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Dear Tenant / Resident

Message to our tenants and residents: Update on Services January 2021

Firstly, we would like to thank you all for your patience and understanding during the current Coronavirus / Covid 19 Pandemic as we know that it has disrupted services to you. The position is continually shifting as we respond to changing guidance and lockdown rules from the Scottish Government. The most recent changes were brought in on 5th January 2021 with updates on the 13th January 2021, and once again we have revised how we can provide services to you.

As you are probably aware, all 3 areas where we provide homes are in local restriction Level 4. The Scottish Government is due to make a further announcement at the end of January 2021 and early indications are that the restrictions are likely to continue into February so we are some way away from being able to fully restore services.

We are trying to give you updates via Facebook and our website but we know that it does not work for everyone, so we are sending out this letter to you. If you can get online with Facebook and the internet we would encourage you to do so as we can get information to you more quickly this way. It would also be helpful if we have an up to date phone number and email address for you if you have this. If you need any information you can call us.

You can keep up to date with the latest Scottish Government Guidance by visiting their web site. They have a coronavirus section and here is the link - <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Safety First

Safeguarding you as our customer, our employees, our contractor's and the communities we work in will remain our top priority. We want to reassure you of our safe working procedures and we and our contractors will establish your individual circumstances and any specific vulnerabilities by conducting a telephone pre visit questionnaire prior to any visit to your home.

Depending on what you tell us, any visits may be re-arranged to a time when you are well enough for our visit.

If you are particularly vulnerable, 'shielding', symptomatic, participating in trace and protect protocols or just not comfortable with our visit due to general concern over the ongoing Covid19 situation, we will act sensitively and considerately and re-arrange our visit to a time that suits your individual needs or postpone the repair.

Risk assessments have been carried out to cover both on-site and in-home works as well as working from home and the office. Specific control measures are proposed for each hazard, including good hygiene practice, social distancing and safe storage of equipment.

Repairs from December 2020

Timescales

- From 26th December 2020 we can only carry out essential repairs in line with the Scottish Government guidance. Please keep reporting your repairs to us and our staff will advise what we can attend to at this time. We will do our best to clear any backlog as quickly and as safely as we can when we get the go ahead to expand the types of repair we can undertake.
- Repairs response times remain suspended and we are now using a Covid 19, 90 day target category for response times however there may be circumstance where we cannot meet this, particularly if Level 4 restrictions are extended.
- There is an estimated backlog of around 3 months' worth of non-emergency repairs to complete as we have been operating a restricted service since lockdown on 23rd March 2020. We are working with our contractors to clear this as quickly as possible but we have to take account of the current restrictions. We may not be able to undertake some works until restrictions are significantly eased and even at that point there will be a backlog of repairs. We do appreciate your patience.
- If you have an outstanding repair, that is not considered to be an emergency or a right to repair, we will be contacting you in the few weeks by phone, email or letter to let you know what is happening with the repair and when we are hoping the contractor will be able to progress. Again, it would be helpful if you make sure that the contact details we hold for you are up to date.

Reporting your repair

- Please keep reporting your repairs to us. Restrictions on in person contacts are still in place however please continue to report your repair request in the normal way.
- Sending photos of your repair or fault may assist us with a quick assessment of what work needs to be done by our contractor. Our contact details are noted below.
- The weather is colder now and we would urge you to know the location of the stop cock in your home (usually under the sink) and know how to turn the water off in the event of a burst. Turning off the water can prevent a lot of

damage. Our leaflet is on our web site and if you want a copy posted to you just give us a call.

Pre- Inspections

- Where we are unable to assess the full extent of the repair required through conversation/photos, an on-site inspection by one of our officers may be required. The process in arranging the inspection is similar to our contractors making appointment to undertake works as noted above.

Work Types

- We are trying to deliver both essential internal and also external repairs where it is safe to do so and it is acceptable under the guidance.
- There may be some issues with the supply of materials due to the knock on effect of reduced availability due to lockdown.
- Gas servicing has continued throughout the lockdown and we would ask that you provide access and we will take your circumstances into account if this needs re-arranged.
- We will use break ins if people do not contact us where we are trying to arrange a safety check within the 12 month period - so please contact us if you have any difficulties regarding access.

Investment/Improvement

- Contractors carrying out improvement works such as Electrical Works (including Smoke/Heat & Carbon Monoxide Alarms), Sanitaryware, Boilers etc will not be on site during Level 4 restrictions.
- Association staff and contractors will communicate direct with you to arrange suitable access to commence these works when we are allowed to do so.
- The work to install Smoke/Heat & Carbon Monoxide is a legal requirement and we would urge you to allow access when we can get back on site. The Scottish Government have recognised the impact of the restrictions on the ability to get the work completed and the deadline to do the work has been extended from February 2021 to February 2022. We remain committed to doing the work as quickly as we can.
- External painterwork continues but the weather has impacted on the progress of work

Estate Inspections /Landscaping Works

- A programme of close and estate inspections will continue to try and ensure health, safety and hygiene are maintained. These will be less frequent than usual but staff will maintain a presence on site.
- We need your help – if you encounter any issues with common areas, estate or close safety etc then please get in touch with the Estates Team.
- Fly tipping is an issue in a number of areas and we need your co-operation in

reporting incidences to us together with any information you can give us as to who may be doing the tipping. It is tenant rent money and owners charges which are paying for these clean ups so it is in everyone's interest if we can charge this to the people responsible and seek to pursue fines through the local authority.

- In Stirling and Clackmannanshire Council areas, IdVerde, our contractor continues to be on site including undertaking gritting at the Plein Balfour Court complex only as the weather requires. For other areas road and pavement gritting is the responsibility of the local authority and you can find out more from their web sites on what service provisions they have in place.
- In the Falkirk Council area landscape maintenance is carried out by the council and they are undertaking work on a restricted basis.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- If you are experiencing any issues with neighbours or any other Anti-Social Behaviour in your estate, block or street then get in touch.
- We are dealing with cases and will use phone and video conferencing to deal with this as far as we can.

Housing Applications /Allocations /Moving Home /Empty House Repairs

- House moves are allowed under the Level 4 restrictions. We continue to accept and process housing applications and let properties.
- This involves repairs being carried out to empty properties using safe working practices.

Paying Rent and Support

If you are experiencing financial difficulties or are having difficulty paying your rent either as a result of coronavirus or for any other reason, then please contact us.

The efforts that tenants are making to ensure their rent is paid during this difficult time is much appreciated and you must still continue to do so. If you have difficulty paying your rent at any time please contact us immediately. In addition to referring you to the Association's Tenancy Sustainment Officer we can also point you in the direction of other sources of financial advice and assistance and agree a plan with you to pay your rent.

Support

- Our staff are working hard to maintain services and, like everyone else, they are coping with the restrictions in their working and home lives. They want to work with you to provide the best service they can. We know you appreciate the difficulties, and we thank you for your support.

- We have been supporting staff with resources to help us all cope and we would like to share these with you. We all need a bit help from time to time. We hope that these are useful to you.
 - The Scottish Government has a “Clear Your Head Site” with useful tips and advice - <https://clearyourhead.scot/>
 - Mind, the mental health charity has some good resources on their web site - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/>
 - The Mental Health Foundation has a section on getting support - <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health/getting-help>
 - We have worked with an organisation called Rowan Consultancy and their Facebook posts are really good - <https://www.facebook.com/RowanConsultancy>

More specifically we have our HoME Project that we run in conjunction with LinkLiving. HoME stands for Help on Managing Everything. The dedicated workers Amanda and Moira can help when things might be a bit overwhelming. There are also opportunities to take part on online social activities. Contact the Tenancy Management Team if you think they may be able to help you.

There are also local organisations that can support with foodbank services. There are too many to list here but if you need help finding them then give us a call and we will point you in the right direction.

Contact Details

- If you have an email address or mobile phone then please give us these details if we do not already have them.
- The office is closed to visitors and staff are mainly working from home though you may have seen some of us out and about. Call us if you need us - we are maintaining usual office hours – Monday to Friday / 9 till 5 excluding Public Holidays. Check our web site or Facebook page for any updates.
- The current number is **01324 878050**. As we continue to work from home, there may be a slight delay through the transfer of the phone to one of our officers, please be patient. The original contact number 01324 664966 has not been restored yet.
- Other methods of contact are:
 - e-mail: enquiries@paragonha.org.uk
 - Facebook Paragon Housing Association Limited
<https://www.facebook.com/Paragon-Housing-Association-Ltd-102003991471917/>

We hope that you and your family stay safe. Contact us if you need us and we will try and help or point you in the right direction.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Torrance

Margaret Torrance
Director