



## West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative

### Autumn 2020 Newsletter

## West Whitlawburn in Lockdown

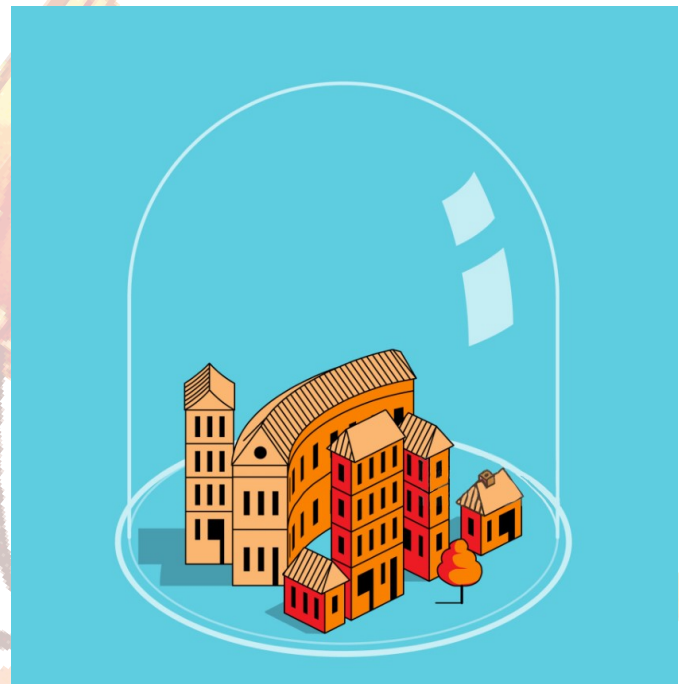
Covid-19 has brought about huge changes to Co-operative services since lockdown was introduced in March this year. We are monitoring Government guidance and announcements and we will be taking a careful approach to any service reintroduction. Things will be different for all of us for some time to come.

On the next page we outline the stages we have gone through and how we would like to extend services over the coming months, taking account of Government guidance.

During the full lockdown period, we continued to provide an emergency and urgent repairs service. Concierge teams were working to provide 24 hour cover, helping to keep everyone safe and well. Tenants had telephone access to Housing Officers for advice and support.

We also set up and still run, several community support services with local partners to deliver food and essential supplies to those in need. We have delivered in excess of 2,000 food parcels and 1,000 hot meals to local people in conjunction with the Community Resource Centre.

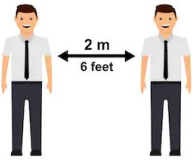
We have supported families with children by providing vouchers and have offered support to people with prepayment meters.



## Next steps

Over the coming weeks and months we hope to move through phases 3 and 4 of the Scottish Government route out of lockdown though we don't have clear timescales for these yet. We'll continue to broaden the range of services we provide, always following Scottish Government advice.

We will keep our website up to date and issue further newsletters as needed. In the meantime, please stay safe and follow the guidance. Office staff are working normal office hours either from the office or at home so if you'd like to contact staff, please telephone.



At all stages, please do not approach staff on the estate, or in common areas. We must all be mindful of the 2 metres social distancing regulations of the Scottish Government to protect each other.

We have been working to progress safe office working, and once we move through future phases, we will have 50% of our office staff working from the office at any one time, with the remainder working from home which will allow us to return to more routine services. The office is currently closed and that will continue to be the case until advice is updated.

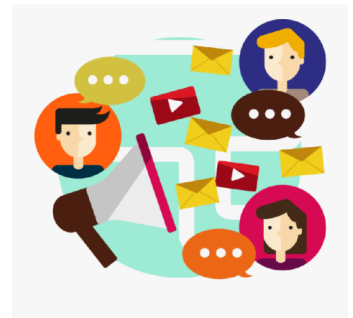
When we are in a position to open further, we will expect tenant members and applicants to make an appointment. We will not be open for people to drop in to the office. We will only have one interview room available so the number of office based appointments will be less than normal. The most important thing is to ensure safe working for all our tenant/members and staff.

We are continuing with only emergency home visits when required. When this is necessary, please be assured that staff will follow guidelines including hand washing, social distancing and wearing face masks in certain situations.



We must be mindful of the fact the Covid 19 virus is still here in Scotland and remains a significant threat to us all, while at the same time maximising our service support and provision to our tenant/members.

We trust all tenant/members will continue to work harmoniously with us to ensure safety for all and would ask all tenant/members to communicate with staff, by phone, by e mail, by letter or pre-arranged appointment (when this becomes available).



**Please remember not to let any doors, including internal and external doors slam shut.**

**Be a good neighbour and be thoughtful to those living around you.**

## Concierge update

The Concierge Station remains closed to visitors, however, Concierge staff are still available 24 hours a day to support tenants. They are currently working with reduced staffing levels due to social distancing requirements.

At present only essential duties are being carried out with the cleaning of high touch areas being a priority such as control entry panels and lift buttons.

House visits are being done in emergency situations and each request for a visit is risk assessed on its merits with triage questions being asked beforehand.



You can still contact Concierge via your handset or by phoning 0141 646 1924. Your continuing co-operation in this will be greatly appreciated.

## Office Staffing Update

The Management Committee has approved a 6 month unpaid leave of absence for The Co-operative's Director, from 4th September 2020. The Management Committee has appointed Stephanie Marshall (currently Depute Director) as Acting Director for the period.

## Rent arrears

As you know the Co-operative monitors income very closely and we continue to be concerned about increasing rent arrears. This is particularly in relation to tenants in receipt of Universal Credit and those whose income has been reduced because of the impact of Covid 19.

We regularly speak to tenants who are stuck in an endless cycle of reducing their rent arrears but then they break their payment arrangements and then they face the prospect of legal action as the debt increases again.

Often tenants simply bury their head and hope the problem will disappear. Unfortunately the problem does not disappear and legal action is progressed. The only way to stop the situation escalating is to work with us.

We know it is daunting making that first step to contact us but our housing officers are ready to help with financial advice and making affordable payment arrangements.

**If you have missed rent payments, please contact us and seek help immediately. Although the office continues to be closed our staff are still working remotely and can help you by phone or email. You can call the office on 0141 641 8628 or email [enquiries@wwhc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@wwhc.org.uk)**



Don't bury your head,  
we are here to help.

# Capital Programme Works Upgrade

## Insulation Work

The Co-operative will be re-starting the common area insulation works in the low rise and multi storey flats from October 2020. We completed the installation of insulation in the low rise common areas and the MSF ground floor bin and water tank rooms earlier this year before lockdown. There are some minor plastering and finishing works which will be completed in these areas.

The work to the low rise lock-ups and MSF cage areas is to be carried out between October and December 2020. We will also be topping up the existing loft insulation in the low rise loft spaces during this programme.

Tenants will receive notification for their blocks ahead of the works being carried out.

## Smoke and Heat Detector Installation

The Scottish Government has introduced new legislation with improved standards for smoke detection requirements. From 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020, the following will be required in all of WWHC's properties:

- one smoke alarm in living room
- one smoke alarm in hall
- one heat detector in kitchen
- all alarms should be ceiling mounted
- all alarms should be interlinked

New Build Phase - The new build phase for the alarm upgrades is programmed to be carried out between October and December 2020. Whilst the new heat detectors are being installed, existing smoke detectors will be replaced as they have reached the end of their life.

MSF Phase – The MSF phase for the heat detector installations is scheduled to be carried out between October and December 2020. A new heat alarm will be installed in the kitchen and hard wired / linked to the existing smoke detectors

Tenants will receive a notification letter ahead of the works with an appointment date and details regarding the installation process including Covid safety procedures.

The Low Rise properties and 2 Brown Place were completed last year.



## Office Repairs

The Co-operative is taking the opportunity whilst the office remains closed to carry out some much needed repair work to the office building to ensure it remains wind and water tight.

External work to windows, cladding and panels is being progressed to mirror the building fabric works completed in 2018 at the Community Resource Centre.

At the same time, we have made some internal alterations to ensure the building is as Covid safe as possible such as installing a screen at the reception area.

Pictured right– new Perspex screen installed in the office reception. Image of automatic hand sanitiser dispenser.



## Cyclical and Planned Maintenance Update

WWHC's Cyclical and Planned Maintenance programme has been restricted to essential tasks only. For example, our annual gas servicing programme, MSF water tank maintenance and estate / block safety inspections have been carried out over the last few months.

Property Services staff are beginning to make plans, in line with the Scottish Government's advice, for re-starting services for more routine type cyclical and planned maintenance to be carried out over the next few months.

## Tenant Satisfaction Results

The Co-operative is delighted with the results from our recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey and want to thank everyone who participated in the survey.

Highlights include:

**96%** of tenants are satisfied with the overall services provided by WWHC.

**97%** of tenants are satisfied with the WWHC repairs service.

**97%** of tenants feel well informed of decisions and services by WWHC.

Over **90%** of tenants feel they have sufficient opportunities to participate in WWHC's activities and decision making.

Over **95%** of new tenants are satisfied with the standard and quality of their new home.

# Combustible items on landings – A Reminder

We wrote to all tenants in June 2018 to advise of the decision that there can be no items of a combustible nature left landings or common areas. That is anything left out in the common areas which could burn in the event of a fire.

This policy decision taken by the Management Committee, followed detailed consideration and discussions with Scottish Fire and Rescue. We aim to do everything possible to ensure fire risk is minimised to all our tenants/members, your families, your guests and visitors, anyone working on our property, including WWHC staff and staff of the emergency services.

During a recent inspection by Scottish Fire and Rescue, they noted that items are again appearing on some landings which are potentially a significant fire hazard, and could lead to a risk to you, your family, guests and people working in the block.

Please remove anything you have on the landing, including door mats. We trust you will see the sense of working together to implement that policy decision to further improve you and your family's safety against fire.

## Bulk Uplift Update

South Lanarkshire Council services have now restarted. If you have Bulk Refuse to be removed you should contact South Lanarkshire Cleansing Department on 0303 123 1020 or complete the online form.

### High Rise Blocks

Bulk refuse will be collected on a Tuesday morning at the bin room door in the car park of multi storey blocks on or after 7am. The Council must be informed of items being placed there.

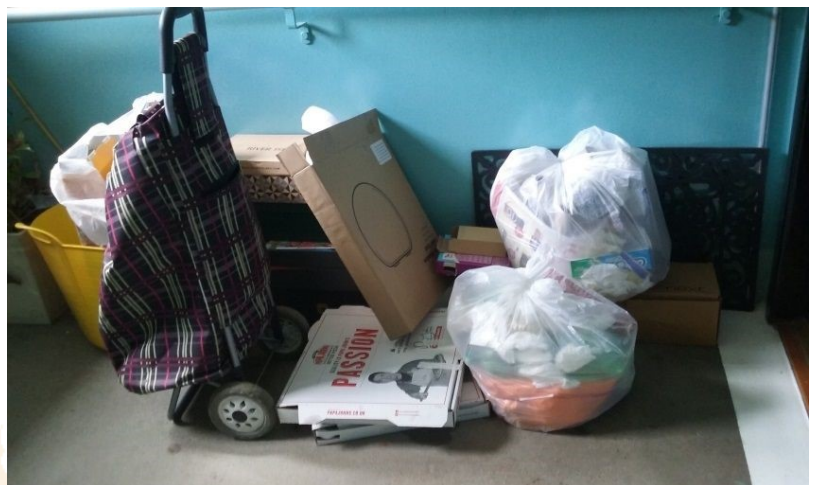
### Low Rise and New Build Properties

Bulk refuse should be phoned in using the telephone number above and you will be advised to place items at the kerb side before 7am on the day of collection.

SLC Cleansing will not lift items that have not been reported to them. If you put bulk refuse out in the street without arranging an uplift it may very well become a fire risk and the Co-operative will take action on this danger to our residents.

If a person is elderly or disabled the Cleansing department will call at your flat and remove items or you may contact Concierge on 0141 646 1924 for assistance

Your co-operation in this matter is greatly appreciated.



## Community Resource Centre Update

The Resource Centre has also been operating on an emergency basis since March. It has been concentrating its efforts on securing funding for our Emergency Support Project. This project has provided food parcels on a weekly basis to those most impacted upon. It has also delivered hot meals and helped secure food vouchers for families with young children. We are continuing to look at ways that we can support our local community through this time. To date the following has been achieved:



Food parcels delivered – 2736

Hot meals delivered - 1115

Food vouchers issued - 145

We have a number of sanitary items available free of charge – contact the Office should you require anything.

A risk assessment has been carried out to allow for the safe re-opening of the centre. The centre will continue to follow Government instructions on when this will take place.

Don't forget South Lanarkshire Council have a wellbeing line which can be contacted on 03031231009. This can be helpful if looking for hearing aid batteries, sanitary provision, extra food parcels, picking up prescriptions etc. More information on this is on the Resource Centre Facebook page.

## Self-Isolation Support Grant

Due to new guidance, those on low incomes will be eligible to a sum of £500 of grant money if you are asked to self-isolate, which includes those who cannot work from home.

The grant is to help those who will face financial hardship due to being asked to self-isolate and will apply specifically to people on Universal Credit or a legacy benefit.

Applications are due to open from 12 October and will be delivered through the existing Scottish Welfare Fund, which is administered by local authorities.



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

# Word search

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INTENSIVE  
IMMUNE  
INFECTIOUS  
CIRCULATE  
SYMPTOM  
VULNERABLE  
SOCIAL  
RISK  
DISINFECTANT  
INDIVIDUAL  
PANDEMIC

What did the buffalo say when his son left for college?

**Bison.**

What do you call a magic dog?

A labracadabrador.

What's the best thing about Switzerland?

I don't know, but the flag is a big plus.

## Useful Numbers

Main Office	0141 641 8628	Money Talk Team	0800 085 7145
Concierge Station	0141 646 1924	Universal Credit– <i>help to claim</i>	0800 023 2581
Resource Centre	0141 641 5005	South Lanarkshire <i>Council Housing</i>	0303 123 1011
Coronavirus Helpline Scotland	0808 800 9060	<i>Benefit/Council Tax</i>	

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Registered Charity No. SCO38737 Vat Registration No. 180223636  
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