. We will be consulting with the individual tenants in due course.

**Please note that all listings may be subject to change and refer to RENTED properties only**

### Replacement/renewal works

#### External Doors (not all)

Eunson Kloss  
Glaitness Pk 1 & 2 external communal doors

#### Window Replacement

Bosquoy Road - velux only  
Hamnavoe

#### Replacement Storage Heating

Barnhouse  
Kirk Park Phase 1  
Howanbrek

#### Kitchen Replacement

Hillside Park  
Kiln Corner Phase 1  
Kiln Corner Phase 2



#### Fascias & Rainwater Goods

Bosquoy Road

### External Decoration

- ◆ Phoenix House
- ◆ Meadow Crescent
- ◆ Jewadale
- ◆ Buckles Rd
- ◆ Mackenzies Dr, Pk & Pl (windows only)
- ◆ Meadowbank
- ◆ Flett's Corner
- ◆ Lyron
- ◆ Easdale Close
- ◆ Johnston's Rd
- ◆ Howanbrek
- ◆ Hillside Pk
- ◆ Citadel Crescent
- ◆ Quilco Phase 2
- ◆ Kirk Park Phase 2
- ◆ Upper Waston Road
- ◆ Marwick Brae

### Development Programme for 2022/23

#### Yorston Drive, Stromness: Completion expected Oct 2022

2 x 2 bedroom general needs for NSSE sale  
4 x 3 bedroom general needs for NSSE sale

#### Walliwall Ph 6 & 7: Completion expected May 2023

4 x 1 bedroom – Amenity Standard – Rented  
10 x 1 bedroom – General Needs Standard – Rented  
1 x 2 bedroom – Wheelchair Standard – Rented  
1 x 2 bedroom – Amenity Standard – rented  
5 x 2 bedroom – General Needs Standard – Rented  
1 x 4 bedroom – General Needs Standard – Rented  
4 x 2 bedroom – Amenity Standard – NSSE sale  
2 x 4 bedroom – General Needs Standard – NSSE sale

### REPAIRS TIMESCALES

Type of Response	Timescale	Description
Emergency	0-6 hours	Works to make safe where there is either a risk to the tenant or members of the public or to make a property secure or prevent further damage.
Urgent	1-3 working days	Works not classified as emergencies but which would cause a high degree of inconvenience or may cause further damage if not attended to within 3 days.  Some repairs are covered by the 'Right to Repair Scheme'. For further information please refer to your Tenants Handbook.
Routine	20 working days	All other repairs which are not Emergency or Urgent.

## The Scottish Secure Tenants (Right to Repair) Regulations 2002

Under the terms of the above legislation the Association is required to let its tenants know of the provisions of these Regulations - this leaflet can be found in the downloads section of our website, or a copy can be obtained from the office.

Shown below is a list of the contractors approved by the Association who are prepared to carry out qualifying repairs:

CONTRACTOR	ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER
G & A Barnie	4B Quarryfield Road, Hatston, Kirkwall 871999
R Clouston Limited	10 Grainshore Drive, Kirkwall 877914
Alfred Flett	St Mary's, Holm 781209
E Fraser Electrical (Orkney) Ltd	The Store, Finstown 761762
JMF Groat & Sons	Anchorfast Buildings, Longhope 701273
Daniel Marcus Construction	Old School, Rapness, Westray 01857 677301
A J Mathers	The Workshop, Cromlech, Stenness 850887
R S Merriman Ltd	Garson Way, Stromness 850105
Barry Moncrieff Joinery	Arrowon, Shapinsay 711376
W Muir	Hooking, North Ronaldsay 01857 633257
Orkney Builders (Contractors) Ltd	Crowness Road, Kirkwall 871447
Steven R Paterson Ltd	10 Crowness Road, Kirkwall 870088
Pipedream Plumbing	Crowness Crescent, Hatston, Kirkwall 874343
A Stevenson Ltd	Hestwall House, Holm 781224
WRC Construction	Crowness Crescent, Hatston, Kirkwall 871176

### Emergency Energy Vouchers



#### Home Energy Scotland offers:

- Support for households with prepayment meters, including access to newly available crisis funding for those at risk of self-disconnection or running out of credit on their gas or electric meter to make sure they can keep their power on.
- Practical help for people who find themselves without heating or hot water.
- Clear advice on ways to save energy and reduce fuel costs while staying warm at home.
- The latest information about extra help from energy suppliers to make sure households don't get cut off.

#### Here's how you can help:

- You can refer your clients directly to Home Energy Scotland through their secure online [referral portal](#) and they will call them back within two working days.
- If you aren't on their portal, please call or email Michael Cromby on 07881109002 or [michael.cromby@hi.homeenergyscotland.org](mailto:michael.cromby@hi.homeenergyscotland.org) and request to be added. This doesn't take long, and they can arrange a short online training session on how to use it, for example via Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
- You can also advise your clients to call them direct on **0808 808 2282** to talk to one of their friendly advisors about ways they can support them. All calls are free and confidential.

## Orkney Foodbank - Helping people in tough times

If you need help from Orkney foodbank there are a few simple steps to follow.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP IS TO GET A FOODBANK VOUCHER.

In order to provide the most appropriate help for the circumstances of your situation, the foodbank work with local agencies such as OHAL. If you are struggling to put food on the table, we will email you a foodbank voucher. We can also provide long term support or refer you to Citizens Advice, if needed, to help address some of the issues behind the reasons for your crisis.

#### 1. GET IN TOUCH WITH US

By phone **01856 875253**, email [enquiries@ohal.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ohal.org.uk) or Facebook messenger or speak to your Housing Officer and we can email you a voucher for the Foodbank.

#### 2. TAKE YOUR FOODBANK VOUCHER TO THE LOCAL FOODBANK

The Foodbank in Orkney is located at Dunkirk, Shore Street, Kirkwall and is open Tuesdays and Fridays between 12noon and 2pm. When you arrive, you will be welcomed with a warm drink and their trained volunteers will chat with you about your situation. They will also discuss any dietary needs you may have and exchange your foodbank voucher for a [parcel](#) of three days of emergency food. They will also help to support you in any other ways that they can. Most foodbank centres offer a cafe style environment and their aim is to provide non-judgemental support at the point of crisis.

A poster for the Greener Orkney Community Fridge. At the top, there is a string of colorful triangular bunting. Below it, the text "Greener Orkney" is written in a green, rounded font, with a green circular arrow icon around the word "Orkney". Underneath, the words "COMMUNITY" and "FRIDGE" are written in large, colorful, block letters. A table of opening hours is centered on the poster. To the left of the table is a red line-art illustration of a kitchen cabinet. To the right is a red line-art illustration of a kitchen scale with a bowl of fruit on top and a sign that says "OPEN". At the bottom, the location is given as "@ ORSAS Hub, 26 Bridge Street, Kirkwall".

Collection	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	-	2100 - 2130
Tuesday	1200 - 1400	2100 - 2130
Wednesday	-	2100 - 2130
Thursday	1200 - 1400	2100 - 2130
Friday	-	2100 - 2130
Saturday	1200 - 1400	-



## Relationship Scotland Orkney

– Offer a range of support services to families and individuals in:

- Relationship Counselling
- Individual Counselling
- Family Mediation
- Child Contact Centre
- Substance Misuse Counselling
- Play Therapy
- Children and Young Person Counselling
- Substance Misuse Support
- Family Support

Most services are being offered either online or over the phone and you can get in contact by phoning 01856 877750 and leaving a message or by emailing [enquiries@rsorkney.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsorkney.org.uk).

## SAMARITANS

Should you feel like you have nowhere else to turn, the Samaritans can be contacted by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on **116 123**.

If you would prefer to send an email you can write to [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) and someone will get back to you in 24 hours.

Their website contains some really helpful information for noticing your triggers and how you can help yourself if you feel yourself becoming overwhelmed:

[Signs you may be struggling to cope](#)  
[Samaritans](#)

## Women's Aid Orkney

Offering a free and confidential support to women and children affected by domestic abuse.

### Contact details

Office hours are 9am – 4.30pm.

**Phone:** 01856 877900

**Email:** [info@womensaidorkney.org.uk](mailto:info@womensaidorkney.org.uk)



### Need support, information or advice outside of these hours?

Scotland's 24 hour Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline can provide information, advice or support at any time of day.

**Call:** Scotland's 24 hour Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline on 0800 027 1234

**Email:** [helpline@sdfmh.org.uk](mailto:helpline@sdfmh.org.uk)

**Or visit:** [sdfmh.org.uk](http://sdfmh.org.uk)

**It's an emergency?  
Call the police on 999**

**Crossroads Care Orkney** is a charity which was established with the aim of improving the life of Carers and those for whom they care by giving information, emotional support and practical help. They can provide a fully trained Care Attendant to allow Carers to take a break.

If you would like to get in touch you can email:

[carers@crossroadsorkney.co.uk](mailto:carers@crossroadsorkney.co.uk)

or call 01856 870500.

Crossroads Care Orkney