

# the tenants' VOICE

Winter 2018

## ► Pages 14-16

Read about changes to housing law

## ► Pages 20-21

**New!** Read our sheltered housing news

## ► Page 22

Get involved in our Service Improvement Panel and have your say on housing services!

### CONTACT US

If you need to contact us or need information please call our **Contact Centre on 0300 123 4566**, email [housing@moray.gov.uk](mailto:housing@moray.gov.uk) or visit our website

[www.moray.gov.uk](http://www.moray.gov.uk)

Alternatively you can visit one of our access points.

### BUCKIE

Buckie Access Point,  
13 Cluny Square, Buckie,  
AB56 1AJ.

### ELGIN

Elgin Access Point,  
Council Office, High Street,  
Elgin, IV30 1BX.

### FORRES

Forres Access Point,  
Auchernack, High Street,  
Forres, IV36 1DX.

### KEITH

Keith Community Hub, Mid  
Street, Keith, AB55 5AH



EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS: **03457 565656**

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# Dear Readers,

## Welcome to the Winter edition of the Tenants' Voice

This month has been all about saving energy and plastic pollution for me. Every year 5.2 million tonnes of plastic is produced in the UK and much of it ends up in landfill or the ocean and is damaging our wildlife. The biggest problem for me is trying to make the change to go plastic free in my weekly shop. I've noticed that it's either impossible to buy the things I need without them being over packaged or surprisingly it costs more. Broccoli that had no plastic covering was 6p more expensive than the wrapped one and the packaging is non-recyclable. I started looking at my recycling at home and realised how difficult it is to know what can and what can't be recycled. I'm planning on going out to visit the waste management site to see what goes on there and I will let you know what I learnt in the next edition of the Tenants' Voice.

As a single parent whose electricity bill has risen hugely, I've also been looking at ways to save energy and reduce my bill. I just found out that leaving a phone charger switched on without a phone costs 3p an hour. I've been making sure I switch things off at the socket now because it's costing more than just a couple of pounds a year to leave them on. I'm also changing my light bulbs to LED as they use less electricity and getting someone to check out my hot water tank and reduce the temperature a bit. These things all add up and small easy measures like this can make a big difference to the wallet and the environment. There is an article included in this newsletter about REAP who can give energy saving advice.

You will notice that the Tenants' Voice now includes a section on sheltered housing which includes updates on what the residents have going on.

I hope you all have a very merry Christmas and a great new year.

If you wish to raise any points with me during my time as Chair, I look forward to hearing from you. I can be contacted through the Members Support Office on 01343 563550 or by email at [louise.laing@moray.gov.uk](mailto:louise.laing@moray.gov.uk)

Councillor Louise Laing  
Chair of Communities Committee

# A day in the life...

**Fred Cole is the estate co-ordinator with our area housing team and has been in this role for the past 6 years. Prior to this he worked as an estate caretaker in the supported accommodation team.**

**Fred found some time in his busy schedule to sit down with us and answer some questions before he headed back to his desk.**

## **Can you tell us what your role involves and how it fits into the housing team?**

My role is quite varied. It includes estate management which is monitoring of our housing estates including parks and stairwells. We deal with abandoned vehicles, dog fouling, low grade antisocial behaviour, complaints, monitoring of capped gas meters and untidy gardens amongst other things. My job involves a lot of joint working with other agencies such as the Police. We also carry out grounds maintenance for elderly tenants in common areas and sometimes the Criminal Justice team help with this. I am the only estate co-ordinator in the team and we have 6 estate caretakers, 2 in the East team and 4 in the West team.

## **What does an average day look like for you?**

We have a weekly programme which has selected areas to monitor and estate visits to undertake. I spend a lot of time engaging with tenants and giving them advice and information on various issues such as fly-tipping and keeping their gardens well maintained. About 40% of my day is spent in the office catching up on admin, updating housing systems and issuing letters or notices.

## **What are some of the main challenges you face?**

My biggest challenge is when a small number of tenants refuse to comply with our policies. I understand that nobody likes to be told what to do but looking after your garden, for example, is a condition of the tenancy agreement. It is unfair for neighbours to have to live next door to an unkempt garden, or to live in an area where people are fly-tipping. Communal buildings are often a challenge to manage. Rotas are used for maintaining hallways, stairs and gardens, and when some tenants refuse to share the load it can cause upset and frustration. I have to think on my feet quite often and continually assess any risks.

## **What is your favourite part of the job?**

Having a job where there is a balance of working outdoors and office work is great. I like the fact that I can make sound decisions on my own and I enjoy lone working, although I also enjoy it when I am working with the rest of the team. I also think it is good to be working in a housing service where we are encouraged to question any policies or procedures if we feel that they are not working



well. Sometimes changes are required to lead to a better service and we all want to provide the best service that we can.

## **If you had a magic wand, what would you change about your job?**

I know that budgets are stretched but if I had a magic wand so money was not a problem I would like to manage a budget for maintenance works. I would upgrade our estates to a higher standard with the aim of providing communities we can all be even more proud of.

## **What would you be doing for a job if you were not doing this?**

I would be working outdoors – perhaps as some kind of outdoor pursuits instructor. I have a real passion for the outdoors and have been canoeing in Canada and paddled in the Yukon river. When not in work I enjoy walking, visiting the cinema and going out to eat with my wife.

## **How would you describe yourself in 3 words?**

Talkative, outgoing and enthusiastic.

## **What is the most important thing you have learnt in the last 6 years?**

How complex we can be as humans and how everyone is different

## **Finally, if there was to be a movie of your life – who would play you?**

It would be Denzel Washington as he's a bit of an action man!



# Recycle right



**Don't** put plastic bags in your recycling bin.

On occasion, we receive queries from tenants who are unsure about recycling and want to know what waste goes in what bin. If you are unsure and need advice on this you can contact our waste team by emailing [waste@moray.gov.uk](mailto:waste@moray.gov.uk)

You can also find out what goes where by visiting our website at [www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_77339.html](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_77339.html)

Here is a quick guide to help you out:

## Purple bin

- Drinks cans and food tins
- Plastic bottles and trays marked PET1 or HDPE2 – give them a little rinse first!
- Shampoo and shower gel bottles, shaving foam tins and aerosols.



## Blue bin

- Wrapping paper – not the foil type though!
- Christmas cards and gift tags
- Cardboard boxes
- Card and paper gift bags
- Newspapers and magazines
- Packaging from kids' toys – remember to remove any plastic first!



## Brown bin

- Food. All your leftovers, plate scrapings, turkey bones, coffee grinds and out of date food
- Your 'real' Christmas tree, if it fits. If not, leave it out beside your brown bin on collection day and we'll do the rest



## Orange Box

- Glass bottles
- Glass jars
- No broken glass please!



## Green bin

- Everything else that can't be recycled!

If you fill up your bins before collection day, you can take excess waste to our recycling centres and points across Moray. On the next page you will find the collection times and the opening times of the recycling centres.





# Waste management arrangements **Christmas/Hogmanay period** **2018/2019**

## Household refuse and recycling collections

Household collections of residual waste (green bin) will continue three-weekly, with household collections of garden/food waste (brown bin) and recycling containers continuing fortnightly, over the festive period, as shown on your collection calendar which can be found at [bindayfinder.moray.gov.uk](http://bindayfinder.moray.gov.uk)

### **Only Tuesday and Wednesday collections are affected**

Collections may be carried out earlier than usual, please present your containers for 7.30am.

If your normal collection day is Tuesday	Your collection day will be:
on Tuesday 25 December 2018	Saturday 22 December 2018
on Tuesday 1 January 2019	Saturday 29 December 2018

If your normal collection day is Wednesday	Your collection day will be:
on Wednesday 26 December 2018	Sunday 23 December 2018
on Wednesday 2 January 2019	Sunday 30 December 2018

**Recycling centres and public conveniences will be closed:**  
**25 & 26 December 2018 AND 1 & 2 January 2019**

**The Special Collections and Waste Hotline will be closed from**  
**3pm Monday 24 December 2018 to re-open 9am Thursday 3 January 2019**



**Excess waste, recycling and old christmas trees can be taken to the following recycling centres:**

**Gollachy, Buckie**  
**Chanonry, Elgin**

**Waterford, Forres**  
**Balloch Road, Keith**



For further information please contact the Waste Hotline on  
**0300 123 4565 or [waste@moray.gov.uk](mailto:waste@moray.gov.uk)**

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year*  
*from all at Environmental Services*

the tenants'  
**VOICE**



# Litter

With services at risk because of budget cuts it is important for us all to think carefully about where we can make savings.

Most of us are responsible when it comes to disposing of waste. With over 1,300 litter bins and layby bins in Moray there really is no excuse for litter.

An on the spot fine of £80 can be given, though the costs involved can be much higher if the case goes to court. Illegal fly-tippers can be fined up to £40,000.

## Organise a litter pick

The waste management team are happy to provide equipment such as gloves, high visibility vests, bags and litter pickers. They will also arrange to collect the litter after the event.

## More information

If there is a litter problem in your area or you want to find out more about organising a litter pick in your



**ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND**

## Litter: we're all paying for the clean-up

Every year Scotland spends at least **£46 million** cleaning up after our litterers...

area then contact the waste management team.

You can phone them on **0300 123 4565** or email [waste@moray.gov.uk](mailto:waste@moray.gov.uk)

# Remember your rent payments

Christmas is approaching and we know this is a time of year when there can be a great deal of pressure to spend money on gifts and entertainment. It is important to make sure that you pay your rent during this time. Missing payments during December and January means you will start the New Year with rent arrears which could put your home at risk.

The rent free weeks over the festive period are the weeks beginning 17 and 24 December 2018.

**Please remember that if you have rent arrears you must continue to make your rent payments on these dates.**

If you have any questions about paying your rent then get in touch with your housing officer or the money advice team on **0300 123 4566**.

You can check your balance and make payments anytime using our online tool. If you have not already done so, register for **myaccount** online at [www.moray.gov.uk/myaccount](http://www.moray.gov.uk/myaccount). This service is secure and is available at any time. It can be used to

access a range of Scottish public services.

For further information about how to pay your rent with links to relevant forms, visit our website at [www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_41538.html](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_41538.html)

## Payments over Christmas

Remember that the date that you will receive benefits, Universal Credit or tax credits may change over the festive period. In most cases if your payment is due between 24 December 2018 and 2 January 2019 you may get your payment early.

For further information call them on **0800 328 5644** or visit the government website: [www.gov.uk/how-to-have-your-benefits-paid](http://www.gov.uk/how-to-have-your-benefits-paid)



# New build update

A new build development in Forres was formally opened in June by the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, Kevin Stewart MSP.

Kevin Stewart made the trip to meet with tenants living at the new £2.5m development. Our tenants occupy all the homes on the site, which includes flats, bungalows and houses.

Housing Minister Kevin Stewart said “I am delighted to officially open this 20 home development for Moray Council and congratulate them and their partners Springfield Properties in the delivery of these high quality, modern, affordable homes which will be an asset to Forres. Supported by Scottish Government funding of over £1.1 million, this development is providing affordable housing and making sure people can live in their local community.



Lily Hendry is presented with flowers from Cllr Louise Laing (Chair of Communities Committee) and Kevin Stewart (Housing Minister).

3 bedroom council house in Forres, where she lived for 33 years.

Lily had a hip operation in November 2017 and needed same level living accommodation and says her new property is “brilliant” and “has been worth the wait”.

The Chair of our Communities Committee, Cllr Louise Laing said the completion of the development marks significant investment in housing infrastructure in the area.

Springfield Group Partnerships Managing Director, Tom Leggeat, said “It was great to see the difference our homes made for the residents in Forres and to celebrate the completion of the development.”



Lily with Housing Minister Kevin Stewart and CEO of Springfield Properties Sandy Adam

We are committed to delivering at least 50,000 affordable homes over this Parliament, and ensuring they meet the needs of people and communities across Scotland – backed by £3 billion of investment. Working together with councils and housing associations, we are on target to reach that ambition.”

One of our tenants, 96 year old Lily Hendry, has settled into her new home, having downsized from a



Lily and Housing Minister Kevin Stewart sharing a laugh



# Keeping our tenants safe is our priority!

Faulty gas appliances and gas pipework, poor gas fittings and blocked chimneys or flues can be life threatening. That is why it is so important that we carry out an annual gas safety check at your home. During the checks we will service and repair all of our gas appliances, and point out any faults on any of your appliances so that you can arrange any necessary repairs.

We will contact you when you are due to have your annual gas safety check to arrange an appointment. If we are unable to contact you after three attempts, we will go ahead and schedule an appointment for you. We will send you a letter with the time and date of the appointment. If the appointment time is unsuitable it is important that you let us know so we can rearrange for another time that suits you. Please make sure that there is credit on your

meter or we won't be able to carry out the gas safety check. You also need to

make sure that there is clear access to the boiler or we may not be able to carry out the service.

If you do not get in touch with us and we cannot agree a suitable appointment time we may force entry to your property and charge you for any repairs. To find out more about gas safety and see the breakdown of the repairs costs, visit our website at <https://bit.ly/2zNgkwm>

You **must** allow us to access your home to carry out this important safety check. It is a legal requirement of your tenancy agreement.

**Please don't put your family, your home or your neighbours at risk!**



## Ensure your home contents are protected this Christmas

### with 10% off Tenants Contents Insurance

As of 1st November 2018, Moray Council has entered into a new three-year partnership with Aviva, the UK's largest insurer, to provide our tenants with access to an improved Tenants Contents Insurance policy. What's more, it includes a 10% decrease in all rates for new and existing customers.

Not only is Tenants Contents Insurance for Moray Council Tenants now cheaper than before, it also provides various enhancements. For example:

- ✓ Optional accidental damage up to 25% of the amount insured
- ✓ Locks and keys up to the amount insured
- ✓ Accidental damage to glass/mirrors up to the amount insured
- ✓ Visitors contents up to £750
- ✓ Emergency access damage up to £500

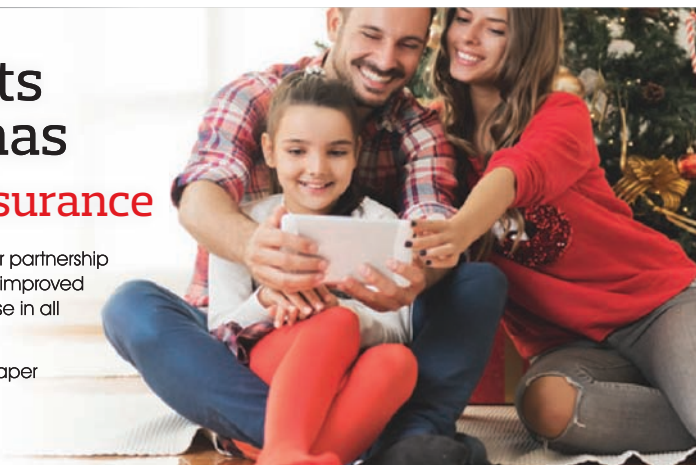
Plus many more.

In addition to the improved cover and a 10% lower rate, we will automatically increase the amount insured by 15% for the month of December to cover any damage caused to your purchased Christmas gifts.

The great news is that all tenants who were on our existing scheme have automatically moved over to the new scheme from 1st November so the new cost and improved cover limits apply to you straight away.

Please remember that Moray Council insures the structure of your home but this does not include what's inside, such as your furniture and personal possessions. Having home contents can't prevent floods, thefts or fires but it can help you get back on your feet should an incident occur.

The policy is underwritten by Aviva Insurance Limited. Aviva Insurance Limited, Registered in Scotland Number 2116. Registered Office: Pitheavlis, Perth PH2 0NH. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.  
FP.ENT.2466.GS



With the festive season fast approaching, we couldn't think of a better time to take advantage of our new scheme.

If you do not currently have a Tenants Contents Insurance policy in place and would like to discuss this with a member of our team,

**Call 01343 563899**  
or email [rents@moray.gov.uk](mailto:rents@moray.gov.uk)



In association with



# What is an emergency repair?



It can be very frustrating and inconvenient when things go wrong at home which is why our repairs service is always open.

If your repair is an **emergency** and our offices are closed, you should call our emergency out of hours number on **03457 565656**.

We will make sure emergency repairs are carried out within our agreed timescale of four hours of a qualifying emergency repair being reported. An emergency repair will involve work carried out to make a problem safe where there is a safety risk to tenants or the public. This may only be a temporary repair and a 'follow on' appointment will be required during normal working hours to complete the repair. In cases of extreme emergencies such as a gas leak or severe water leak, our tradesmen aim to attend within 2 hours.

**A repair is classed as an emergency repair when there is:**

- Danger to health
- Risk to safety or security
- Damage to your property
- Serious damage to the building

It is essential that our 'out of hours' emergency phone number is only used to report genuine emergencies. Our staff are trained to authorise qualifying emergency repairs only. A high number of non-emergency repairs are reported out-with normal hours, which wastes staff time and can delay more serious repairs being dealt with.

You can find out more about our repairs service on our website at <https://bit.ly/2KSylIP>

There is also a form to report ordinary repairs in normal working hours.

On average, there are 65 out of hours calls made each week in Winter!

This costs on average £5.5K per week!

Call our **emergency** out of hours number on

**03457 565656**

# Winter is here

Be ready for winter at home and while you are out and about. Check that your neighbours are ok during the winter period.

## In the home

Nobody wants burst pipes and the disruption this can bring. Make sure that you know where the stop valve is in your home if the worst happens.

If you are not going to be home over the festive period keep your heating on low and if possible ask a friend or neighbour to check on your home. We offer a free drain down service if needed, phone us on **0300 123 4566**.

If you suffer a burst pipe or find frozen pipes:

- Find the stop valve and turn the water off straight away.



- For a burst pipe, if there is any chance of the water coming into contact with any electrics turn off the electrics at the mains at once.
- Turn on your taps to drain away any excess water and minimise potential damage.
- Turn off your electric boiler or immersion heater and let fuel fires die down.
- Call us immediately and let your neighbours know if it is likely to affect them.

Call us on **0300 123 4566** or call into your local access point during office hours, or call our emergency out of hours number **03457 565656** if out of office hours.

# Winter road maintenance

The roads maintenance team monitor road and weather conditions to treat ice and snow conditions on our roads.

They use a sophisticated ice detection system to monitor roadside weather conditions including air and road surface temperatures and whether the road is dry, wet or icy. Visit [www.moray.gov.uk/winter](http://www.moray.gov.uk/winter) for an interactive map of where gritting will be taking place.

The trunk roads, the A96 Aberdeen to Inverness and the A95 Keith to Aviemore, are the responsibility of Bear Scotland who can be contacted on 0800 587 1107. All other routes are gritted on a priority basis, with main routes being covered first.

You can find your nearest grit bin at [www.moray.gov.uk/gritbins](http://www.moray.gov.uk/gritbins). There is also an option to ask for one if there is not one nearby. If you do not have access to the internet then call the roads maintenance team on **0300 123 4565**



Over 14,950 tonnes of salt are held in stores, with 90 personnel and 40 gritting and snowploughing vehicles on standby.

## SOME TRAVEL TIPS

If you need to travel over the winter period then:

- Make sure your car is in good condition before bad weather hits.
- Check weather and road conditions before setting off. Avoid unnecessary journeys.
- Keep seasonal equipment in the car such as anti-freeze, ice scraper, torch, small shovel and a blanket.
- Make sure your phone is charged before you set off.
- Make sure someone knows where you are going and your expected time of arrival.



# WISHING YOU A SAFE AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS



We have a duty to service your smoke alarms every 2 years. This is a very important safety check and you must allow us into your home so the checks can be carried out. Tenant safety is our priority and we need your help. It only takes a short time for us to check your smoke alarms so please make sure you are in for your appointment. We want to make sure that you and your family are kept safe.



Most fires start in the kitchen. Avoid leaving a cooker unattended.



Make sure your family and visitors know how to escape in an emergency.



Make sure cigarettes are put out properly.



Check your Christmas tree lights carry the British Safety Standard sign.



Never place candles near your Christmas tree or materials that can catch light easily.



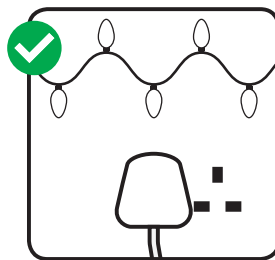
Test the batteries in your smoke alarm every week. Never remove them.



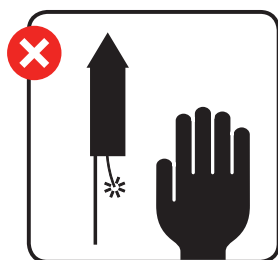
Decorations can burn easily – so don't attach them to lights or heaters.



Keep candles, lighters and matches out of children's reach. Never leave burning candles unattended.



Never overload electrical sockets. Always switch Christmas lights off and unplug them before you go to bed.



Store fireworks safely. Never go back to a lit firework and keep a bucket of water nearby.



Take care around open fireplaces as clothes may catch fire.



Take time to check on elderly relatives and neighbours this Christmas as they are at greater risk from fire.

# Energy efficiency

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. It was introduced in March 2014 and set a first milestone for landlords to meet by 31 December 2020.

Meeting this target will be a challenge! We will continue with our heating replacement programme which replaces old style 'back boiler' gas systems with modern gas-fired condensing boilers. We will be working to replace old style off-peak heating systems with modern storage or panel heater systems, air source heating or gas-fired condensing boilers. We will also look to replace coal fired systems that are over 10 years old.

We are carrying out a range of other energy efficiency works including the application of external wall insulation, loft and cavity wall insulation and improved

heating controls. For the future we are planning to develop a programme of solar water heating and the installation of solar panels to some of our houses.

These various replacement or installation programmes will improve energy efficiency, reduce tenants' fuel bills, make our properties more attractive to our tenants and help us meet the new EESH target by 2020.

During the current year we intend to spend around £900,000 on EESH related works, with a total budget of over £2.7million allocated up to the end of 2020. As well as this specific budget our normal heating and insulation programmes will also help us achieve EESH.

Last year we brought just over 200 properties up to the EESH and our target for this year is 412.



Room with old style gas fire before the heating upgrade took place

Room once heating upgrade has taken place. Fire and boiler have been removed (tenant has decorated)



**REAP** (Rural Environmental Action Project) is a local environmental and sustainable development charity based in Keith. Their aim is for everyone to be able to heat their homes affordably, eat well and protect our environment.

They do this through projects and services such as:



## Grow Elgin

Working with community groups, schools and individuals to encourage people to grow and eat

local fruit and veg and compost their food waste. This project is growing as more groups are getting involved in creating community and food gardens.



## Free energy saving advice

The Community Energy Champions provide energy saving advice for the Keith, Buckie and Lossiemouth areas. They will be out and about at roadshows and you can train to become a Community Energy Champion at a free, fun and interactive session.

To find out more about these, and other projects, REAP are involved in, visit their website at [www.reapscotland.org.uk](http://www.reapscotland.org.uk) where you will also find more information and advice regarding energy saving. REAP can also be contacted by emailing [info@reapscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@reapscotland.org.uk) or phoning **01542 888070**

# Changes to housing law

## Your tenancy agreement

We wrote to you or emailed you recently and told you about changes that the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 will make to your tenancy rights. Some of the changes will apply from 2019.

These changes affect your rights in the following areas:

Change	New rules	Effective date
Assignment	An assignation is a formal request from a tenant to assign, or pass the tenancy from themselves to another person. If you want to assign your tenancy, you must get our written consent. The house must have been your only or main home before you apply. The person that you want to assign your tenancy to must have been living in your home as their main home for at least 12 months before the date of application.	1 November 2019
Joint tenancy	A joint tenancy is when two or more people sign a tenancy agreement and jointly agree to keep to its conditions.  The proposed joint tenant must have lived in the property as their principal home for at least 12 months before making an application.  We must have been notified of them becoming part of the household. If we have not been notified we will have grounds to refuse the joint tenancy. This includes civil partners, co-habiting partners, wives and husbands.	1 November 2019
Subletting	A sublet is when you want to let all or part of your house to someone else on a temporary basis. You can only sublet your home if you have obtained our written consent.  You must have been the tenant for at least 12 months before making an application to sublet your home.  If you were not the tenant throughout the whole of that period, the house must have been your only or main home during those 12 months and we must have been notified of this.	1 November 2019
Succession	Succession is the transfer of a tenancy from the tenant to someone else when the tenant dies.  All successors must have been living in the property at the time of the tenant's death.  Unmarried partners, family members and carers, must have been living in the house for the previous 12 months before the tenant's death.	1 November 2019
Adapted properties	We can ask a sheriff to grant an order to end the tenancy of an adapted property that is not being occupied by anyone who needs the adaptations. If this situation happens we would give you notice before applying to the sheriff. We would offer you suitable alternative accommodation.	1 May 2019



Ending a Scottish secure tenancy agreement	A Scottish secure tenancy can be ended by us if someone living in or visiting the home is convicted of a serious offence in the area of the house. This allows us to end the tenancy where behaviour has had a serious impact on neighbours or others in the community. A serious offence is one that the offender could have been imprisoned for.	1 May 2019
Conversion to a short Scottish secure tenancy agreement for antisocial behaviour	<p>We could serve notice to convert your tenancy to a short Scottish secure tenancy which gives you fewer rights and less protection from eviction than a Scottish secure tenancy.</p> <p>A short Scottish secure tenancy has a fixed term, unless we agree to extend it or convert it back to a Scottish secure tenancy.</p> <p>The circumstances now include any situation where a tenant or someone living with the tenant has acted in an antisocial manner, or pursued a course of conduct amounting to harassment of another person in or around the house occupied by the tenant.</p>	1 May 2019

**The 12 month qualifying period only starts when you tell us that there has been a change to your household.**

#### **Telling us about changes to your household**

To make sure that your tenancy rights are protected it is very important that you tell us of any changes to your household. This includes telling us:

- about anyone who has previously moved in with you who you haven't already told us about; and
- when anyone moves into or out of your home in the future, at the time they do so.

#### **Changes to our policies and consultation with tenants**

We will be updating our policies and procedures in 2019. These will include:

- Assignations Policy
- Evictions Policy
- Neighbour Nuisance and Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Policy

We will consult tenants about significant changes to policies. We will tell you when a consultation is taking place on our website and on our Facebook group for Council tenants

**[www.facebook.com/groups/MorayCouncilTenants](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MorayCouncilTenants)**

You can also ask to join our list of interested tenants and we will get in touch with you when consultations are taking place.

To be added to the list phone **0300 123 4566** or email us at **[tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk)**



# Antisocial and criminal behaviour

Your tenancy agreement sets out the behaviour that is expected from you, members of your household and any visitors to your home. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 will introduce changes from 1 May 2019 which will give us more powers to deal with antisocial behaviour and criminal activity in or around your home.

Where a tenant, any joint tenant or any person staying in or visiting a Council property has behaved antisocially towards someone else living in or visiting the area of the property, in the past 3 years, we will be able to:

- convert the tenancy of an existing tenant to a short Scottish secure tenancy agreement for a 12 month period;
- give a new tenant a short Scottish secure tenancy for a 12 month period;
- extend this period by an extra 6 months, to 18 months, where housing support is being provided.

This means the tenant will have fewer rights and we can monitor the behaviour during the 12 month period. If the behaviour doesn't improve or stop we will be able to take eviction action to protect neighbours and/or the community.

A new streamlined eviction process will also

be introduced to help us take action on serious antisocial behaviour more quickly. This means that we can take eviction action where a tenant, any joint tenant or any person staying in or visiting a Council property:

- has been convicted of an offence that is punishable by prison; and
- this has already been proven in Court.

The offence must have happened in or around the Council property. Examples of these would be breach of an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO), serious drug related offences, such as drug dealing, a course of threatening and abusive behaviour, serious violent offences and offences related to the use of offensive weapons.

Eviction action is always the last resort, we will always try to avoid it where possible.

You can report antisocial behaviour at any time of the day quickly and easily. You can contact the Community safety team by email on [antisocialbehaviour@moray.gov.uk](mailto:antisocialbehaviour@moray.gov.uk) or you can report any issues through our website using the online form which can be accessed at [online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/asb\\_ext](https://online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/asb_ext)

You can also phone us on **0300 123 4566**

# House exchange

Have you been thinking about moving home? Maybe for a new job, a bigger place for your family or simply to be closer to loved ones. Whatever the reason, House Exchange can help you.

House Exchange brings people together who are interested in swapping their homes. Currently over 100,000 people are looking to swap their properties around the UK, so your ideal home could be only a few clicks away.

Enter your details at [www.houseexchange.org.uk](http://www.houseexchange.org.uk) and the site will match you up with other would-be swappers. There's also a free app, so now you can search on the move too.

**Important things to consider:**

**Add photos:** You can have up to five photos of your property on your advert, this increases your chances

of finding a swap, so make sure each room looks its best in the pictures.

**Include a description:**

House Exchange has a fantastic tool that allows you to create a description by selecting options that apply to your home. You can find this in the 'Edit my advert' area.

**Get in touch:** Once you are registered start messaging the properties you are interested in. Arranging viewings is a great first step in your House Exchange journey.

**Happy house hunting!**



**House  
Exchange**



## NEUTER YOUR CAT FOR £5

- Are you on income based benefits or low income?
- Are you a full time student?
- Are you in receipt of a state pension or pension credit?

Moray Cats Protection may be able to help you with the cost of neutering your cat.

**Neutering is good for your cat:**

- It stops unwanted kittens & costly vet bills when the pregnancy goes wrong
- Your cat is less likely to fight, reducing the risk of catching life-threatening diseases
- Neutered cats are less likely to wander and get run over
- Neutered male cats are less likely to display territorial behaviour such as spraying

Let us help you and your cat.

Please contact us for more information:

Tel: 07837 342 646 or email: [moraycp@hotmail.com](mailto:moraycp@hotmail.com)

Visit our Facebook page: Moray Cats Protection

**£5.00  
Micro  
Chipping**





# Allocations Policy consultation

Our Allocations Policy and access to all social housing is governed by law and guidance. New legislation – the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 – makes several changes to the allocation rules for social landlords which we must prepare for by reviewing our Allocations Policy. We would like to hear your views about the changes we are proposing.

Earlier this year, we carried out an extensive consultation on these changes. Following analysis of the feedback we received, we have drafted a revised Allocations Policy.

We want to make sure that we respond to local housing needs and that the way we let houses is clear to all applicants, staff and other

stakeholders. Before we finalise the Allocations Policy, we would like your views.

## How to give us your feedback

Please visit our website at <https://bit.ly/2Q6Vpz3>

There you will find:

- The revised draft Allocations Policy
- An easy to read version of the Allocations Policy
- An online survey to tell us what you think.

Please read our Allocations Policy and tell us what you think by filling in the survey.

If you do not have access to the internet then phone us on 0300 123 4566 and we will send you a copy.



## Moray tenants' forum



The Forum is a group of Council tenants who work with us to improve housing services and conditions for all tenants. We regularly consult with them on changes to our service or ask for their feedback on draft leaflets and reports before they are finalised.

The Forum invite guest speakers along to talk to them about various housing matters. In September Fiona Coutts (Senior Housing Needs Officer) and Gillian Henly (Senior Housing Officer-Policy) came to talk to the group about the review of the Allocations Policy.

Last month they were joined by Lesley Carr and Alan Davidson (Housing Needs Officers) for a discussion about homelessness. They explained their role in assessing homeless applicants and making sure their transition to mainstream housing goes smoothly.

The Forum is informal and friendly and joining is a great way to meet new people, as well as an opportunity to find out more about your housing services and ways you can help to make a difference.

The Forum next get together at 2pm on 29 January 2019 and the guest speaker will be Richard Anderson (Head of Housing and Property). Richard will talk to the group about the current issues facing the housing section and answer any questions they may have. If you need help with travel expenses then just let us know.

Phone us on **0300 123 4566** or email [tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk) for more details.

## Our 2017/18 annual performance report

The Moray Tenants' Forum recently helped us shape the theme and format of our annual performance report which is now available on our website at [www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file95927.pdf](http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file95927.pdf).

The report highlights where we are performing well but also the areas where improvements need to be made.

To help us develop next year's report, please fill in the short survey at the end by 31 January 2019. As a thank you for your time you will be entered into a prize draw for £25 worth of shopping vouchers.

If you would like a copy of the report phone **0300 123 4566** or email [housing@moray.gov.uk](mailto:housing@moray.gov.uk)



# Policy, pens and popcorn

by Frankie Graham

A tenant's experience of TPAS conference 2018

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)

Scotland is a national organisation for landlords and tenants.

It aims to promote and support tenant involvement in all areas of housing services, and organises various events throughout the year, including an annual conference. I was one of the tenant delegates for Moray Council at this year's conference, which was held at the MacDonald Resort in Aviemore.



The conference ran from Friday lunchtime to Sunday morning, and had the overall title of "Baking up a Storm". There was a mixture of keynote, workshop and lifestyle sessions; while the keynote sessions were single sessions, there were always several simultaneous workshop and lifestyle sessions, and we chose in advance which ones to attend.

Many of the sessions focused on how individual organisations were coping with UK Government policy. One speaker from a Glasgow Housing Association talked about how they prepared for the advent of Universal Credit. They were concerned that most of their tenants would not have enough computer knowledge to be able to cope with the requirements of Universal Credit. They also recognised that many tenants would assume that using a computer would be too difficult for them to learn, and so they would avoid formal computer classes. There were already many tenants' special

interest groups, and the Housing Association decided to use these as a way into getting people comfortable with computers - for example, they showed the people in the knitting group how to download knitting patterns.

There was a session on fuel poverty, which highlighted the huge costs in making old properties energy efficient, often with only small savings in tenants' fuel bills. (That session was also memorable for the fact that everyone had to walk round a large bucket in the middle of the floor which was collecting drips from a leak in the ceiling - obviously the hotel was having its own issues with property maintenance!)

There were exhibition stands in the foyer, all of which were giving away freebies of one sort or another. I'm guessing that many of us now have enough pens to last a decade, if not a century. I also now have a fidget spinner, though I can't for the life of me see the point in it, so I'm obviously a failure at getting down with the kids. And I'm ashamed to say that, despite having just eaten an excellent hotel breakfast, I munched my way through a tub of popcorn at the morning showing of South Ayrshire Council's short movie promoting their new Tenants Handbook. But I did leave behind the Santa hat thoughtfully provided at the Christmas-themed Saturday night dinner, so I showed some restraint.

Seriously, the conference was a very interesting, if exhausting, weekend, and I enjoyed learning about what other organisations are doing. To anyone who gets the opportunity to attend a future conference, I would say, don't hesitate, go for it!





# Sheltered housing news

Sheltered housing helps people to continue to live independently in their own home but with the support of a warden service.

Sheltered housing is normally suited to older people but may be available to younger households in need of support. We have 150 sheltered properties in Buckie, Elgin, Forres, Lossiemouth and Portgordon.

We find that people don't always ask for or think that sheltered properties are an option. Due to this we occasionally find that these properties are hard to let. If you are interested in sheltered accommodation please get in touch.

Tenants asked us to introduce a new section on sheltered housing so we thought a good place to start would be finding out from some of our tenants what it was like living in sheltered housing. We'd like to thank Agnes and Daphne for sharing their experiences.

## Agnes' story

I would like to share my experience of living in sheltered housing. My husband, George, and I first came to sheltered housing in 2003 from private rented housing.



Crown Terrace in Portgordon was like heaven for us! We settled in well and having a warden call in on us every morning made a great difference to our lives and lifted us up for the day. The warden service is really important because they offer great support and good advice and help with things you cannot manage yourself. George was ill and I was very glad of the warden service.

After five happy years friends persuaded us to move to Hanover sheltered housing, but we were not as happy there as we had been at Portgordon. Sadly, I lost my George in 2012. I was very unsettled and prayed to move back to Portgordon where I had been happy. I moved back to Crown Terrace in March 2013 but due to ill health and the bereavement I had suffered, I did not cope very well and ended up moving back to Hanover sheltered housing. I knew very quickly that this had been the wrong decision for me and put my name back down for council sheltered housing in Portgordon. In May 2017 I was offered the same house I had spent five happy years in with George and I accepted it.

I love being in Portgordon and am very happy here. The warden service is excellent and worth its weight in gold. Portgordon is a lovely friendly village and there are plenty of activities at the village hall where I join in and make new friends. There is a lunch club on a Tuesday with entertainment, and also the pensioners group, the ball group, the craft group and bowls in the summer.

I have done a full circle of sheltered housing but Portgordon is the best.



## Daphne's story

I moved into sheltered housing in Leys Road, Forres in January 2014, three months after my husband passed away. I was living in Portgordon and didn't know anyone in that area. I lived at the top of the hill in Crown Street so could not really go out as I am disabled after a stroke. My husband was my carer and I relied on him very much.

After I moved into my flat in Leys Road it changed my life. Having a Warden to make sure I am well and happy and helping me if I need it made a big difference to me. I am a few minutes' walk from the shops and there are plenty of things going on for me to join in. I have made plenty of friends as we have a gathering of tenants in the community room once a week where we have entertainment and fun and games, also cakes and tea. I like to get involved in things so I organise days out for us and try and raise money for our trips.

I can definitely recommend sheltered housing. It has given me plenty of confidence and a good purpose in life with no time to sit and be miserable.





Larch court sheltered housing complex

### Larch court

The residents of Larch Court sheltered housing complex in Elgin hold a coffee morning on the first Thursday of each month for everyone to meet up and have a chat. There is bingo on Thursday nights at 6.30pm but they don't go for the big money they go for a laugh. They try to have a high tea sometime in the month when it is possible and they also have a game of play your cards right. The rotary goes along to entertain them on a regular basis.

If anyone is interested in attending the monthly coffee mornings or the bingo they would be made welcome. The rotary evenings are also open to friends.

### Gurness Circle coffee and chat group

Gurness Circle is a street in Elgin with 20 sheltered houses for older people and/or people with disabilities. Each property has one or two bedrooms and is self-

contained with a garden. This gives everyone their own space and we have independence to live our own lives. There are meeting rooms which are available for residents and others to use to get together. There are 2 regular wardens who keep an eye on us without being intrusive. They can do personal visits that vary according to the needs or requirements of the tenant. These can be as regular as twice a day to once a week but they can always be contacted if we need anything. We also have an alarm installed that can be used in emergencies and will contact an alarm centre or the emergency services.

We have a group which includes both Gurness Circle residents and friends and we meet every Monday from 10am to 12pm. The meetings are very informal and mainly centre on our personal experiences from the past and present. The groups ages range from between 70 to over 90 so we have a lot to talk about.

### Contact us:

For more information on sheltered housing, including information on how to apply, you can: Visit our website at <https://bit.ly/2G8EsPX> Phone us on **0300 123 4566**

# Smart justice Moray

Moray's first ever community justice event, 'Smart Justice Moray', took place in Elgin earlier this year. Community justice is when public sector organisations, third sector groups and the local community all work together to help prevent offending behaviour and reduce the number of victims of crime. The government hope to move away from short-term prison sentences to community-based orders for offenders with less serious crimes.

The event provided an opportunity to find out more about community justice and the work that goes on. It was also a chance to see how the community can benefit. Over twenty stalls represented groups who are involved in community justice in one way or another.

Community group, Forres in Bloom, benefitted when financial constraints caused their greenhouses to be closed.

The unpaid work from the community justice team was a great help and also allowed those on placement to develop their skills in a supportive workplace. Some even returned to volunteer when their placement was over.





The Service Improvement Panel (SIP) began meeting in the summer. The panel were given an overview of the SIP, their role and how they can make a difference to the housing department. They helped to develop an information pack for new members who wish to join.

For the first topic the group will be looking at how people contact us. This will include access points and the contact centre. Margaret Kidd (Customer Contact Manager) has been invited to the next meeting to talk to the group.

The next meeting will be held on 22 January 2019.

If you would like to be involved and have the opportunity to make a real difference to the housing service then get in touch.

Phone us on **0300 123 4566** or email [tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk) for more details.

## Buckpool new build tenant group

The Buckpool new build tenant group held their most recent meeting in September. They discussed the name of their estate and all decided on 'Seafield'. The installation and planting of raised beds within the estate has been delayed. Unfortunately, due to the delays, the growing season is now over and it has been decided by REAP (Rural Environmental Action Project) that beds and planting will be planned for spring. It has been agreed with the tenants that the trees that were damaged will be replaced.

Road safety was discussed. The roads are currently maintained by the developer (Springfield). When the road is handed over to the Council then traffic calming measures can be considered.

The next meeting will be in the morning on 11 February 2019 in Buckie. If you would like to be involved and make a real difference to the area then get in touch.

Phone us on **0300 123 4566** or email [tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk) for more details.

## Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2018



Our major tenant satisfaction survey is now coming to an end. Your opinions are very important to us and the results of the survey will help us to focus on areas that matter to you and improve our services.

Market research organisation, Research Resource, have been carrying out the survey on our behalf since September. All of our tenants were contacted by email or post initially and have been given the opportunity to tell us what they think of our housing services. Some of the data gathered is used to report our performance to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

We would like to thank the tenant representatives who helped us check that the survey was both easy to understand and fill in before it was sent out. We would also like to thank all our tenants who took the time to fill in their survey or talk to Research Resource on the phone. We appreciate that sometimes it can be annoying to receive surveys, but it is the best way to make sure that every single

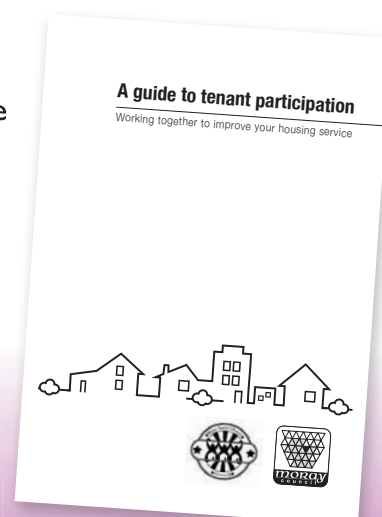
tenant has a chance to tell us what they think.

So far we have received a 36% response rate which includes a total of 2127 postal responses. We expect that the response rate will improve further with the phone surveys. The full results of the survey will be with us early next year and we will share those with you in the next edition of the Tenants' Voice.

# thank you

for your time and interest  
in providing us feedback.

Gathering feedback through surveys is just one of the ways that you can give your feedback on housing services. Our leaflet 'A guide to tenant participation' explains all the ways that you can take part. You can read the leaflet on our website at <https://bit.ly/2QOSvP6> or phone **0300 123 4566**



# We listen to **your feedback** and **act on it**



**YOU** SAID...

We should include items in the newsletter which are relevant to tenants in sheltered housing

**WE** DID...

We have included a section in this newsletter called 'Sheltered Housing News' and this will be a regular feature in future newsletters

**YOU** SAID...

There was an inconsistency in some of the wording on our Allocations Policy Review document

**WE** DID...

We edited the document for the final draft to take your suggestions into account

**YOU** SAID...

Mystery shoppers told us the signage for the Keith office was unclear from the main street and the wording on the sign was confusing

**WE** DID...

We have improved the signage at the Keith office (photo right)



**YOU** SAID...

We should include advice on recycling in our tenant newsletter as tenants are not sure what can and can't be recycled

**WE** DID...

We have included advice on recycling in this edition of the Tenants' Voice



# Christmas wordsearch

N W  
 C S  
 K Z R J  
 Q A U M  
 P T U R Q E  
 S E E R T O  
 U O N N I U R Y D E P P A R W T F I G V  
 R H J K S S L E I G H B E L L S W L O N  
 M Z Q D T F E S U A L C A T N A S C  
 Y B R I M Z C N Z R X O R K B L  
 T E N A I S T O C K I N G V  
 H S P F S S N I W U O N  
 T P E B E H T U E T J B U N  
 K E L I Y C O L S U A L Q C  
 D X H K E C O R H E L B R P H W  
 T V S K A A U G T E A O F U  
 G J W N D G U J O G U C A S  
 B N O D P E N B E C  
 U L D P A L D K  
 Z R E S

ANGELS ★ BAUBLE ★ DECORATIONS ★ DONKEY ★ GIFTWRAPPED ★ MISTLETOE ★ SANTACLAUS  
 ★ SHEPHERDS ★ SLEIGHBELLS ★ STAR ★ STOCKING ★ TINSEL ★ TREE ★

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

Phone number: .....

Email address: .....

**To be entered into our prize draw for a £20 shopping voucher please complete the word search and send it to us by no later than 31 March 2019.**

You can post it to us at: **Winter 2018 Competition**, Housing & Property, PO Box 6760, Elgin, IV30 1BX, or hand it in to your local area office.

## CONGRATULATIONS

To Mrs M MacLennan from Buckie who was the winner of the £20 gift card for successfully completing the Tenants Voice Summer Wordsearch competition

To Mrs Stephanie Gerrie who was the winner of the £50 gift card for returning the new tenants survey.

# Children's Christmas colouring competition



The best colouring in as selected by our judges will win a £10 shopping voucher.

**Please send completed pictures to us by no later than 31 March 2019.**

You can post it to us at: **Colouring Competition**, Housing & Property, PO Box 6760, Elgin, IV30 1BX,  
or hand it in to your local area office.

Name:..... Age: .....

Address:.....

..... Postcode: .....

Phone number:.....



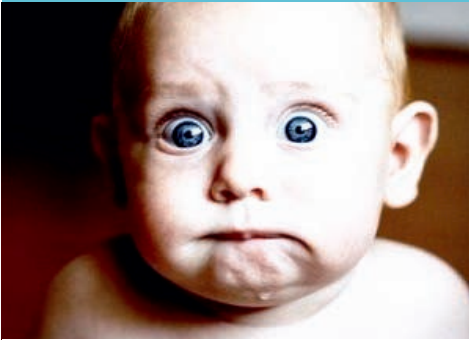
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***Support your local businesses.***

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Do you provide unpaid care for someone because of physical or mental illness, disability, frailty or substance use?

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