

# homefront

June 2021

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## New Developments



Main Street, Kyle of Lochalsh

Last year we completed 17 flats for affordable rent at the former Rapson's bus garage site on **Park Road**, behind Tigh na Sgire, Portree. We also completed 6 flats for affordable rent at the former Hydro shop site in **Main Street, Kyle**.



Park Road, Portree



Park Road, Portree

We are currently on site with the second phase of our development at Struan Road, Portree, which comprises 12 flats at **John Nicolson Court**. The first phase comprising 16 flats at **Murray Court**, was recently completed. Both phases are for affordable rent.

We are also on site for 24 affordable rented properties at Campbell's Farm, Phase 4, Broadford, at Kyleakin Feus Phase 2, comprising 28 properties for affordable rent and in Staffin – 2 houses for affordable rent for LSHA, 2 for rent via the Rural Housing Fund for **Staffin Community Trust** and 2 Rent To Buy properties for the **Community Housing Trust**.



Murray Court, Portree

In the next months, we will start on site for three houses in Staffin Road, Portree (2 for LSHA and one for the Scottish Government - **SGRPID**). We are currently working on affordable housing proposals at **Raasay, Glenelg, Armadale, Portree** and **Dunvegan**.

**You are invited to join us at our**

**Annual General Meeting**

**Monday 19th July 2021**

**at 7.00 pm**

**The Meeting will be held by Zoom**

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.**

## Board 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 Board** 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 **Chief Executive, Lachie MacDonald**, for an Information Pack, please contact **Alison Taylor, Corporate Services Manager**, on **01478 612035**.

## New Board Members

We were delighted to welcome **Professor David Clapham, Professor Ron Hill** and **Mr Iain Lewis** to our Board recently.

The Association is very grateful to all Board members for the invaluable contribution they make towards the continued development of LSHA.

## New Staff Members

The Association is pleased to announce that **Mr Graeme Coull** joined us as **Director of Finance Services** in January 2021.

**Ms Alison Taylor** took up the post of **Corporate Services Manager** in April 2021 and **Mr Paul Denham** is due to commence with us in June 2021 as **Property Modernisation Officer**.

## Your feedback

Following the national lockdown announcement from the UK Government on 23 March 2020, we had no choice but to close our office doors to the public due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

In addition to this, a decision was taken to move all of our Morrison House based employees who could effectively complete their roles from home, to work remotely from their homes. To date, we still have **90%** of our office based employees working remotely and we are currently reviewing our long term office plans for the future and looking at ways in which we can maintain and improve the services we provide and make them more accessible to the public.

As we ease out of lockdown and certain restrictions are being lifted, we are keen to receive your feedback on how the new methods of contact have or have not worked for you and for you to provide any feedback or suggestions on how we could continue to provide the ongoing support to our tenants, albeit face to face, remotely or via other methods.

We are keen to hear your views and ask that you please provide any feedback to us by calling the office on **01478 612035** or via email to **info@LSHA.co.uk** by **Monday 7 July 2021**. Thank you.



## To All Tenants with Scottish Secure Tenancies

June 2021

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.

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## 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

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....

## 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.

## A reminder ... when we visit you ...

**Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association's staff, contractors, Handypersons and Energy Advisers carry out their work in LSHA owned and many other homes throughout Skye and Lochalsh.**

Our services are now resuming in peoples' homes and we want to reassure you that we will continue to abide by the highest health and safety standards. This little guide explains how we will work and what we might expect from you. **Thank you for your co-operation.**

To help us prepare for our visit there are a few simple questions our staff will ask before coming to see you:

Are you or any members of your family displaying symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19), such as high temperature, new and near persistent cough, or loss of taste or smell?



Are you or any of your family considered vulnerable or have you been self-isolating or shielding?



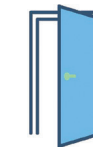
Are you happy for us to enter your home and do you understand that we may need further access within it?



**We will call you again on the day of your appointment to make sure that your circumstances haven't changed.**

Before our staff member or contractor enters your home there are some simple steps you can take to help us do so safely. If possible, please:

Leave all internal doors open



Leave windows open for ventilation

Keep clear pathways within the home and free of any obstruction



Keep all areas well-lit and open window coverings

Where possible other occupants of the house should vacate the property and stay together in one area such as the driveway or garden or get together in one other room



Shut pets away safely in another room

1. At all times our staff and contractors will ask questions from a safe distance and where possible will do this from outside of the property.

2. We will wash or sanitise our hands before and after every home we visit. We will wear a fresh pair of disposable gloves and a fresh face covering at each home we visit. We will dispose of used gloves safely without compromising you.



3. Any equipment we may use will be disinfected before and after each use.

4. To minimise the time we spend within your home, we will try to complete our notes and forms outside of your property.



## Electricity Switching Update

After a cold winter and the additional impact of homeworking and home-schooling, energy consumption for many has been higher than normal – and with energy prices increasing – bills are getting higher.

The **Energy Advice Team** is aware that many households have not tried to reduce their electricity costs by switching energy provider and are happy to advise on the current options available. If any tenant would like some advice on switching then please get in touch with the Energy Advice Team at the Housing Association, telephone number 01478 612035 or email **EnergyAdvice@LSHA.co.uk**. We are not allowed to advise you which company to choose but can help explain the choices and the methods of switching.

For those with single rate credit and prepayment meters – rates can vary from **13p to 19p** a unit for a credit meter and **17p to 19p** a unit for a prepayment meter.

For those with an Economy 7 meter there are similar deals and both single rate and E7 switches can be done relatively easy online via a price comparison website.

Many households have restricted meters like Economy 10 or THTC and switching options are more complex for them. The Energy Advice team tracks every month the available options. THTC prepay customers have the biggest challenge in that there are no simple switching routes – but those with credit THTC meters do have a couple of switching routes.

Most people with E10 meters would be better with single rate meters – that would allow much easier switching.

Some households have switched once – but that supplier has now introduced much higher rates – and it might be time to consider switching again? Please get in touch if you want to know more - **EnergyAdvice@LSHA.co.uk**

## Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

### Are you claiming Universal Credit?

You may be able to apply for extra money to pay your rent in addition to your Universal Credit payment.

First, check online on your Universal Credit monthly payment statement for:

- **Any reduction in the amount awarded for housing costs due to a spare room;** or
- **Any reduction in your total award due to the benefit cap.**

If you have a reduction, as above, for any month, past or present, you may be eligible for a **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)** to pay the shortfall.

A DHP is separate from Universal Credit and we can help you apply for it. If this applies to you, and you have not yet been awarded a DHP, please contact our **Tenant Adviser** on **01478 612035** or email **Rent@LSHA.co.uk** for assistance.

### Are you receiving Housing Benefit Payments?

You may be entitled to a DHP if you are receiving Housing Benefit payments paid direct to you by Highland Council and the eligible rent on your Housing Benefit notification is lower than the rent you have to pay.

**Please contact us for assistance.**

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](mailto:info@LSHA.co.uk) and we will forward a copy to you.



Morrison House, Bayfield, Portree,  
Isle of Skye, IV51 9EW  
**Tel:** 01478 612035 **Fax:** 01478 613377  
**e-mail:** [info@LSHA.co.uk](mailto:info@LSHA.co.uk)  
**web:** <http://www.LSHA.co.uk>