

Our Power

The Energy Company **Our Power** went into administration on the 31st of January 2019 and this has affected many tenants of the Housing Association – particularly those in the new developments of **Suisnish Place, Pat Gordon Place** and **St Duthac Drive**. The tenants of these developments all have single rate meters, but **Our Power's** principal selling point was that they were one of the few main providers of an **Economy 10 tariff** and **THTC** replacement tariff and were also early adopters of **Smart Meters**.

Ofgem the **Energy Regulator** has transferred all **Our Power** customers to **Utilita** as supplier of last resort. Tenants will have to decide if they like the new tariffs that **Utilita** have introduced, and if they don't like them, they can look around for alternatives. Those **Utilita** customers who have a single rate credit meter can switch to another single rate provider via a price comparison website, and thus access the entire UK energy market.

Those with **heat pumps on Economy 10** will have to consider whether they remain on **Economy 10** or alternatively switch to a single rate meter. With the demise of **Our Power** there are few E10 companies to choose from. **Utilita** have yet to release their finalised proposals for

supporting E10 and THTC customers but **their interim tariffs are considerably higher** than those offered by **Our Power**.

The experience of the Association's **Energy Advice Service** is that few tenants on E10 get the best out of the tariff and rather than predominantly using low rate electricity they mostly use the higher rate.

All heat pump users with **credit meters** should therefore consider moving to a **single rate meter**. They then have the freedom to choose from a wide variety of providers. Those with prepayment E10 meters are protected from the highest rates until 2020 due to the prepayment cap.

If any tenant would like some **advice on switching** from E10 to single rate meters then please get in touch with the **Energy Advice Team** at the Housing Association, telephone number **01478 612035**. We are not allowed to advise you which company to choose but can help explain the choices and the methods of switching.

It is a complicated switching procedure in the short term, but worthwhile in that it creates many more switching choices in the future.

Management Committee Members Required

Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association is the major provider of **affordable housing** in Skye and Lochalsh and we provide a range of other services including **Handyperson, Energy Advice** and **Care and Repair**.

We are looking for **volunteers to join our Management Committee** which includes members from a variety of backgrounds and with a wide range of skills and experience. An interest in housing or social care would be desirable but not essential.

This is a great opportunity to get involved with a local community-based organisation which is committed to meeting the needs of a variety of clients whilst providing excellent customer service.

This is a voluntary and unpaid position, but all reasonable out of pocket expenses are paid. If you wish an informal chat or meeting with our **Interim Chief Executive, Iain McIvor**, or an Information Pack, please contact **Marion Douglas, Corporate Services Manager**, on **01478 612035**.

If you would like to receive this document in another format or language, please contact us on 01478 612035 or e-mail: info@LSHA.co.uk and we will forward a copy to you.



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homefront

May 2019

**Lochalsh
& Skye
Housing
Association**

New Developments

We are due to complete the development at **Main Street, Kyle**, comprising 13 flats for affordable rent and retail and office space on the ground floor, in **May 2019**.



Main Street, Kyle of Lochalsh



Main Street, Kyle of Lochalsh

We are on site at **Kyleakin Feus** with 14 houses and flats due to complete in **October 2019**, 2 sites at **Struan Road, Portree**, of 12 and 16 flats and at the former bus garage site in **Park Road, Portree** comprising 17 flats all for affordable rent and all due to complete in **Summer 2020**.



Kyleakin Feus

We are currently working on affordable housing proposals at **Uig, Staffin, Kyle, Broadford, Portree, Armadale**, and **Glenelg**.



Kyleakin Feus

**You are invited to join us at our
Annual General Meeting
Monday 15 July 2019 at 7.00 pm
in Morrison House, Bayfield, Portree**

**A light buffet and refreshments will be
available at the end of the meeting**

Our annual **Right to Repair letter** is included in the following pages. This letter only applies to tenants with a Scottish Secure Tenancy, not Shared Owners/Mid Market Rent properties/Shared Equity properties or properties that we manage on behalf of other landlords. **If you are unsure if you are eligible, please get in touch with us.**

White Goods Safety

In Scotland, house fires involving white goods such as washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers happen every week.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) are working closely with partners including Scottish Government, Safer Communities, Trading Standards Scotland and Electrical Safety First. Together with a common aim – to reduce the number and the impact of white goods fires.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have recently issued the following safety message and launched an awareness campaign as new statistics reveal that fire crews were called to **327 white goods fires during 2018.**

The cause of these fires included:

Washing Machine – 121;
Tumble Dryer – 111; Fridge / Freezer – 53;
Dishwasher – 33; Washer / Dryer combined – 5; Spin Dryer – 4.

This awareness campaign has the following **top safety tips** and advice which we believe is worthy of highlighting.

1. Maintenance Of Whitegoods

Avoid overfilling your washing machine or tumble dryer – it could help you avoid a fire.

Tumble Dryer Safety Tip: Clean the lint trap after every use – the build up of lint or fluff can cause fires.

2. If You're Asleep, It's Just Not On

Keep everyone and everything important to you safe. Don't leave appliances such as dishwashers, tumble dryers and washing machines running when you are sleeping.

3. If You're Out, It's Just Not On

Leaving appliances such as dishwashers, tumble dryers and washing machines on when you are out of the house leaves your home at unnecessary risk. If you're not in make sure your appliances are switched off.

4. Register Your White Goods

It only takes a few minutes on www.registermyappliance.org.uk to register the large appliances we rely on every day to handle essential chores, chill food and cook for our families. In a small number of cases, manufacturers may identify problems with a model once the product has been in use for some time. They then need to contact owners to get the fault corrected as quickly as possible. Registering your appliances makes sure you'll know if a safety issue is identified.

5. Product Recalls

Look out for product recalls. Manufacturers may, on occasion, issue product recall notices for electrical appliances where the product could affect the safety of the user / consumer. Simply check out the list of products recalled on the **Electrical Safety First** website* to find out if your product is listed as a recall item. There is also a section which explains what to do with your recalled product. You can also keep up to date with all the latest product recalls by following the new SFRS Your Safety social media channels.

* <http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/product-recalls/>

6. Home Fire Safety

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service offer a **free Home Fire Safety Visit service**. The visits only take around 20 minutes and help householders spot possible fire hazards and make sure that their home is safer.

To request a free home fire safety visit for you, or someone you know, call **0800 0731 999** or text **'FIRE'** to **80800** or visit www.fireScotland.gov.uk

Please do use your white goods safely. Don't risk it. Maintain your white goods correctly and if you are out or asleep, IT'S JUST NOT ON.



Storage of Items in Communal Areas

The common stair is your only means of escape in the event of a fire.



Have you ever thought what you would do if **fire were to break out in your stair**? It may not necessarily be in your flat - a fire started in a common stair could **kill you and your family**. Even a small bag of rubbish can create enough smoke to fill a whole stair.

We would like to remind all tenants occupying flatted developments of the need to **keep communal areas clear of rubbish bags, cycles, prams/pushchairs or any other items** to ensure that there are no obstructions in the event of any emergency.

Our staff will notify tenants when items must be moved. If they are not moved before their next cleaning visit, they will be removed by the Association. **This policy will be enforced without exception.** Additionally, fire doors or main entrance doors in some communal areas are often found to be wedged open. We would ask that residents refrain from this practice in the interests of the safety and security of all occupiers of the properties.

Keep it clear

- Get rubbish, old furniture, etc out of the building
- Make sure storage areas are kept locked
- For advice on uplifting items contact your local Council

If fire does start

- **Keep doors closed** to prevent smoke filling your house
- **Dial 999** and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service, giving as much information as you can

The Association is pleased to announce that **Angus MacLennan** joined us in January 2019 to take up the post of **Technical Manager**.



In the previous edition of **Homefront**, we invited all our tenants to comment on our proposals for rent and service charge levels for 2019/2020.

Following the conclusion of the consultation exercise, our Management Committee agreed that the proposed **4% increase** should be applied from **1 April 2019**.

Please remember that if you are on a low income, your income

drops (perhaps because of seasonal work) or a member of your household leaves, you may be eligible to claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to pay all or part of your rent.

If you think that you may be eligible to claim, don't delay. For further information, please contact **Janet Masson, Linda Shaw** or **Alex Macleod** on **01478 612035**.

To All Tenants with Scottish Secure Tenancies

May 2019

Dear Tenant(s)

HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2001

The main purpose of this letter is to explain two rights introduced in the above Act, the Right to Repair and the Right to Compensation for Improvements.

Right to Repair

Enclosed at Appendix A you will find a "List of Qualifying Repairs". This corresponds with the schedule of qualifying repairs in the Right to Repair Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

You will notice that a maximum time in days has been allocated to each repair. Only the repairs defined on this list are qualifying repairs. All these repairs will normally have a value of less than £350.

When you report a repair you will be told:

- ❑ If the repair is a qualifying repair.
- ❑ The date by which the repair will be completed.
- ❑ Which contractor has been allocated the work.
- ❑ What your rights are under the Right to Repair scheme.

The time period for each repair is set by law, and cannot be varied except in exceptional circumstances, such as severe weather conditions; or if parts require to be ordered to complete the repair; or if further work is required to enable the repair to be completed. In the event that the work is delayed for any of the above reasons, the tenant will be informed of a new completion date.

If the nominated contractor does not start the work within the allotted time, you may select a second nominated contractor from the Association's List of Approved Contractors.

You may be due compensation (subject to certain circumstances - see above) if:

- ❑ The original contractor has not started work within the allotted time.
- ❑ The original contractor has started, but not completed the work, within the allotted time and no extension of original completion time has been notified.
- ❑ The second contractor has not completed the work within the allotted time.

Continued overleaf/...



When you nominate the second contractor, they must contact us to confirm the new arrangements. You will then be advised of the new completion date of the work.

If you fail to fulfil any appointments with a contractor to carry out the works, the whole process must begin again.

The Right to Compensation for Improvements

You will also find enclosed Appendix B headed "Schedule of Qualifying Improvements". This list details the improvements that may qualify for compensation.

The main points to consider before applying for compensation are as follows:

- ❑ You must apply in writing to the Association and obtain permission to carry out any improvement.
- ❑ In the event of permission to carry out an improvement being refused, you have the right to appeal to the sheriff court.
- ❑ To be considered for compensation you must apply in the period 28 days before your tenancy ends and no later than 21 days after your tenancy ends.
- ❑ You must be able to provide evidence of the cost of the improvement and the date the improvement was started and completed.
- ❑ The maximum amount that can be paid is £4,000 and, if the amount of compensation would be less than £100, no compensation will be paid.
- ❑ The amount of compensation paid will be based on the original cost of the improvement, the amount of years since the work was completed and the nominal life of the improvement.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Angus MacLennan

Angus MacLennan
TECHNICAL MANAGER

Please see over....

Appendix 1

LIST OF QUALIFYING REPAIRS AND THE MAXIMUM TIME FOR COMPLETION

DEFECT	Maximum Period in working days from date immediately following the date of notification of qualifying Repair or Inspection
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1 day
Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house	1 day
Blocked sink, bath or drain	1 day
Loss of electric power	1 day
Partial loss of electric power	3 days
Insecure external window, door or lock	1 day
Unsafe access path or step	1 day
Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks or cisterns	1 day
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1 day
Loss or partial loss of space or water heating where no alternative heating is available	1 day
Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house	1 day
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting	1 day
Loss of water supply	1 day
Partial loss of water supply	3 days
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3 days
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads	3 days
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working where no other means of ventilation exists	7 days

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Appendix 2

LIST OF IMPROVEMENTS WHICH COMPENSATION MAY BE CLAIMED FOR

You can only claim compensation for certain improvements which were started **on or after 30 September 2002**. These include installing, replacing or fitting:

- ☐ a bath or shower;
- ☐ cavity wall insulation;
- ☐ sound insulation;
- ☐ double glazing, replacing external windows or fitting secondary glazing;
- ☐ draught-proofing external doors or windows;
- ☐ pipes, water tanks or cylinders;
- ☐ a kitchen sink;
- ☐ loft insulation;
- ☐ rewiring, providing power or lighting, or adding other electrical fixtures (including smoke detectors);
- ☐ security measures other than burglar alarms;
- ☐ space or water heating;
- ☐ storage cupboards in a bathroom or kitchen;
- ☐ thermostatic radiator valves;
- ☐ a hand-wash basin;
- ☐ a toilet;
- ☐ a work surface for preparing food; and
- ☐ mechanical ventilation in bathrooms and kitchens.