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Now we are in the winter months, we are conscious that folk are looking for an extra bit of help as energy costs remain high. We want tenants to be as affordably warm as possible.

While much of the energy support funding that has been available in recent years has disappeared, OHAL still has access to some specific support. Robert Leslie, Energy Officer, can help with advice and support with energy suppliers and can be contacted at robert.leslie@ohal.org.uk or Tel: 01856 875253 ext: 404.

We have also had positive feedback from Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau after sending out 179 letters to pension-age tenants regarding benefit checks due to the changes to the winter fuel payments. These highlighted Orkney CAB's joint campaign with Age Scotland Orkney to encourage pensioners to double-check their entitlement to Pension Credit, due to the newly imposed eligibility criteria for Winter Fuel Payments. To date they have assessed 74 individuals from across Orkney. An OHAL tenant made contact after reading our letter and because of their enquiry, they are approximately £200 better off a week once their benefits are paid. If you have not had your entitlement to benefits assessed, please contact:

- **Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau**, Tel: 01856 875266 or e-mail bureau@orkneycab.casonline.org.uk

Age Scotland Orkney has access to funding to support older people in the short term and if this is something that you would like to find out more about, please get in touch with:

- **Age Scotland Orkney**, Tel: 01856 872438 or e-mail enquiries@agescotlandorkney.org.uk

Christmas Closure & Rent Payments

The Association's office will be closed from 5pm on Monday 23 December 2024 until 9am on Monday 06 January 2025.

You can still pay your rent during this period by logging onto our website at www.ohal.org.uk and making your payment online.

Allpay payment cards, Direct Debits and Internet Banking will continue as normal during this time. Anyone using an Allpay payment card will need to be aware of the following payment limits:

- **Paypoint outlet** - £200 limit per transaction
- **Post Office** - £999 limit per transaction

If, for any reason, you are unable to make a payment either over the Christmas/New Year break or at any time in the future, please contact your Housing Officer to discuss your options. We can offer advice and support to help you during this time.



Here to help with Radio Teleswitch meter issues



Robert Leslie, Energy Officer

Many tenants have been in touch with us in recent weeks after being contacted by their electricity supplier about the need to have their Radio Teleswitch (RTS) meter replaced.

Radio Teleswitch meters are in many OHAL properties that have storage heating along with hot water immersion tanks. The RTS radio signal that controls the charging times for the storage heaters and hot water is to be switched off on 30th June 2025.

While some tenants may be unsure of having a smart meter installed due to stories that they have heard about them, the clear message from Energy UK, the energy industry trade body, is that this is the only viable option ahead of the signal switch-off. While the lifespan of the signal has been extended several times previously, it is very unlikely that the switch-off will be delayed any longer.

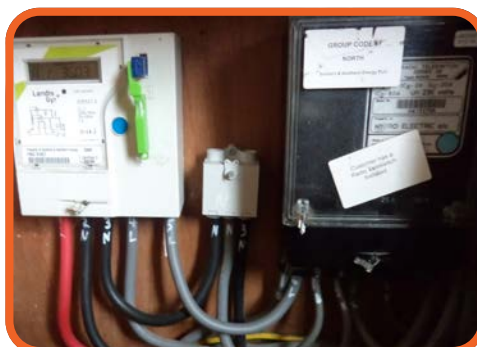
When the signal does go off there are three scenarios for what will happen to an RTS meter that has not been replaced:

- It will continue to operate in the pattern that it has been doing to charge heaters and heat water;
- It will stay on permanently even at peak rate times, with the potential for higher bills; or
- It will go off permanently, leaving properties without heat and hot water.

It is not known which meters across the country will respond in these three different ways at the switch-off, so the best option is to contact your supplier to arrange a replacement ahead of the 30th June 2025 date.

We have heard from some tenants who are contacting suppliers to make an appointment, as they have been advised to do by Ofgem, and have been told that there are no appointments available. This should not be happening. If you get this message from your electricity supplier please let us know so we can follow this up.

Due to technical issues, some RTS replacement appointments in Orkney have resulted in no meter replacement going ahead. OHAL is working with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and Energy UK to highlight issues as they arise so that they can be addressed.



It has been indicated by Energy UK that one of the issues is a shortage in supply of the correct meters, but the suppliers know when these are due to be available, so should be able to give a timescale for this.

Another cause of replacements not going ahead has been lack of signal. In these cases other solutions are being worked, including installing pre-programmed smart meters to operate in 'traditional' mode. This would then require a follow-up visit to properties where this happens to switch the meter to 'smart' mode.

While there is no requirement for tenants to let OHAL know that they are having their meters changed, we are very keen to hear about any issues tenants are having in contacting their suppliers to book an appointment, or with their meters or heating and hot water following a replacement.

If you have any questions about the RTS meter replacement programme, such as what tariff might be best for you, or are having issues with your supplier on this, please contact **Robert Leslie, Energy Officer**, on **01856 875253 ext. 404** or by email at robert.leslie@ohal.org.uk



WINTER CONTACT PROGRAMME

When the Covid Pandemic struck in 2020, the Association was aware that this would have a significant impact on our tenants including some of the most vulnerable members in our local communities. We wanted to support our tenants as best as we possibly could during those unprecedented times therefore, we made attempts to contact each of our tenants in the spring of 2020 to ask how you were coping, identify areas we could assist you or to sign-post you or connect you to other agencies who could provide advice or direct help. We found this to be incredibly successful and received fantastic feedback from our tenants so decided we would do something similar in the Winter of 2020 and have done so each year thereafter.

This year will be similar, with the only difference being that we intend to take a more targeted approach and to contact those tenants who have previously requested or received support and assistance from the Association. However, we are here to support all our tenants and if you find yourself in a situation where you are struggling to pay your rent, heat your home or have any other issue where you don't know where to get help, please contact your Housing Officer at the earliest opportunity. We appreciate that it is not always easy to ask for help or admit to someone that you are struggling but you will always be dealt with in an understanding, empathetic and entirely confidential manner by our professional housing staff. If you do not know who your Housing Officer is, you can find this information on our website www.ohal.org.uk or just contact the office directly on **01856 875253** and our friendly customer services staff will connect you to them.



Your VOICE MATTERS

We are committed to ensuring our tenants influence our decision-making processes. We want our customers to be involved in shaping the services they receive so we deliver services that meet their needs and our performance continually improves.

What is tenant participation?

Tenant participation is key to our vision of providing homes and services that make life better.

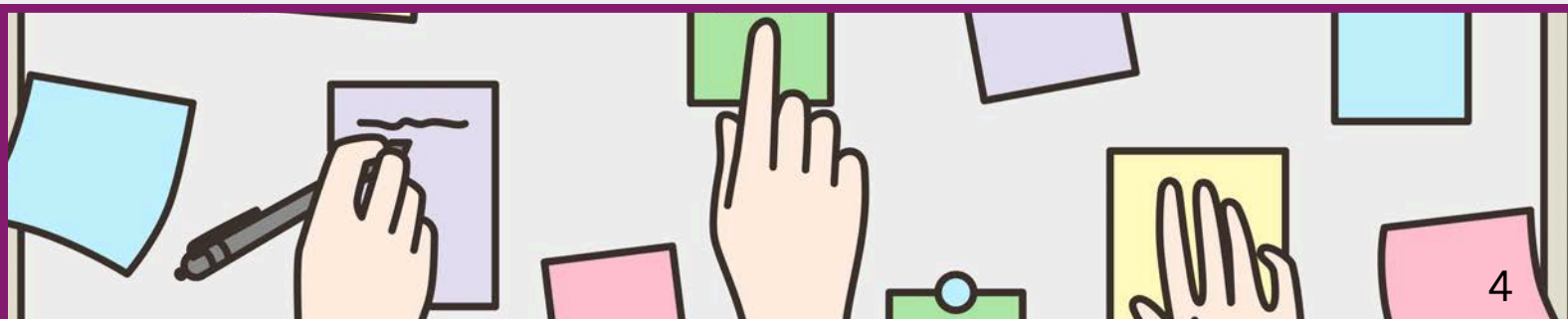
It's a two-way process involving our tenants working in partnership with us to share ideas, input into decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing conditions, policies and services. Tenant participation gives you an opportunity to help shape the future of our services.

Orkney Housing Association Ltd provides various services to tenants including repairs, making sure our neighbourhoods are well maintained, advice on tenants' rights and responsibilities and dealing with breaches of tenancy agreements such as anti-social behaviour. Your views as a tenant are crucial in helping us to monitor and deliver these services effectively.

The Association recognises that tenant involvement can lead to real, positive outcomes for tenants and their communities.

These benefits include:

- Better communication and relations between OHAL and tenants – each being more aware of the others position
- Opportunities for tenants – to develop new knowledge and skills as well as meeting like-minded people
- Enhanced communities – making them positive places to live by fostering a sense of community and ensuring estates are well maintained
- Services that reflect tenants' needs – the services delivered by us are those that tenants wish to receive and that these are delivered to the highest standards
- Increased tenant satisfaction – with their home, neighbourhood and the services delivered
- Increased accountability – the views of our tenants are heard when decisions are made at all levels, and that these decisions are communicated to tenants in a transparent manner
- Improving tenant skills – supporting tenants to develop the relevant skills and knowledge to take part in tenant participation
- Improved effectiveness and efficiency giving better value for money



How can I get involved?

We provide the opportunity to get involved in a number of ways and at different levels. We also understand that participation or ‘taking part’ means different things to different people, so you can be as involved as little or as much as you want - it really is up to you.

You don’t need any specific experience to join in, every tenant is welcome. It doesn’t matter if you have recently moved in or if you have been an OHAL tenant for years. Here are some examples of how to get involved:

- Become an Armchair Editor by reading our literature such as leaflets, newsletter articles and others, and returning your feedback and comments.
- Become an Interested Tenant and take part in consultations when we review policies.
- Complete questionnaires or surveys and provide us with your comments and suggestions.
- Take part in neighbourhood walkabouts.
- Form a tenant group in your area or become a member of an existing group.
- Connect with us on social media.



If you are interested in being more involved and part of what we do, please contact us on enquiries@ohal.org.uk



Greener Orkney’s Community Fridge Project offers surplus food to individuals, free of charge. One of the primary aims of the Project is to limit the amount of food waste going to landfill.

OPENING TIMES		
	Kirkwall – 26 Bridge Street	Stromness - 116 Victoria Street
Monday	8:30pm - 9:00pm	8:30pm - 9:00pm
Tuesday	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm	8:30pm - 9:00pm
Wednesday	8:30pm - 9:00pm	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm
Thursday	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm
Friday	8:30pm - 9:00pm	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm
Saturday	12:00pm - 2pm	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm
Sunday	Closed	8:30pm - 9:00pm

There are 2 Community Fridges, located in Stromness and Kirkwall, which receive donations of surplus food from many local organisations on a regular basis. Anyone can pop along to the Community Fridge, although please be aware that the supply is sometimes limited and opening times may change over the festive period.

Regular updates are posted on their Facebook page with information on the food that is available – www.facebook.com/greenerorkneycommunityfridge

The Priority Services Register (PSR)

is a free UK wide service which provides extra help during power cuts or when there's an interruption to your electricity, gas or water supply. Visit www.psrscotland.com to join.

Joining the PSR helps your utility companies to provide adapted services, adjust communications and make amendments to keep you safe, such as setting up a password scheme and providing advance warning of planned interruptions to electricity, gas or water supplies.

You are eligible for free PSR Services if you:

- Use medical equipment reliant on electricity or water
- Are blind or partially sighted
- Are deaf or hard of hearing
- Have a chronic illness
- Have anxiety, depression or any other mental health condition
- Have a disability
- Are over 60
- Live with children under five
- Temporarily need extra support
- Need documents translated into another format or language



www.psrscotland.com

ORKNEY CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

operates an appointment only service. You can make an appointment to see an Adviser by contacting the Bureau's reception either in person, email: bureau@orkneycab.casonline.org.uk or by telephone: 01856 875266

Reception Opening Times

Monday	10.00am - 2.00pm
Tuesday	10.00am - 2.00pm
Wednesday	10.00am - 2.00pm
Thursday	10.00am - 2.00pm
Friday	10.00am - 2.00pm

If calling out with these hours, please leave a message on their answer phone, or make an enquiry online and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.



Managed Migration to Universal Credit

Managed Migration is the term used to describe the process by which a legacy benefit claimant moves to Universal Credit. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) start the process by sending a Migration Notice which intimates a date when the legacy benefit or tax credit award ends and invites the claimant and any partner to make their Universal Credit (UC) claims. Claimants are given a deadline date in which they must make their claims for UC (which is usually 3 months from the date of their Migration Notice), and reminder notices are sent 7 and 10 weeks after the Migration Notice to prompt claimants to make their claim by the deadline. Failure to make claim before the deadline will result in lost legacy benefit award and potential UC entitlement, which will result in lengthy gaps in payment of benefits.

We are seeing an increasing number of residents who are migrating from Housing Benefit to UC, and we wanted to highlight that there is support available to claimants who require assistance with this process. There is a dedicated Help to Claim Universal Credit Helpline through Citizens Advice Scotland on 0800 023 2581, where advisers can answer any questions, support you to submit your claim through to support to your first payment, and making sure all your claim evidence is correct. Your Housing Officer can also support you, and when we receive notification that a Housing Benefit claim is ending, we will make contact with you to discuss the next steps. If you receive a Migration Notice and want to discuss this further, don't hesitate to get in touch.



WARM HOME DISCOUNT SCHEME



Have you checked whether you are eligible for the Warm Home Discount Scheme? This is a £150 payment to help with heating costs over the Winter. Contact your energy supplier to find out more or if you require support please contact OHAL's Energy Officer, Robert Leslie, on 01856 875253 ext. 404 or by email at robert.leslie@ohal.org.uk

The Scottish Government has a dedicated website, pulling together information on support available to people struggling with the cost of living. See <https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot>



congratulations

Finance Assistant
Alison Rothnie
successfully
completed her
AAT SCQF Level 7
Diploma in
Accounting
with Merit



Housing Officer
Mark Stillwell
successfully
completed his
Chartered
Institute of
Housing Level 4
Certificate in
Housing

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Election and Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

At the first meeting following the AGM each year, we elect a Chair and Vice Chair: this year marked the end of Fiona Lettice's 5 year tenure as Chair so, according to our Rules, a new Chair was required.

- Brian Kynoch was elected as Chair and Fiona Lettice as Vice Chair of the Management Committee.
- John White remains Chair of Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee.
- Roella Wilson remains Chair of the Performance & Resources Sub Committee.

Membership of OHAL's 4 sub-committees and 2 working parties were also agreed. Mhairi Hughes continues in the role of Company Secretary.



Brian Kynoch, Chair



Fiona Lettice, Vice Chair

Would you like to find out more about the work of our Committee, and possibly become a Committee Member yourself?

For further information or an informal chat, please contact Mhairi Hughes:
e-mail: mhairi.hughes@ohal.org.uk or phone: 07739 326922

Leaking or Draughty Door?

As we move into the winter months, it's essential to ensure that your door is operating and maintained properly to prevent drafts, water ingress and unnecessary energy loss.

Why is this Important?

All our uPVC doors are equipped with a multi-point locking system designed for enhanced security and performance. This system features several locking points along the door's edge, which simultaneously secure the door in multiple places, making it stronger and more resilient against drafts and potential break-ins.

How to Operate Your Door Properly:

- **Closing the Door:** Each time you close your door, make sure to firmly pull the door handle upwards. This action will engage the additional locking points into their corresponding keepers (or strikes) in the door frame, ensuring a tight seal and helping to prevent drafts, water ingress and potential damage.
- **Avoid Stepping on the Threshold:** The door threshold forms part of the continuous seal that surrounds your door. Stepping on it can distort or damage this seal, preventing a clean fit and allowing water and drafts to enter your home. Please be mindful of this when opening or closing your door.

How to Help:

Regularly Check the Bottom Seal. This seal is crucial for ensuring a tight closure. Please make sure it's intact, properly engaged every time the door is shut and periodically clear the track from undue dirt and debris.

What to Do If You Experience Problems:

If you notice any issues with your door, such as excessive leaks, drafts, or difficulty locking, please report them as soon as possible. Timely repairs can prevent further damage and ensure your home remains warm and secure during the colder months.



Net Zero Funding

The Scottish Government's Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund (SHNZHF) is designed to support heat and energy efficiency projects within the social housing sector. A total of £200 million is available until 2026 to assist social landlords in installing zero-emission heating systems and energy efficiency measures across their existing housing stock.

There has been no new information regarding the next funding checkpoint. However, we will continue to monitor available funding opportunities and assess our current housing stock to identify properties that could benefit from this and other related schemes.



Electric Bike Safety



As part of our commitment to safety and well-being, we would like to offer some important guidance on the safe purchasing, storage, and charging of electric bikes, electric scooters (e-scooters), and their associated batteries and chargers. By following these guidelines, you help ensure a safer living environment for everyone.



Safe Purchasing

- Always purchase electric bikes, scooters, batteries, and chargers from reputable suppliers. Ensure they meet relevant British or European safety standards (eg, CE marking, UKCA marking).
- Verify that products have been tested for safety and are compliant with regulations.

Registering Products

- Register your electric bike, scooter and battery with the manufacturer upon purchase. This allows the manufacturer to contact you in case of product recalls or important safety updates.

Safe Storage

- Do not store or charge e-bikes, e-scooters or batteries in escape routes or communal areas.
- Ensure these items are stored in a cool, dry place, following the manufacturer's storage instructions.
- Keep them away from direct sunlight, heat sources, or damp conditions that could cause damage.
- Always store your electric bike, scooter, and batteries away from flammable or combustible materials such as paper, fabric, or gas cylinders to minimize fire risk.



Safe Charging Practices

- Unplug after charging: Once the device is fully charged, unplug the charger to prevent overheating or overcharging.
- Do not charge while sleeping or away: Never charge your e-bike, e-scooter, or battery when you are asleep or away from home. A fire could start without your knowledge.
- Check smoke alarms: Ensure that your charging area has working smoke or heat alarms, as per Scottish Fire and Rescue Service guidelines.
- Use approved chargers: Only use the charger provided by the manufacturer, and make sure it is in good condition.
- Avoid covering items while charging: Do not cover the bike, scooter, or charger while charging, as this can cause overheating.
- Use the right extension leads: When charging, use only appropriate, uncoiled, and rated extension leads. Do not overload them.

What to do in Case of Fire

- If a fire occurs due to an e-bike or e-scooter, do not attempt to extinguish the fire yourself. Evacuate immediately and call the emergency services (999).
- If safe to do so, cut off the power supply and move the vehicle or battery away from other flammable items, but do not put yourself at risk.



Regular Battery Checks

Regularly inspect your battery for any signs of damage, such as cracks, leaks, or unusual heating. If any issues are found, stop using the battery immediately and follow the manufacturer's disposal instructions.

Safe Disposal of Batteries

Dispose of damaged or worn-out batteries safely by taking them to a recycling centre that accepts electrical waste. Do not throw them in regular bins or recycling collections, as they can be hazardous.

By following these simple steps, you will help ensure a safer environment for you and your neighbours. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

New Build and Planned Investment Programme

The last three years our rent increases have been significantly below inflation, as part of ways to support tenants. As part of that we adjusted some of our planned works.

We all know the costs of buying things and using services have increased in the past few years. This has been no different for the Housing Association.

Buying parts and materials - and even the costs of getting them here - have all risen.

As a result, continuing with all planned works in this environment may not be financially sustainable, therefore, difficult decisions may need to be made about which projects to move forward with and which will be delayed. We understand how frustrating it can be to wait for improvement works that were anticipated and we deeply appreciate your patience as we continue to navigate this challenging situation.

Although we've received invaluable support from Scottish Government funding, this was also cut significantly last year which means advancing new sites is becoming more challenging. However, the new draft budget has restored funding and will help us in our commitment to continue developing new properties for Orkney's communities long into the future.



Complaints and Compliments

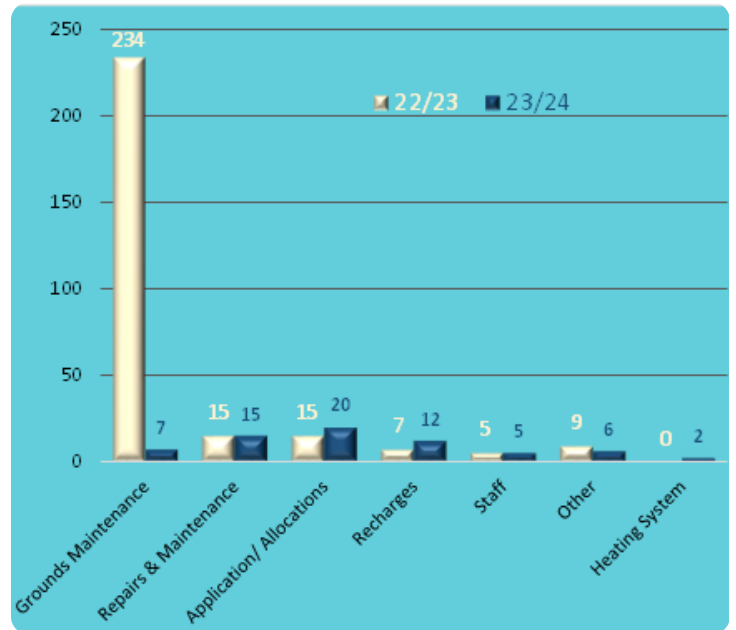
During the year to 31 March 2024, we recorded 67 complaints:

60 Stage 1 and 7 Stage 2.

This is a significant decrease of 218 since last year. The majority of complaints (20) were regarding applications and allocations.

How did we respond to the complaints?

- 94% of complaints were completed on time (96% last year).
- We upheld 22 (33%) complaints (57% last year).



Compliments

It is always nice to receive compliments and during the year to 31 March 2024, we received 184 compliments. These have been broken down as follows:

OHAL Tradesman Team	83
Repairs & Maintenance	53
Care & Repair	32
Services (general)	16

The contractors turned up when they said they would. The shower is a great benefit to me and every night they hoovered up and left the bathroom spotless. I am also indebted to the Care & Repair team for putting in extra grab rails, toilet support and shower seat.

As usual your help was first class and I always do appreciate your help. Thank you so much. I am very fortunate to live here.

Thank you for dealing with the problem so promptly. I was impressed and delighted by actions of all concerned.

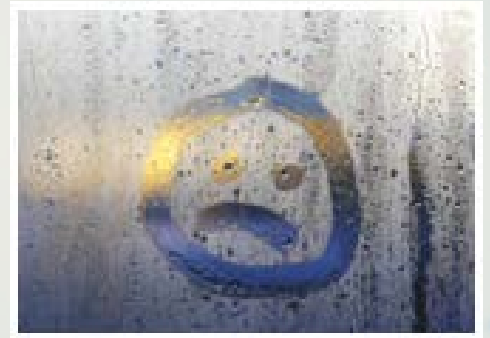
As always repair dealt with within a decent time frame, contractor punctual, polite, good communication to arrange repair, neat and tidy and completed works swiftly with a good explanation of the repair work carried out. Very satisfied.

Thank you for an excellent service. The contractor very kindly left a heater so that I could keep warm over the weekend until he returned today. He was very knowledgeable and took the time to explain the inner workings of the heat pump. I am one satisfied customer.

Condensation Advice

This is the most common cause of dampness.

Condensation is caused by water moisture from inside the home coming into contact with a colder surface, such as a window or wall. The water drops (or condensation) may then soak into the wallpaper or paintwork or even plasterwork and attract black mould to grow on its surface. You can wipe the black mould away using a special fungicidal solution or a solution of water and bleach. Please remember to be careful when using bleach and take appropriate safety precautions as guided by the manufacturer.



Condensation mainly occurs during the colder months and is usually found in corners and north facing walls, on or near windows, areas with little air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds - especially when they are pushed up against external walls. Black mould is frequently seen on this type of dampness.

It is very important to strike a balance between warmth and ventilation. It may appear that by opening windows you are losing heat, but what this allows is warm moisture-laden air to escape and permits cool dry air to enter your home. Dry cool air is actually cheaper to heat than warm moist air! So this actually saves you money as well as resulting in a healthier living environment.

Taking preventative action - if you feel the dampness and/or mould growth is caused by condensation.

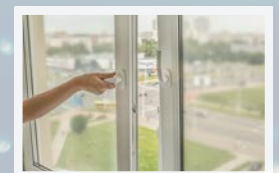
Produce less moisture

- Cover pans when cooking.
- Dry clothes outdoors in warm weather.
- Ventilate tumble driers to the outside.
- Do not use paraffin or liquid petroleum (bottled) gas heaters they produce masses of water vapour and are very expensive to run.



Ventilate to remove moisture

- Always ventilate, or open a window when the kitchen/bathroom are in use and close other internal doors so as to prevent moisture-laden air from spreading to other parts of your home.



Wipe away excess moisture

- Always wipe the windows (and window sills if required) of your home every morning to remove condensation. This is especially important in the bedroom, just opening the window is not good enough.

Keep your home adequately heated

- If possible, keep low background heat on all day, even in the bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom.



Above all remember, dealing with condensation is not easy and automatically assuming it has come inside from outside; it hasn't!

- Only carrying out one or two of the above steps will not help your problem. You must do as many as possible every day so that it becomes part of your routine.

If you still feel, having read this article, that your dampness is due to rising damp, penetrating damp or from defective plumbing then you should contact us.

ENERGY SAVING TIPS

Help to keep costs down

Electricity prices remain high going into this winter, which in turn affects what we pay for the energy we use in our homes.



While we recognise that many tenants may already be doing all this and more to cut costs, hopefully some tenants may find these tips useful:

Optimise use of your heating system

Your home's heating system has various controls that can be used to reduce your energy usage. On storage heaters these are on the heaters themselves. For room thermostats, these can be turned down to 19°C, or for radiators turn down the thermostatic radiator valves in individual rooms to further cut back on heat usage.

Do full laundry loads

Half-load settings save very little energy, so a full load is much more energy efficient. Do fewer (but fuller) wash loads instead. Try and avoid using a tumble dryer as well.

Use the 'eco' setting

On your dishwasher or boiler, the 'eco' setting heats water more slowly, using less energy. You get the same results; it just takes a little longer.

Don't use standby mode

Unless switched off at the wall, appliances like your TV continue to use energy, costing the average UK home £35 per year. Switch off at the wall to put a stop to this wasted spend.

Careful with that kettle

When making tea or coffee, most of us fill the kettle right up. This means as a country we're wasting around £68 million worth of energy a year. By filling your kettle just to the level you need, it could save you up to a third of the energy you have been using.

Switch to LED bulbs

Traditional bulbs are extremely inefficient. Modern LEDs are the opposite, and also last longer so are less wasteful too.



Use your microwave more

You'll save energy because it's quicker than using the main oven or hob. It's worth considering a slow cooker too, as they're one of the most energy-efficient kitchen appliances.

Unplug all your chargers

Across the country, people are unnecessarily over-charging their mobile phones, tablets and laptops. Instead, as soon as your device is fully charged, try to get into the habit of unplugging it. Not only will this save energy, it also prolongs battery life and removes a potential fire safety hazard. It could also save you about £60 a year on your electricity bills.

Close your curtains at night

During the day it's important to try to use as much natural - and free - heat (in the form of sunlight) as possible. But when night comes, closing your curtains will help your home retain that heat. This helps keep warmth in the room - but try not to let them cover radiators or heaters.

Turn down the temperature of your washing machine

With today's effective washing machine detergents, there's often no need to run your washing machine any higher than 30°C - clean clothes and energy saved.



Dress for the weather

An obvious tip is to ensure you are dressed accordingly in respect of the weather. A cosy jumper or fleece in winter keeps you warmer and reduces the need to rely on your heating system to stay warm.

Not using it? Turn it off!

Get into the habit of turning energy using devices off when not using them - TVs, lights, games consoles, etc are easily left on when not in use.

Heating guides

You should have been given a guide to operating your heating system when you moved into your property. If you require a replacement then your Housing Officer will be able to help with this.

For further energy advice and support contact Robert Leslie, Energy Officer, on 01856 875253 ext 404 or email robert.leslie@ohal.org.uk

Other Sources of Help and Information

Energy Domestic Consumer Advice for Autumn/Winter 2024

A specific guide for domestic customers has been published, although please check the main web page to ensure the latest version is being accessed.

Visit Website www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/domestic-energy-consumer-advice

Energy Advice Scotland



Free, practical advice and information on energy-related matters for the citizens of Scotland can be found on their website.

Visit Website www.energyadvice.scot

Energy Saving Trust

The Energy Saving Trust has produced some quick tips on how to save money on your energy bills.

Visit Website www.energysavingtrust.org.uk



Scottish Welfare Fund

The Scottish Welfare Fund is aimed at providing assistance for people on benefits, or considered to be on a low income. The Council administers the fund on behalf of the Scottish Government and provides two types of grant:

Crisis Grants - Providing a safety net in the event of a disaster or emergency.

Community Care Grants - Providing help to leave care and live on your own, or to continue living in your own home.

Visit Website www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/council-tax-and-benefits/scottish-welfare-fund



Scottish Social Security

Responsible for managing Scottish benefits - click link below.

Visit Website <https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/benefits>



Orkney Charitable Trust



The Orkney Charitable Trust provide financial help for people under 25 living in Orkney during times of ill health, disability, hardship or disadvantage. Financial support is available to these people and their families in the form of grants, loans or other support. Visit their website to find out more about what they're doing.

Visit Website <http://www.octrust.org.uk/>

Free School Meals and Clothing Allowances

Information on how to apply for free school meals and clothing allowances can be found on OIC's website:



Visit Website <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/grants-emas-and-bursaries/school-meals-and-clothing-allowances/>

Orkney Money Matters Working Together To Get The Right Support For You

Orkney Money Matters is a partnership project which aims to reduce financial insecurity within Orkney through advice and a cash-first approach to support.

The close working between front-line support organisations, including Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau, THAW Orkney and Orkney Blide Trust, and the creation of a referral pathway from other local agencies, including Orkney Housing Association, ensures that there is 'no wrong door' approach to seeking support. This approach allows people to access support in a way that suits them and ensures that you don't feel that you need to retell your story over and over again.

If you would like someone to support you to attend appointments sort paperwork, or work out the next steps, there is a Money Matters and Mental Health Links Worker within Orkney Blide Trust who is available to guide you each step of the way.



If you don't know where to start and need support to navigate the available services, or if you are in a position where you can't afford essentials such as food or heating, please get in touch with the Orkney Money Matters Links Worker in Orkney Citizens Advice on : 01856 875621 or email: LINKS@orkneycab.casonline.org.uk

Are you happy with our service?

We aim to provide an excellent service at all times but recognise that there may be occasions when people are not happy with something we have done or failed to do. If you are unhappy with the level of service we have provided please let us know so that we can consider your comments and resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

If you wish to make a complaint about a service you have received there are 2 stages involved:

Frontline Resolution (Stage 1): Contact the person with whom you were dealing and see if it can be sorted out informally;

Investigation (Stage 2): This is for complaints that have not been solved at Stage 1 or are complex and require further investigation.

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO can be contacted at www.spsso.org.uk or 0800 377 7330

Our Complaints Handling Procedure is available on the website or from the office on request.

SPSO



The Scottish Housing Regulator is an independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and local authority housing services in Scotland. They were established on 01 April 2011 under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, and have one statutory objective, to:

"safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities".

They regulate social landlords to protect the interests of people who receive services from them. They do this by assessing and reporting on:

- how social landlords are performing their housing services;
- RSLs financial well-being;
- RSLs standards of governance.

Further information on the Regulator can be found on their website:
www.housingregulator.gov.scot/





*Wishing all our
residents a
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!*