

Be heard by Horizon!



During the last 30 years, our vision has been to create inclusive and active communities. We encourage tenants to be actively involved in their community and influence decisions about the services we provide.

Tenants are at the heart of our organisation. We believe listening to and involving tenants is an essential part in delivering excellent services. Successful tenant participation delivers

benefits for tenants, landlords and staff, creating a culture of trust, respect and partnership.

We want your views and ideas on how we can improve. By getting involved you can:

- Build relationships with other tenants in your community and with us.
- Make sure we deliver our services to a high standard.

- Gain new skills and experience.
- Check we are performing well in comparison with other landlords and meet the standards set by the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

You can get involved by:

- Giving us feedback in surveys.
- Joining the Residents' Improvement Group (RIG), our tenant scrutiny group.
- Coming along to our AGM or tenant conferences.
- Starting your own tenants' group.

We plan to review our approach to tenant participation with tenants taking the lead. We have asked RIG to look at how we approach tenant participation as the next independent scrutiny project.

RIG will start this project in August and will be guided by the Tenant Information Service (TIS).

The latest Residents' Improvement Group (RIG) scrutiny project

Following RIG's success last year, when it looked at how we communicate with tenants about repairs, it presented its second scrutiny project to the board in June. RIG looked at our lettings standard, which sets out the standard new tenants can expect when they receive the keys to their home.

RIG members spoke to staff and looked at empty properties before and after they had work done to them. They also commissioned an independent survey of new tenants to get their views. All members of the RIG thoroughly enjoyed this project – and have come up with some worthwhile recommendations about how we can improve services for new tenants.

We will present an action plan to the board in August about how we hope to respond to RIG's recommendations. We have produced a new leaflet informing tenants what they can expect when letting one of our properties.

You can read the full report at:

www.horizonhousing.org/tenants/get-involved/resident-improvement-group/

Please contact us on **0330 303 0089** if you require a hard copy.





Would you like to know more about RIG?

Watch our short film at www.horizonhousing.org/tenants/get-involved/resident-improvement-group

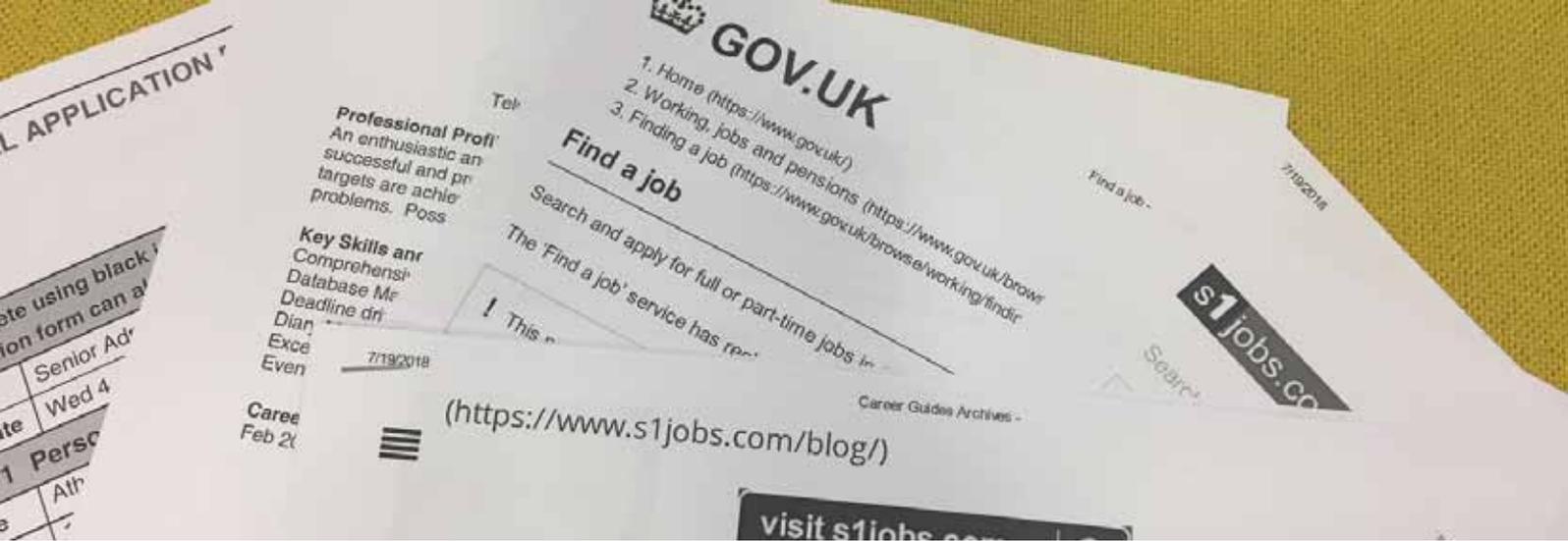
If you are interested in joining RIG, or if you would like to know more about tenant participation, speak to your Housing Officer. You can also contact Elaine Whyte, Housing & Communities Manager by calling **0330 303 0089** or emailing e-mail@horizonhousing.org. Alternatively, keep an eye on our website for new tenant participation opportunities.

Your data



General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on 25 May 2018. This enhances your rights and gives you more control over the use of your personal information. The aim of the legislation is to protect you and your information, particularly when it is used electronically. To help keep your data safe, we may need to ask you for some security questions to verify your identity.

To find out more, please visit www.horizonhousing.org/privacy or call **0330 303 0089**.



Are you looking for a job?

We want to help you access the training and support you need to get into employment. Our Tenancy Sustainment team can provide free and confidential support while you are looking for a new job. We can help with writing applications, updating your CV, preparing for interviews and, in partnership with Link Housing, we can help you to get online and connect you with local employability services.

Get digital

Getting online is often essential when looking for a new job. We can help you get online, take part in computing courses and training. Link's laptop loan scheme allows you to try out a tablet or laptop for six months to see if you would like to buy one in the future. We can also help you sign up for job alerts and complete online application forms.

Employability courses

If you live in Edinburgh, Fife or Falkirk, we can refer you to employability courses Link runs in these areas. These courses give you the skills and confidence you need to enhance your job prospects. If you live outwith these areas, we can connect you with your local employability services.

Help with your job search

From searching for jobs, writing or updating your CV to preparing cover letters and completing online applications forms, we can support you throughout your job search. We can also help you prepare for job interviews.

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

- My World of Work, part of Skills Development Scotland, can help you find a job that matches your skills, interests, education and experience.

You can find out more at www.myworldofwork.co.uk or by calling **0800 917 8000**.

Its website has a CV builder and interview tool which you can use to carry out comprehensive searches for courses, jobs and volunteering opportunities.

- You can speak confidentially to our Tenancy Sustainment team or your Housing Officer by calling **0330 303 0089** or emailing e-mail@horizonhousing.org.

Planned maintenance

As part of our £540,000 investment in planned maintenance works during 2018-19 we've entered into an agreement with Turner Property Services to upgrade bathrooms in Erskine and Coatbridge. Forty tenants received new bathrooms last year.



Anti-social behaviour consultation

We want all tenants to enjoy their homes. However, sometimes people can behave in ways that may upset others and this can cause problems within our estates.

We are currently reviewing how we deal with anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance and are looking for your feedback on:

- What anti-social behaviour means to you.
- How easy is it to report anti-social behaviour to us? How can we improve this?
- Our timescales and targets for dealing with anti-social behaviour.
- New powers to deal with anti-social behaviour as part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

A survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N28JYX6> and will close on **Friday 24 August 2018**. If you would prefer a paper copy please call us on **0330 303 0089**.

All completed surveys will be entered into a prize draw for the chance to **win a £50 shopping voucher**.



Tea in the Car Park

After the success of last year's Tea in the Car Park events, this summer's programme was bigger and better than before!

We visited six areas to gather tenant's views on their estates and what we can do to improve them.

You may have seen us with our goodie bags and balloons in Blantyre, Cowdenbeath, Denny, Dunfermline, Erskine and Whitburn. Tenants shared stories about their time with Horizon and the bonds they have built with their neighbours. The community spirit was clear to see and we hope this continues to strengthen throughout the year.

We were pleased to hear tenants were satisfied with their estates, although there were some areas for improvement. We will collate the feedback and use this to plan our estate improvements over the coming year. We also appreciated hearing tenants' views about anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance as we are currently reviewing this policy.

We will be back out on the road next summer visiting other areas and getting your views on your estate.





Looking to move?

A transfer to a Horizon or Link home

We have 795 properties to rent across 11 local authority areas. You can see where they all are on our website:

www.horizonhousing.org/find-a-home/where-we-have-properties/

We advertise our vacant properties on Homehunt, a choice-based lettings system which allows users to filter homes by area or specific needs. We advertise properties weekly for users to bid on. Once bidding closes, the applicant with the greatest housing need will be offered the property. You can find out more by visiting www.homehunt.info or by contacting your housing officer on **0330 303 0089**.

As a Horizon tenant, you may be entitled to a **transfer priority pass**. This means you are given priority over other bidders who are not Horizon tenants and it also gives you priority for Link

Housing properties. Link has more than 6,000 properties throughout Scotland.

If you can't access the internet or need help to access Homehunt, you can call the team directly on **03451 400 100**. Please note we do not use Homehunt to allocate properties in Fife or Edinburgh. If you are interested in Horizon properties in these areas, please contact your housing officer on **0330 303 0089**.

Mutual exchanges

In a mutual exchange two or more tenants in the public housing sector have the ability to move by swapping homes with another housing association or council tenant **anywhere** in the UK.

It is up to you to find someone to exchange with. You may be able to find someone by word of mouth or by advertising locally. Alternatively, you can register with www.homeswapper.co.uk, a national register of people looking to exchange properties.

The service is **free to use** and will allow you to add your property and search for homes that meet your needs.

Once you have found someone to exchange with, download a mutual exchange form from www.horizonhousing.org or call us on **0330 303 0089** to request a form to be sent out.

Once you return your form, we will make a decision within 28 days. It is important to remember you cannot exchange properties unless you have permission from us and the landlord of the person you want to exchange with.

Other housing options

You will find more information about your housing options on your local council's website. This includes information on applying for social housing or private letting. Your housing officer can help you find other social landlords in your chosen area and they can help you with application forms if required.

If you are moving, please give us 28 days' notice and leave your home and garden in a clean and tidy condition. If you meet the standards we expect we will pay you £150 as a thank you. Ask your housing officer for more information.

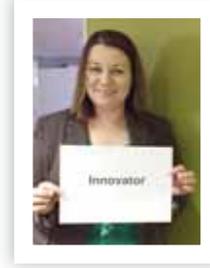
Meet the team new staff



Joni Thomson, Customer Services Assistant, is the first point of contact for information, advice and guidance to Care and Repair West Lothian customers. She also supports our Customer Services team.



Abbie Scott is our Modern Apprentice in Business and Administration. Abbie supports the Corporate Services team with extensive administrative support whilst working towards her NVQ5 qualification.



Lorraine Atherton and **Annemie Breesch** are the Corporate Services co-ordinators, responsible for providing a wide-range of administrative support.



David McQuade joined the Care and Repair North Lanarkshire team as the Co-ordinator.



Jonathon Heath joined the Tenancy Sustainment team as an assistant. Jonathon provides confidential and free support to our tenants.



Graeme Swanson joined the team as Asset Planning Officer. Graeme is covering Emma Wilson's maternity leave.

We would like to introduce you to some new members of our in-house maintenance team. Following Gordon Wilson's retirement from Horizon, we recruited **Brian Rooney** as a painter.

Brian started with us in April and has already hit the ground running with cyclical painting projects in East Kilbride, Giffnock, Kilmaurs and Ardrossan.

He is already receiving great feedback from both staff and tenants.

Connor Scott joined the team as our new apprentice painter. Connor was thrilled to start his new role with Horizon and is excited to begin his apprenticeship and work towards his SVQ Level 3 for painting and decorating.

Graeme Laing, who has been with Horizon for six years as our painter, said how pleased he was with his new team.

Please introduce yourself if you see any of our new staff out in the developments.



Save the date

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on **Thursday 13 September** at the Mercure Hotel, Almondview, Livingston from 11.00am. All tenants are invited to attend. Please contact us on **0330 303 0089** or **e-mail@horizonhousing.org** to secure your place.



Horizon in Bloom – gardening competition 2018

Our gardening competition closes on 31 August 2018. Please remember to send in your submission for one or more of the following categories:

- Best individual garden • Best communal garden
- Best container • Best new tenant

Email us at **e-mail@horizonhousing.org** to enter.

Horizon Housing Association Leving House, Fairbairn Place, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 6TN.

t: 0330 303 0089 e: e-mail@horizonhousing.org

f HorizonHA @Horizon_Housing

www.horizonhousing.org

Office opening hours:

Monday – Tuesday 9am – 5pm, Wednesday 10am – 5pm, Thursday 9am – 5pm, Friday 9am – 4pm

Out of hours **emergency contacts:**

Gas boiler and heating repairs: 01294 468 113

Other emergency repairs: 0800 783 7937

This newsletter is available in larger print, other languages, audio or other electronic forms. Should you require a copy of this newsletter in any of these formats, please contact **0330 303 0089**.



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