

NEW HOMES A WELCOME BOOST

We celebrated the completion of 46 new homes in the Black Isle by sowing wildflower seeds with new tenants and local MSP, Kate Forbes.

And an online cooking class was arranged to welcome tenants in Glasgow to their homes.

The homes, which give a welcome boost of affordable rented housing, contribute towards the Scottish Government's drive to deliver upwards of 100,000 new homes by the end of 2032.



Kate Forbes MSP with local children in Avoch

ARE YOU RECEIVING OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTERS?

Did you know that we send out email newsletters every two months? We now only send two physical newsletters a year, so if we don't have your email address, get in touch through webchat, Facebook messenger, give us a call, or email enquiries@cairnhq.com and we'll put you on the mailing list for next time. To send us an email, scan the QR code.



GREAT OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW

We have a long-standing Community Fund that tenants, community groups and charities can tap into and access funding to support projects that benefit and enhance our communities.

The fund has never been more important than over the last 18 months where projects were popping up to support people who were struggling under lockdown restrictions. We cut out the red tape to get funding to community activists who were moving quickly to help others.

A great example of one of our projects was our support for Lochbroom Community Council in Ullapool, who have worked tirelessly to bring local people together to take control and regenerate a derelict play park. It is inspirational to see what people can do when someone has a great idea, the will to make change happen, and a little support.

If you'd like funding for your area, scan the QR code or get in touch.



You'll see QR codes throughout this newsletter. To use, open the camera on your phone or tablet to scan and open the web link

EXTRA HELP FOR HEATING HOMES

Warm Home Discount

You could get £140 off your electricity bills this winter under the Warm Home Discount scheme. The scheme opens on 18 October 2021.

The money is not paid to you – it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between October and March. If you get Pension Credit you should receive the discount automatically and will be sent a letter confirming you are part of the scheme.

If you aren't on Pension Credit but claim other benefits, you can apply directly with your energy supplier. Applications are open now and you should make your claim as soon as possible as the number of discounts given is limited.

If you are worried about being able to afford heating your home this winter, please get in touch with our Tenancy Sustainment team for advice and support.

Scan the QR code to watch our video on the Warm Home Discount.



Child Winter Heating Assistance

If you have a disabled child at home, the Scottish Government's Child Winter Heating Assistance are giving an extra £202 to help families with children up to the age of 18 on certain disability benefits to heat their homes during the winter months.

You do not need to apply as the payment will be automatically by Social Security Scotland. Families will receive a letter of confirmation to coincide with the payment being made.

BEYOND LEVEL 0

Since Scotland moved beyond level 0 a couple of months ago, we have removed our detailed service level route map from the website.

What restrictions remain in place?

While most of our staff continue to work from home, our preference is to carry out communications with you digitally or over the phone.

Where that is not possible, we can arrange a face-to-face meeting with you. If that meeting is held indoors, either in your home or at a Cairn office, we require you to wear a face covering unless you are exempt, and to practice social distancing.

All repairs and maintenance will be carried out as usual. Our contractors will always wear a face covering while in your home.

REPAIRS SURVEY: HERE'S WHAT YOU SAID...

Many thanks to all the tenants who took the time to respond to our recent survey on the future of the repairs service. We received 678 responses with lots of good feedback on what is important to you and your preferences and priorities for reporting and receiving the repairs service.

Some highlights of the feedback include:

- It is clear that people report repairs in many different ways.
- Many tenants would be happy to use digital technology to report repairs.
- The importance of information about the timing of your repairs is a clear priority – 83% of tenants feel it is important to know when someone is expected and 72% want to know how long it will take to have repairs carried out.
- Flexibility for repair appointments is also important, so we will be looking at how we can improve this.
- Top priorities are that repairs are carried out as soon as possible and that they can be reported easily.
- There are clear differences in preference over how repairs are reported and scheduled between tenants in our retirement courts and other kinds of housing, and this is something we will look into further.

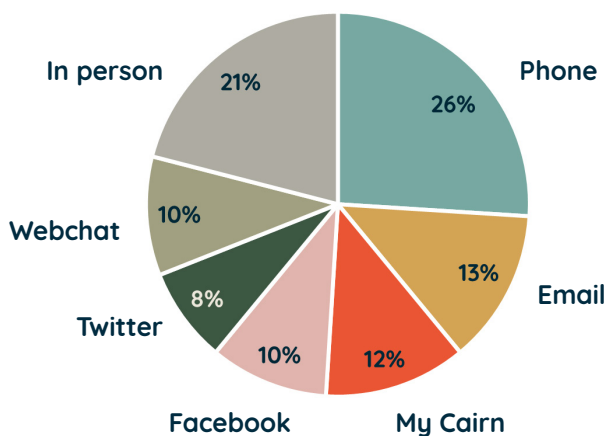
This feedback also highlights that many tenants do not have regular access to the internet or digital devices and this is something we are keen to understand, to make sure we provide accessible services, understand potential barriers, and provide support where we can.

Over the next few weeks, we will continue to review all the feedback and this will be used to help inform our service planning and identify further areas for exploration.

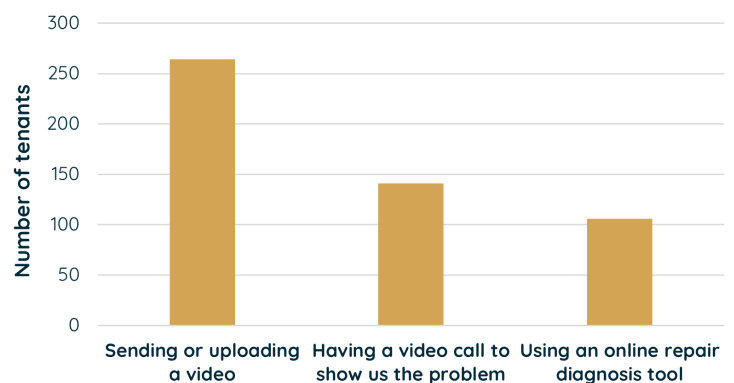
Over 200 tenants said you would like to hear about opportunities for further involvement in the future of the repairs service, and the feedback here provides a very good starting point. Over the next few months we will be getting back in touch with all those who expressed an interest to look at ways to get involved – this could include one-off focus groups or workshop sessions, Q&A sessions with the team or other ways of getting involved that suit your needs.

Thank you again to all those who took the time to share your thoughts.

Preferred way to report a repair



Use of digital media to report repairs



PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR WINTER

As we approach the colder months, the changing weather can cause damage to your home. However, with a few easy steps you can prepare for the chillier months ahead.

Bleed your radiators

After a few months out of action, you may find your radiators are cold at the top and hot at the bottom. To make sure you're getting the most out of your heating (and money), bleed your radiators.

Before starting, have an old cloth and a bleed key ready, and make sure the heating is off. There should be a valve on the radiator, usually at the top, and you need to turn this until you hear a hissing sound. Use the cloth to catch any liquid that comes out of the radiator and as soon as only water starts coming out, turn the valve key again.

Find your stopcock

It's important to know where your stopcock is so you can stop water flowing into your home in the event of a burst pipe. Your stopcock is usually found under your kitchen sink. But it may also be near the boiler, under the stairs, or on an outside wall. You should be able to turn it to shut the water supply on or turn it on.

Keep your heating on a timer

If you're planning to be away and the weather is set to fall, set your heating to come on with a timer setting. This could prevent the water in your pipes freezing if it gets really cold, which could lead to burst pipes or flooding.

How to deal with a frozen water pipe

- Turn your water supply off at your stopcock
- Turn all your cold taps on to drain the system, and leave them on
- Do not open hot taps, as the hot water cylinder may be damaged if the pipes feeding it are frozen and it becomes empty whilst still switched on. To deal with hot water:
- Turn off the central heating boiler and immersion heater, if you have one, or let any solid fuel fire with a back boiler die down
- Then open the hot water taps, collecting the water in the bath for washing and flushing the toilet

If you'd like any advice or assistance on any of this, including how to find your stopcock or how to bleed your radiators, please get in touch and our maintenance team will be happy to help.



HOW DO WE MEASURE UP?

You will have noticed our Annual Report has been included with your newsletter. This report gives some highlight figures from the last financial year and reflects on some of the hardships we've all encountered so far this year. To see our full performance, including trends, comparisons with the Scottish average and analysis, scan the QR code.

We have also started reporting on our performance quarterly so keep checking our website to find out how we're getting on throughout the year.



COVID TESTING AT HOME

Did you know you can test yourself for covid-19 twice a week by ordering lateral flow tests?

Up to 1 in 3 people have no symptoms of Covid-19, so to help put your mind at rest and stop the spread of the virus, you can order test kits online at: gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

If you do not have access to the internet, you can:

- pick up test kits from participating local pharmacies
- phone 119
- ask your Court Coordinator to order some for you if you live in one of our courts

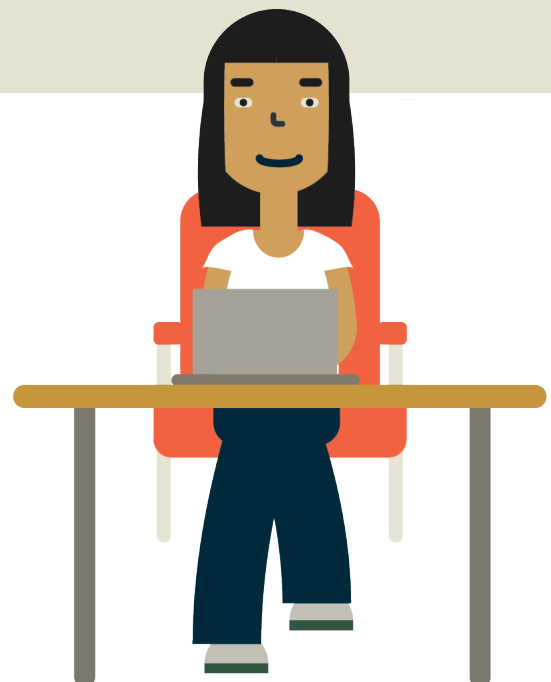


To order online you'll need:

- your name
- an email address (you can use someone else's if you don't have your own)
- your date of birth
- your address

LOW COST BROADBAND

Stay connected with BT's low-cost broadband and phone plans. Their affordable plans are available if you're on specific benefits, including Universal Credit and Pension Credit. To find out more scan the QR code or call 0800 800 150.



MONEY WORRIES? WE'RE HERE TO HELP

With the end of furlough and the £20 weekly uplift to Universal Credit due to come to an end this month, it's understandable that you may be particularly worried about how to manage your money.

If you are concerned about your finances, please get in touch. Our dedicated Tenancy Sustainment team are here to help. The sooner we know you are struggling, the sooner we can help you, even if you are already in debt.

We know that money may be tight but paying your rent should remain a priority to keep the roof over your head. Don't risk losing your home because you've not paid your rent.

Our Tenancy Sustainment team continue to do fantastic work helping our tenants. Over the last financial year they helped **909 tenants gain an additional £930,188 in income**. This is a massive achievement, particularly given the challenging nature of the working environment over the last year and a half.

There has been an increase in demand for the team this year, largely because of the pandemic and the financial challenges this has brought to many of our tenants.

The team have helped complete benefit claims, given advice on benefits and provided budgeting advice. Furniture and charity grants were applied for, food bank vouchers were given out and support was provided in other areas where tenants need a little more support to manage their tenancy. Tenants with school age children were also encouraged to apply for free school meals and clothing grants, which helped significantly with the increased costs of having children at home over the last year.

If you think you'd benefit from the outstanding advice and support on offer from our Tenancy Sustainment team then please get in touch.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR ENERGY SUPPLIER GOES BUST

You'll likely have seen in the news that the price of energy has increased dramatically, and this has led to many smaller companies going bust. It can be worrying to hear your energy supplier has gone out of business. But don't panic, your gas and electricity supply won't be cut off. Follow these steps to help you out.

Take a meter reading. You'll need this to give to your new energy supplier. Take a photo if possible.

Ofgem will give you a new supplier. As the energy regulator, Ofgem is responsible for finding you a new provider. Your electricity and gas supply won't be cut off and you'll be switched to a new provider within a few days.

Don't switch until you're with the new supplier. If you want to switch to a different provider, wait until you're set up properly with the Ofgem appointed supplier. This will make your switch much simpler and smoother.

Wait for the new supplier to get in touch. Once Ofgem has chosen a new provider, they will be in contact with you to explain your new tariff and how to manage your balance if you're in debt or credit. At this point you can ask to be put on a cheaper tariff or look to switch providers.

UP, UP AND AWAY

We have completed building works at Swan Court in Eyemouth to make the well-loved retirement housing development more accessible to current and future tenants.

A small number of steps at four locations were restricting access to different areas of the court for tenants and visitors. We installed a Danish designed and manufactured 'flexi steps' system that convert steps into a platform lift to make the building fully accessible. The works to the court included removing existing concrete steps and flooring, poured concrete to create a new base for the equipment and installing the pre-fabricated flexi-steps.

Kelly Pitt, Court Coordinator at Swan Court, said: "This has been a fabulous upgrade to the court and has given a new lease of life to some of our older residents. Thanks go to the tenants who were fantastic while the work was carried out, which is so typical of the community we have here."



YOUR VIEWS ON THE WORK OF OUR BOARD

In our email newsletter in August we asked you for your views on the Board and whether you'd be interested in joining.

Eighteen people said they'd be interested in joining the Board, with the rest saying they wouldn't. When asked what puts you off joining the majority said they were too busy, have health issues or are lacking in confidence.

Tenants were asked what ideas they had for how the Board should listen to tenant's views. Answers given included visiting tenants in their developments or have tenants attend Board meetings from time to time. More face-to-face contact, not only with the Board but staff in general, appears to be welcomed by tenants.

A huge thanks goes to those who took the time to fill out the survey. We are going to follow up with tenants who expressed an interest in joining the Board. The Board are also going to take some time to reflect on what tenants have told them in this survey and how best they can incorporate these views into the work they do. If you want to read the full report, scan the QR code.



WHAT TO DO ABOUT PESTS

There may be times when you find pests in your home. We understand it's not pleasant. It's really important that we work together to try and make sure your home is free of infestations. Even the cleanest homes can become host to unwelcome visitors, no matter how careful you are.

Whose responsibility is it?

Dealing with a pest infestation is usually your responsibility as a tenant.

As a landlord, it is our responsibility to deal with any infestation where pests have gained access through a defect in the fabric of the building, or if the infestation is within a communal area or a sheltered or retirement court, where the tenant is unable to take appropriate steps to treat the issue themselves.

If it is your responsibility, but the infestation is so severe that you cannot reasonably be expected to manage the issue yourself, we may assist you and pass on the cost for treatment to you as a rechargeable repair. We will always advise you if this is the case before arranging treatment.

What can you do?

It is important to take preventative action to discourage pests in your home. Ensure your home, including common areas, are kept clean and tidy. To deter pests, it is essential that you:

- Avoid feeding birds around your home
- Clean all surfaces thoroughly to remove crumbs
- Make sure waste bins are covered, emptied and cleaned regularly
- Make sure gaps behind kitchen appliances, such as cookers and fridges, are cleaned regularly
- Do not store food on the floor and keep all food stored in sealed containers
- Keep your home free from clutter
- Wash and dry your bed sheets on the hottest temperature you can
- If you buy second-hand furniture or clothing, inspect them carefully before bringing them into your home
- Block up any small gaps that a pest could access. Replace any damaged or poorly fitting finishings and neatly seal any gaps with an expanding foam or a silicone sealant
- If you are a cat or dog owner, regularly treat your pet with a suitable flea treatment. You can ask your vet for more information about this

We have detailed information on how to deal with the following creatures on our website:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| • Mice and rats | • Squirrels |
| • Bees and wasps | • Fleas |
| • Ants | • Bedbugs / dust mites |
| • Birds | |

To have a read, scan the QR code.



LIVE RETIREMENT TO THE FULL

Did you know that we have sheltered and retirement housing available to move into right now?

It is specifically for those aged 50 and over and is perfect for those who want to move to a property better suited to their needs and embrace a whole new way of life. You can live as independently as possible, while having the peace of mind that comes with living amidst a friendly community.

Each court differs, but residents can enjoy a range of on-site facilities such as a communal lounge and garden, fully equipped laundry room, lift, guest room for family and friends, library and 24/7 pull cords.

Our court Coordinators, who are located at most of our developments, offer not only a friendly face but are also responsible for looking after the security of the building and carries out regular health and safety checks to give residents peace of mind. Repairs and maintenance, garden upkeep and window cleaning are all taken care of as part of your service charge.

To find our list of properties available to move into now or to add your name to our waiting list, scan the QR code or give us a call.



Cluny Court, Blairgowrie

1 Bedroom
Rent: £419.11 pcm
[View property](#)



Frank Jack Court, Peterhead

Studio
Rent: £352.40 pcm
[View property](#)



Douglas Haig Court, Hawick

Studio
Rent: £423.67 pcm
[View property](#)



PUTTING TENANTS AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

At Cairn we put a big emphasis on involving tenants in how we make decisions and improve our services.

We received funding from the Scottish Government Next Steps Programme in 2019 which provided us with support from TPAS to look at how we could improve tenant participation. In 2020 we involved tenants again in a review of our Customer Involvement Strategy which set out our new approach.

We recognise that times are changing, and people interact with organisations, including Cairn, differently. We've moved to quicker and more informal consultations, which includes making better use of surveys and online technology. Where we are reviewing a service for a specific local area we are picking up the phone and chatting to tenants directly to collect their ideas and experiences and starting to plan how we might start face-to-face events again.

We have made good use of our new bi-monthly email newsletters to invite comments on specific services. We have been getting brilliant feedback through these bulletins and tenants have told us they appreciate that the surveys are quick to complete and that they can see a report in the following issue about how we used their ideas. We also offer raffle gift vouchers as a small thank you for taking part.

During the strategy review tenants told us that we had to improve how we report back the outcome of consultations. We now write reports for every consultation and these are all available to view on our website, alongside a simple 'You Said - We Did' guide, which gives some examples of how tenants have influenced decision making. Scan the QR code to have a read.

Finally, we really want to have more tenant representation on our Board so if you are interested then please get in touch for an informal chat about what is involved.



PENTLAND TENANTS URGED TO VOTE YES TO TRANSFER

A ballot for Pentland tenants to decide if they want to transfer to Cairn is well underway. The transfer will only go ahead if a majority of Pentland tenants vote YES before the ballot closes on 2nd November.

If tenants vote in favour of the proposals, their homes and services will transfer to Cairn next April, guaranteeing additional investment in tenants' homes, alongside a locked-in affordable rent guarantee and continued local services from a combined Cairn and Pentland team in Thurso.

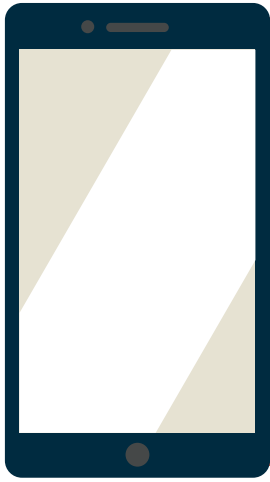
If the transfer goes ahead this will benefit Cairn tenants too. As we grow Cairn through the development of new homes or transfers, we can spread our costs across more properties, which means a higher proportion of our rental income is available to spend on your homes and services. This transfer will also significantly increase the number of homes we have in Caithness, with opportunities to develop new services from a combined Cairn and Pentland team in Thurso.

MY CAIRN, YOUR TENANT PORTAL

Last year we launched a new and improved My Cairn.

It helps you to manage your tenancy in an easy to use way, that's just right for you. You can do things like pay your rent and view your balance, report repairs and update your details, and we're adding new features all the time.

To sign up, you need an email address and your 18-digit tenancy number. Don't worry if you don't have this to hand. You can start the registration process online and then our contact centre team will help you complete it. Or, you can contact us, and we'll send you a link to activate your account. Scan the QR code to get started.



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www.cairnha.com

OUR PHONE NUMBER:

0800 990 3405

OUR EMAIL:

enquiries@cairnha.com

cairn

Great homes.
Great services.
Great people.

A registered Scottish Charity No
SCO16647. The Scottish Housing
Regulator Registration No 218.
Property Factor Reg No PF000292

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یہ دستاویز سی ڈی، بریل، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور کمیونٹی کی دیگر زبانوں میں 'کیرن' Cairn سے اس پتے پر دستیاب ہے: Bellevue House, 22 Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh EH7 4GH ای میل enquiries@cairnha.com یا اس نمبر پر فون کریں: 0800 990 3405

هذا المستند متوفر على أسطوانة مضغوطة، بلغة برايل وطباعة كبيرة ولغات الأقليات من Cairn, Bellevue House, 22 Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh EH7 4GH. بريد إلكتروني enquiries@cairnha.com أو اتصل بالرقم

Niniejszy dokument dostępny jest na płycie CD, w formie dużym drukiem, oraz w językach ojczystych członków lokalnej społeczności. Aby uzyskać ten dokument należy odwiedzić Cairn pod adresem: Bellevue House, 22 Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh EH7 4GH, wysłać e-mail na adres: enquiries@cairnha.com lub zadzwonić pod numer 0800 990 3405.

This newsletter is available on CD, in braille, in large print and in community languages.

part of: **cairn** HOUSING GROUP

