

Westworld

Official Newsletter of West of Scotland Housing Association

July 2022 Edition

Our New Customer App is now Live

Our new Customer App is now live which gives you 24/7 access to your tenancy information and request a number of services such as viewing rent balance and transactions, reporting a non-emergency repair and paying your rent.

Our Customer App builds on the success of our Tenant Portal which we launched in 2020 and it gives tenants another way to use our online services.

Tenants were a key part of the process in creating our App and they helped choose the successful App provider and decide what features it should have. Tenants also tested our App and we want to thank everyone who took the time to ensure we created an App that meets the needs of tenants.



How to register

To register you will need a reference number which is your rent account reference.

You can find this on your rent statement or contact us on 0141 550 5600 or customer.service@westscot.co.uk

Search 'West of Scotland Housing' on your App Store or Google Play to download the app.

We have also created video and written guidance on how to download and register for the App which you can find at <https://westscot.co.uk/customer-app/>

Welcome



Welcome to the latest edition of our tenant newsletter, Westworld. As you will read about, it has been a busy few months and we have been making great progress with some of our key business priorities and continuing to improve our services.

You will find out that tenants of Charing Cross Housing Association have recently voted to transfer to West of Scotland Housing Association. This is great news for us and we will provide more information to our tenants over the coming weeks and months. We can't wait to welcome tenants, customers and staff!

We are excited to launch our new Customer App which builds on the success of our Tenant Portal. The App gives you access to our services at a time that suits you and I hope you will find it useful. We will continue to provide our other contact methods such as phone, to ensure we provide services that suit everyone's needs.

It was great to welcome the Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights, Patrick Harvie MSP, to our first Passivhaus site and show him the innovative features that make these homes the gold standard of energy efficiency.

We will welcome our first tenants in the summer, and they will benefit from lower energy use which will help address fuel poverty.

Remember you can also hear our latest news and updates on our Facebook page (WSHAScotland).

Best Wishes,

Brian Gannon
Chief Executive

Safety Notice

Triton, a supplier of showers in some of our properties, have informed us of a product safety notice relating to their electric showers.



Under very rare circumstances and in a very small number of cases a part of the electronic circuit board of the Safeguard+ shower may develop a fault which could lead to overheating and a potential risk of electric shock or fire hazard.

If you have a Triton Safeguard+ shower can you please contact our Repairs Team on 0141 550 5600 so we can arrange for the necessary safety checks to be carried out.

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Charing Cross Tenants say ‘YES’ to Transfer to West of Scotland Housing Association

Charing Cross Housing Association (Charing Cross) tenants have overwhelmingly backed the proposed transfer to West of Scotland Housing Association with 96.1% voting YES to the proposal. The ballot was open for 31 days with an impressive 72.4% of tenants taking the opportunity to cast their vote and make their voice heard.

Charing Cross and West of Scotland worked closely together to develop an exciting transfer proposal that has been shaped by Charing Cross tenants through months of intensive engagement. Both organisations worked together to create a joint business case for the transfer of engagements of Charing Cross’s interest into West of Scotland that would allow the expanded West of Scotland to do much more for Charing Cross’s tenants, other customers and staff members.



Charing Cross shareholding members will now be invited to two Special General Meetings where they will be asked to approve, then confirm, a special transfer resolution to complete the transfer process. Subject to the support of Charing Cross’s members and other final consents being achieved, the transfer is expected to complete on 1st August 2022. At this point, we will become responsible for delivering the homes and services currently provided by Charing Cross.

Brian Gannon, Chief Executive Officer, WSHA, commented: “We feel very privileged that the tenants in the historic communities of Woodlands and Garnethill have put their faith in us to deliver on our transfer promises. We look forward to delivering to both communities the excellent wider support services and strong community engagement that our existing tenants have benefited from for many years.”

It's Blooming Marvellous at Hill Road

Tenants living at one of sheltered housing sites, Hill Road in Cumbernauld, worked with our Retirement Assistant, Belle, to refresh the outside area of the site's common space.

The area had been neglected over lockdown therefore was looking for a bit of love and attention. One tenant, Robert, kindly offered the use of his power washer to clean the slabs. Two other tenants, Nan and Margaret worked together to pot some plants and place them at the front.

The difference that this has made has been astounding – the space now looks inviting and a friendly place to sit and chat with neighbours. We hope that this space will now become the 'Go To' space for blethering, bonding and of course a brew.

The tenants are looking to improve it even more by adding more plants and flowers and we look forward to seeing the finished results.



Tenants Celebrate Bike Week

Part of our Green Strategy is to share information with tenants about how they can make simple changes to help reduce their carbon footprint. One easy way to do this is to drive less and walk, or cycle, more.

To help promote this, we arranged some community events to celebrate Bike Week 2022. The events took place in Cowlairst, Barrowfield and Doonfoot and were joined by Urban Fox who carried out bike safety checks and made simple repairs. Tenants also got to find out more about other services we provided such as energy and money advice. Thanks to all those that came along and look out for more events in the future.



Planning for the Future

WSHA Business Plan 2022-2027

Our Corporate Business Plan is our key strategic document which outlines the vision and objectives of the West of Scotland Housing Association Group. We have created a summary document which outlines our priorities for the year ahead.

Our Key aims for 2022/23 are:

- To deliver a successful Transfer of Engagements from CXHA to WSHA and begin to deliver our Business Case commitments.
- Work collaboratively with our Reactive Repairs contractor to improve service delivery for customers
- Develop Investment Strategy for Existing Homes to meet EESSH2
- Implement new Willowacre Trust Business Plan Business Objectives
- Preparing for Management of Mid-Market Rent
- Review and Deliver our Green Strategy
- Review Digital/IT Strategy
- Review partnership approach to homelessness & tenancy sustainment/support
- Implement new regulatory requirements and low carbon technologies for new build housing
- Review our Factoring Services



You can find the full summary on our website www.westscot.co.uk

Supporting Communities

Willowacre Trust, our charitable subsidiary, provides core services to help tenants keep their homes and to improve their wellbeing. These services include starter packs, Handy person service, food parcels, Imagination Library, money and energy advice. Willowacre Trust also operates the Barrowfield Community Hub and gives support to older tenants in WSHA's sheltered homes.

Willowacre Trust have recently approved their Business Plan for 2022-2024 which Communicates their vision and objectives and how they will achieve those objectives.

Key Business Objectives 2022-2024

- Carry out a targeted consultation exercise with our communities, linked to the Business Plan, to further inform service design and delivery.
- Produce a funding strategy which supports service delivery and development.
- Deliver an extended range of services to reduce homelessness and increase successful tenancies.
- Explore the opportunities to utilise local buildings and facilities to provide a base for activities and services across our communities.
- Improve equality of access to services, in partnership with others, across our communities.
- Deliver a range of services designed to improve the health and wellbeing of older people within our communities which supports them to live well at home for longer.
- Promote new Community Benefits which align with partners priorities and deliver measurable benefits to our communities.
- Meet our transfer business case commitments to the households connected to Charing Cross.
- Identify and support the development of community use of vacant and/or derelict land within our localities.

You can find out more on their website www.willowacretrust.co.uk

Getting Involved

Tenant Scrutiny

Tenant Scrutiny is an opportunity for tenants to have an in-depth look at how we deliver services, and to suggest improvements we can make. Tenants use a range of methods to review services including mystery shopping, gathering feedback from tenants who have interacted with the service area, exploring how other landlords operate and speaking to staff. When tenant scrutiny works well it should deliver improvements in how we deliver services, and deliver services which provide increased value for money for tenants.

We recently relaunched our Tenant Scrutiny Group with two taster sessions. These sessions provided an opportunity for tenants to find out more about what tenant scrutiny involves, the benefits to tenants of effective tenant scrutiny, the activities we have previously undertaken, and our plans for the coming months.

Those who attended the taster sessions had a positive discussion about some of the service areas they would like to 'scrutinise' including how the new Customer Service Team was performing, the approach that we take to managing dumping of rubbish in our estates, and how we allocate our homes. The Group agreed to have a follow up meeting to identify the tasks they would undertake to allow them to provide feedback on how these services could be improved.

If you are interested in finding out more about tenant scrutiny and want to be involved with the Group please do get in touch with us on haveyoursay@westscot.co.uk or 0141 550 5600.

Improving our approach to Tenant Scrutiny is part of our updated Customer Engagement Strategy which you can read on our website <https://westscot.co.uk/getting-involved-/>

Customer Engagement

Our Tenant Advisory Group has continued to work over recent months giving feedback on our Income Management Policy and our Void Management Policy. The Group also provided feedback about our Corporate Business Plan and received an update about the work undertaken by our Grounds Maintenance contractor.

The Group is back meeting in our offices again for the first time since early 2020 – and have a busy few months ahead of them. We will be:

- Sharing information about the Willowacre Trust Business Plan
- Reviewing the Local Lettings Strategy which sets out the priorities for housing for the next 12 months

- Looking into opportunities for using our new customer app to resume 'Rate Your Estate' visits
- Beginning discussions about a reviewed housing allocation policy

If any of this sounds like something you would be interested in then please get in touch with us on haveyoursay@westscot.co.uk or 0141 550 5600 and we can discuss the best way you can be involved.

Readers Panel

Over the last year we have updated a number of our housing procedures. As part of this staff are presented with template letters that should be used when contacting tenants. We are looking for tenants to review the letters so that we know the content is clear, understandable and provides sufficient information for tenants. If you want help us review our standard correspondence, then please get in touch with us on haveyoursay@westscot.co.uk or 0141 550 5600.

New Repairs Contractor



We have been advised by our current day-to-day repairs and empty homes contractor, Turner Property Services, that the company wishes to withdraw from their agreement with us along with other housing associations.

We have reacted quickly to this news to ensure our repairs service will be maintained and we are pleased to confirm that we have appointed Everwarm to provide this service for us.

Everwarm will begin work on 8th July 2022 and our repairs staff are working on ensuring as smooth a handover as possible. You can still report a repair in the same way. Please note that between 27th June - 8th July 2022 we unfortunately won't be able to undertake non-emergency repairs. Our out of hours and emergency repairs service will continue to be provided.

We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your patience.

Improving Customer Satisfaction

We are pleased to have seen improvements with tenant satisfaction with grounds maintenance e.g. grass cutting services. In 2021/22 we received 15 formal complaints compared with an average of 80 per year for a number of years previous. Our contractor, Idverde, started to deliver the service in June 2021 and it is reassuring to see that they have already made improvements to tenant satisfaction with only 4 complaints made since they started.

Our dedicated Estate Officer, Martin Connor, is responsible for liaising closely with our Contractors, including grounds maintenance. He works closely with our Housing Officers and has regular Meetings with Contractors to ensure work is carried out to an acceptable standard. If you have any questions or concerns about grounds maintenance in your area then please contact Martin Connor, on 0141 550 5606.



Housing Officer Changes

North Lanarkshire	Glasgow	South Lanarkshire	South Lanarkshire/ Glasgow	Ayrshire / Glasgow	South Ayrshire	Glasgow	Glasgow
Cumbernauld Kilsyth Moodiesburn Queenzieburn Airdrie Bellshill Motherwell Coatbridge	Springburn Royston The Point/ Possil	Blackwood Lanark Uddingston Law Kirkfieldbank Stonehouse Kirkmuirhill Strathaven Hamilton	East Kilbride Blantyre Westcraigs Fernhill Halfway Yoker/Annisland Hillhead Glasgow West dispersed Glasgow N/E dispersed	Ardrossan Troon Irvine Kilmarnock Pollokshields Govan Road Govan/ Elderspark Crookston Turriff Street	Ayr Mossworld Prestwick Symington Monkton	Barrowfield/ Camlachie Springfield Cross (Dalmarnock)	Games Village (Dalmarnock) Broomhouse Barrachnie Tollcross Easterhouse Gallowgate Aberfeldy Street Garfield Street
Jennifer Milligan 	Heather MacKenzie 	Karen Wright 	Yaw Frempong 	Sharon Cowan 	Susan Greenan 	Lynette Baillie 	Stuart Cole 
0141 550 5069	0141 550 5075	0141 550 5624	0141 550 5626	0141 550 5609	07946 121 457	0141 550 5632	07764 969 452

We have reviewed the areas our Housing Officers cover so your Housing Officer may have changed.

You can find a full list of Housing Officers and their areas on our website <https://westscot.co.uk/housing-officers-income.../>

Building for the Future

New Homes Update

Springfield Cross, Glasgow

Our first Passivhaus development is near completion with the first tenants expected to move in late Summer 2022. The Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants Rights, Patrick Harvie, made a recent visit to the development, the largest of its kind in Glasgow. He was delighted to hear about the increased standards of insulation, triple glazing windows and low carbon technology installed will make it easier and quicker to heat tenants homes resulting in lower energy usage and reduction in carbon emissions.



Each flat has a space for a bike and a covering bike shelter is provided within the common garden area. Only 18 car parking spaces are provided to promote active travel given that the area has excellent transports, walking and cycling links to the city centre. All of which helps reduce our carbon footprint which is one of the priorities of our Green Strategy.

Built in partnership with Hub West Scotland and CCG (Scotland) Ltd, the six-storey development consists of 36 two and three bed flats and includes four wheelchair adaptable and 12 flats designated for over 55s. A communal WIFI system has been installed and will provide each tenant with low cost internet access.

The communal gardens will have a pergola style walkway area with seating, raised planters and grassed areas for all tenants to enjoy. All the ground floor flats will have a small private patio area.

We will be carrying out regular surveys to monitor the performance of the building and to ensure that each tenant maximises the benefits of the Passivhaus standards.

Dalmarnock Station, Glasgow

Construction is progressing well at our 114 home project located next to Dalmarnock Train Station in the East End of Glasgow. The project will deliver Westscot Living's first 54 mid market rent (MMR) homes along with 60 social rented homes. The first social rented homes are expected to be ready winter 2022.



An MMR show home will be available late 2022 for prospective tenants to view prior to handover which is expected in early 2023. If you or someone you know would be interested in our MMR properties, further information and an online form to register your interest can be found on our website www.westscotliving.co.uk

Greenan, Ayr

In December 2021, the Scottish Government granted us £3.1 million of funding to support the development of 31 new family homes at Greenan, South Ayrshire. The new homes will include a “no gas” low carbon heating system to help reduce our carbon emissions and tackle climate change which is a priority of our Green Strategy.

Work began on site with McTaggart & Mickle on what will be their final phase of social housing with us at Greenan Views. Good progress is being made on site with the homes due to be ready from late 2022.

There are six affordable homes remaining to be delivered at Greenan to fulfil South Ayrshire Council Planning Department's affordable housing quota across the wider masterplan area. Negotiations are currently ongoing with us and CALA to purchase six family homes for social rent. Subject to successful negotiations, these homes are expected to be available in 2023.

New Homes Update

St Andrews Church, Hamilton

The project, located in Hamilton town centre, consists of 12 spacious 2 bedroom flats. Work is ongoing at present with handover of all homes expected in December 2022. WSHA are working in partnership with Apsis (Construction) Ltd to deliver the homes which will also include an attractive landscaped area and will be electric vehicle enabled.

Negotiations are ongoing with the Contractor to deliver a further 3 flats on the site for social rent. The Scottish Government has awarded WSHA an additional £264,000 to deliver these units subject to agreement being reached.

Dundashill, Glasgow

WSHA acquired the site on 31st March 2022 from Scottish Canals and secured additional funding from Glasgow City Council's Neighbourhood Regeneration Services (NRS) following approval from the Scottish Government on 30th March. The project is being developed in partnership with CCG (Scotland) Ltd and will deliver 90 high quality contemporary Mid Market Rent flats built to Passivhaus standards. Each flat will be fitted with a "no gas" low carbon heating system to help reduce our carbon emissions through decarbonisation. A mechanical ventilation & heat recovery system will also be installed to provide low running costs for residents and deliver health benefits through consistent clean air being circulated. Each flat will have a balcony with stunning views over Glasgow City Centre and access good walking and cycle routes from the Canal. The development is also being Electric Vehicle enabled through future proofing the infrastructure and network. Access to fibre broadband will also be provided.

The construction will take around 2 years to complete with handovers expected late 2023.



Smoke Alarms

We are receiving increasing numbers of reports of tenants removing alarms and not letting us know. These alarms are a legal requirement and are installed to ensure your safety and under no circumstances should be removed.

If there is a fault with your smoke alarm, heat detector or your carbon monoxide detector e.g. alarm beeping, smoke alarm sounding for no reason, please do not attempt to remove but call us on 0141 550 5600 and press option 1 and report the problem to our repairs team during office hours. When we are not open, you can use the same number to speak to our emergency contact centre who will arrange for a contractor to attend as an emergency. Please note we reserve the right to recharge for replacement alarms where a tenant has removed the alarm.



Green Strategy Update

Our Green Strategy Project Team, comprising of staff members and tenants, have been busy taking forward our Green Strategy Action Plan. The Action Plan sets out the tasks which we will undertake to achieve the strategic objectives of our Green Strategy. These are to:

Strategic Objectives	
1	Reduce waste, energy consumption and harmful emissions by improving the efficiency of service delivery and office management
2	Improve/enhance the environment of our communities through investment in green infrastructure
3	Reduce our carbon footprint and ensure that our properties are resilient to the potential impact of climate change, through our approach to new build construction and the improvement of existing homes.
4	Improve the health and wellbeing of our staff and communities by raising awareness and changing behaviours in respect of the climate emergency, and by offering opportunity to positively contribute to the environment
5	Work with partners who are environmentally aligned with us and are committed to delivering 'green' benefits to our assets, customers and communities

Examples of some of the actions achieved and activities undertaken by us over the last 6 months include:

- Installation of 2 electric vehicle charging points at our office and purchase of 2 electric vehicles for staff use
- Reduction in paper use by more than 30%
- Establishment of a new partnership with the Halliday Foundation to achieve our upcycling targets of 16 white goods and 30 soft furnishings per year. These furniture and white goods are upcycled from void properties and are re-distributed to existing and new tenants
- Increase of recycling within our office bases and the Barrowfield Community Hub by 10%
- Funding secured to deliver 3 environmental projects within our communities
- Introduction of our Tree Replacement Initiative where any trees lost through the development of new build housing will be re-provisioned elsewhere within WSHA communities
- Replacement of all void property lighting with low energy LED fittings and bulbs



If you are interested in joining the Green Strategy Project Team or in doing your bit to reduce your carbon footprint, get in touch with our Customer Service Team.

Welfare Rights Update

Financial Health Checks:

Give the unprecedented pressure on our customer's incomes to meet the rising costs of fuel, food and other daily costs, our Welfare Rights Team is carrying out benefit checks and income maximisation for tenants in our communities. If you would like to chat with a member of our Team regarding this or to arrange an appointment, please contact them on 0141 550 5662.

Move to Universal Credit:

Legacy benefits such as Housing Benefit and Tax Credits are coming to an end for working age claimants. The Department for Work and Pensions will be moving claims to Universal Credit and you will be contacted, by them, when it is your time to claim. The aim is for this to be complete by the end of 2024.

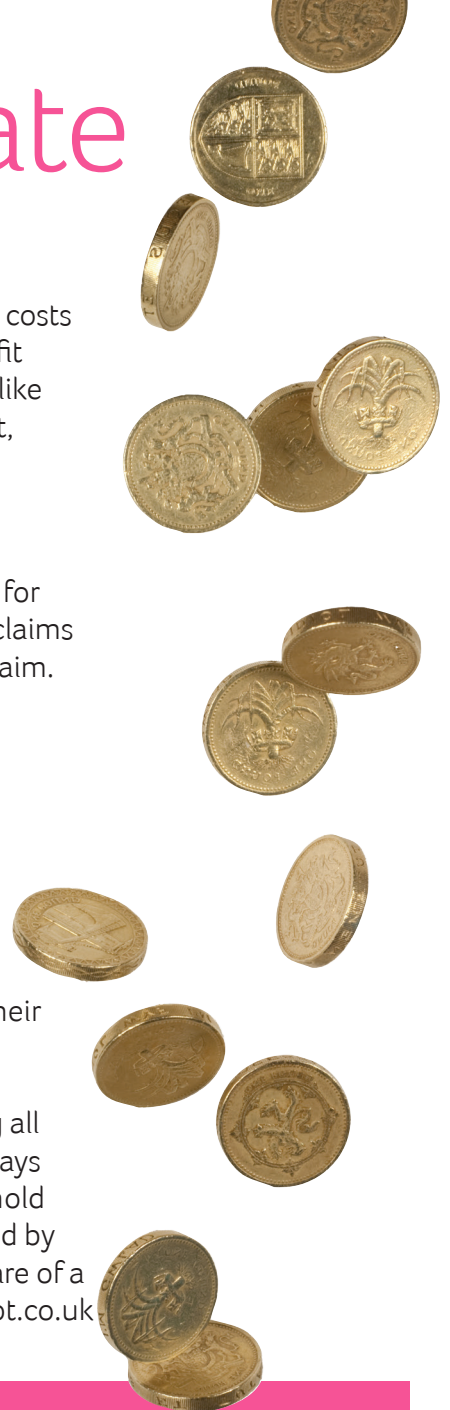
There are some circumstances where you may move to Universal Credit sooner, e.g., change in household, moving to a new Local Authority area.

If you would like further advice on this, please contact us on 0141 550 5662 or welfarerights@westscot.co.uk

Help with Rent

We have come across several tenants lately who have ended up with a debt in their rent accounts that could have been easily avoided had they contacted us.

If you are struggling with your rent please make sure you contact our Income Maximisation Team as soon as possible so that we can check if you are receiving all the benefits you should be, you might be missing out on money due to you. Delays in claiming benefits, notifying UC or Housing Benefit of changes in your household or income may result in you having to pay a charge that could have been covered by UC. Staff at the Association want to help you but can only do this if they are aware of a problem. You can contact the team on 0141 550 5059 or income.max@westscot.co.uk



Welfare Rights in Action

Between April 2021 and March 2022, our Welfare Rights Team have worked hard to secure over £1.5 million for tenants in backdated and new income. **Well done team!**

Here to Help

Our Welfare Rights Team can provide advice and support about welfare benefits. If you need their help, please contact them on 0141 550 5662 or welfare.rights@westscot.co.uk



Performance/Complaints

Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

We are committed to listening to your views so we can deliver services more effectively, or where we can do more things that you want us to do. To support us to do this we regularly monitor the complaints we receive, and also have an independent company Research Resource undertake monthly satisfaction surveys. Where an issue comes up as part of a complaint, or is fed back to us by Research Resource we will look to make changes to how we work.



Complaints Update - January 2022 – March 2022 (Quarter 4)

In the previous quarter (January to March) we received a total of 23 complaints. 21 of these were stage one, or frontline complaints, and we responded in an average 2.6 days. Two complaints were considered under stage two, or investigations, and we responded within an average of 13 days. Both these figures are within the targets that are set for us.

The majority of complaints we received related to day to day repairs, though we did receive a number of complaints about our rent increase proposals. The complaints about repairs related to delays in work being undertaken linked to difficulties in getting materials – however we did communicate this to tenants and we will work with our contractor to improve on this in the coming months.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service then you can report a complaint by emailing haveyoursay@westscot.co.uk or calling **0141 550 5600**.

Customer Satisfaction

We recently completed a customer satisfaction survey and spoke with over 800 tenants about how they feel about how we deliver our services. We will share the results in our Annual Report in the Autumn however customer satisfaction levels decreased slightly from previous high performance. This is disappointing and we will put in place improvement plans for those areas where satisfaction is low. We will tell you about the actions we will take in our Annual Report.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey as this information is important as it helps us understand what improvements we need to make.

For more information please contact:

t: 0141 550 5600

w: westscot.co.uk

e: customer.service@westscot.co.uk

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