

# Housing Brief



Advising and supporting our tenants to enjoy their homes

## Customer Survey

During the summer all our tenants were invited to participate in a survey which we are required to complete every three years. It is a requirement of the Scottish Housing Regulator that we ask our tenants a set of standard questions. The results are then reported back to the Scottish Housing Regulator, and form part of our annual Tenant Talk publication.

Enclosed you will find a report which provides all the information independently collected and collated by Knowledge Partnership, an external company who were engaged to complete the work. Knowledge Partnership have already set up Focus Groups for those who indicated that they would like to be part of further work, to help us improve our services.

Chief Executive Margaret Moynihan commented "thank you to everyone who gave their time to take part in our survey and to all those who have agreed to be further involved in the Focus Groups with Knowledge Partnership. We are obviously disappointed that we have seen a drop in our percentages across a range of the questions and will be addressing the issues raised as we continually try to improve our services."

All those who assisted in the survey were invited to take part in a prize draw, and four households selected, each received a cheque for £200.



Jacqueline MacDonald



Robert, Gay-Ann-Joy and Elisha Watson

## Social Housing Fuel Support Fund Update

For the past two years the Association has been able to support those tenants most in financial need, following successful applications to the SFHA Social Housing Fuel Support Fund. Unfortunately, earlier this year the SFHA confirmed that this funding stream is no longer available.

Staff at the Association will of course support all tenants but particularly those struggling financially, to ensure they are accessing all the help and benefits available to them. Referrals to ALLenergy will also continue. Please contact us if you need assistance.

### Contact your Housing Officer



Mairi Clare Mackay: 07496 288 487



Melody Robinson: 07464 829 028



housingmgt@lochaberhousing.org.uk

## Out of Hours Callout Service

Earlier this year the Highland Council withdrew from an arrangement to provide a service for our tenants who required an emergency repair out with office hours. The Association has considered various options to ensure we can continue to provide this service for our tenants.

We are now able to announce that G & A Barnie Group has successfully completed a trial period and will be handling our out of hours emergency repairs going forward. Chief Executive, Margaret Moynihan commented "we look forward to working with G & A Barnie Group and with the continued provision of an effective out of hours service for our tenants".



Please continue to call the emergency out of hours switch board on:  **01349 886691**

## And the Winner is...

Our hugely successful garden competition saw judges from the Association travelling the length and breadth of the Lochaber area during August. With lots to view, the judges were impressed by the quality of the entries and the hard work that had gone into them.

Congratulations to the winners and runners up who included:

**Best Tubs** – winner Morven Cameron, Claggan, runner up Chris Cairns, Fort William

**Best Vegetables** – winner Martyn Calum from Banavie

**Best Garden** – winner Anne Marie Scott, Glenfinnan, runner up Andrew Lewis, Duror



Best tubs winner



Best vegetables winner



Best garden winner

## How to Get the Most Out of Your Heating this Winter

The Association has various different types of heating and domestic hot water systems across its housing stock. It is important to have the knowledge of how you control and use your system to gain the most efficient running costs to your property, especially when we are all experiencing higher fuel costs.

To help you understand how to use your system at its best efficiency, **Changeworks** has a fantastic website that has a wealth of useful information and guides.

Please visit: <https://bit.ly/ManagingYourHeating>.

In addition to this, the Association's Asset Department can reissue you with instructions on how to use your system efficiently. If you have any questions or would like support with the settings for your heating system, please contact us on:

 **01397 702530** or  [info@lochaberhousing.org.uk](mailto:info@lochaberhousing.org.uk)



Remember it is important to heat your property to a minimum 16 degrees for your health and reduce the chance of condensation within your property.

## Handyperson Service

Lochaber Handyperson Service will complete minor repairs, tasks and small jobs around the home to contribute to your well-being and safety. The service is available to people aged 65 or over, and to people living with a disability. We do not charge for our labour or travel expenses, but you may have to make a contribution towards parts and materials as required. We will discuss any costs prior to works being carried out.





These tasks include:

- Supplying and fitting smoke alarms
- Changing fuses
- Draught proofing windows and doors
- Fitting curtain rails, window blinds and curtains
- Fitting shelves and assembling small amounts of flat pack furniture
- Replacing tap washers and bleeding radiators
- Fitting toilet seats
- Fitting energy saving light bulbs, smart switches and other energy saving devices



If you would like assistance, or know of someone who may benefit, please contact the Handyperson Service. (Lochaber Handyperson Service is a subsidiary of Lochaber Housing Association.)

Complete the online form:  <https://www.lochaberhousing.org.uk/request-handyperson-service>

 **01397 706333** or  [info@lcr.org.uk](mailto:info@lcr.org.uk)







**LOCHABER  
HANDYPERSON SERVICE**

## Are you Cold Weather Ready?

There are many ways that cold weather can be prevented from causing damage to your home and its contents. Try and avoid burst pipes and damage to your home this winter by keeping your home reasonably warm day and night. In particularly cold weather keep the heating on during the night at a low temperature.

A few do's and don'ts:

-  If you have a burst pipe, turn off the water at the mains stop valve. Turn off the central heating and open all the taps to drain the system.
-  If your water supply becomes frozen, **do not** open the hot taps because the hot water cylinder may collapse if the pipes feeding it are frozen.
-  **Never** attempt to thaw out frozen pipes by switching on your immersion heater or boiler.
-  Contact Lochaber Housing Association for a plumber at the earliest opportunity.

If you're going away even for a short time during the winter months and you don't want to leave the heating on, you should turn off all services at the mains and ensure that the water is turned off and drained down too. To do this, you should turn off the stopcock and then turn on all the sink, basin and bath taps until the water stops running. **DO NOT TURN OFF THE TAPS.** Don't leave the house until all the water has stopped running in case the waste pipes are frozen and the water can't drain away. You should also put salt in the toilet pan to prevent the water from freezing.

**IF YOU DO NOT REPORT A REPAIR** which then gets worse and causes further damage to your property, you will be recharged for the cost of putting this right. Further guidance is given in our information sheets: <https://bit.ly/Cold-weather-and-frost-alert-advice> and: <https://bit.ly/Living-in-your-home>

## Reporting Repairs

The easiest way of reporting a repair is by using the online Report a Repair Tool on our website:

<https://www.lochaberhousing.org.uk/report-repair/>

Alternatively, you can log your repair via your My Home Account:

<https://myhome.lochaberhousing.org.uk>

Maintenance Department: **01397 703165** during office hours

If you experience an emergency repair out with office hours you need to call the out of hours emergency switchboard on: **01349 886691**



## Join our Board!

Did you know that the Association is operated by a voluntary board of management with members from all walks of life and very different skills?

We are seeking to have tenants on our Board, who are committed to the Association's objective to provide affordable housing and services throughout Lochaber.

The Board meet approximately 10 times a year with most of our meetings held in the evenings, and can be attended in person or online. Expenses to attend are available.

We are an equal opportunities organisation and positively encourage applications from people regardless of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.

If you would like to hear more about how you could support the Association, please contact Jenny MacKay, Director of Customer Services on:

 **077914 94572** or

 [jmackay@lochaberhousing.org.uk](mailto:jmackay@lochaberhousing.org.uk)

Upon request, this newsletter can be produced in another format e.g. braille or large print.

Where English is not your first language, LHA will provide on request, written information in your first language.



## Meet our New Apprentices

Earlier this year we welcomed two new apprentice joiners, Liam Campbell and Ewen Morrison. Both will undertake a four year training programme which involves a period at Inverness college, although their main source of learning will be from shadowing the tradesmen that they work with.

Director of Customer Services, Jenny MacKay welcomed Liam and Ewen to the company adding "across the LHA Group we have a long history of investing in the future of young people in Lochaber with both building trade and business administration apprenticeships."



Liam Campbell



Ewen Morrison

**For general enquiries our telephone lines will close  
4:00pm Monday 23rd December and  
re-open 9:00am Friday 3rd January  
For out of hours emergency repairs  
**01349 886691****