

# the tenants' VOICE

Winter 2019

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Read about our stock condition survey and how you can help



## 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 House Library  
High Street, Forres  
IV36 1BU

### KEITH

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

EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS: **03457 565656**



## MORAY'S REUSE CHARITY SHOP

**FREE COLLECTIONS  
FROM FORRES,  
ELGIN & NAIRN**

**WATERFORD RECYCLING CENTRE  
WATERFORD ROAD FORRES,  
MORAYSHIRE, IV36 3TN**

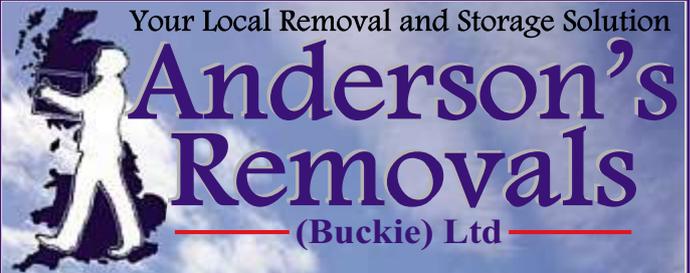
**t: 01309 676056**

**e: [info@moraywastebusters.org](mailto:info@moraywastebusters.org)**

**Opening Times:**

**Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri: 9.30 - 3.30 Wed: 10.00 - 3.30**

**Sat: 9.30 - 3.30 Sun: 10.00 - 2.30**



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Quarriers

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

- Are you tired, stressed or struggling?
- Do you feel isolated?
- Need help or support?

**Call us today for a confidential chat**

**01343 556031**

Quarriers Carer Support Service (Moray)

44 High Street, Elgin IV30 1BU

[carersmoray@quarriers.org.uk](mailto:carersmoray@quarriers.org.uk)

[www.quarrierscarersservice.org.uk](http://www.quarrierscarersservice.org.uk)



Quarriers is a Registered Scottish Charity No. SC001960



*Dear Readers,*

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

As Winter sets in why not curl up with your Tenants' Voice and a nice cuppa. This edition is filled with interesting articles that we hope you will enjoy.

By now, you should have received information about the 2020/21 rent increase proposals. You can read more about this in our rent increase article. I hope you have found time to fill in the short survey on our website and let us know what you think about the proposed increase. The consultation does not close until 10 January 2020 so there is still time. Your opinions are important to us and the survey will only take you a few minutes so please take part.

Part of the reason for the proposed rent increase is to allow us to invest in our homes and carry out upgrades on our existing stock. We will be carrying out a stock condition survey on 25% of our housing stock. To find out more about the stock condition survey read our article in this newsletter.

The cold nights are drawing in and the weather forecast for Winter warns of snow and ice. Make sure you read our article on road safety. There are also articles about how to stay safe this festive period and what precautions to take if you are away from home.

I would like to wish all our readers a happy and healthy festive season. I hope everyone has a peaceful and relaxed Christmas and that 2020 brings you all you wish for.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louise Laing". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Louise Laing  
Chair of Communities Committee



# Season's Greetings

Councillors and staff wish all our tenants a very Merry Christmas and best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year.

Our offices will close on Tuesday 24 December at 3pm and then re-open on Friday 3 January 2020 at 8.45am.

If you need to report an emergency repair during office hours, please contact **0300 123 4566**.

For out of hours emergencies please call **03457 565656**.

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Keep these numbers handy during the festive season

Gas Leaks: National Gas Emergency Services - **0800 111 999**

Emergency Repairs: **03457 565656**

Scottish Water: **0800 0778 778**

Police: **101** for Non – Emergency or **999** for Emergency

National Domestic Violence Helpline: **0808 2000 247**

Electric Supply Disruption: **105**

NHS: **111**



## Going away over the festive period?

If you are not going to be at home over the Christmas period, follow our tips below to keep your home safe.

- Make sure that there is someone you trust who is able to check your home frequently. Leave a spare key with them for emergency use.
- Make sure your contact details are kept up to date with us and with your neighbours.
- Contact us for guidance on how to shut down your water supply or keep your heating on to avoid burst pipes.
- Keep us updated with your current mobile phone number so we will be able to get in touch with you and send you useful communications.



- Do not announce on social media that you are away from home. This can alert people that your home is empty.

# Waste management arrangements Christmas/Hogmanay period 2019/2020



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. The exception to these collections is those which would be undertaken on 25 and 26 December, and 1 and 2 January. Revised dates are set out below.

## **ONLY WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY COLLECTIONS ARE AFFECTED**

Collections may be carried out earlier than normal, containers should be presented at their usual collection point for 7.30am.

### **Scheduled Collection**

Weds 25 December (**green bin/brown bin**)

Weds 25 December (**recycling**)

Thurs 26 December (**green bin/brown bin**)

Thurs 26 December (**recycling**)

Weds 1 January (**green bin**)

Weds 1 January (**brown bin**)

Weds 1 January (**recycling**)

Thurs 2 January (**green bin**)

Thurs 2 January (**brown bin**)

Thurs 2 January (**recycling**)

### **Revised Collection**

Sat 21 December

Sat 28 December

Sun 22 December

Sun 29 December

Sat 28 December

Sat 4 January

Sat 4 January

Sun 29 December

Sun 5 January

Sun 5 January

The special collection and waste hotline will be closed from 3pm on Tuesday 24 December until 9am Friday 3 January.

Recycling centres will be closed on 22, 25, 26, 29 December, and 1, 2 and 5 January. They will also be closed from 12noon on 24th December.

**Public conveniences will be closed: Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 December  
Wednesday 1 and Thursday 2 December**

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

**Gollachy, Buckie**

**Waterford, Forres**

**Chanonry, Elgin**

**Balloch Road, Keith**

For further information please contact the Waste Hotline on  
**0300 123 4565** or **waste@moray.gov.uk**



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
from all at Environmental Services

# A day in the life...



**Irene Turnidge is an estate caretaker for our supported accommodation team. She works with temporary accommodation dispersed housing and has been in the role for 9 months. Before this she worked in retail as a paint expert and has also had her own business and has travelled around the world.**

**Irene found some time in her busy schedule to sit down with**

**us and she also took us on a site visit to show us a void property she was working on.**

## **Can you tell us what your role involves and how it fits into the Supported Accommodation Team?**

My role is quite different to that of a mainstream housing estate caretaker. It includes taking care of temporary accommodation properties where we carry out duties like changing the locks and general repairs. We can be found unclogging sinks if there is any blockage as well as taking care of our tenants. Our main task is to get the property ready for occupation by a homeless household. This involves cleaning, decorating, DIY and making sure electrical appliances are in working condition. I am also there to sign tenancy agreements with any new tenants. I go through the house rules with them, how the heating and electrical appliances work and answer any questions they may have. Sometimes we need to visit our tenants regularly as they may be anxious due to their particular situation, or they might have issues with antisocial behaviour or mental health that we need to support them with.

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

Every day is different. As I work in a reactive housing service we spend a lot of time fire-fighting. All kinds of people move in to temporary accommodation. There are many people who present with relationship breakdowns and there are also people with drug and alcohol problems and mental health issues. There will also be people who have come out of prison and the armed forces and people leaving hospital. I spend a lot of time with our tenants, especially those with drug and alcohol problems. I try to make sure they are ok and they are settling in to their accommodation.

I come in to the office in the morning to catch up on any admin and pick up the list of tasks for the day and I then take the van out. I can be out and about all over the Moray area throughout the day making visits and maintaining accommodation.

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

My biggest challenge is time. I visit properties that have been handed back after our tenants are housed in permanent accommodation. Sometimes mainstream accommodation is

allocated to more than one temporary household at the same time. This means we can have many tenants moving out at the same time and I have to get more than one home ready for new tenants as quickly as I can.

When there is time we like to redecorate the properties as they get worn due to the high rate of turnover. We try to get tenants settled into one property for the duration of their time in temporary accommodation rather than moving them to different properties. Things do not always go as planned and your day can be interrupted. For instance, if there is an emergency with a tenant I may have to go and visit the tenant and the property immediately to make sure they are both safe and secure.



**Irene prepares a void property for new tenants**

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

I like the variety the job brings. I could be out in Aberlour in the morning and then I could be prepping a property in Lossiemouth at midday and visiting a tenant in Forres in the afternoon - it's not the same every day. I don't think I would like a job sitting at a desk from 9am - 5pm. My current role is interesting and keeps me busy looking after tenants and properties, doing DIY, decorating properties and getting them ready for new tenants.

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

The colour magnolia! I used to work in B&Q as a colour expert and every time someone bought the colour magnolia my heart sank. I would love to add some colour to our temporary homes.

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

I would still be in retail. I quit retail two years ago and this is the first job I applied for as it sounded interesting. I also have a degree in chemistry so may have done something with that.

## **What do you like to do when you are not at work?**

I am a keen gardener and I like DIY and baking. I am often known for taking bakes into work.

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

Positive, mischievous and friendly.

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

It would be Angelina Jolie of course (Irene laughs)



# Rent increase

We understand that affordability is a key concern of our tenants. We have the lowest average weekly rent of all local authorities in Scotland and last year we were the only local authority in Scotland to freeze rents.

At the last rent consultation, most tenants favoured a higher rent increase to pay for 70 new homes each year through our new build programme and help meet the high demand for our homes. This will now reduce to 50 per year and we will concentrate our efforts on upgrading and maintaining your homes.

A recent review of our Business Plan has identified we need to make a significant investment to pay for work to your homes to meet national standards and the law. This includes meeting national energy efficiency standards which will make your home warmer and reduce your household bills. We also have to meet safety measures such as electrical testing and upgrading smoke detectors (you can read more about this on page 10).

We are about to commission a housing condition survey which will assess 25% of our stock. This will help us make decisions and prioritise future programmes of works.

To achieve these improvements we are proposing a 3% rent increase for 2020/21 but we would like your feedback on this. It is important to us that all tenants get the opportunity to have their say. If you get help to pay your rent, it is still important that we hear from you.

We will contact all our tenants about the rent increase proposal. This will be by email if we have one for you or by letter if we do not. We will promote the consultation on our Moray Council Tenants' Facebook Group and on our website where you will be able to fill in our survey online.

You can find the short survey and more information at [www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_129048.html](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_129048.html). The consultation ends on 10 January 2020 so don't delay. It will only take a few minutes to fill in and it is important to us that you have your say.

# Rent payments

We understand that the festive period can be a costly time but that should not be a reason to stop paying your rent. Missing rent payments during December and January means you will start the new year with rent arrears which could put your home at risk.

We are always here to help. Please contact your housing officer if you are having difficulty making your payments. You can contact them on **0300 123 4566**.

 Prioritise your rent and pay the full amount due on time	 Prioritise buying presents or paying other bills over your rent payments
 Pay during the 'rent free' weeks if you are in rent arrears. 'Rent free' weeks can only be taken by tenants who are up to date with payments	 Have no money in your bank when your rent direct debit is due as your payment will fail
 Check the balance on your rent account so you know how much money you need during the coming weeks to cover your rent	 Ignore any contact from us about your rent payments
 Review your budget and decide how much you can afford to spend on Christmas	 Be afraid to ask if you are struggling financially as we can help

## RENT FREE WEEKS

There are two 'rent free' weeks which are the weeks beginning 23 and 30 December. Many people think that they don't have to pay their rent during these weeks but that is incorrect. If you have any rent arrears you must continue to pay during the 'rent free' weeks.

# How to avoid over spending this Christmas

We all feel the pressure to spend money at Christmas. Whether it's presents for the family, turkey for the table or special days out. Our tips might help you manage your spending around the festive period.

**Set up a Christmas cupboard and make a list:** Make a list of who you need to buy for and whenever you see goods at decent prices, buy them, wrap them, and stuff them in a Christmas cupboard. Keep your eyes peeled for discounts and deals. Divide the amount amongst everyone on your list and take care not to overspend.



**Secret Santa:** Everyone's name goes into a hat, then you draw out who you're buying for. So you only buy and receive one gift, usually within a spending limit. It's more fun when no one knows who it's from! You can also agree a budget so that every present is a similar price.

## **Avoid the extras:**

There are constant offers in the shops at Christmas time. Money should be just as valuable at Christmas time as any other so think just as hard about a purchase as you would at any other time of year. It is only a bargain if it is something you need!

## **Look out for deals:**

Most shops make more profit during the Christmas period than at any other time of year. Buy the smaller, less expensive gifts first before you tackle the bigger stuff so you know exactly how much you have left to spend. It's important to always shop around for the best deal. If you see something you like in the shops, look online to see if you can find it cheaper anywhere else.

## **DIY gifts:**

Christmas does not need to be about the best and most expensive gifts. If you are short of money try making a personalised gift, something thoughtful and practical. The joy of homemade Christmas gifts is that you get to have fun while you make them as well as learn a new skill.

**Christmas is, above all else, a time to spend with family and loved ones and that is priceless!**



**REAP** (Rural Environmental Action Project) is a local charity based in Keith. Their wish is for a future without fuel poverty, where everyone can afford to heat their homes, eat well and protect



Fruit and herb growing in Cooper Park, Elgin

the environment now and for the future. They deliver a whole host of projects and services to meet local needs including local food and growing

projects and free and impartial energy advice.

REAP are currently looking for community energy champions. These are people who are interested in energy use in their home and who want to learn more about energy and spread the word to help others save money. REAP are offering free training and support to encourage people to become energy champions for their neighbourhood. The free training is fun and interactive and travel expenses and lunch will be provided.

As an energy champion you will learn about energy bills, grants and loans and find out interesting facts about heating and hot water systems. You will receive a free pack of energy saving goodies and will learn how to save money and the planet!

If you are interested in becoming an energy champion or in any of REAP's other projects then get in touch with them on [info@reapscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@reapscotland.org.uk) or phone **01542 888 070**.

Check out REAP's upcoming events including gardening sessions and a fermentation workshop on their website at

[www.reapscotland.org.uk/calendar/](http://www.reapscotland.org.uk/calendar/)

# Are you ready for Winter?



## Keep your house warm this Winter:

- By keeping your home warm you will prevent burst pipes. Burst pipes can cause a lot of damage to your home and your neighbours' homes.
- Remember that the pipes in a flat may supply water to your neighbours
- In very cold weather, keep the heating on overnight



at a low temperature if you can

### Protect your home:

- Report any cracks or leaks at taps or valves as soon as you notice them

- Install draught excluders to your doors and windows
- Make sure you have contents insurance
- Keep an eye out for your neighbours, especially the ones in poor health or those who are elderly or vulnerable

## If your pipes burst:

- Turn the water off at the main water stop valve. Ask us if you are not sure where your water stop valve is located
- Switch off the electricity at the mains and any water heater
- Turn off the central heating system
- Open all taps to drain your system
- Notify the neighbours who could experience the damage
- Report it to us as soon as possible

# Road safety

Make sure your car is ready for Winter driving by following our road safety tips:

- Be aware of changing road conditions
- Watch your driving speed and do not drive too fast
- Don't take the car when you have had a festive drink. Drinking and driving is not worth the risk



## BEFORE YOU GO: A CHECKLIST TO BE SAFER ON WINTER ROADS

	<b>CHECK UP</b> MAKE SURE YOUR DEFROSTER, WIPER BLADES, LIGHTS, BATTERY & BRAKES ARE WORKING
	<b>TRACTION READY</b> CARRY CHAINS, BE SURE YOUR TYRES ARE PROPERLY INFLATED & TREAD IS GOOD
	<b>BE INFORMED</b> CHECK THE WEATHER, ROAD CONDITIONS & TRAFFIC CAMS
	<b>CHARGE UP</b> BE SURE YOUR MOBILE PHONE IS FULLY CHARGED IN CASE YOU GET STUCK
	<b>FLUIDS</b> ADD CONCENTRATED WIPER FLUID & TOP OFF ANTIFREEZE
	<b>VISIBILITY</b> USE WATER REPELLANT ON THE OUTSIDE OF YOUR WINDSCREEN & ANTIFOGGER ON THE INSIDE
	<b>HEADLIGHTS</b> USE WATER REPELLANT ON YOUR HEADLIGHTS. CONSIDER RESTORING YOUR LENS' COVERS
	<b>FILL UP</b> IN CASE YOU GET CAUGHT IN TRAFFIC OR HAVE TO CHANGE ROUTES OR TURN BACK
	<b>JUST IN CASE</b> CARRY A KIT WITH SCRAPER, WATER, SNACKS, HEADLAMP, HAT, GLOVES & ESSENTIALS

# Gas safety

We have a duty under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to make sure that all gas installations in our properties are safe to use, and serviced on an annual basis. To do this we need access to your property.

If a serious fault occurs in the gas heating system in your home, your safety and that of your neighbours could be affected.

Our Building Services (DLO) service your gas installations, as well as providing a repairs service for all gas heating problems. Access is normally arranged by telephone three weeks in advance of the service date to agree an appointment.

Appointments can be either morning (between 8am and 12.30pm) or afternoon (between 12.30pm and 4.30pm). You can have a choice of date but this must be before the existing gas safety certificate is due to expire.

Tenants are sent written confirmation of their appointment as well as a text message. A



As a landlord, the Council has a legal duty to make sure that a gas safety check is carried out in your home each year.

reminder text is sent the day before the appointment and it is important that you let us know if this date is no longer convenient. You can do this by phoning

0300 123 4566. We can arrange a further appointment with you but if access cannot be obtained then we will force entry and you will be charged for repairs.

To find out more about gas safety and see a breakdown of the repair 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 help us to keep you safe!**

# Smoke alarm legislation update

We need access to your home so we can keep you and your family safe

72 people died in the devastating fire at Grenfell Tower in London in 2017. As a direct result of this, new fire safety legislation has been introduced in Scotland. We have until February 2021 to make sure that all our Council properties meet the new safety requirements for smoke alarms and detecting fires.

## These must include:

- one smoke alarm in the room most often used for general daytime living purposes (normally the living room/lounge);
- one smoke alarm on each storey, such as hallways and landings;
- one heat alarm in every kitchen;
- all smoke and heat alarms to be ceiling mounted and interlinked; and
- a carbon monoxide alarm in any room with a boiler, fire, gas hob or flue.

We will be starting to upgrade all our properties from early 2020. We will write to you to let you know when we will need access to your home. It is very important

that you give us access to upgrade your alarms.

If you do not give us access to your home we may have to force entry to the property to make sure the work is done to the new legal standard. We will re-charge you for the cost of having to force entry.

Any disruption to your home will be kept to a minimum during the upgrade.





# Christmas is coming. On reflection, wouldn't it make sense to have some contents insurance?

Burglaries are statistically proven to increase at Christmas.

- Pay-as-you-go
- No excess
- Choice of payment methods  
paying monthly

## Insure your belongings

It's our responsibility as your landlord to insure the structure of your home but this doesn't include what's inside, like your furniture and personal possessions.

As a tenant of Moray Council you are eligible for a home contents insurance scheme, created just for Moray Council starting from just £3.92 a month for £9,000\* standard cover.

There's no long term commitment, it can be cancelled at any time and there's no excess to pay if you need to make a claim.

**Call: 01343 563899**

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

Connect: with your local housing officer

\*Lower sums insured at lower rates are available for over 60's.

Terms and conditions apply, contact above.

Special exclusions/limits apply

Price includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) charged at the appropriate rate.

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.

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In association with



# New build update

Our new build programme continues to deliver affordable homes with 3 new housing developments on schedule to be completed by Spring 2021.

The new developments include 22 new homes in Hopeman, 30 new homes in Mosstodloch and 50 new homes in Elgin. The Hopeman site will be completed first and will be ready for new tenants by around April 2020. This development consists of 8 one bedroom flats, 8 two bedroom bungalows and 6 three bedroom homes, providing 22 households with new affordable homes.

The 30 new homes at Stynie Road, Mosstodloch should be complete by Summer 2020 and include a mix of flats, bungalows and houses. South Glassgreen in Elgin, located off Birnie Road, sees a further 50 affordable homes due for completion, in phases, by Spring 2021. The Elgin development includes 2 two bedroom wheelchair accessible bungalows, a four bedroom wheelchair accessible bungalow and a mix of flats, bungalows and larger houses.

All our new build housing is designed around tenants needs. Family homes are close to play areas and open space for children, and built away from road hazards. They come with modern kitchens with space for a



Progress being made on our new build homes in Hopeman

dining table, over-bath showers in the bathrooms and all have energy efficient heating systems. Bungalows are on level plots and close to bus stops wherever possible. They have small manageable gardens and level access showers.

We use a local lettings plan to help us decide who should be allocated one of our new build homes. This plan also helps us make sure our new developments create sustainable communities and we make best use of housing stock. The local lettings plan can be found on our website:

[www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file96178.pdf](http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file96178.pdf)

For further details of our new build programme and to view site plans, see our website:

[www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_84428.html](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_84428.html)

## Vacant properties

Sometimes we have properties available to let which are not suitable for anyone on our housing waiting list. This is often because they are not in an area our applicants want to live in or because they are not the right size and type of property for anyone on our housing list.

We advertise these properties on our website in case anyone is interested in applying for them. If you want to apply, you must be registered on the Apply4homes website.

At the moment, we have some vacant sheltered housing properties in Portgordon and one in Forres. The properties in Portgordon are bungalows and the one in Forres is a first floor flat with a stairlift. They have gas heating and have showers which may be level access or over a bath. Although sheltered housing is usually for older people, it can be let to younger households who may need the extra support of a daily visit from a warden.

We also have rural properties to let in Tomnavoulin, Chapelton of Glenlivet and Rothiemay. If you are interested in any of these properties, contact our Housing

Needs Section on **0300 123 4566** and they can let you know if you would be eligible and provide help if you would like to apply.

We are always trying to make the best use of our housing stock and make sure properties are not left empty when they could provide a home for someone.

You can find out more about our current vacant properties on our website at

[www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_117990.html](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_117990.html)



Photo is for representation purposes only

# Changes to our Homelessness Policy

## The overall aim of our Homelessness Policy is:

- to prevent and alleviate homelessness in a sensitive but effective manner and
- when homelessness does occur, to provide responsive and sustainable solutions which minimise its impact on affected households.

## Changes in law

Earlier this year the Scottish Government announced changes in housing law that would remove the duty on local authorities to investigate if someone is intentionally homeless. Instead the power becomes discretionary. From November this year local authorities can decide whether to investigate intentionality as part of a homelessness assessment.

## Changes to the homelessness policy

Moray Council agreed that we would continue to investigate intentionality. By this we mean did someone do or not do something that resulted in them becoming homeless.

The changes made to the Homelessness Policy set out our approach to investigating and managing intentionality decisions.

## Inquiries into intentionality

As part of our homeless assessment we will make inquiries into the reasons that led to a person becoming intentionally homeless. We must prove that:

- they deliberately did or didn't do something that caused them to leave accommodation; and
- it would have been reasonable for them to continue to stay in the accommodation; and
- they must have been aware of all of the relevant facts before taking or failing to take the deliberate action.

Our trained and experienced staff will take a holistic view of an applicant's circumstances before reaching a decision on intentionality.



## Are your household details up to date?

Did you know that if you do not keep your household details up to date it may affect your tenancy rights. You may not be able to:

- pass on (assign) your tenancy to someone else in your household;
- sublet all or part of your home to someone else;
- make a member of your household a joint tenant;
- pass on your tenancy to a member of your household in the event of your death (succession)

Recent changes in housing law came into effect on 1 November 2019. This means that any decisions we make about the above changes to your tenancy are based on whether you or any household member has lived in the property for 12 months. The property must have been their only or main home and the 12 month period starts when we are first notified they are living in the property. If we have not been notified that they are living in the property

you will not be eligible to make the changes to your tenancy.

## Does someone live with you to help look after you?

If someone, such as a family member, has moved into your home to help care for you, then you need to let us know. Carers who have given up their home to move in and care for someone else, and have lived there for at least 12 months, will have certain rights.

They should always get some independent advice before they give up their home.

Please fill in our online Census and Equalities form every time your household changes to make sure you keep your full tenancy rights.

The form can be found on our website at

[https://online.moray.gov.uk/site/wss/request/ss\\_census\\_and\\_equalities](https://online.moray.gov.uk/site/wss/request/ss_census_and_equalities)

# Annual performance report

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has a duty to protect the interests of tenants, homeless people and others who use our services. They inform us of our duties to our tenants and make sure that we meet the aims and standards within the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

Every year, we must produce an annual performance report for our tenants and customers. This must be published on our website by 31 October of each year. Our report for 2018/19 can be found at the following link:

[www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file95927.pdf](http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file95927.pdf)

If you would like a paper copy of the annual performance report, we can send one out to your address.



Contact us at [tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk) or by phone on **0300 123 4566**

The SHR also require us to publish an annual assurance statement by 31 October of each year. This is to reassure them and our tenants and service users that we comply with our regulatory and statutory obligations. Our assurance statement can be found on our website at the following link:

[www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file128054.pdf](http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file128054.pdf)

## New Elgin housing summit



The New Elgin East Working Group is looking to host a housing summit. This is aimed at finding ways to make it easier for people living in the area to improve their housing situation. This came from work over the last 18 months where the group held over 1000 conversations with members of the public. Housing was identified as a priority for improvement in the area.

In particular there were a high number of people who were in homes that did not meet their needs but they were unable, or unsure, of the best way to change their housing situation. The aim of this summit is to look at what can be done to better inform people about the options that are available to them. It intends on bringing council, housing associations, and private providers together to create a joint approach to address the situation. In order to make this happen the working group is looking for council tenants, preferably living in New Elgin, to get involved. The group want to hear their experiences of trying to access different

housing, in order to shape the discussions at the summit. These experiences and views will be vital in trying to shape what happens as a result of the summit.

The New Elgin East Working Group is formed with a combination of local residents and professionals working in the area. Its goal is to reduce the levels of inequality in the area. In September 2019 it launched its Community Action Plan at an event in the New Elgin and Ashgrove Public Hall. This saw over 500 visitors over the course of an afternoon. It has already seen successes in supporting the revamp of the halls garden, and in supporting young people to create a video looking at the history of New Elgin. Other projects that are in their plan include a project looking at improving opportunities for people to access high quality training and how to improve green spaces in the area.

If you are interested in being involved with either the summit or the working group please get in touch with [barry.jarvis@moray.gov.uk](mailto:barry.jarvis@moray.gov.uk) for more information.

# ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Antisocial behaviour can impact on everyone in a neighbourhood. It can harm people and/or their lifestyles through crime and victimisation.

Antisocial behaviour covers a wide range of offensive activity that causes harm or threatens to cause harm to an individual, to their community or to the environment. This could be behaviour that leaves people feeling concerned, anxious, harassed or distressed. Antisocial behaviour can also cause concern for public safety.

**Examples of antisocial behaviour can include:**

- Rowdy or inconsiderate neighbours who cause a nuisance
- Vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
- Street drinking
- Environmental damage including littering, dumping of rubbish and abandonment of cars
- Prostitution related activity
- Begging and vagrancy
- Fireworks misuse
- Inconsiderate or inappropriate use of vehicles

**Evictions for antisocial behaviour**

Persistent antisocial behaviour can result in eviction when all other attempts to address the behaviour have failed. This is a last resort and before evicting someone for antisocial behaviour and/or criminal activity, there are certain steps we must follow by law. These are:

- Early and regular intervention to try and avoid a situation from escalating. This is dependent on the

level of engagement from the person displaying the behaviour

- Trying to carry out prevention actions and processes. This may involve joint working with the community safety team or Police
- Using support services to encourage a change in the antisocial behaviour. This may remove the need for court action
- Taking legal advice to make sure any eviction action is justified. The rights of the person displaying the antisocial behaviour should be balanced against the rights of the household and the community

A detailed risk assessment will be carried out for all members of the household in question if a tenancy is at risk. This will measure the potential impact of an eviction and determine whether temporary accommodation will be needed. It will also make sure that the correct supports can be offered. We will support any external agency when they are trying to resolve the situation and prevent legal action. We are committed to protecting our housing stock, our tenants, households and the wider community. We want to provide safe environments to live in and we take antisocial behaviour seriously. We will take appropriate action when antisocial behaviour threatens to disrupt neighbourhoods and puts the safety and security of others at risk. Eviction is a last resort but in the past year, we have evicted on the grounds of antisocial behaviour when other options to address the behaviour have failed.

You can report antisocial behaviour online at any time on our website:

[https://online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/asb\\_ext](https://online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/asb_ext)

During office hours you can call **01343 563134** or **01343 563704**.

If your complaint is more serious you can call the non-emergency Police Scotland number on **101**.

## Keep safe during the Christmas Period



Please try not to make yourself a target for crime this Winter. When you are out Christmas shopping or in the January sales remember to hide tempting purchases in the boot of your car or use your own shopping bag to hide high priced purchases.

Lock your doors even when you are at home.

If you are walking on your own at night, take greater care. Stay on roads and paths that are well lit and busy. Make sure you plan your route well in advance and keep away from short-cuts that contain alleyways. Do not take walks across parks or commons unless they are properly lit.

# Scatter flats initiative



In 2018, we launched our Scatter flats initiative which aims to enable capable care experienced young people (CEYP) to move directly from care into their own accommodation. It seeks to avoid homelessness where possible and builds an incentive for the young person to plan their own journey out of care. Once in the community wrap around tailored support is provided. The aim is to enable the young person to successfully transition to suitable, sustainable accommodation.

The Initiative offers the young person a short Scottish secure tenancy (SSST) in conjunction with a package of housing support, which is based on an assessment of their needs. This type of tenancy is a short term or probationary tenancy agreement. During the term of the tenancy, there will be ongoing monitoring to

review how the young person manages. This involves regular meetings with professionals including housing and social work. Ongoing monitoring will determine if the SSST should continue, be extended or convert to a Scottish secure tenancy.

It is hoped that with the tailored support, which will include life skills to enable them to sustain their tenancy and live independently, their tenancy will convert to a Scottish secure tenancy.

Since the Initiative started last year we have successfully helped two young people who are now Scottish secure tenants and living independently in the community.

Further referrals have been received for more young people to be selected for the scheme. Suitable properties will be chosen for them as the scheme continues to grow.

## Moray Reach Out



The goal of Moray Reach Out is to provide a safe and welcoming business environment that strives for excellence. They provide work experience for vulnerable adults in Moray through their social enterprise ventures.



**Buckie Yarns** was their first social enterprise. It is a haberdashery and craft shop on West Church Street in Buckie. It provides 25 training places in a colourful and creative space.

**In Stiches** is the newest project and it specializes in embroidery and gifts. The shop is on Elgin High Street and has an online catalogue. It also provides 25 training places.



**Waste Watchers** is a recycling team based in Buckie on their own site. They also staff the recycling facility in Lossiemouth. There are 50

training places on offer each week at both Buckie and Lossiemouth. Trainees learn to operate machinery and pick up and process recycling.

Moray Reach Out are always looking for volunteers and ideas for new social enterprises. If you would like to volunteer, work as relief staff or if you are considering a work placement please get in touch:

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

Phone: 01542 834434

# Moray Tenants' Forum



Our tenant group continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss housing matters and help us to improve housing services. In August, Jennifer Fulton from the waste management team came to speak to the group about her role as a team leader for operations. There was much discussion about the wide range of issues Jennifer deals with on a daily basis from littering, landfill sites, dead animals and street cleansing to recycling and bin collections.

In October, Gillian Howden attended the group's meeting to talk about her new role as a housing options advisor for the downsizing scheme. She explained more about the scheme which offers practical and financial assistance to tenants who want to downsize. Gillian emphasised that the scheme is voluntary and tenants are never made to give up their home. Feedback from tenants who have moved home by using the scheme has been very positive and 27 households moved home through the scheme in 2019/20.

The group found both talks very interesting and thanked Jennifer and Gillian for coming along to talk to them.

Members of the group have also been busy attending various meetings and events. In November they attended a housing performance briefing presented by Scotland's Housing Network (SHN), where they learnt how we have performed compared to other landlords. They also helped

us produce our 2018/19 Annual Performance Report by giving their views on design and content. A member of the group attended the annual conference hosted by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). This year the conference was held at the Fairmont Hotel in St. Andrews and attendees took part in numerous workshops and enjoyed listening to various keynote speakers discuss housing issues. The theme of this year's conference was 'Strictly' and they had plenty of time to put on their glad rags and enjoy some entertainment.

If you would like to join the Moray Tenants' Forum or find out more about what it involves contact us at [tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk) or phone **0300 123 4566**.

The Forum is a great place to meet people and make new friends. It is informal, friendly and welcoming and you can get involved at whatever level you wish.



## Buckpool new build tenant group

Attendance levels at the past few meetings of the group have been low. At the last meeting, the group discussed whether there was a need to continue to meet and decided that it was not viable to continue unless there was sufficient interest from tenants. We would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the group since it was set up. We will reform the group in future if we get sufficient interest.

If you would like to register an interest you can send us a message at [tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk) or phone **0300 123 4566**.

Tenants experiencing any antisocial problems can fill in an online form at [https://online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/asb\\_ext](https://online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/asb_ext) or contact our antisocial behaviour team on **01343 563134 / 563074**.



# SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PANEL

Our Service Improvement Panel (SIP) is a small group of tenants who want to help us to make your housing services better. They meet every few months to review housing processes and procedures.

The group start by picking a topic or an area of the housing service they would like to review. They investigate their chosen area and look at the current procedures and processes used to see if there are better, more efficient ways of doing things. We can help them with their investigations and offer them guidance, support and training where it is needed.

This is a new group and they are in the process of finalising their first review which was on letters that are sent to tenants regarding heating upgrades. The group wanted to find out why some tenants refuse a heating upgrade and they found that the letter sent out to tenants was not very clear about the benefits of having the upgrade. They thought that a clearer letter which was easier to read and understand may result in fewer heating upgrade refusals. They discussed the letter over the course of their meetings and put together a report for

housing managers. The next step is to review their final report and check it over before they share it with housing managers who will then respond to their recommendations.

The SIP would like more people to join them. It is a great group to be part of as you can really help make a difference to your housing services and get your voice heard. The group can get involved in mystery shopping, visiting void properties, interviewing staff and reviewing policies and procedures. There is also the opportunity to study for a qualification and getting involved with tenant participation can really help to enhance your CV and improve work prospects.

They will next meet in the new year so if you would like to come along, get involved and make a real difference to your housing service then contact us by email at [tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk) or by phone on **0300 123 4566** for more details.



**MAKE YOUR  
VOICE HEARD**

# Sheltered housing news

Boccia is a Paralympic sport where players try to score points by placing their coloured balls closest to a jack. It can be lots of fun and is fully inclusive as players are seated during the game and may use adaptive equipment. This makes it a great sport for bringing people of all ages and abilities together. Boccia Bonanza is a new project funded by 'Get Out Get Active Grampian'. The aim is to introduce Boccia to new groups across Moray and



Larch Court tenants (from left to right): Anne Wood, Sheila Johnston, Sheila Buchan, Sharon Sutherland, Margaret McLean

Aberdeenshire and equipment will be made available for organisations to borrow. It is hoped the game will encourage people into activity who are quite frail or have limited mobility. It has many benefits such as developing community spirit and improving social skills as well as increasing movement which helps maintain strength and balance.

Olive Scotson, our supported accommodation officer for sheltered housing, attended a Boccia leaders course. This taught her the basics of the game so she can roll out sessions in our sheltered housing schemes. Equipment has been borrowed from 'Get Out Get Active Grampian' and tenants at Larch Court sheltered housing scheme in Elgin have been enjoying their games of Boccia.

**Anne Wood:** "it was great to have fun with other tenants and get a bit of exercise whilst having fun. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and would definitely come again"

**Sheila Johnston:** "I had a great time, it was good fun and I would definitely come again"



## Social News

Tenants from our sheltered housing complex at Leys Road in Forres have set up a social group called Leys Road Pensionaries. They meet on a Tuesday morning and if you are a tenant at Leys Road you would be welcome to come along. If you are interested contact Ann Hay - **013430563510 / 07779999261** [ann.hay@moray.gov.uk](mailto:ann.hay@moray.gov.uk)

## SSSC Registration

All our sheltered housing wardens are now registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The SSSC is a register set up under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 to regulate social service workers and promote their education and training.

This registration plays an important role in making sure service users are kept safe and increases public confidence in social service workers. The SSSC promote high standards, the raising of public confidence and they aim to develop a trained and trusted social services workforce in Scotland.

We make sure that all our sheltered housing wardens are well trained. Dot Arthur is the latest member of our sheltered housing warden team to gain her SVQ 2 in health and social care and is pictured here with her certificate.



# Fundraising

Charities change the lives of people in need every day with even the smallest of donations making a large impact in a community. However, any charity relies on support to continue their work in the community.

## MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

Council staff held a MacMillan Cancer Support coffee morning on Friday 27 September 2019 which saw lots of staff members contributing home baking to raise money for this worthwhile cause.

We are delighted to advise that we raised the sum of £1,391.26

Ashgrove department also had a coffee morning and raised around £500.



## Steamed Cranberry Christmas Pudding recipe

**Preparation time:** 30min

**Cooking time:** 2 hr 30 min

**Ready in 3 hours**

**Ingredients:**

- 200g self-raising flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 200g caster sugar
- 4 tablespoons melted butter
- 140g prepared mincemeat
- 140g cranberry sauce
- 125g pumpkin puree

**To Serve:**

- 250ml container soured cream
- 1 (200g) tub cream cheese
- 5 tablespoons icing sugar

**Method:**

1. Grease one 2-litre lidded pudding mould. Sift together the flour, sugar and cinnamon; set aside.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the eggs, butter, mincemeat, cranberry sauce and pumpkin puree. Add to flour mixture and mix until smooth. Pour into pudding mould.
3. Place a rack in the bottom of a large pot over medium heat, and fill 1/2 way up with boiling water. Place the pudding on the rack. Steam for 2 1/2 hours.
4. Check the pot occasionally and add more water if needed. Check if it is cooked throughout by inserting a skewer in the centre. When

firm, place the pudding mould on a rack outside the water for 10 minutes and turn out of the mould.

5. Prepare a sauce by blending together the soured cream, cream cheese and icing sugar. Spoon dollops over warm pudding and serve.



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# Stock condition survey

We have a duty to maintain our housing stock to a certain standard known as the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). We also have to make sure we meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESHS) by 2020.

Following a competitive tender procedure, consultants have been appointed to carry out a stock condition survey of our housing stock. The survey will cover 25% of our housing stock and will assess the internal and external condition of our homes. It will also provide us with costs for our programme of planned maintenance over the next 30 years. As well as lifetime component replacement, the programme will include improvements to meet the SHQS and the EESHS.

The consultant will contact you if your property is chosen to be surveyed. They will have a letter of authority from the council so that you know we have asked them to carry out the survey. They will also have photographic identification which you should ask them to show you before you let them into your home.

If you are contacted to take part in the survey, please allow the consultant access to your home.

The survey will not take long and will be carried out between the hours of 8am and 6pm. If the time does not suit you, an alternative time can be arranged with the consultant. It is important that we maintain your home and target our maintenance where it is needed.

Help us to help you!



## PDA Satisfaction Survey

Our building services department have changed the way they collect customer feedback.

From now on, when one of our tradesmen visit you to carry out a job they will ask you to complete the new online satisfaction survey. This can be done there and then on the tradesman's PDA (Personal Digital Assistant). We hope you will take a few minutes to complete the survey as your feedback helps us improve our services and respond to any concerns.

George Beange is one of our top performing plumbers gathering the most tenant feedback on the PDA's. Elizabeth Forsyth from Elgin filled in the survey with George after he had visited her property to carry out a plumbing repair. Elizabeth said she found the online questionnaire easy and quick to use and staff were very helpful. If you do not want to fill in the survey on the PDA you can still ask to have a paper survey sent out to you.



# Christmas Word Search



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

BELLS  
 STOCKINGS  
 WREATH  
 ELVES  
 SLED

CELEBRATE  
 EGGNOG  
 TREE  
 JOLLY  
 SANTA

MERRY  
 MISTLETOE  
 CHIMNEY  
 REINDEER

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 2020.**

You can post it to us at: **Winter 2019 Competition**, Housing & Property, PO Box 6760, Elgin, IV30 1BX, or hand it in to your local area office.

# 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 2020.**

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: .....

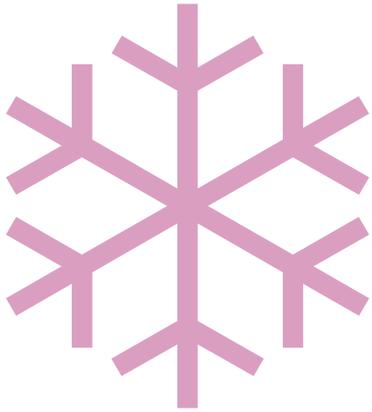
Address:.....

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

Phone number:.....

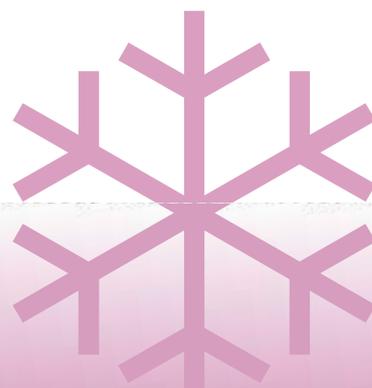
# Congratulations

To Mrs Margaret Cameron from Elgin who was the winner of the £20 gift card for successfully completing the Tenants Voice Summer Wordsearch competition



# Congratulations

To Ms Maureen Wilson who was the winner of the £50 gift card for returning the new tenants survey.



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The Blind Spot welcomes Nicole, the latest generation of our family  
to join us along with all her fresh ideas for the future



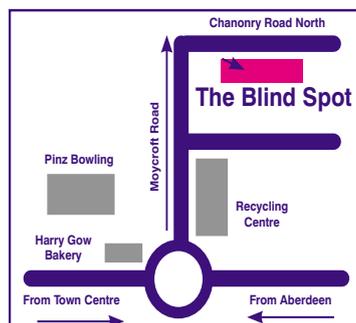
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- Neutering stops unwanted kittens and costly vet bills if things go wrong when pregnant
- Your cat will be less likely to wander and fight, reducing the risk of injury and catching life threatening diseases, or getting lost
- Neutered cats are less likely to display territorial behaviour such as spraying
- Microchipping helps us and vets to reunite you with your cat if it is lost



You can contact us on:

Tel: **07837 342646**

Email: [moraycp.treasurer@outlook.com](mailto:moraycp.treasurer@outlook.com)

Facebook: Moray Cats Protection

Web: [www.cats.org.uk/moray](http://www.cats.org.uk/moray)

Charity Number: SC037711