

DECEMBER 2022



WAVERLEY HOUSING'S MODERN APPRENTICES

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CONSULTATION – PUBLIC ACCESS TO OFFICE

At our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in September 2022 it was highlighted by 2 of the tenants attending that consideration should be given to opening the office to the public either on a full time or part time basis. At the AGM a commitment was made to ask all our tenants their opinion on this matter. Thank you to those who responded. Included below is an analysis of the returns.

When asked “If you were to think of the last 12 months and contact you have made with Waverley Housing, have we been able to resolve any of your queries or issues or offered face to face appointments?” 100% of the tenants who responded said Yes. Four tenants said they would visit the office if it was open, 2 of these tenants specified that they think the office should be open. All 4 tenants reside in Hawick.

Our staff were also surveyed and they have suggested ways that we could become more accessible to all our tenants in all geographical areas we operate in. These include drop-in sessions to the office or designated areas within the towns we operate so that tenants can speak to us in person more easily. An additional service being explored is an electronic chat forum where staff can be available for tenants to log-on and speak to specific staff at pre-arranged times. These suggestions are being explored and we will be in touch with a further update in the early part of 2023. Our office will continue to remain closed to the public. If you wish to contact a member of staff to arrange a face-to-face meeting, please call us on 0800 104105, arrangements can be made to meet you at your home or within our office at a time convenient to you.

FESTIVE OPENING HOURS

The office will be closed from 23 December 2022 until 3 January 2023. The contact number for emergency repairs is 07721 889 618 (please note this number is for genuine emergency repairs only. You will be charged for all call-outs which are subsequently found not to be an emergency).

WAVERLEY HOUSING OUT IN THE COMMUNITY



Waverley Housing staff are committed to being accessible to our tenants and the community. Over the last year we have attended local community hubs in Hawick and Galashiels and have completed 12 estate walkabout sessions. Staff have also attended the Burnfoot and Langlee Carnivals. Waverley has been represented at community council and local group meetings. As part of our commitment to our communities we recently completed a community exercise to paint the underpass owned by SBC in Upper Langlee. Our staff attended school career fairs to enlighten students to the career opportunities within the housing sector. Waverley Housing will continue this commitment in 2023 and are recruiting an additional staff member who will focus on tenant and community engagement.

If you have any ideas or opportunities where we can get involved in your community please contact us on 0800 104105.

WISHING YOU ALL A VERY SAFE AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Here's a few tips on how you can keep your family safe over the festive period:

- Test your smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms at least monthly.
- Check your Christmas tree lights carry the British Safety Standard sign.
- Never overload electrical sockets.
- Never place candles near your Christmas tree or materials that can catch light easily.
- Decorations can burn easily – so don't attach them to lights or heaters.
- Keep candles, lighters and matches out of children's reach.
- Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Take care around open fireplaces as clothes may catch fire.
- Take time to check on older relatives and neighbours as they are at greater risk from fire.
- Most fires start in the kitchen. Avoid leaving a cooker unattended.
- Make sure cigarettes are put out properly.
- Have an escape plan in case of fire in you home.



GET INVOLVED

We are always looking for tenants to get more involved. Our Customer Review Panel are a dedicated group of tenants who volunteer their time to review and scrutinise the services we deliver. They look at our performance and make recommendations on how we can improve our services. In the past we have seen tenants use the Customer Review Panel as a stepping stone toward joining the Waverley Housing Board. If this is of interest to you please get in touch. Call us on 0800 104105 or email info@waverley-housing.co.uk.

SCOTTISH CHILD PAYMENT

Scottish Child Payment is available for all eligible children under the age of 16.

Scottish Child Payment helps towards the costs of supporting your family. It's a weekly payment of £25 that you can get for every child you look after who's under 16 years of age. You'll get the payment every 4 weeks if your application is successful.

Scottish Child Payment is one of the 5 family payments you may be able to get from Social Security Scotland, along with Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, all the information can be found on www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods.



It's up to you what you choose to spend the money on. You could use Scottish Child Payment for things like:

- travel costs
- nappies and other essentials
- childcare
- family days out

Scottish Child Payment does not affect any other UK or Scottish Government benefits that you, or any person in your household, currently get. If you want to know how Scottish Child Payment might affect local council allowances or grants, such as the Scottish Welfare Fund, you can contact SBC.

Only one person can get Scottish Child Payment for a child. This means, if two people apply for the same child, Social Security Scotland have a process of deciding who gets the payment. This is called a double claim. The process depends on the benefits that you and the other person are getting.

COMPLAINTS MONITORING

APRIL 2022 - OCTOBER 2022

During the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 October 2022 we received a total of 35 complaints. 32 of these complaints were treated as Stage 1 complaints, with 1 of these escalating to Stage 2. In addition, we received 3 complaints which were treated at Stage 2 from the start.

The following table shows a breakdown of complaints:

Number of Complaints	1st Stage Complaints		2nd Stage Complaints	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total number of complaints	32		4	
Responded to in full	30	94%	4	100%
Upheld	14	47%	1	25%
Partially Upheld	2	7%		
Not Upheld	10	33%	3	75%
Resolved	4	13%		
Complaint Open/Response Outstanding	2*			
Responded to within SPSO timescales	30	94%	3	75%
Average timescale to respond (in days)	2.5		13	

* 2 complaints have been unable to be progressed due to complainants failing to communicate with us.

TIPS TO REDUCE CONDENSATION AND DAMP

REDUCE MOISTURE

Condensation is caused by excess moisture in the air hitting colder surfaces, so if you want to reduce it appearing, slash moisture levels at home. When you cook, put a lid on pans and ensure your window trickle vents are open. Similarly, when you take a bath or shower, keep the room well ventilated to allow steaming air to escape through a window or vent. To stop condensation forming, the bathroom windows should be opened and extractor fans turned on. Try to keep the bathroom door shut as much as possible so the moisture doesn't escape into other parts of your home. Wet surfaces attract moisture, so wipe them down to get rid of the excess damp.

DRY CLOTHES OUTSIDE

As winter beckons, we may be more tempted to dry wet clothes indoors on radiators, but doing so creates higher moisture levels in the air, contributing to condensation. Try to hang your washing outdoors as much as possible during winter. Additionally, if you use a tumble dryer to dry clothes, make sure that this is vented to the outside to allow moisture to escape.



ALLOW AIR TO CIRCULATE

Allow air to circulate in parts of the home where it may otherwise remain stagnant. Regularly open cupboards, drawers and wardrobes, for instance, to give them an airing and don't overfill them. Create a gap between furniture and walls to stop air from getting trapped and causing condensation to form. Make sure the trickle vents at the top of your windows are open.

ADEQUATE HEATING

Adequately heating your home can help to reduce condensation and damp, so keep temperature levels fairly consistent. A cold house isn't good for anyone. If anyone in your house has health problems that are made worse by the cold – asthma, arthritis etc – then it can be dangerous. It can harm your mental health. Cold makes condensation, damp, and mould problems worse.

If you are concerned about condensation, please contact our repairs team on 0800 104105 to seek advice.

METER CHOICES - WILL A PREPAYMENT METER MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO BUDGET?

Everyone wants to reduce their gas and electricity bills, and some people are wondering if switching to a prepayment meter will help. So, could a prepayment meter help you to use less energy and budget more easily for these high prices?

The table below looks at the PROS and CONS of a prepayment meter, and this might help you decide whether one will help you budget better.

Different Types of Meters -The main difference is how you have to pay for the energy.

<p>Prepayment Meter You have to pay for your energy before you use it</p>	<p>Credit Meter You can pay afterwards, when you receive your bill, or budget monthly and pay by Direct Debt</p>
<p>A smart meter can work in “prepayment mode” or “credit mode”. You may have had a smart meter installed “in credit mode” so you can see the extra information – it has a display showing what you have used in a day/week and what that has cost.</p>	
<p>There are two different ways to add money onto a prepayment meter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with an old-style pre-payment meter, you load a key or a card with money at local shops or a Post Office. Then you update your meter with this. • with a smart meter used as a prepayment meter you can load up the money online or with a key/ card. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a direct debit evens out your energy bills across the year. You pay the same in winter as you do in the summer. This makes it easier to budget for the extra energy you will need when it is coldest.



<p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a repayment meter may appear to help with budgeting as you know what you are spending on utilities. <p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• they charge more as they have a standing charge whether you use energy or not. <p>This is very hard to budget for, not easier. It leads to the nightmare of not being able to afford to put enough money onto a prepayment meter, especially during the cold winter months.</p>	<p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• you know exactly what to budget for monthly if you pay by direct debit. <p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• if you chose to pay when you receive the bill, and not by direct debit, you may not have enough money to pay for it. • If you don't have enough money in your bank account to pay the DD, you will be subject to bank charges.
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Waverley Housing appreciate that the rising cost of energy will be affecting your ability to adequately heat your home so please contact our Welfare Benefits Advisor on 0800 104105 who may be able to give you advice on addressing your energy bills.

If you think your supplier is setting your direct debit too high, perhaps because you will be using less this year contact your supplier.

MODERN APPRENTICES

Waverley Housing continue to be committed to support the modern apprentice scheme and have found the scheme to be very successful within Waverley Housing. All of our apprentices, over the years, have contributed a great deal to Waverley Housing and have been a real asset to our teams. We are delighted to confirm that we have recently recruited 4 of our apprentices on full time contracts. Monica Riddell has been recruited as a painter and decorator working within our trades team; Lisa Copeland joins us as a Housing Services Assistant; Megan Baxter joins us as a Property Services Assistant; and Mattie Newman will work within our Corporate Services team as a Finance Assistant. We will soon be looking to recruit 2 new apprentices to join our team in the coming months.



AUTUMN STATEMENT 2022

In November 2022 the Chancellor delivered his Autumn Statement including a targeted package of support for the most vulnerable.

Detailed below are some of the benefits that the package includes, however for information on other benefits that are affected you can read the full Autumn Statement which is available on GOV.UK along with supporting documents including a Cost of Living factsheet.

Benefits uprating

Benefits will increase in line with inflation by 10.1%.

The Government is also providing support this winter for people who need help now, including money off energy bills and Cost of Living Payments with the latest payment of £300 for pensioners.

Pensions uprating

Pensioners will benefit from a 10.1% increase to their State Pension in April 2023.

A full basic State Pension will increase from £141.85 to £156.20 per week, and the new State Pension will increase from £185.15 to £203.85.

New Cost of Living Payments

UK households on means-tested benefits will receive an additional Cost of Living Payment of £900 in 2023-24. These will be made in more than one instalment.

People on non-means-tested disability benefits will receive a further £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment in 2023-24.

Pensioner households across the UK will receive an additional £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment in 2023-24 to help with bills.

WAVERLEY HOUSING DROP-IN SESSION

Langlee Primary School

Wednesday 25th January 2022

10am – 2pm

BURNFOOT COMMUNITY HUB DROP IN SESSION

Waverley Housing hosted a drop-in session at Burnfoot Community Hub on Friday 28 October 2022, which was well attended by the local Community.

Debbie Kilgour, Housing Officer and Derek Grieve, Welfare Benefits Advisor were present to offer advice on any queries or concerns regarding Universal Credit, Discretionary Housing Payments, Fuel Poverty, Paying your Rent, Cost-of- Living Crises, Housing needs and much more!



We had a supply of LED bulbs and radiator panels to give away too, to help with increasing energy costs, and there was a prize draw for a Slow Cooker.

We are delighted to announce that Mrs Findlay above was the lucky winner.

COLD WEATHER PRECAUTIONS

You can avoid frost damage and burst pipes by following a few simple steps:

- Leave doors in each room open to allow warm air to circulate and open the loft hatch.
- Set your room thermostats to a minimum of 10 degrees.
- If you are going to leave your home for a long period of time contact Waverley Housing for advice.

If you have burst or frozen pipes please carry out the following:

- Turn off the water at the main stopcock and turn on all cold taps.
- Switch off the electricity at the mains if water comes into contact with electrical fittings.
- Switch off any water heaters.
- Switch off your central heating.
- Contact Waverley Housing ASAP.

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follow us on....

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**See our latest Annual Assurance Statement and Engagement Plan
submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator on our website
www.waverley-housing.co.uk/home/library/shr-reports/**

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