

Welcome to Dunbritton

Your Tenancy Agreement

Rent Charge

Repairs and Maintenance

Safety & Security

Estate Management

Getting Involved

Complaints Handling Procedure

Useful Contacts

Dunbritton Housing Association Limited

Tenants' Handbook



Tenants' Handbook



Together we can...



Dunbritton Housing Association Limited, 1 Hatters Lane, Dumbarton, G82 1AW
Tel: 01389 761486 • Fax: 01389 730067 • E-mail: admin@dunbritton.org.uk

www.dunbritton.org.uk



Dunbritton Housing Association is a Scottish Charity (Scottish Charity Number SC036518), a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 with Registered Number 2421(R)S and having its Registered Office at 1 Hatters Lane, Dumbarton, G82 1AW.

We take the issue of security and data protection very seriously and strictly adhere to guidelines published in the (Data Protection Act of 1998) and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 which is applicable from the 25th May 2018, together with any domestic laws subsequently enacted. We are notified as a Data Controller with the Office of the Information Commissioner under registration number Z7205348 and we are the data controller of any personal data that you provide to us. Any questions relating to this notice and our privacy practices should contact the Data Protection Officer on admin@dunbritton.org.uk



Customer Service Standards

At Dunbritton we pride ourselves in providing a good service to all of our customers. Following consultation with our customers we developed our Customer Care Standards and a copy of these are included with your handbook. Customers will always be treated with respect and we would hope that our staff receive the same respect from our customers.

Office Opening Times

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 9am – 5pm

Wednesday: 9am – 12.30pm (closed in the afternoon for staff training)

*The Association has a Complaints Handling Procedure leaflet which is available from our office.



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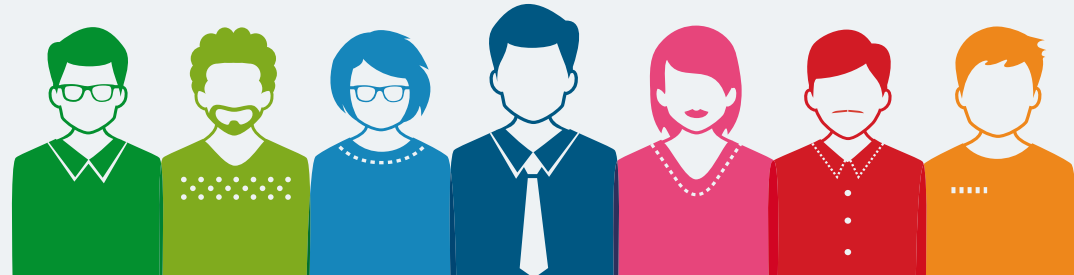


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Welcome to Dunbritton



Welcome to Dunbritton

Welcome Message

On behalf of the Board and staff at Dunbritton may we extend a very warm welcome to you in your new home. We appreciate that moving home can be difficult, with so many things to do and remember.

To assist you we've prepared this Tenants' Handbook in consultation with existing tenants. We hope the information in relation to the Association, your new home and your responsibilities as a tenant are helpful, however please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information. Our contact details can be found at the end of this section.

Please note this handbook may be translated into other languages or the print size increased.

About Us

Dunbritton Housing Association was set up in 1992 to operate in the former Dumbarton District Council area. Following local government re-organisation in 1996, our area of operation straddled the two new local authorities of Argyll & Bute and West Dunbartonshire. Since then, our area has expanded to take in Lochgoilhead in Argyll. We are a not for profit organisation and our primary function is to provide well maintained affordable housing for rent.

We are a registered charity and we are regulated as a social housing landlord by the Scottish Housing Regulator and financially by The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. (O.S.C.R). We are governed by a Board who have been elected by the members of the Association. All Board members give their time voluntarily to the Association.

We have over 800 homes for social rent, 50 shared ownership and provide a factoring service to over 300 owners.

Our Vision:

Dunbritton Housing Association's Vision is "thriving, diverse, healthy and safe communities that enhance quality of life for our customers."

Our Purpose

- Support our customers to sustain their homes and have a better quality of life
- Work with our customers, staff and partners to achieve our Vision
- Provide good quality housing and services that are affordable and accessible to all
- Support the physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration of our estates and the communities in our area
- Enhance quality of life in diverse communities that are safe, sustainable and attractive

Services we provide

We provide a range of services to both existing and future tenants, these include:

- Processing of applications for housing and mutual exchanges
- Development of new homes in our communities
- Assisting new tenants to settle into their homes
- Regular visits to our neighbourhoods, ensuring they are well maintained
- Managing tenants' rent accounts and provide support and guidance
- Managing repairs and major works programmes in your home and on our estates
- Assisting with the provision of aids and adaptations to enable people to remain in their own home
- Assisting with resolving neighbour disputes
- Liaising with the local community, Local Authority, Social Work and other related organisations to improve service delivery to you as a valued customer.
- Working with care support agencies to assist people retain their independence in the community



About your Tenancy

All tenants are issued with either a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement or a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement as required in the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act. This is a legal contract between you and Dunbritton Housing Association. This agreement details the main terms and conditions under which you rent your home.

In certain circumstances some tenants may be issued with a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. With this agreement you will have less rights however this will usually revert to a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, after a specified period of time normally 6 months.

When you sign for your tenancy your Housing Officer will explain the main parts of your Tenancy agreement. At any time during your tenancy if you require any further details please do not hesitate to contact your Housing Officer.

Where your tenancy has been signed as a joint tenancy you are both jointly and severally liable for the conditions contained within the Tenancy Agreement. This means that Dunbritton can enforce the terms on either tenant.

Tenants' responsibilities

- Pay your rent and agree to abide by the conditions of your Tenancy Agreement
- Take entry to your home and occupy it as your only principal home. If you purchase or rent another property you must give up your tenancy
- You and those living with you, and visitors, must take reasonable care to prevent damage to the house, decoration, and communal furniture, fixtures and fittings, common parts and your neighbours' property
- You cannot use your home for immoral or illegal purposes

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Your Tenancy Agreement

Security of Tenure

Dunbritton gives our tenants a home for life under the terms of your Scottish Secure Tenancy as long as you pay your rent, keep your house and garden in a good condition and meet the terms of the rest of your tenancy agreement. Your tenancy will continue indefinitely unless you choose to bring it to an end.

Ending your Tenancy

Your tenancy can only be ended in the following ways:

- By you giving at least 28 days' written notice
- By written agreement between you and Dunbritton
- By your death (if the tenancy is not succeeded to)
- Where you are the subject of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order and your tenancy is converted to a Short Assured Tenancy Agreement
- By Dunbritton taking action because you have abandoned your tenancy
- By Dunbritton obtaining a court order to recover possession of the house

Full details in relation to ending your tenancy can be found in section 6 of your Tenancy Agreement.

Succession

If you should die your tenancy agreement provides protection for your residing family. If the family member was your spouse or resident in your home they may be allowed to have the tenancy transferred to them. In these circumstances they should contact the office as soon as possible.

Bereavement is such a difficult time for families, however if they contact the office we will be able to assist them with any queries they may have.

Sub-letting, lodgers and assignments

Some tenants decide to sub-let when they are going travelling or have temporary employment abroad. You require permission from Dunbritton to sub-let your home. You must write to the Association to obtain permission and we must ensure that the person(s) you sub-let to meet with our Allocation policy. Please note that you cannot charge more rent than that charged by Dunbritton.

Should you wish to take in a lodger you will be responsible for their behaviour and if you decide to terminate your tenancy the Association is not obliged to house them.

Sometimes tenants apply to assign their tenancy to someone else that lives with them. They must be at least 16 years of age and have lived with you for 6 months. You need to contact Dunbritton for permission to do this and each case will be considered on its own merits.

Mutual Exchanges

Tenants living in social housing can carry out mutual exchanges, which is effectively swapping property. If you wish to be considered for a mutual exchange, please contact the office to register.

To view the details on exchanges, please see our website at www.dunbritton.org.uk. Please contact the office if you require further information.

Drugs/ illegal or immoral activity

Please note the Association will seek a Court order to end your tenancy if you or someone residing in your house, or anyone visiting it, has been convicted of using the house or allowing it to be used for illegal or immoral purposes or a criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment, which was committed in the house or the locality.



Pets

Tenants are allowed one pet in a flat and two pets in a house. Permission is required from Dunbritton before taking on a pet and this should be requested in writing. As a Tenant you are responsible for ensuring that your pet does not cause alarm or nuisance to your neighbours and you must ensure your pet does not foul in your home, garden, communal gardens or street.

Dunbritton's Landlord responsibilities

We have certain responsibilities to you as a tenant, which are explained in more detail in your Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. Key responsibilities are as follows:

- To keep your home in good repair
- To consult with you in respect of any changes to your rent
- To consult with you in relation to any changes to your tenancy agreement



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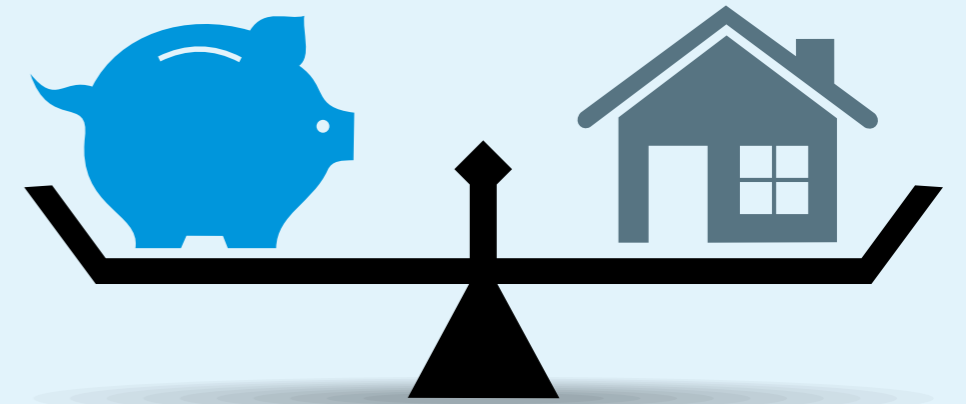
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Rent Charge

Difficulty in paying your rent?

The Association recognises that there may be occasions when our tenants may get into financial difficulties and they cannot afford to pay their rent.

It is important that if you cannot make your rent payment, for whatever reason, that you contact your Housing Officer in the first instance to let them know.

The Association will offer advice, support and guidance on what options there are available to ensure that you do not lose your home due to non-payment of rent.

We also work closely with a number of advice services throughout West Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute who can help when tenants get into financial difficulties.

All services are free of charge and can mean the difference between being evicted or remaining in your home.

We are here to help.

How do we set your rent charge?

A number of factors are taken in account when setting your charge:

- Property Size
- Property Type
- Fuel Efficiency
- Services Provided (ground maintenance, close cleaning, common electricity, common repairs & maintenance)

Annual review – how do we decide rent for following year?

The Association in terms of its current Rent Setting Policy will consider on an annual basis the actual costs to operate the business and apply the appropriate increase, if appropriate, to cover current and projected costs. The Association, as part of this process, will also consider the impact on costs of inflation based on the October Consumer Price index (CPI) and the Retail Price Index (RPI).

Rent Consultation

We consult with all tenants on an annual basis in relation to any changes to the rent charged. Following feedback from tenants the Management Board will consider your views before a final decision is reached. In considering this the Association's financial position has to be considered along with the tenants' views.

What does your rent include?

A number of factors are taken into consideration with regards to the costs of running the Association whilst providing management of services to our tenants such as:

- Planned maintenance programme (replacement kitchen/bathroom)
- Cyclical maintenance programme (annual gas servicing)
- Efficient reactive repairs response
- Emergency repairs service
- Out of hours service (emergency repairs)
- Estate Management
- Allocation of Properties
- Neighbourhood disputes handling
- Arrears Management
- Rent collection
- Welfare rights advice & support
- Sustaining tenancies
- Wider role
- Tenant participation

Your rent does not include Council Tax or Home contents insurance.



PAYING YOUR RENT - WAYS TO PAY

Rent to the Association is payable, monthly, in advance on the 1st day of the month. All new tenants are required to make one month's rent payment in advance, regardless of their date of entry.

It is a condition of your tenancy agreement that you make your rent payment on the date it is due and the Association requires a Direct Debit to be set up to ensure your rent payments are received on the date they are due.

There are currently some other payment methods available however the Association are reviewing these to improve efficiency and deliver value for money in how we manage our staff time and keep down costs.

The Association offers the following payment methods:

Direct Debits

The Association has introduced payment of rent by Direct Debit. You can complete a form and hand it into the office or to your Housing Officer when you get your keys – we also offer paperless Direct Debits which can be set up by calling into the office.

Credit/Debit Card Payments

If you make your rent payment by debit/credit card the processing time for all card payments is 3 working days – therefore any rent payment due by you must be made 3 days before the rent due date. You can call the office to make a debit or credit card payment. Our number is 01389 761 486.

We are hoping to introduce an on line debit/credit card payment facility through our website in the future and we will tell you when this is going to be launched.

Help paying your Rent

If you are on a low income or in receipt of benefits from the Department for Work and Pensions you may qualify for Housing Benefit to pay all or part of your rent charges. Your Housing Officer will explain how to contact the relevant local authority department when you are made an offer of housing.

Universal Credit

Customers who are in receipt of Universal Credit when they become tenants of the Association are required to notify the Department for Work and Pensions of their responsibility for payment of rent.

New tenants receiving Universal Credit will be issued with a letter to take to their Job Centre Plus to ensure that they receive the housing costs element of their Universal Credit.

Medical Adaptations

Each year Dunbritton applies for grant funding to carry out medical adaptations for tenants with physical needs. We work closely with Social Work Departments in both Argyll & Bute and West Dunbartonshire Councils who carry out needs assessments of individuals to determine the need for medical adaptations to make it easier for tenants within their homes. This may include walk in showers, door bells for the hard of hearing, etc. If you think you could benefit from an adaptation for medical reasons, contact your local social work department to request a visit from an Occupational Therapist.

Please refer to the contacts page in this Handbook for the relevant telephone numbers.

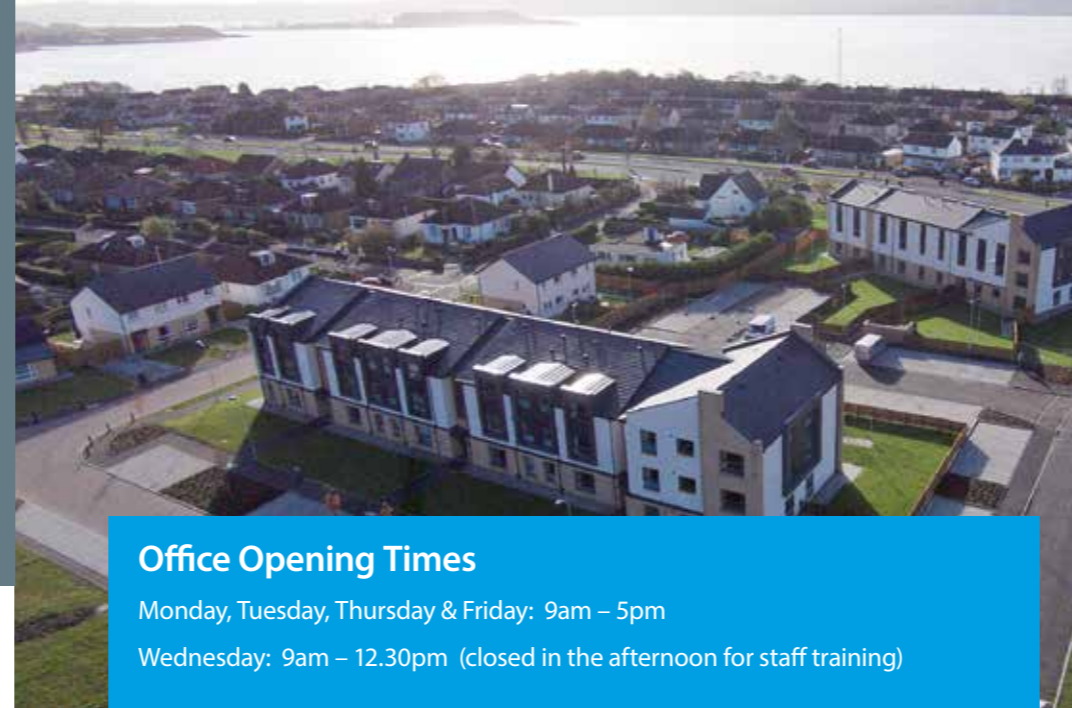
Right to Compensation for Improvements

Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Scottish secure tenants and short Scottish secure tenants may be able to receive compensation from their landlord for improvements which they have made to their home on or after 30 September 2002.

In order to qualify for this compensation:

- The Association must have approved the improvement.
- The tenancy must have ended.

For more details on all of the above subjects contained within the Repairs and Maintenance section, please visit our website where you can download our Repairs and Maintenance Procedures. Alternatively please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.



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Repairs & Maintenance

Reporting a Repair

You can report any repair to us by telephone, in person at the office or via our website. Do NOT report an emergency repair through our website – we cannot guarantee these will be seen in time!

Repair timescales and examples – emergency, urgent, routine, Right to Repair.

Out of Hours Emergencies

If you need to report an emergency repair and our office is closed you should phone Hanover on 0131 524 1418. When you call this number our call centre operatives will tell you whether the repair is an emergency or not.

Emergency Repairs (made safe within 5 hours) - Where there is a risk to life or property e.g. burst pipes or leaks causing flooding, burst radiator, loss of power, insecure property e.g. doors not locking, broken windows, blocked WC if no other toilet, & no heating or hot water.

Or an

Urgent Repair (complete within 4 working days) - These are repairs such as: minor electrical faults, roof repairs, drain problems etc.

Or a

Routine Repair (complete within 12 working days) - These are non-urgent repairs which do not affect the working elements within your home e.g. plasterwork, boundary fences etc.

Right to Repair (RTR) - (as per Legislation) - You have a legal right to have certain repairs carried out by us within a reasonable timescale. This scheme was brought into effect by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 giving all tenants on a Scottish Secure Tenancy the right to have small urgent repairs carried out within timescales. There may be circumstances which we or our contractor have no control over which make it impossible to do the repair within the maximum time (for example, severe weather). In these circumstances we may need to make temporary arrangements & extend the maximum time.

Our responsibilities: When reporting your RTR repair to our customer services team – we will:

- Record details of the repair and let you know the timescales for completing the repair.

- If needed, arrange an inspection to assess the work required.
- Give you details of the contractor who will be carrying out the repair. This is known as the Primary Contractor.
- Give you a summary of your rights under the Right to Repair scheme.
- Give you the name and contact details of an alternative contractor (known as a secondary contractor) from our approved contractor's list.
- Have in place a compensation scheme for repairs not completed on time – the Association will be liable to pay you compensation if the Primary contractor does not complete the repair on time.
- Your responsibilities
- You must give reasonable access to the contractor or our staff so that the qualifying repair can be inspected or work carried out. If you do not give reasonable access this will lead to the 'Right to Repair' being cancelled. The repair will still be carried out once access is allowed but the repair will not be classed as a 'qualifying repair' any longer.

Rechargeable Repairs

You may be recharged if you fail in the upkeep of your property. Tenant responsibilities are defined in your Tenancy Agreement.

The cost of work carried out by the Association which is deemed to be the tenant's responsibility, has been caused by tenant's neglect, or misuse of the property, will be charged to the tenant. In addition misinformation when reporting a repair may result in the tenant being charged if the Association incurs additional costs.

Some but not exhaustible examples are:-

- Misuse of the out of hours emergency repairs system.
- Clearing blocked toilets, baths, sinks and wash hand basins due to unsuitable products being flushed down the sewage system e.g. baby wipes, nappies (these items are not bio-degradable), hair and cooking oil. It is recommended that over the bowl toilet blocks are not used as they can be easily dropped down the cistern.
- Re-glazing broken windows / doors / frames where damaged by tenant, family, or visitors.
- Lost keys (tenants are recommended to leave a spare key with a relative).

Cyclical Maintenance

We provide safe homes for our tenants and ensure that we comply with all Legislative matters. This work carried out may include gas safety checks and periodic electrical inspections as well as gutter cleaning and external painting programmes.

On a cyclical basis the Association carries out works to ensure the fabric of the building is being maintained, to maximise the lifetime expectancy of its components.

Planned Maintenance

The Association has in place a robust 30 year plan to address areas of Legislation and to upgrade and provide modern facilities for its tenants.

This work includes smoke alarm, carbon monoxide and heat detector replacements as well as complete component renewals such as heating upgrades, bathrooms and kitchen replacements.

Alterations & Improvements

If you wish to carry out any alteration or improvement within your home or garden, you must seek permission to do this from the Association before commencing with the work. You can also put your request in writing. Please contact Dunbritton's Asset team who will provide you with an alterations/improvement form to complete and return.

You are breaching your tenancy agreement if you do NOT seek our written permission prior to carrying out any alterations.

Safety in your home

Fire Precautions

Plan your escape route – a fire can develop and spread quickly throughout your home therefore it is essential to have an action plan in place to ensure that everyone has an escape route and is familiar with the plan.

Do **NOT** remove smoke alarms from your property – they are there for your safety and can save you and your family's lives.

If your smoke alarm goes off and a fire breaks out in your home you should:

- Close the door of the room where the fire is.
- Get everyone out of the house if possible, warn your neighbours & do NOT go back into the property.
- If unable to escape from the property enter a safe room & close the door, pack what you can around it to keep the smoke out – Open a window & shout to attract attention.
- **Call the Fire Service on 999 if you can.**



Did you know you can ask your local Fire Safety Officer to visit you at home for advice & information?

Please refer to the contacts page in this Handbook for the relevant telephone numbers.

Door Entry Systems

Some of our flatted properties are fitted with door entry systems at the common entrance to the block. These systems are fitted for the security and peace of mind for all the tenants living there. Door entry systems are only an effective security measure if used correctly.

- Please ensure the entrance door is **ALWAYS** kept shut and **NEVER** wedged open.
- Be aware that burglars may make a convincing story to gain access – Only allow access to people who are visiting you – Do **NOT** allow access for anyone you are unfamiliar with.

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Safety & Security

Gas Escapes

If you think you have a gas leak, you should do the following:

- Open all doors & windows.
- Check if the pilot light has gone out. If any gas appliances have been left on, turn them off.
- If the pilot light is still on and your gas appliances are all off there may be a gas escape.
- Turn off the gas at the mains.
- Phone the National Gas Emergency Number immediately on **0800 111 999. (This is a free phone number unless you are calling from a mobile phone).**
- Do not turn light switches on or off.
- Do not use doorbells, mobile phones or any other electrical appliances.
- Do not smoke, light a match or use any other kind of naked flame.

Loss of Electricity Supply

If your power has gone off take a look in the electric meter box and:

- Check your trip-switch or fuses to make sure you do not have a fault with an appliance.
- If the trip switch is on - Turn the switch off and back on again.
- If the supply is not restored, push the “test” button. If the switch trips, there is a fault with one of your appliances. You should then turn off all appliances and turn the switch back on. Now switch your appliances on one by one and if the power trips when you turn on an appliance, that is the faulty appliance. It may be as simple as a light bulb needs replaced.
- Check with your neighbours, if they are having a problem it may be a power cut. You should call your electricity supplier to advise them, and to ask if they are aware of the problem and how long the power may be off for.
- If there is no power cut or apparent fault with an appliance, call us.

Safety with Gas - Yearly Safety Check

By law, the Association must service all gas heating systems within our properties on an annual basis to comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. We have a statutory duty to check all gas appliances owned by the Association including checking flues and pipework. It is really important that you allow us to inspect gas appliances to ensure that they are working safely and efficiently. You **MUST** allow access to our Contractor for your arranged Gas Safety Service in accordance with Section 5 of your Tenancy agreement. If you have to cancel or re-schedule your annual service please let the Association or our Gas Contractor know as soon as possible.

When our Gas Contractor is at your home to carry out the annual service, please observe the following;

- If you have a prepayment meter you must have at least emergency credit available on your meter for our gas engineers to complete a Gas Safety Check.
- If you have a dog, please make sure your pet is kept under control.
- Ensure you have cleared the area surrounding your boiler to enable the engineer easy access to the boiler.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Symptoms can include drowsiness; headaches; chest pains; sickness; diarrhoea and stomach pains. If you develop these symptoms suddenly and for no apparent reason when you use a gas appliance switch off all appliances and contact a medical professional for further advice.

A yearly check of your Carbon Monoxide Detector is carried out by the Association and should any faults be noted at this time the unit will be repaired or replaced. Please **DO NOT REMOVE OR TAKE DOWN** this appliance in your home - this is here for your own safety. Should the Association be notified at the time of inspection that your carbon monoxide detector is missing we will arrange to have a new detector fitted. If it is found that you have removed this device you will be recharged for a replacement.

Legionella Precautions

Legionaries’ disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia, which can affect anybody, but mainly affects those who are more vulnerable because of age, illness, immunosuppression, smoking etc. It is caused by the bacteria Legionella Pneumophila & related bacteria. Although the number of cases is **VERY LOW**, you can significantly reduce the risk in your home by following these simple steps:

- Do not allow water to stagnate e.g. when outlets are not in regular use.
- Make sure you run water through all your taps and showerheads at least once a week.
- When you get back from holiday/breaks, you should repeat the above for a longer period, say 10 minutes.

Boiler Fault

If you have a problem with your boiler, please take the following steps before calling us to report a fault:

- If you have a pre-pay meter, check it is in credit.
- Check there has not been a power cut.
- Check to see if the pilot light has gone out.
- Please try and reset the boiler—refer to your instruction manual (if you do not have this, contact the office & we will send you a copy).
- Check the pressure gauge on the boiler; it should be between 1 & 1.5. Check that the boiler has not been turned on to hot water only settings or on to a timer
- If you have a thermostat, check that this is set to the correct temperature.

Safety in Lifts

If your development has a lift – Please follow the instructions that will be clearly displayed in each individual lift – Directions and emergency contact details will be shown.

Neighbourhood Visits

The Association is keen to ensure that our neighbourhoods are maintained and tenants are happy in their homes. Following consultation with our Resident Consultation Groups we now carry out scheduled visits to selected neighbourhoods.

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Dunbritton Housing Association Limited, 1 Hatters Lane, Dumbarton, G82 1AW
Tel: 01389 761486 • Fax: 01389 730067 • E-mail: admin@dunbritton.org.uk

www.dunbritton.org.uk



Dunbritton Housing Association is a Scottish Charity (Scottish Charity Number SC036518), a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 with Registered Number 2421R(S) and having its Registered Office at 1 Hatters Lane, Dumbarton, G82 1AW.

We take the issue of security and data protection very seriously and strictly adhere to guidelines published in the [Data Protection Act of 1998] and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 which is applicable from the 25th May 2018, together with any domestic laws subsequently enacted. We are notified as a Data Controller with the Office of the Information Commissioner under registration number Z7205348 and we are the data controller of any personal data that you provide to us. Any questions relating to this notice and our privacy practices should contact the Data Protection Officer on admin@dunbritton.org.uk



Estate Management

Estate Management

The Association wants to ensure that you enjoy your home and the surrounding area. Our Housing and Maintenance Officers will work with you to ensure that you maintain your home and garden area and that we can assist you with any issues in relation to your tenancy.

Housing Officers

You have a named Housing Officer who will visit your neighbourhood on a regular basis. Your Housing Officer will be able to provide housing advice or signpost you to the relevant agency. When you move into your new home your Housing Officer will arrange a settling in visit within 6 weeks to ensure you are enjoying your new home.

Your Housing Officer can assist with general housing matters such as transfers, subletting, maintaining your home and garden, neighbour disputes, rent enquiries, benefits and complaints. If you have any concerns please ask your Housing Officer for advice and assistance.

Maintenance Officers

The Association has two Maintenance Officers, one who is responsible for day-to-day repairs and another for the Association's major replacement programme.

Day-to-day repairs - This Maintenance Officer is responsible for checking a sample of the repairs carried out within tenants' homes. In this way we can monitor the standard of the contractors that we have engaged and also ensure we get value for money for you as a tenant. The Maintenance Officer is also responsible for monitoring communal contracts such as landscape maintenance of communal areas. Please contact your Maintenance Officer if you wish to carry out any adaption to your property or garden.

Major Replacement programme – This Maintenance Officer deals with this area of work and oversees all major replacements within tenants' homes and communal areas. These include replacement kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, doors, communal entry systems and redecoration of communal areas. Tenants will always be consulted in advance of any proposed major replacement works. In addition this Officer also ensures that the Association complies with all regulatory and legal requirements in terms of the standards required for homes in Scotland.

Reporting problems and/or concerns

Tenants can contact the Association in a variety of ways to report a repair or raise a concern. In the first instance please contact the office on **01389 761486** where our staff will be available to answer your queries.

If you prefer you can also email us at admin@dunbritton.org.uk or call into the office.

We also have a website where you can find lots of information about the Association - you will find this at www.dunbritton.org.uk.

Good Neighbours

Dunbritton aim to create balanced communities, by allocating houses to people of different ages and backgrounds and with varying needs. This approach to managing our estates has many positive aspects. However from time to time issues may arise when there are conflicts brought about by life style choices. The vast majority of our tenants live in harmony with very little or no major disputes within the community, however we do appreciate that there may be times when neighbours fall out. To assist where disputes arise it may be helpful to recognise the issue your neighbour may have, and with respect for their opinion, discuss possible solutions with your neighbour. However if the matter cannot be resolved, please contact the Office for advice and assistance.

Simple gestures such as keeping noise levels to an acceptable standard, keeping stairwells free, respecting parking spaces, disposing of rubbish correctly, ensuring your pets behave, and maintaining your garden, can go a long way to creating a happy neighbourhood.

At Dunbritton we recognise that the majority of our Tenants are good neighbours and we have an annual "Garden" and "Good Neighbour" competition. Details can be found on the Association's website or by calling our Customer Services Team on 01389 761486.

Office Opening Times

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 9am – 5pm

Wednesday: 9am – 12.30pm (closed in the afternoon for staff training)

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Getting Involved

Getting Involved

The Association welcomes the opportunity for all of our customers and future customers (people who have made a housing application through Home Argyll) to share their views, comment on and shape the way we deliver all aspects of our services.

We have a Customer Participation Strategy which outlines the ways in which you can become involved in how we make decisions and deliver services such as:-

- Developing and reviewing our customer service standards
- Our Allocation Policy (Home Argyll Common Housing Register)
- Setting our Rents/Annual Rent Review
- Feedback on the quality of our Repairs Service

Register of Tenants

Due to the geographical spread of our properties throughout Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire we have a number of tenants who live in the different areas who have registered their interest in being involved in consultation events. We also hold Tea Time Talks to give all tenants the opportunity to hear what is going on in their area and any new ideas the Association has.

When you move into your new home your Housing Officer will ask if you want to be involved in the consultation events or tea time talks.

Your name can then be added to the list of interested tenants and you will be notified of any planned Consultation events.

OTHER WAYS TO BECOME INVOLVED

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

The Association has a Tenant Scrutiny Panel who are responsible for reviewing the different areas of the Association's business. The Scrutiny Panel choose which areas of service they want to look at and training and support is provided by the Tenants Information Service, Section Managers and Housing Officers. The Scrutiny Panel plays a very important part in making recommended changes from a tenant's viewpoint.

If you are interested in becoming a Scrutiny Panel member please let your Housing Officer know.

Satisfaction Surveys

The Association is required by the Scottish Housing Regulator to demonstrate the satisfaction levels of its tenants. To assist with this process we employ an external agency to survey our tenants about their experience of the services we provide. We also carry out a survey to assess the level of satisfaction with our repairs service. The information we gather allows the Association to improve the services we provide to our tenants.

Tenants Report

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced a Scottish Social Housing Charter, which came into force on 1 April 2012. The purpose of the charter was to set the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities.

The Association meets with tenants on an annual basis to produce a Tenants Report. Our tenants decide on the information, layout and presentation of the report.



Complaints Handling Procedure

Customer Information Leaflet

A copy of our detailed Complaints Handling Procedure is available on our website.
Updated: April 2016

Dunbritton complaints procedure

Dunbritton is committed to providing high-quality customer services. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- our standard of service
- dissatisfaction with our policy
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper procedure
- the conduct or quality of service delivered by a contractor employed by Dunbritton

There may be other reasons for you complaining – the above list is not exhaustive. Your complaint may involve more than one of our services or be about someone working on our behalf.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service, for example reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti social behaviour
- requests for compensation
- our policies and procedures that have a separate right of appeal, for example, if you are dissatisfied with the level of priority you have been given when applying for a house, you may have the right to appeal against the decision
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal

- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following a Stage 2 investigation. If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for an independent review of the complaint – or if you are a homeowner you can go to the Homeowner Housing Panel.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns we will give information and advice to help you.

Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person at our office, by phone, in writing, email or by using our complaints form. A copy of this form is available to download from our website.

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. Please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. They can try to resolve any problems right away.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address (we will consider anonymous complaints but there will be limits to how far we can take any investigation)
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

Contact details

In writing or in person: Dunbritton Housing Association Ltd
1 Hatters Lane, Dumbarton, G82 1AW
Phone number: 01389 761486
Email: admin@dunbritton.org.uk

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage one – frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in 5 working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why. If you are still dissatisfied you can ask for your complaint to be investigated further through Stage 2. You may choose to do this immediately or some time after you get our initial response. We can help you with making this request.

Stage two – investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

When using Stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days
- discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you regularly updated on progress.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO cannot normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure (so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO:

In Person:

Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

By Post:

Freepost SPSO
(no stamp required)

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

Complaints about our factoring service

The SPSO does not normally look at complaints about Property Factors. The First Tier Tribunal for Scotland will try to resolve complaints and disputes between home owners and Property Factors. So if your complaint is about a factoring service, and you are still dissatisfied after our investigation stage you can go to the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland:

Housing and Property Chamber
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland
Glasgow Tribunals Centre
20 York Street
Glasgow
G2 8GT

Telephone: 0141 302 5900
Fax: 0141 302 5901
Email: HPCAdmin@scotcourtribunals.gov.uk

Care complaints

If you live in one of our supported properties and you receive care and support from another agency under a contract with us you can choose whether to complain to us or the Care Inspectorate. You can find out more about their complaints procedure, or make a complaint, by contacting the Care Inspectorate.

Information about their complaints procedure, contact details and offices around Scotland, and information about how to complain are all on their website: <http://www.scswis.com/>

Or you can contact them by:

telephone 0845 600 9527

fax 01382 207 289

Online complaints form

email enquiries@careinspectorate.com

Reporting a Significant Performance Failure to the Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about 'significant performance failures'. A significant performance failure is defined by the SHR as something that a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved. This is something that is a systematic problem that does, or could, affect all of a landlord's tenants. If you are affected by a problem like this, you should first report it to us. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, you can report it directly to the SHR.

A complaint between an individual tenant and a landlord is not a significant performance failure. Significant performance failures are not, therefore, dealt with through this complaints handling procedure. You can ask us for more information about significant performance failures. The SHR also has more information on their website:

<http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/>

Or you can phone them on: 0141 242 5642

Quick guide to our complaints procedure

A copy of our detailed Procedure is available on our website: www.dunbritton.org.uk

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail or in writing.

We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.



Stage 1: frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.



Stage 2: investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** *unless* there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.



The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it.

We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: 0131 260 5380 Fax: 0131 260 5381 Website: www.siaa.org.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland

Website: www.cas.org.uk

Or check your phone book for your local bureau.

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help customers access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing please tell us.

We can also give you this leaflet in other languages and formats (such as large print, audio and Braille).



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Housing Support Services

Argyll & Bute: 01546 605522

West Dunbartonshire: 01389 608988

Dunbritton Housing Association

01389 761486

Emergency out of Hour's repairs:

Hanover Telecare: 0131 524 1418

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Useful Contacts

Council Services

Housing Benefit

Argyll & Bute: 01546 605512

West Dunbartonshire: 01389 738555

Environmental Health

Argyll & Bute: 01546 605519

West Dunbartonshire: 01389 738290

Council Tax

Argyll & Bute: 01546 605511

West Dunbartonshire: 01389 737444

Refuse Collection

(including bulky waste uplifts)

Argyll & Bute: 01436 658877

West Dunbartonshire: 01389 737000

Anti-Social Behaviour Helpline

(and Noise Service: During Mon-Fri)

Argyll & Bute: 01546 602127

West Dunbartonshire: 01389 772048

Graffiti Removal/Fly tipping

Argyll & Bute: 01546 605514

West Dunbartonshire: 01389 772059

(during office hours)

Social Services

Argyll & Bute: 01546 605517

West Dunbartonshire:

Dumbarton 01389 737020

Alexandria 01389 608080

Out of Hours contact
for Argyll & Bute & West Dunbartonshire:
0300 3431505

Other Services

Citizens Advice Bureau

Dumbarton: 01389 744690

Alexandria: 01389 752727

Helensburgh: 01436 679111

Vale of Leven Hospital:

(Non-Emergency A&E) 01389 754121

Women's Aid:

24 hour helpline 0800 2000 247

Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley:

0141 887 9111

Job Centre plus

0345 604 3719

Universal Credit

0345 600 0723

Credit Unions

Scotwest: 0141 2272390

Dumbarton: 01389 768585

Vale of Leven: 01389 721803

Free Home Fire Safety Visit:

0800 0731 999

Money Matters Advice Service:

0141 445 5221

Homeless Services

Dumbarton: 01389 608956

Argyll & Bute: 01436 658806

ChildLine:

0800 1111

Samaritans:

08457 90 90 90

Breathing Space: (For people experiencing low mood who need to speak to someone)

0800 83 85 87

Archway:

(support for people with Learning Disabilities)

01224 643327

National Gas Emergency Number:

0800 111 999

Scottish Water:

0845 600 8855

NHS 24:

111 (free phone to NHS 24 helpline from landlines and mobiles)

Occupational Therapy

Helensburgh & Lomond: 01436 655052

Dumbarton/ Alexandria: 01389 737020

The AA: for people experiencing issues with alcohol:

0800 9177650

Community Addiction Team

Dumbarton: 01389 812018

Alcoholics Anonymous

24 hour helpline: 0800 9177650

General Enquiries: 0141 226 2214

Emergency Numbers

Emergency Calls (fire, police): 999

Police Non-Emergency Calls: 101

Crime stoppers: 0800 555 111