



OAK TREE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

**SPRING
NEWSLETTER 2016**

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TRY THIS

RENT INCREASE DECISION

Thank you to all tenants who responded to our consultation on what the rent increase would be for 2016-17. We had 93 responses from tenants giving their views. The majority (76) wanted the lowest increase of 0.7% with 14 going for 1.0% and only 3 choosing the highest level 1.3%. The results were reported to the Management Committee at their meeting on 22nd February. The committee were pleased to have so many responses and were happy to agree to the lowest increase possible. They are very keen to make sure that rents are kept low, but remain at a level which gives enough income to manage and maintain your homes and keep services at a high level.

Some tenants were not directly affected by the decision. Where it was known that rents needed to increase or reduce to bring rents in line with the new policy for setting rents, a higher or lower increase was applied. The maximum increase was £8.00. The final phase of resetting rents will get underway next year. Around half have been reset during 2015-16 so we know what the difference is between the rent charged and what the rent should be. By March 2017, we intend to have all rents reset so we know what the differences will be. Over the next 5 years or so, the differences either up or down, will be reduced until rents are at the right level.

Oak Tree Office Opening Hours and Public Holidays

OPENING HOURS

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| Monday | 9am – 5pm |
| Tuesday | 9am – 6pm |
| Wednesday | 12noon – 5pm |
| Thursday | 9am – 5pm |
| Friday | 9am – 4pm |

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

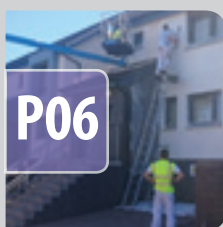
| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Good Friday | Friday 25th March 2016 |
| Easter Monday | Monday 28th March 2016 |
| May Day | Monday 2nd May 2016 |
| Queens Birthday | Friday 27th May 2016 |
| May Weekend | Monday 30th May 2016 |
| Greenock Fair | Friday 1st July 2016 |
| | Monday 4th July 2016 |
| September Weekend | Friday 2nd September 2016 |
| | Monday 5th September 2016 |
| Christmas | Monday 26th December 2016 |
| | Tuesday 27th December 2016 |
| | Wednesday 28th December 2016 |
| New Year | Monday 2nd January 2017 |
| | Tuesday 3rd January 2017 |
| | Wednesday 4th January 2017 |

TAKE A LOOK INSIDE

The Association is regulated with:
The Scottish Housing Regulator No. HCB137
Financial Conduct Authority No. 2232(S)
VAT Registration No. 156 9197 67
Charity number SC045300



P02
**HOUSING
BENEFIT &
UNIVERSAL
CREDIT
UPDATE**



P06
**PLANNED
& CYCLICAL
MAINTENANCE**



P16
**24 HOUR
ACCESS TO
SERVICES**

CHANGES TO HOUSING BENEFIT ENTITLEMENT FOR NEW TENANTS

The Government has announced that people who start new tenancies in social housing from April 2016 will have their Housing Benefit capped to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates (the amount payable to people who rent from private landlords) from April 2018.

This means that the government will apply the relevant Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates as a maximum level for Housing Benefit payments in the social rented sector (including the Shared Accommodation Rate for single claimants aged under 35, pension age tenants and supported accommodation).



The cap will apply from 1 April 2018 but only to tenancies signed after 1 April 2016. You may be able to claim additional Discretionary Housing Payments should you be deemed vulnerable or live in supported accommodation.

These changes will apply to tenancies signed after 1 April 2016, with Housing Benefit entitlement changing from 1 April 2018 onward.

Current LHA rates can be found on Inverclyde Council's website www.inverclyde.gov.uk.

We are still waiting for clarification on the details of how this policy will work in practice, and we will keep tenants advised when we have more information.

However this will only apply to tenancies signed after 1 April 2016.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE

All our tenants who are single and of working age and need to make a new claim for benefits may now be entitled to Universal Credit.

The number of tenants that are moving onto this benefit is increasing and it is the plan that **all benefit claimants in Inverclyde** will be in receipt of Universal Credit by 2020.

This means that you are responsible for paying your rent from your monthly payment.

At the moment there are a number of factors which would mean that you were not eligible for Universal Credit. These include:-

- You are under 18 or over 60 years & 6 months
- You are in a relationship or have children living with you
- You have caring responsibilities
- You have children that stay with you for some of the time or you provide financial support for them
- You live in temporary accommodation
- You are claiming other benefits
- You are due a payment from your previous employment of more than £338.00

The last point on this list is very important. If you answer no to this question and you then receive payments in the following month which total more than £338.00 then this will affect the amount of your first payment. You may find that you get much less than you were expecting. The information about payments is provided directly to the Department of Work and Pensions from the department that collects information on taxes – HMRC.

Please remember to take into account any wages and holiday pay that you could be due and let your Work Coach know.

Another important point to remember is if you start work you should not close your claim for Universal Credit as you might still be entitled to money until you receive your first wage or additional money if you are only working part time or are on a low wage.

It also means that if your circumstances change again and you are no longer working it will mean you won't need to wait so long for your Universal Credit to start again.

Our staff are here to help you deal with these changes. There is a lot of support and help with IT skills, budgeting and even some financial assistance if you are having difficulties while waiting for your payments to start.

OPENNESS & CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY (REVIEW)

The Association has recently reviewed our Openness and Confidentiality Policy. As you may know, the Association responds openly to requests for information, unless there are justifiable reasons for withholding it. The Association believes that our members, tenants, service users and stakeholders should have access to information on how the Association conducts itself. This means that unless information requested is considered sensitive or personally confidential, it will be made available on request.

In reviewing our Policy, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) requirements have been incorporated, where required. The regulation relevant to this Policy includes:

Regulatory Standard 2: *“The Registered Social Landlord (RSL) is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.”*

In addition, the Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the overall outcomes which social landlords should aim to achieve in performing our housing activities.

Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome 2: *“Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.”*

The following highlights some of the steps we take to achieve our Policy objectives:-

Annual Report and Accounts

OTHA will comply with the law and make available on an annual basis an Annual Report and our Annual

Accounts, through the AGM and on request. Our Annual Report will be made available on our website and circulated widely and our Annual Accounts will also be posted on the SHR website.

Providing Information to Tenants

The information which we will provide to each tenant will include:

- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Tenancy Agreement
- Information about Right to Repair, Right to Compensation for Improvements
- Rent Setting Information and Service Charges Information
- Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy
- Service Standards
- Information about our Repairs and Maintenance Service
- Details about other policies such as Allocations, Customer Engagement Policy etc.

This information will be made available at the point of signing for a new tenancy and most of this will be contained within our tenant's handbook. This will be periodically revised.

OTHA acknowledges and shall fully comply with the SHR requirement for all social landlords to report their performance, in achieving or progressing towards the Scottish Social Housing



Charter outcomes and standards to their tenants and service users. We will also ensure that information produced by the SHR about our performance is freely provided to all tenants and service users and accessible to any other stakeholder.

Consultation with Tenants

Section 54 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 contains provision to enable both individual tenants and registered tenant groups to be consulted by the Landlord on issues affecting them, to which OTHA will comply.

Structure and Governance

OTHA will make the following information publicly available about its structure and governance:

- How the Management Committee is elected
- How decisions are made about housing and related services, and about the management of the Association.

We will also make all our other governance related policies and other relevant documents freely available.

Minutes of Management Committee Meetings

Minutes of our Management Committee Meetings will be

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OPENNESS & CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY (REVIEW)

available for inspection at the office. These will be provided on request to members, tenants and service users, unless there are matters of commercial and personal confidentiality which cannot reasonably be placed in the public domain.

Customer Surveys

OTHA will carry out periodic surveys of our tenants and service users to determine the level of satisfaction with our services and performance. These results will be published in full and in a summary format along with our response to them, in order to demonstrate our commitment to act on the results of the information received.

Scottish Housing Regulators Regulatory Assessment of Performance

The SHR publishes a range of information about individual social landlords on its website. We will advise or assist any person who may wish to obtain or access this information, or draw comparisons with other RSLs.

Communication of information

Information will be made available through a range of channels appropriate to the information in question, including:

- OTHA's website, which will be maintained in order to ensure that it provides an accessible, accurate and up-to-date information resource.
- Twitter and in the future, other social media options
- Tenants Handbook
- Regular newsletters distributed to OTHA customers
- In printed form; upon request from OTHA's offices.

OTHA will regularly ask tenants and stakeholders how they would like information provided and will ensure that, wherever possible and practicable, information available to the public will be written in plain English, avoiding jargon and

unexplained acronyms. We will make information available on request in a variety of information formats and in translation.

Access to meetings

Management and Sub Committee meetings are generally closed to the public. Minutes and non-confidential reports however are available as printed copies from our office. OTHA, in accordance with our constitution, will hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM), usually in June of each year, to which all members of the Association will be invited. Information will be provided in accordance with the Association's rules.

Requests for information

In addition to the information made publicly available, OTHA will comply with requests for information wherever practicable and appropriate, subject to considerations of confidentiality, cost and practicality.

Although not currently bound by the Freedom of Information Act, OTHA will abide by the spirit of the legislation. In general terms, OTHA will respond positively to written requests for information, from whatever source and for whatever reason, unless:

- The request is vexatious;
- The Association has already complied with the request;
- The request is identical or substantially similar to a request previously received from the same individual or organisation;
- The information is covered by an exemption from the requirements set out in the Freedom of Information Act.

Procedures for responding to information requests

We will respond to any request for information as soon as possible and within a maximum of 20 working days, with the exception of requests covered by the Data

Protection legislation where a 40 day period will apply.

This timescale applies both to requests where information is provided in full, and requests, which are covered by an exemption and are refused. In the event of a refusal, an explanation will be provided.

Charging for information

Our general policy is not to charge for the copying of documents which are requested.

OTHA will charge a fee of £10 for each Data Protection request requiring a search for information on an individual. The fee level will be notified to the individual or organisation in advance of any transaction. For large volumes of material, OTHA must also take account of the fact that the staff resources associated with providing information is met by tenants' rents.

We reserve the right to charge for the cost of providing information, or to refuse to provide information, in the following circumstances:

- If an information request will absorb significant staff resources either because of the nature of the request or if copy material is requested with a frequency which affects the Association's ability to manage its day to day business;
- If the person requesting information is not an OTHA tenant or service user. For example, the Association often receives requests from students seeking information for research purposes, and is not always able to meet such requests without compromising service standards for tenants.

Requests for information from the media

OTHA will respond openly to requests for information from the media.

If you have any comments on this aspect of a service, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

DIRECT DEBITS



We are now able to set up Direct Debits by telephone which means you don't need to sign a form and we can set them up immediately for you. You just need your bank account details with you.

You can still complete a form if you prefer and payments can be made to your account from someone else's bank account (your partner, family member etc) if this is appropriate.

Direct Debits can be set up for any day of the month and can be weekly, fortnightly, 4 weekly or monthly. The minimum we would usually accept as a Direct Debit payment is £5.

It is a convenient way to pay your rent and we can change the amount or the frequency of payments for you easily. We will also take care of making changes if your rent charge changes.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is child abuse. It involves a young person under the age of 18 being manipulated, forced or pressurised into taking part in a sexual act in exchange for gifts, money, alcohol or simply the promise of affection.

Who is at risk? – Anyone. Young people of any age, gender, sexual orientation, background or race. This can happen either online or in the community.

To find out more visit www.csethesigns.scot or www.inverclydechildprotection.org

Know the signs of Child Sexual Exploitation

- Going missing or returning home late
- Missing School
- Having unexplained gifts
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections
- Mood swings
- Drug and / or alcohol misuse
- Displaying sexualised behaviour



- Being secretive about where they are going, what they are doing or who they are with

Be aware as you talk to children and young people that there may be a lot of things going on for them: maybe serious or just growing up. Maintaining relationships helps us protect children and young people.

What can I do?

- Stay alert to any changes in the behaviour of your child
- Share your concerns - Social Work services (715365) or the Police (101)
- Think about ways you might support and help the young person to tell you about what has happened. They might also be worried about a friend

Being aware of the signs and symptoms of CSE can go a long way to help protect children.

Messages to young people about Child Sexual Exploitation

Every relationship is different but the healthy ones have some important things in common: talking and listening; trust and respect; support; and having an equal say.

Signs of an unhealthy relationship:

- being criticised or being made to feel stupid;
- if it gets physical, even a shove and even just once;
- being forced into something sexual;
- feeling afraid;
- being made to feel guilty;
- being expected to do something in return for a gift;
- feeling cut off from your friends or family.

If you think someone may be taking advantage of you or isn't treating you as they should, there's lots of advice and support available at alerts.scot or young.scot/ Inverclyde

Look out for the adverts on the tv for more information.

PLANNED MAINTENANCE & CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE

OTHA expects to spend around £1.3 million between April 2016 to March 2017 on planned improvements and maintenance carried out in a regular cycle. We have carried out our own property inspections where work is due, to check that work is needed. We also have added in extra work which was identified by a full stock condition survey carried out by David Adamson & partners.

Some work in our programme is not being done next year as planned. This is because the inspections showed that they were not needed at this time. The works which have been postponed are noted below. We postpone works where our inspections show that less than 30% of the properties or common areas, which we have inspected are in need of attention.

All the work that we are now intending to carry out in the 2016/17 programme is listed below. Staff members from OTHA's technical team will contact you in due course with more information on the extent of the works, if your home is on the list below. The investment being made by the Association will help to ensure that the properties included remain attractive and desirable for both our existing and prospective tenants.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of the programme then please contact the Association's Senior Development Officer, Sean Marshall, on 01475 807000 or at info@oaktreeha.org.uk.

Consultation

As part of the budget planning process, the Association is proposing changes to both the Kitchen replacement

and Painterwork elements of the 30-year planned maintenance programme.

Firstly, kitchens are presently done in two parts. Door fronts, worktops and sinks are replaced on a 10-year cycle and kitchen unit carcasses are replaced on a 20-year cycle. Our recent contracts have shown that in practice, this does not save money as expected. OTHA is now proposing that full replacement of the kitchen is carried out every 10 years.

Secondly, when we inspect paintwork in common areas, we find that most is lasting well after 5 years. This suggests that the frequency for the painting of the existing internal and external common areas could be extended. The feedback from surveyors is that a 7 year cycle would be more appropriate.

We are required to consult on proposed changes and the Association would therefore welcome your thoughts on these proposals. We would be obliged if you would take some time to complete and return the consultation survey that was issued with the rent increase letters in February.

PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2016/17 WORKS POSTPONED 2-5 YEARS

| Address | | Works |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| John Campbell Court, Bow Farm Phase 1A (40-64 Tasker St, 1-19 Murry St & 16-22 Walker St), 69-77 Wellington St, Wemyss Bay Estate | 67 Dempster St, 37-39 Kelly St, 37-39 Kelly St & 32 South St, Midton Estate (Bute St, Kirn Dr & MacMillan Dr), 48, 48A & 50 Inverkip St. | Kitchen Replacements |
| 11-13 Nelson St | 17-19 Newton St | Bathroom Replacements |
| Midton Estate (Bute St, Kirn Dr & MacMillan Dr) 37-39 Kelly St, 32 South St 69-77 Wellington St, 7 Leven Rd | 48, 48A & 50 Inverkip St. | Painterwork |



PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2016/17

| Address | | Works |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| Bow Farm LSVT (Bow Road & Buchanan St) Pennyfern Cottages (Maple Rd & Pennyfern Rd) Tower Drive Estate (Darroch Dr, Fletcher Av, Henderson Terrace, Murray Pl, Tower Dr & Craigmuschat Rd) | 2 Murdieston St, 3 Brachelston St, 128-130 Drumfrochar Rd, 2 Wemyss Bay St, James Watt Ct, Bowfarm Phase 1B (2-32 Tasker St & 66-100 Tasker St), 3 Argyle Street & 53 West Blackhall St | Kitchen Replacements |
| John Campbell Ct, Bow Farm Phase 1B (2-32 & 66-100 Tasker St), 97 Holmscroft St | 1, 1A & 3 Newton St, 46 & 52 Inverkip St Muriel Blue Ct, 5-7 Brachelston St | Bathroom Replacements |
| Bow Farm LSVT (Bow Road & Buchanan St) Midton Estate (Bute St, Kirn Dr & MacMillan Dr) Kempock Place, 97 Holmscroft St | John Campbell Ct, Muriel Blue Ct 3 Brachelston St, 128-130 Drumfrochar Rd 2 Wemyss Bay St, 32 Innellan Rd | Heating Installations |
| Fancy Farm, Bow Farm LSVT (Bow Rd & Buchanan St) Tower Drive Estate (Darroch Dr, Fletcher Av, Henderson 17-19 Newton St Terrace, Murray Pl, Tower Dr & Craigmuschat Rd) | Branchton LSVT (Branchton Rd, Rothesay Rd, Stonehaven Rd, Forfar Rd & Cupar Dr), Kempock Pl 19 Robertson Street & 52 Finnart St, 11-13 Nelson St Wemyss Bay Estate | Painterwork |
| 6 & 8 Murdieston Street, Fancy Farm | Kempock Place | Electrical Works |

EASY ONE-POT CHICKEN CASSEROLE

Prep: 5 mins Cook: 50 mins

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 8 bone-in, skinless chicken thighs
- 1 tbsp oil
- 5 spring onions, sliced
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 2 chicken stock cubes
- 1 large carrot, cut into batons
- 400g new potatoes (cut into halves if large)
- 200g frozen peas
- 1 tbsp grainy mustard
- Small handful fresh soft herbs, like parsley, chives, dill or tarragon, chopped

Method

1. Fry the thighs in the oil in a casserole or wide pan with a lid to quickly brown.
2. Stir in the whites of the spring onion with the flour and stock cubes until the flour disappears, then gradually stir in 750ml boiled water.
3. Add the carrots and potatoes and bring to a simmer. Cover and cook for 20 mins.
4. Take off the lid and simmer for 15 mins more then add the peas and simmer for another 5 mins.
5. Stir in the mustard, green spring onion bits, herbs and some seasoning.



HOT CROSS BREAD & LEMON PUDDING

Prep: 20 mins Cook: 40 mins

Serves 4

Ingredients

- A knob of butter, for the dish
- 4 stale hot cross buns
- 200g lemon curd
- 2 large eggs
- 200ml double cream
- 200ml milk
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 4 tbsp caster sugar
- A little lemon zest
- Cream or vanilla ice cream, to serve (optional)

Method

1. Butter a 1-litre baking dish that will quite tightly fit the 4 buns. Cut each bun into 3 slices, and sandwich back together with a generous spreading of curd. Arrange buns in the dish.
2. Whisk the egg, cream, milk and remaining curd together, then sieve into a jug with the vanilla and 3 tbsp of the sugar. Pour over the buns and stand at room temperature for 30 mins for the custard to soak in.
3. Heat oven to 160°C (140°C fan)/ gas mark 3. Scatter the remaining sugar and lemon zest over the pudding. Bake for 30-40 mins until the top is golden and the custard gently set.
4. Stand for 5 mins, then serve with cream or vanilla ice cream, if you like.

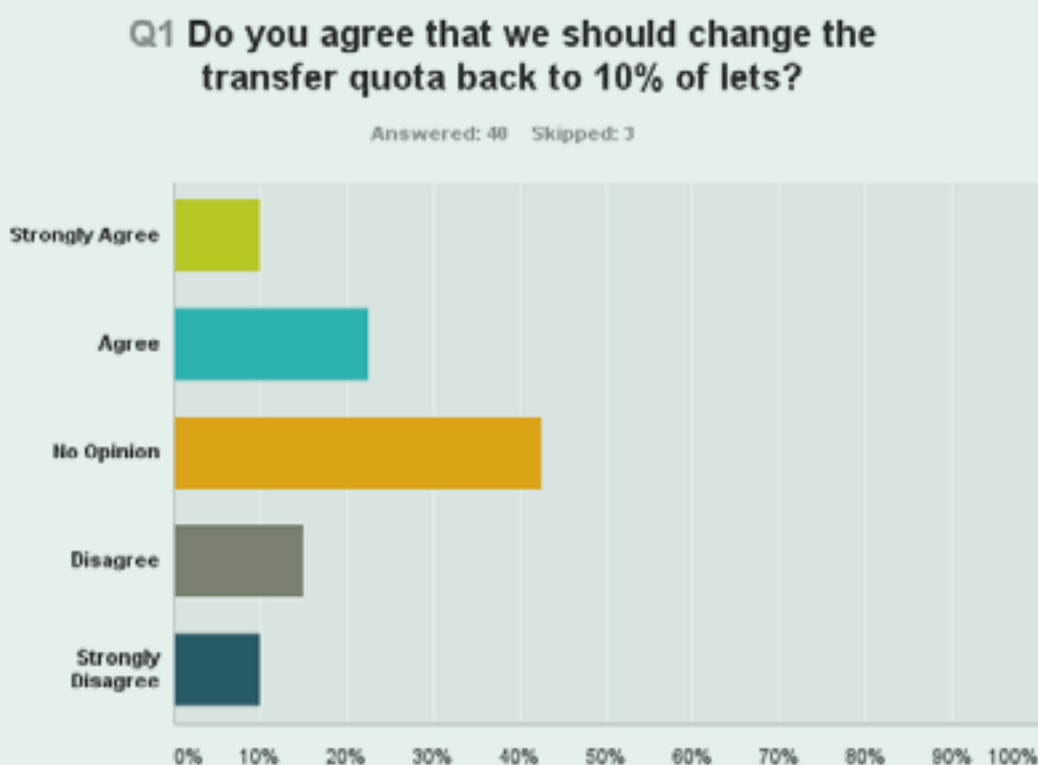


CONSULTATION ON OTHA LETTINGS PLAN FOR 2016-17

We asked all our tenants for their views on changing the Transfer Quota from 25% to 10% by including a survey form with the Rent Consultation information in January 2016.

Thank you to everyone who either sent the form back or spoke to a member of staff. 43 tenants took part in the consultation.

Although this was a small number of tenants, just under half had “no opinion” and of those that did have a view, 57% were in favour of changing the Transfer Quota to 10% and 43% were against it.



These views were taken into account by our Housing and Technical Services Sub-Committee and the change was approved. The Lettings Plan for 2016-17 sets out how the Association intends to let its properties in the coming year.

OTHA developed a joint Allocations Policy to determine how properties would be let, with Inverclyde Common Housing Register partners in 2011. This is a policy based on a quota system. Some quotas are let via referrals from agreed agencies, but most lettings are via a choice based lettings system.

Application processing is operated as a joint service through the Inverclyde Common Housing Register (ICHR) for the following partners:

- Oak Tree Housing Association Ltd
- Cloch Housing Association Ltd
- Larkfield Housing Association Ltd
- Link Housing Association Ltd (for properties in Inverclyde).

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CONSULTATION ON OTHA LETTINGS PLAN FOR 2016-17

Since 2008, OTHA have offered 25% of its lets to a Transfer Quota which means that the priority for the let will be to an existing OTHA tenant.

Any OTHA tenant can however be considered for any property that is advertised by the ICHR and a number of our tenants have moved to properties that were not part of the Transfer Quota.

Some facts and figures about Oak Tree tenants moving house since 1 April 2013.

- A total of 135 tenants have either moved to another Oak Tree HA property or one of the other housing associations in Inverclyde. Only half of them were transfers to another Oak Tree property.
- Most of the tenants who transferred to another Oak Tree property were living in a flat before they moved. Half of these tenants moved to another flat.
- A quarter of the tenants who moved were successful in moving to a property that wasn't "Priority to Oak Tree Tenants".
- This year so far, nearly half of the tenants who transferred had 0 points.
- Only half of the properties offered as "priority to Oak Tree tenants" were actually let to a transfer applicant. The demand is lower since it is now easier to move within Inverclyde.

It was because of the above that we thought it was time to change the Transfer Quota to 10% of the lets.

We are expecting it to be a busy year as we hope that the new houses being built at Garvald Street will be finished and occupied before 31 March 2017.

The table below shows how many properties OTHA expects to let next year.

| Quota | Percentage | Number |
|---|--------------|------------|
| Inverclyde Council – referrals under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 i.e. Homeless Referrals | 15% | 30 |
| Housing & Social Care Partnership Referrals | 15% | 30 |
| Of the remaining 140 lets | | |
| OTHA Transfer list | 10% | 14 |
| Other referrals | 5% | 7 |
| ICHR Housing List | 85% | 119 |
| | Total | 200 |

If you are interested in moving house and you haven't yet made an application, please log onto www.inverclydechr.org.uk or contact the office for details.

You can view the Lettings Plan on our website www.oaktreeha.org.uk. It is in the Document Library under Policies. If you would like a printed copy please let us know and we will send one to you.

OAK TREE WORDSEARCH

Can you find the Springtime words?

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

APRIL
BASEBALL
BIRD
BLOOM
BUTTERFLY
CATERPILLAR
CHICK
CLOUD
DAFFODIL
DIG
EARTH
EGG
FLOWER
FOG
GARDEN
GROW
HATCH
INSECT
KITE
LEAF
LILAC
MARCH
MAY
NEST
PICNIC

PLANT
PUDDLE
RAINBOW
RAINCOAT
RAINY
ROOTS
SEASON
SEED
SHOVEL
SHOWER
SOIL
SPRING
SPROUT
STEM
STORM
SUNSHINE
THAW
TULIP
UMBRELLA
VIOLET
WARM
WATER
WEED
WIND
WORM

FEEL LIKE A WINNER

Join today

Specialist support to help you stop smoking

**Stop smoking for 28 days
and you could be £250
better off***

Phone to book a place or just come along!

01475 501226 or email

smokefree.inverclyde@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

or book a place here

www.nhsggc.org.uk/smokefreeservices

* Based on a 20 a day smoker at current
average cigarette costs September 2015.

INVERCLYDE
HSCP
Health and Social
Care Partnership

Stop Smoking Support Sessions:

Craigend Resource
Centre
Mondays
12:30 – 1:30pm

Greenock Health
Centre
Tuesdays
6:30 – 7:30pm

Gourock Health
Centre
Thursdays
10:00 – 11:00am

7 ½ John Wood St,
Port Glasgow
Thursdays
6:00 – 7:00pm



smokefree
SERVICES





YOU CAN NOW SHOP SMARTER AND PAY SMARTER WITH SMARTERBUYS STORE!

Smarterbuys Store, a scheme that provides an ethical alternative to loan sharks and high street weekly payment stores, helping social housing tenants to buy household essentials in an affordable way.

Smarterbuys Store works with lots of other social landlords across the country, providing tens of thousands of tenant's access to a dedicated online store, where they can purchase new furniture and white goods. Oak Tree is delighted to be a Smarterbuys Store partner.

More than providing a great range of big brand products at competitive prices, Smarterbuys Store also provides access to responsible and affordable credit if customers are unable to pay for the goods they need up front. Following a simple, safe and confidential credit check, customers can pay for their goods in weekly, fortnightly or monthly instalments over two years.

And as if this wasn't enough, the scheme

also encourages tenants to save as they buy, by putting 25p from every weekly payment into an account opened especially for them. At the end of the loan term, customers will have at least £26 in their account, more if they choose to add to it further themselves.

Smarterbuys Store products are up to 40% cheaper than other weekly payment stores and provide a real alternative to the much higher cost options offered by unscrupulous lenders. At 24.19% APR, the rate of lending is very competitive, and is actually cheaper than many high street favourites.

The full range of products includes a wide range of white goods including ovens, fridge freezers and washing machines, as well as a stylish range of quality furniture for the whole house. Smarterbuys Store also stocks a great range of baby and nursery products, and offers value packages for those seeking to make a number of purchases. Delivery is completely free and Smarterbuys Store can even install your new purchases. Plus, it doesn't matter how many items customers buy; Smarterbuys Store only charges one administration fee per transaction.

All in all, Smarterbuys Store offers safe and secure purchasing, from a name you can trust. Go online and take a look at the range today, at your dedicated Smarterbuys Store <http://www.inverclyde.sbstore.org/> and find out how you can shop smarter and pay smarter or call Smarterbuys on 0300 500 0975.



CUSTOMER CARE

| Target Area | Task Targets | Within Target Times (annual %) | Comments October – December 2015 |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Check new housing application, point and process | 10 working days | 95% | November- December 100%. October's targets not recorded due to change in system. In new system cases out with target are being recorded via a spreadsheet maintained by Senior Officer |
| Time to wait for an appointment to see specific member of staff (within OTHA area or at office/Excludes Applicant Surgeries) | Same or next working day | 95% | Survey carried out twice per month (rotating days) 100% |
| Appointments kept/ attended on time | Within 15 minutes of agreed time | 100% | Survey carried out twice per month (rotating days) 100% |
| Acknowledge or fully respond to a written enquiry | 5 working days | 95% | 97.8% |
| Behavioural code of Committee, Staff and Contractors/Agents | Adherence to Code | 100% | 100% based on complaints received via the complaints handling procedure. |
| Behavioural code of Customers | Adherence to Code | 100% | Tenant swearing and shouting at staff. Voicemail messages left of repeated frequent swearing and threats to OTHA. Home visits where staff have had to leave because of unreasonable behaviour. OTHA advised tenant that staff will no longer speak to tenant on the phone and will only speak with the tenant in the office with someone in attendance with the tenant. A friend or family member is to be nominated so that OTHA can contact if required. |

CUSTOMER CARE WINNERS

| Name | Month |
|---------------|---------------|
| Name Withheld | November 2015 |
| S. Graham | December 2015 |
| L McLeod | January 2016 |

**ALL WINNERS RECEIVE A
£10 TESCO
VOUCHER**

BREAST SCREENING

Don't get scared get checked

- Are you a women aged 50 – 70 years of age?
- Is your GP in the Greenock or Port Glasgow area?
- If so, you will shortly receive a letter to attend a breast screening appointment in a local mobile unit.
- **Please note this is not a drop-in facility.**

If your appointment does not suit you we can arrange a more suitable time or place for you, an information booklet will be with your letter.

Why should you attend?

- Breast screening check can save your life
- This can detect tiny cancers before you can see or feel it yourself
- The earlier a cancer is found the easier it is to treat

What happens?

- It only takes a few minutes
- Female only staff
- No men allowed in the unit
- Done in privacy



DON'T BE A TARGET FOR THIEVES



Most of us will never suffer the misfortune of having our possessions stolen but it does happen on a regular basis and there are some simple steps you can take to minimise the risk.

Here are our top ten tips:-

1. Make sure your front and back doors are always locked – even when you are in the house.
2. If you live in a flat which has a door entry system ensure that it isn't "snibbed" open and if the door isn't closing over automatically or there is a fault then report it to the office. Don't assume that someone else will have reported it – they maybe thinking you will!
3. Back doors to blocks of flats need to be secure too and the above applies to back and front doors.
4. If you are popping out for a short while remember to take a key and don't put the lock on the snib.
5. If you have a house with a garden, make sure the garden is kept tidy and grass short as it may look as though you have left the property if the garden needs attention
6. Garden sheds can also be a target so make sure yours has a sturdy padlock.
7. Be wary of posting on Social Media your whereabouts. Letting your friends know that you have checked into your family hotel in Majorca is also letting others know you are away from home. You should ensure that your settings are not public
8. There are a number of Facebook groups which allow people to buy, sell or swap with others. These are often public groups with large numbers of users so it's best to send private messages when arranging to meet.
9. Don't advertise that you have new large electrical items by putting the box out for collection beside your bin. It may mean you have to dispose of it elsewhere or try and break it into smaller sections that will fit in the bin.
10. Don't leave a spare key hidden somewhere outside the house or flat. If you can see a tricky hiding place, so can a determined thief.

Remember that OTHA can also assist with low cost contents insurance that can give you cover if the worst does happen. Please contact the office for details.

LEGIONELLA & ASBESTOS RISKS

REMINDERS REGARDING THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH LEGIONELLA & ASBESTOS

Precautions Against Legionella

The risk of contracting legionella in the domestic home is minimal. There are, however, some simple steps that you should take to avoid this happening.

- You should turn your shower on at least once a week or more.
- You should make sure that you dismantle, clean and descale your showerheads and shower hoses at least once every 3 months or earlier if scaling is evident.

Precautions Regarding Asbestos

Properties built after the mid-1980s are very unlikely to contain asbestos in the fabric of the building and properties built or refurbished after the 1990s are extremely unlikely to contain asbestos anywhere in the building. Asbestos cement, however, had been widely used as a cladding material and it can still be found in garages and sheds. Asbestos fibres are often present in the air and it is very unlikely that the levels of asbestos fibres in a domestic home will be harmful, particularly given that asbestos materials in good condition do not usually pose a danger if they are not disturbed or damaged.

- If any of our maintenance contractor's suspect there is asbestos in your home, they will contact the Association to seek further advice before they take any action. If you do have asbestos materials in your home, extra care will be taken to ensure the release of fibres does not present a danger to you. If asbestos is discovered you should refrain from carrying out DIY work where drilling or disturbance of the asbestos is required. Remember asbestos is not usually dangerous if it is not disturbed or damaged.
- Some small jobs can be undertaken if the right precautions are taken. Our information leaflet on asbestos gives advice on asbestos and this should be consulted before any work is undertaken. This leaflet can be obtained from the reception area of the Association's office at High Street.



Caution
May contain
asbestos

MAPLE ROAD FLATS – PROGRESS SO FAR



Work is progressing in Maple Road and the closes are starting to brighten up the street.

So far we have completed the external wall insulation and a new dry dash render system which means that the outside of the building is covered in a material which will help retain heat within the building. The appearance of the buildings has also been improved.

We have had positive comments from tenants who say that their flats are noticeably warmer and we hope that as well as feeling cosier, their heating bills are reducing too.

We consulted tenants on a number of issues and asked them for their comments on what they would like to see in Maple Road. This was a very useful exercise and has allowed us to take these comments and ideas into account when planning what to do next in the area.

We also consulted on the colours tenants would like the closes to be painted and the type of flooring that would be provided in the closes.

The six closes at 1, 3, 5, 31, 33 and 35 are in the process of being painted dark grey & light grey and grey rubber flooring is being fitted. We hope this will make the inside of the closes look more attractive and be easier to clean.

We have also been working with the charity Action for Children and they are providing training opportunities to young people and this will include landscaping work,

painting and decorating and fencing. We are delighted to be able to offer youngsters the chance to learn valuable skills like these and look forward to seeing their handiwork.

Some work has taken place at the garden areas at 1-5 Maple Road but unfortunately the work was started in January and the wet weather meant mud was an issue for the volunteers and the tenants living in the closes but some planting has taken place and the milder weather will help future works.

The tenants of the flats have been attending a number of meetings and we have established a Pennyfern Regeneration Working Party. We have a Facebook group set up and we are using text messaging to keep residents informed of developments and meetings. We are hoping to have the next meeting in Maple Road and will invite everyone to see the improvements for themselves.

There are flats available for let at the moment - we have one, two and three bedroom flats available. If you are interested in moving to or within Maple Road please contact the office.

We are not finished by any means and will be continuing to improve the outside and inside of the flats throughout the coming months.

CONTACT US

There are many ways to contact us

| | | |
|-----------|---|----------------------------------|
| Phone No: | ~ | 01475 807000 (General Enquiries) |
| | ~ | 01475 807001 (Repair Line) |
| Email: | ~ | info@oaktreeha.org.uk |
| Website: | ~ | www.oaktreeha.org.uk |
| Text: | ~ | 07866 555 538 |
| Twitter | ~ | @OakTreeHA |

Or call in to the office:

41 High Street, Greenock, PA15 1NR



www.oaktreeha.org.uk



@OakTreeHA

OFFICE OPENING HOURS

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Monday | 9:00am ~ 5:00pm |
| Tuesday | 9:00am ~ 6:00pm |
| Wednesday | 12noon ~ 5:00pm |
| Thursday | 9:00am ~ 5:00pm |
| Friday | 9:00am ~ 4:00pm |

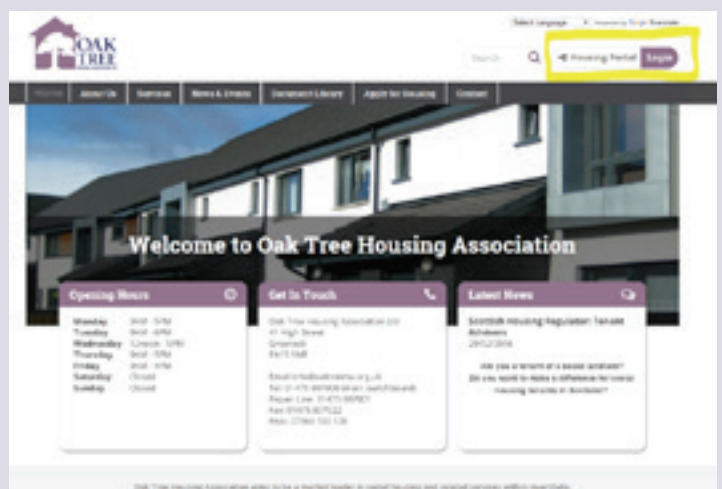
GET YOUR LOG IN HERE!

Savvy OTHA customers have been logging in via our website to check their rent statements and check on their repairs. Just like online banking, our web portal takes you straight to the information you want to see for yourself. You can get 24 hour access to our services online, perfect for when the office is shut.

Using the portal, you can also:

- Report a repair
- Pay your rent
- Update your details
- Request a meeting
- Report your satisfaction levels.

Any member of the housing team can get you sorted and if you need a bit more help, we can refer you to Future Skills to get your digital knowledge up to scratch. If you haven't got one already, get your log in and password and get started. OTHA's on line service is ready and waiting for you.



[Housing Portal](#) [Login](#)