

talkback

SUMMER
2019



Karen Barry is our New Director of Housing

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Karen Barry as our new Director of Housing. Karen has been our Housing Manager for the last 14 years, and has been the acting Director for the last 6 months.

Our Chief Executive, Martin Pollhammer, said:

"We had a particularly tough recruitment process and were delighted with the response we had. However, Karen stood out, particularly through her knowledge and experience of leading and managing digital service development. This remains a key area for us over the next few years, and I am looking forward to working with Karen as we develop and introduce a wide range of new products and services."



Did you know...

... that if you're ordering a tricky repair in your My Home account, you can take a photo of what's wrong and upload it? Once you've booked your repair appointment, make a note of your order number (it will be on your repair confirmation page), go back to your main My Home page and click the 'send documents' button. You can then upload a photo or two of what's wrong, with a note of the repair order number.

Send Documents

Topic (Required field) 06 - Other

Comments (Required field) Photo of repair #1234567

Document 1 (Required field) Choose file Loose kitchen...r handle.jpg

Document 2 (Required field) Choose file Handle.jpg

Add Remove

Cancel SUBMIT ✓



Utilita – Warm Home Discount

The Warm Home Discount is a Government scheme funded by Energy Suppliers.

It's designed to help lower income and vulnerable households with their energy costs during the winter.

If you are a Utilita customer, applications for The Warm Home Discount will open at 11am on 7 August 2019 for one week until 11am, 14 August 2019.

Utilita is making a change to when they process Warm Home Discount payments this year. If you are eligible, payments will be made between December 2019 and February 2020.

To find out more, go to the Utilita website: <https://utilita.co.uk>

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Performance 365

For those of you who like reading our How We're Doing booklet, you can now track how we're doing all through the year! We are now publishing monthly updates as well as our annual figures, so you can see what's going on at the click of a mouse.



[HOME](#) [MONTHLY PERFORMANCE](#) [2019 REPORT](#) [ELHA.COM](#)

Performance 365

Every year we publish our How We're Doing report along with other monthly performance information.

MAY
Monthly Performance

2019
How We're Doing



PREVIOUS MONTHS

[April](#) [March](#)

PREVIOUS YEARS REPORTS

[2018 \[white on black\]](#) [2018 \[black on white\]](#)
[2017](#) [2016](#) [2015](#)

To take a look at the year so far, visit us at <https://performance365.elha.com> or click on the big grey 'Latest Performance' button on the [elha.com](#) home page

Congratulations Hannah!

Well done to our Housing Modern Apprentice, Hannah Strachan, who has completed her Level 3 in Business and Administration.



Why You Benefit From The Key Tenant Scheme

(even if you don't get a rent discount)

The Key Tenant Scheme is an incentive scheme designed to get tenants to manage their tenancy through My Home. The more tenants who report repairs, apply for tenancy changes, make neighbour complaints, ask questions, and more through My Home, the more time is freed up for our staff to spend time with tenants who need additional help (and less money is needed for running costs – something we are always keeping an eye on).

Do you remember a few years ago when you called us and you had to wait in the phone queue? With around 2/3 of our tenants now using My Home, the chances are that calling in today will get you straight through. And if tenants complete application forms online, that means our staff don't have to spend time scanning paperwork into the system, so they're free to take more phone calls, answer more e-mails and help out if you've dropped into the office for an appointment.



Consultation Calendar 2019/20

Consultation Name	Start date	Report to Committee
Customer Care Policy Review	In progress	August 2019
Domestic Abuse Policy Review	In progress	August 2019
Communal Maintenance (East) Survey	July 2019	August 2019
Tenant Participation Strategy Review	In progress	November 2019
Garden Care Scheme Survey	September 2019	November 2019
Allocations Policy Review	September 2019	February 2020
Rent & Service Charges Annual Review	January 2020	February 2020

As mentioned in the spring edition, we have some very important policy reviews in progress. There's still time for you to take part – if you'd like to discuss any of the subjects below, please contact Housing Manager, Claire McMillan by sending us a message through the contact form in **My Home**, e-mailing **info@elha.com** or calling on **01620 825032** and choosing '3 for any other enquiry' from the automated phone system.

MAKE A STAND

Our homes, our people,
our problem.

We are proud to have signed up to the Chartered Institute of Housing national campaign to help tackle domestic abuse. By signing the pledge to 'Make a Stand' we have made four focussed commitments:

- To have a policy to support our tenants who are affected by domestic abuse
- Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on our website and in other places that is easily accessible for tenants and staff
- Put in place an HR Policy to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse
- Appoint a champion at senior level in ELHA

All our staff will undergo training to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and provide support and information to survivors. Domestic abuse is one of the biggest issues in society today with a large proportion of it going unreported. Research suggests that many millions of people are affected every year and tragically, two women in the UK are killed every week by their partner or ex-partner.

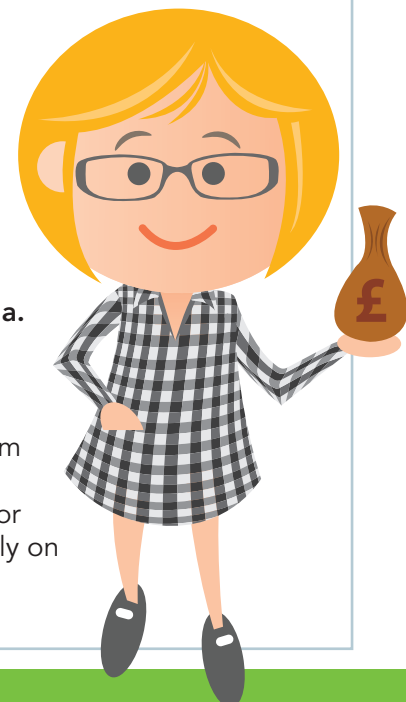
Our Domestic Abuse Policy, and information on support organisations can be found in the Tenancy Support section of **elha.com**.

Need Help With Your Application for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP)?

Anne to the Rescue!

Our Money Adviser Anne does so much more than just help tenants apply for Universal Credit (UC). She can help you claim PIP and other benefits, including if your Disabled Living Allowance (DLA) has stopped and you're being reassessed for PIP. Anne can also help you budget, act on your behalf to negotiate debt repayments, and arrange for an energy efficiency check on your home if you're worried about fuel bills.

If you'd like to chat with Anne about your finances, just click the 'Money Advice' button in **My Home**, e-mail **info@elha.com**, call us on **01620 825032** and choose the rent options from the automated phone system, or call Anne directly on 07989 702 607.



Can You Read This?

How about this?

If you have problems reading our newsletter, we can provide it in large print, or on CD.

And don't forget – if you're paper-free you will receive all correspondence from us in a format that can be resized so the text will be as large as you'd like.



We're Golden!

Not only have we successfully retained our Gold TPAS Accreditation (with an improved high score), but our Healthy Happy Staff team have retained their Healthy Working Lives Gold Award.



Leave a Note!

If you claim Universal Credit, our Money Adviser and your Housing Officer cannot talk to the DWP on your behalf unless you have made a note in your UC journal saying you allow them to discuss your claim. Please make sure you have made this note, particularly if you need help with your UC claim or if you have chosen to have your housing element of UC paid directly to us.

BETA This is a new service - your feedback will help us to improve it.

Home

To-do list

Journal

What happens next

Your statement is now available. Check **payments**.

You'll be paid on 19 June 2019.

[Report a change of circumstances](#)

[Add a note to your journal](#)



Prize Draw Winners

Congratulations to Mr McNeill from Musselburgh, Mrs Sherlaw from Haddington and Mr Cassidy from Prestonpans, who have each won £50 in our monthly repair survey prize draw.

We draw one lucky winner every month, so make sure you remember to click through to leave your feedback when you get a repair survey e-mail (or send back your completed survey forms if you're not paper-free yet).



Need Help with your Universal Credit Account?

Universal Credit Work Coach Available in:

Dunbar Library every Thursday from 9:30am to noon

Prestonpans Library every Thursday from 2:00pm to 4:30pm

Just drop in no appointment required!



Ventilate!

The weather is warmer, and we're all throwing open our windows and getting some much-needed fresh air into our homes.



We think that's great, and would like you to consider doing this at other times of year too.

Did you know that the leading cause of damp patches and mould growth in Scottish homes isn't because of penetrating or rising damp, it's because for the

rest of the year, we don't open our windows and ventilate our homes properly?

Everyday living - breathing, cooking, drying clothes, taking a shower – all these things put moisture into the air. That moisture stays in the air until either it gets blown outside, or – and this is what causes problems – at night the air cools down and the moisture condenses back into water, usually on windows, behind furniture, or other colder places of your home. This condensation is a perfect breeding ground for mould.

So please – if your windows have trickle vents, keep them open. If you have extractor fans, make sure you use them, and if they break down, log into your **My Home** account and report it. If you don't have vents or fans, open a window after you've had a shower or cooked a meal to let the damp air out.

New Staff

This section of the newsletter isn't usually so crowded, but we've recently filled a few vacancies and taken on new Modern Apprentices. Welcome to ELHA to:

Abbey Ellis is a new face in our Reception. Abbey is our youngest apprentice at 16, and comes to us straight from Dunbar Grammar School. Abbey is studying for her SVQ Level 3 in Business Administration, and amongst her many achievements, she is a Saltire Awards Ambassador for East Lothian.

Jamie Mackenzie is our new Property Officer. Jamie has an HNC in Construction Management and was previously a Contract Manager with High Access Maintenance. Jamie has also worked in various property management roles at Sanctuary Housing, East Renfrewshire Council and Link Housing.

Keira Horsburgh is another new apprentice, in our Asset Management Department this time. Keira is also studying for her SVQ Level 3 in Business and Administration.

David Leishman is our new Finance Officer, and previously worked with Cairn Housing Association, Davidson & Robertson Chartered Surveyors and Landrover. David is a student member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and hopes to be a fully qualified accountant within the next two years.

Lisa Flynn is our new Finance Assistant. Lisa previously worked for Schur Flexibles Uni UK, and has four years experience working for the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Bank of Scotland and Lloyd Banking Group. She is currently studying for her Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) Qualifications.



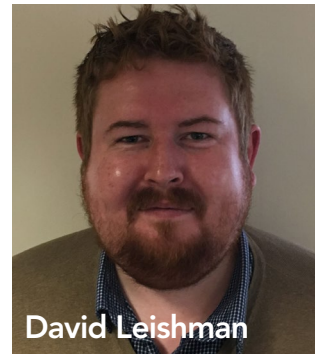
Abbey Ellis



Jamie Mackenzie



Keira Horsburgh



David Leishman



Lisa Flynn

TIG in Action

It's been a busy few weeks for Tenant Participation, with an event at Osborne Court, Cockenzie and our 'Sticky Bun' Focus Group, as it's known in the office.

Osborne Court – Getting Started in My Home

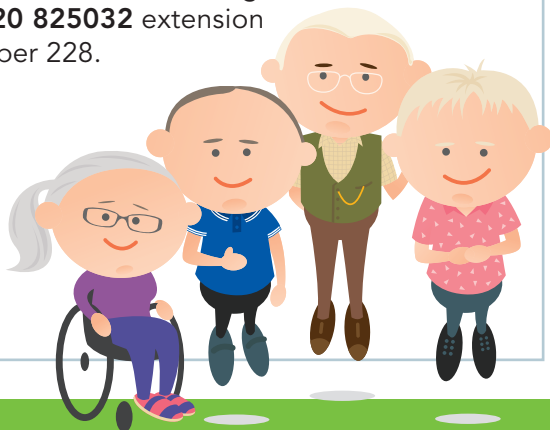
We are running a promotion at the moment, where tenants who work together to help each other get started in My Home can claim £20 of shopping vouchers for every person they help to create a My Home account or successfully apply for a Key Tenant Discount. We were asked to come along to Osborne Court, where one of our Platinum Key Tenants wanted to get involved and had a neighbour who was interested.

Customer Information Officer, Mary Hargreaves, and Housing Officer, Michelle Cassidy, attended the event, and paid out £160 in shopping vouchers to several Osborne Court tenants! We also referred a tenant to AbilityNet, who can help people get started online.

ARC (or sticky bun) Focus Group

Spot-checking our performance figures doesn't sound like a fun way to spend an afternoon, but it is. Any tenant who can find an 'anomaly' (mistake) in our audit trail wins a bag of sweets and bragging rights for the rest of the year. This year no mistakes were found, but three bags of sweets were given out because we'd forgotten to save our Scottish Housing Quality Standards audit trail into the Focus Group folder (oops).

If you'd like to take part in next year's focus group, you can contact our Customer Information Officer, Mary Hargreaves, by logging into your **My Home** account and using the 'contact us' form, e-mailing info@elha.com or calling us on **01620 825032** extension number 228.



It's not too late...



Ask your neighbour if they're on My Home – if they are, and can help you get started, you could receive £20 each (or even £40 if you're joining the Key Tenant Scheme as well).

If you'd like to know more, you can download the leaflet from elha.com, e-mail info@elha.com or pick one up from our office. Or call us on **01620 825032** and choose the rent options from the phone system.

Social Security Scotland – What this means for you

Social Security Scotland is a Scottish Benefits agency set up by the Scottish Government following the introduction of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018. This means that many benefits will be moved from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which is a UK wide agency under the control of Westminster, to the new agency, under the Scottish Government.

Responsibility for devolved benefits, including their funding, will sit with the Scottish Government from 1 April 2020, with delivery for disability benefits rolled out shortly after. We'll keep you up to date as things happen.

Available now:

Carer's Allowance Supplement: This is an extra payment for anyone who already receives the Carer's Allowance. This is an additional £221 per year, split into two payments.

Best Start Grant: this is in three parts.

- Pregnancy and Baby Payment – this pays out £600 on the birth of a first child, and £300 for each additional baby (there is no limit on the number of children who qualify for this payment)
- Early Learning Payment – a payment of £250 to help with early learning costs for children between 2 and 3½
- School Age Payment – a £250 payment to help with the costs of starting Primary 1

