

Newsletter

SPRING/SUMMER 2019

faifley
HOUSING
ASSOCIATION

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

www.faifleyha.co.uk



UC Universal
Credit

UPDATE

As you will be aware, UC became live in our area during November 2018. We had anticipated a slow transition of tenants migrating over but have been surprised at the level of uptake. Unfortunately there seems to be some confusion over the actual processes of making a claim and we would like to clarify this to avoid any delays:

How to claim

It is imperative that all tenants follow the processes in place with the DWP and we have detailed them below:

- All claimants are required to open a bank account; or, post office account; or,

a credit union account to receive their payments. If you don't have one or you are unable to open one, you can apply to use the payment exception service. You can obtain more information on this online.

- All claimants require an email address.
- All claimants require a mobile telephone number.
- All claimants are required to confirm their identity (photographic evidence).

Applications are made online and tenants are allocated a work coach at the job centre who will assist them in all matters relating to their claim.



When you'll be paid

After you apply, it will take around 5 weeks for your first UC payment. During this time you can apply for an advance payment if you don't have enough money.

Your payments will then be made monthly.

If you find it difficult to manage on a monthly basis, you can change how you are paid. You can apply to receive your money fortnightly if this will make it easier for you.

Paying your rent

Some of your Universal Credit will be for your housing costs – you can choose to have this element sent direct to Faifley Housing Association to ensure that you do not fall into rent arrears.

However, every new Universal Credit claimant will receive their first rent payment direct along with their Universal Credit payment.

It is vital that you pay this to Faifley Housing Association to ensure your rent is paid. You can then request rent to be paid direct to us from when your second payment is due.

If you choose not to do this, you will be expected to pay your full monthly rent charge to us along with a payment towards any arrears which may have accrued.

If you are already in receipt of Housing Benefit when you apply for Universal Credit, you will still be entitled to an extra 2 weeks towards your rent charge. You won't need to pay this back.

Help with emergency services

If you are struggling to survive on Universal Credit, you can get emergency help with things like food or household items – you can do this by applying for a crisis grant or a community care grant from the Scottish Welfare Fund. This can be accessed via the Local Authority.

Backdating your Universal Credit

There are certain circumstances in which you can apply for a 'backdated' Universal Credit payment to cover up to 1 month before you started your claim.

These include:

- Illness – proof will be required
- Disability
- You were unaware that your JSA or ESA claim was ceasing
- You were unable to access the online system due to technical problems
- You have broken up with your partner and are making a claim as a single person
- A joint claim has ended and you now need to claim as a single person
- You didn't claim on time because the DWP told you the wrong thing. You can complain and ask for compensation if this has happened.

If you want to apply for a backdated payment, you can contact the Universal Credit helpline on:

Telephone: 0800 328 5644 Textphone: 0800 328 1344

Calls to these numbers are free

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

It is best to call the DWP on the telephone number you registered with as you will have a shorter wait and be put through to the same person who handled any previous calls you may have made. If you change your telephone number, please remember to notify the DWP.

**BENEFITS ADVICE SERVICE
(Independent Resource Centre)**

As you are aware, our outreach welfare benefits service with the Independent Resource Centre has reduced from 2 half days to 1 half day for an initial period of 6 months.

The service now operates on a Tuesday morning between the hours of 10am and 12 noon.

We are now making appointments via a referrals system to ensure that all of our residents are able to access the service.

If you have an appointment and find that you are unable to attend, please let us know in advance so that we can use your appointment slot for another resident. This will ensure that all appointments are filled so that we can monitor the usage during the review period.

**HELP TO CLAIM SERVICE
(Citizens Advice Service)**



Further assistance with Universal Credit claims can also be provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) as per a UK government announcement in October 2018. This service became live on 1 April 2019 and is called:

HELP TO CLAIM

The service offers free, independent support to help people make a Universal Credit claim and receive their first full payment on time.

You can access the **HELP TO CLAIM** service in the following ways:

- In person at any CAB office
- By telephone on: 0800 023 2581
- Via webchat: www.cas.org.uk/helptoclaim
- Self-help information online: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/benefits/universal-credit/

RENT INCREASE 2019/2020

As the majority of the Association's Income comes from rents, it is imperative that we collect enough money to cover the cost of delivering our services and keeping our properties in a good and habitable standard.

We are committed to ensuring that any significant changes we are proposing are subject to consultation with our tenants and as such, a consultation exercise was carried out during December 2018 and January 2019. Unfortunately, the response to the exercise was very poor and as such, our Management Committee approved an increase of 2.9%.

We would like to express our thanks to our Failley Road resident who responded to the Consultation exercise.



CONSULTATION REGISTER



Faifley Housing is extremely keen to involve tenants in the policy setting area of our business where it directly affects you.

We currently hold a register of tenants who are interested in participating in future events. Participation can take the form of attending meetings or responding via post, email, website or telephone. It is completely your choice in which way you wish to participate.

To take this further, we would welcome input by way of a Tenant's Scrutiny Panel to represent the views of the residents.

To ensure that your views are taken account of, please contact us and add your name to the Consultation register. All residents who respond will be entered into a prize draw.

PAYING YOUR RENT

In order for the Association to provide a quality service for all of our tenants in the coming year, we require to maximise our rental income as well as reducing our rent arrears.

How can you help?

Well, here are a few ways that will help the Association to continue to provide the current service:

- Make every effort to pay your rent each month
- Inform the Association if you have stopped work/started work
- If you are struggling to pay your rent, always ask for our help
- Return any Housing Benefit forms to the Association or to the Council on time
- Always respond to any visits/letters from the Association

The consequences for tenants could be:

- Fewer repairs carried out to your home or close.
- Higher rent charges in future years
- The Association being unable to upgrade and maintain our existing properties

TENANTS SCRUTINY PANEL

Help to set up a Tenants Scrutiny Panel. A Tenants Panel is a group of people who would meet a few times a year to look at how certain services can be improved. The panel would also be consulted over such topics as:

- Future rent increases
- Review the way the Association lets its houses
- How we deal with rent arrears
- Act as a sound board for new ideas

Panel members would only have to attend a few meetings a year and the Association would provide the support and information required to make the Panel work.

We need around 6 members to make the Panel as effective as possible and would ask that you contact us if you are interested in helping set one up.

Please contact us: 01389-877924, or, email at: enquiry@faifleyha.co.uk, or, on our website at: www.faifleyha.co.uk via the Contact Us page.

POLICY REVIEW

Allocation of Housing

Our Allocations Policy sets out the rules that we follow when letting our properties. These rules are governed by legislation and guidance to ensure that houses are allocated in a fair and equitable manner as well as making best use of our housing stock.

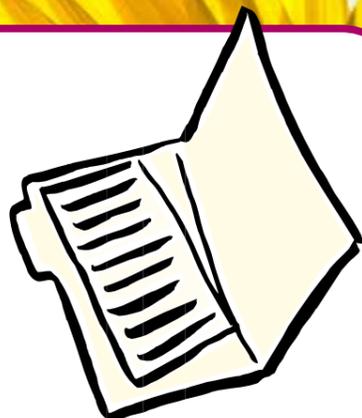
As you will be aware from previous correspondence, the introduction of The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 – makes changes to the allocations rules and as such, we have now carried out an internal review of our current policy.

Some of the changes in the act relate to how we consult on our Policy and set out how we should prioritise the allocation of houses, internal transfers and exchanges. We are required to consult with the following groups before we make any changes; applicants on our housing list; our own tenants; registered tenant organisations and any other persons as we see fit.

We have recently consulted with our Management Committee and are now preparing to send out a summary consultation document to all of the above groups.

We would welcome feedback to ensure that we take account (where applicable) to all views expressed.

Please watch out for our consultation paperwork as well as keeping an eye on our website for further information: www.fairleyha.co.uk



RENT ARREARS POLICY

Rent collection and arrears management forms an integral part of the operational management of Fairley Housing Association.

The introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 has significantly changed the benefits and tax credit systems, which in turn has reduced benefit entitlements for tenants.

These changes will, over time, decrease significantly the level of benefit we receive directly from benefit agencies and this will impact on the rental income we receive.

We have therefore sought to mitigate the impact of the Reforms by reviewing our current Rent Arrears Policy.

Our new Policy is being finalised and will be presented to our Management Committee shortly before being issued for Tenant Consultation.

Again, we would welcome feedback on our proposals.

Further information will also be available via our website.

SCOTTISH SECURE TENANCY AGREEMENT

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 also makes changes to existing and future Tenancy Agreements from 1 May 2019. We have previously notified all existing tenants of the changes that apply and new tenants from that date will sign a new Tenancy Agreement incorporating the changes.

For clarification, the main changes are:

- 1 May 2019 – there have been changes to the way in which a tenancy can be ended following a conviction for serious anti-social or criminal behaviour

A court no longer has to consider whether it is reasonable to make an order for eviction where the Landlord has grounds for recovery of possession. This change applies to tenant, joint tenant, a person residing or lodging in the property, a sub-tenant of the property or someone visiting the property.

This means that we can end a tenancy if someone living in or visiting the home is convicted of a serious offence in the area of the house. It allows us to end the tenancy where behaviour has had a serious impact on neighbours or others in the Community.

- 1 May 2019 – Converting your tenancy to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy for Anti-social behaviour

We can change the terms of your tenancy giving you fewer rights and less protection from eviction. It also has a fixed duration, unless we agree to extend it or convert it back to a full tenancy.

- 1 November 2019 – Any tenant who wishes to: sublet, assign or succeed a tenancy from this date must have lived in the property as their main and principle home for at least 12 months before a written request can be made. You must have notified us previously and permission must have been granted.

- 1 November 2019 – Any tenant who wishes to apply for a joint tenancy must also meet the terms shown above.

GARDEN COMPETITION

It's that time of year again, summer will be here soon and so will the long grass, the hedges and the weeds.

May we remind all residents that it is their responsibility to maintain their gardens and keep them free of litter.

To encourage everyone to play their part, we would advise that our gardening competition is now open for residents. You are invited to enter photographs of your summer garden or nominate your neighbour for the chance to win £50 of gardening vouchers for first prize and £25.00 of gardening vouchers for 2nd and 3rd prize. The closing date is 31 August 2019 (hoping for a long summer!)

The winners will be selected at our Annual General Meeting which is scheduled to be held during September 2019 and pictures will be available on our website after that date.



WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT

West Dunbartonshire Libraries are working with Macmillan Cancer Support to provide a network of Macmillan Cancer Information & Support Drop-In Services in the West Dunbartonshire area.

Drop-In Services

Drop-in services are now available in Alexandria, Balloch, Clydebank and Dumbarton Libraries at the following times:

Drop in services		
Location	Day	Opening Hours
Alexandria Library	Mondays	10:30 am to 12:30 pm
Balloch Library	Tuesdays	2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Dumbarton Library	Wednesdays	11:00 am to 1:00 pm
Clydebank Library	Tuesdays	10.30 am to 12:30 pm
	Thursdays	1.00 pm to 4:00 pm

What we provide at the drop-in centre

If you want to find information, support and practical help or would just like someone to talk to, our trained volunteers will be there for you.

What we can offer:

- A listening ear, time to talk and meet others affected by cancer
- Help you find the information you need on living with all aspects of cancer
- Arrange free counselling appointments*
- Arrange free complementary therapy appointments*
- Refer you to your local Macmillan Benefits Advisor
- Refer you to your local Macmillan Carers Service
- Provide you with information on local physical activities
- Guide you to good quality internet sites for cancer information & support

*Provided by Cancer Support Scotland.

COMPETITION WINNERS

We would like to thank those residents who submitted a competition entry for our Christmas 2018 Word Search.

Our two winners reside in both Fullers Gate and Spinners Court. Each winner received vouchers for Argos.



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION FOR REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS (RSL'S)

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 was an Act of the Scottish Parliament which was passed in 2002. It covers public bodies over which the Scottish Parliament has jurisdiction and from 11th November 2019, this Act has been extended to cover Housing Associations.

Under the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations you have a right to request any recorded information held by a public authority, such as a government department, local council or state school.

Anyone has a right to request information from a public authority. The Association has two separate duties when responding to these requests:

- To tell the applicant whether you hold any information falling within the scope of their request; and
- To provide that information

We would normally have 20 working days to respond to a request.

There will of course be exemptions to the Act and we are currently waiting on further information from the Scottish Government on the details of how the Act will apply to us. This information will inform future policy and procedure to ensure that we adhere to both legislation and good practice.

We will provide updates as and when they become available.

MAINTENANCE

Gas Contract

The Association in partnership with Knowes Housing Association recently tendered the above contract for the next two years. The contract covers all aspects of our gas servicing and maintenance repairs within our housing stock. City Building PLC was the successful company and they have worked with both Associations since 2014.

Fire Safety

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London, the Scottish Government has recently introduced new legislation which will improve the safety of the home that you stay in.

As your landlord, we are now required to install additional smoke alarms and a heat detector to each property within our housing stock and all must be interlinked with the current smoke alarms already in your home.

The Association has already upgraded approximately a third of its housing stock to comply with the new regulations and work to upgrade other properties will continue throughout the year. All tenants will be notified prior to this work commencing.

Your co-operation on allowing our contractors access to your home to carry out the upgrade work would be much appreciated.

CYCLICAL PROGRAMME 2019/20

As part of the Associations cyclical maintenance program the Association intends to carry out the following works:

PERIODIC ELECTRICAL INSPECTIONS IN:

Phase 1 (37 – 83 Fullers Gate)

PAINTER WORKS TO PROPERTIES IN:

Phase 1 (37 – 83 Fullers Gate) will include works to internal closes and external fencing.
Phase 5 (36 - 42 Lennox Drive & 45 – 85 Abbeylands Road) will include works to external fencing, windows, doors and internal closes.
New Build (2- 33 Hart Street & 54 – 60 Langfaulds Crescent) will include works to external fencing, windows and doors

GUTTER CLEANING TO PROPERTIES IN:

Phase 1 (37 – 83 Fullers Gate)
Phase 2 (24 – 34 Lennox Drive & 21- 43 Abbeylands Road)
Phase 3 (180 – 218 Faifley Road)
Phase 5 (36 – 42 Lennox Drive & 45 – 85 Abbeylands Road)
Phase 6 (222 & 254 Faifley Road)
Phase 7 (1-13 Spinners Court, 1 – 22 Milldam Road, 16 – 46b Fullers Gate & 19a – 19d Lennox Drive)

GAS SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE OF BOILERS TO ALL PROPERTIES

ROOF ANCHOR INSPECTIONS TO ALL PROPERTIES AS REQUIRED.

MAJOR REPAIRS PROGRAMME

As part of the Associations major repair maintenance program, the Association intends to carry out the following works:

KITCHEN RENEWALS IN:

Phase 1 (37 – 83 Fullers Gate)

EXTRACTOR FAN RENEWALS IN:

Phase 1 (37 – 83 Fullers Gate)

CLOSE DOOR ENTRY SYSTEM RENEWALS IN:

Phase 6 (230 & 248 Faifley Road)

SMOKE ALARM RENEWALS IN:

Phase 1 (37 – 83 Fullers Gate)
Phase 2 (24 – 34 Lennox Drive & 21- 43 Abbeylands Road)
Phase 3 (180 – 218 Faifley Road)
Phase 4 (25 – 35 Fullers Gate)

FASCIA/SOFFIT BOARD & GUTTER REPLACEMENT

Phase 4 (25 – 35 Fullers Gate)

Tenants will be kept informed of when these works will commence.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS WANTED

We are looking to recruit new Committee members to take forward the Association's business and to make decisions which affect all Faifley tenants.

This is a very important role and full training and assistance will be provided along with child care costs if applicable.

If you are interested in what is happening in your area and would like to play a part, please feel free to contact us for an informal chat.



PERFORMANCE IN HOUSING MANAGEMENT/MAINTENANCE

AREA	Performance 2016/2017	Performance 2017/2018	Performance 2018/2019
Total current tenant rent arrears (exc. Outstanding Housing Benefit payments & Universal Credit) (target 2.5%)	2.01%	2.39%	2.12%
Total former tenant rent arrears (target 0.5%)	0.9%	0.7%	0.7%
Void losses (empty properties) (target 0.5%)	0.29%	0.35%	0.34%
Days to re-let empty properties (target 15 days)	12.73	24.15	22
Avg length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (target 6 hours)	2.13 hours	2.48 hours	2.35 hours
Avg length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	2.60 days	2.45 days	2.76 days
Number of reactive repairs completed right first time	97.18%	98.91%	98.6%

- Further work is required
- Performance reasonable but improvements could still be made
- Performance good, compares well with other RSL's, meeting targets, aim should be to maintain

EMERGENCY CALL OUT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

For Gas Repairs, please call: City Building on:

Freephone number: 0800 595 595

24hrs per day 365 days per year

For all other trades, please call McDougall Group on:

Freephone number: 0800 975 1234

Please remember that if you call out the emergency service and the repair is not an emergency, you will be recharged for the cost of the callout.

OTHER USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Transco (Gas Leaks): 0800 111 999

Local Fire Station: 01389-385141

Council Tax: 01389-737444

Woman's Aid: 0141-952-8118

Welfare Benefits: 0141-951-4040

(Independent Resource Centre)

Clydebank Police Station: 01786-289070

WDC Housing Benefit: 01389-738555

WDC Social Work Dept: 0141-562-8800

Faifley Credit Union: 01389-872510

OFFICE CLOSING DATES:

GLASGOW FAIR:

Friday 12 July 2019 and Monday 15 July 2019

SEPTEMBER WEEKEND:

Friday 27 September and Monday 30 September 2019



Faifley Housing Association Ltd

Skypoint, Lennox Drive, Faifley, Clydebank G81 5JY

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Faifley Housing Association Ltd is a recognised Scottish Charity registered under Scottish Charity No SC 037273