

WELFARE REFORM: IMPORTANT CHANGES TO HOUSING BENEFIT

From April 2013, Housing Benefit for working age tenants will be based on the number of bedrooms they need. This will affect tenants who are deemed to be under occupying their home. Under occupying means you are living in a house that is larger than you need.

When these changes come in to effect, claimants will qualify for one bedroom for:

- Every adult couple (married or unmarried or in a civil partnership)
- Any other adult aged 16 or over
- Any two children under age 10
- Any two children of the same sex aged under 16
- Any other child

The number of bedrooms you need will be used to decide how much housing benefit you will be entitled to. It is expected that if you under occupy your home by one room you will lose 14% of your maximum housing benefit and if you under-occupy by two or more bedrooms, you will lose 25% of your maximum housing benefit.

The following examples may help to explain the new arrangements. Please contact our Tenancy Sustainment Team on 0141-331 6651 if you would like to discuss your particular circumstances and/or for information and advice about possible options that could be available to you.

Example 1:

Mr Brown is married with twin daughters aged 14. They rely on Employment and Support Allowance (due to the claimant's poor health) as their main income, as well as child tax credits and child benefit. They have lived in their home with 3 bedrooms for several years and received full housing benefit. Their rent is £80 per week and maximum housing benefit is £80 per week.

Under the new rules they would be expected to pay their landlord the 14% shortfall, which would be £11.20 per week, even though the claimant is unemployed and unfit for work.

Example 2:

Mr Smith is single and in low paid employment. He has overnight access rights to his two children, one 12 yr old daughter and one 8 yr old son. He lives in a 3 bedroom property. His rent is £80 per week and he receives only £40 per week housing benefit because he also has wages.

Under the new rules he has two bedrooms that he does not need and therefore he under occupies his home. He would be expected to pay his landlord 25% shortfall, which would be £20.00 extra per week towards his rent

ALLPAY APP

Are you looking for a more convenient way to pay your rent? Why not make your payments using the Allpay App?



This is available for Apple and Android Smartphones

The Allpay App is available to download for free from the Apple App Store and Google Play. This is available free of charge to customers of allpay clients who have signed up to use allpay for accepting debit and/or credit card payments.

If you would like any more information please use the below contact details:

Tel: 0844 557 8313

enquiries@allpay.net

www.allpay.net/the_allpay_app

MEMBERSHIP WITH GWHA

Why become a member?

Becoming a member of the GWHA entitles you to participate in the development of the Association. Some of the benefits of membership include:

- influencing the GWHA policy
- having a say in what services are provided and how GWHA is run
- voting at elections for the Management Committee
- being nominated for election to the Committee
- nominating other members for election to the Committee
- voting on other matters discussed at the AGM and General Meetings

The GWHA's Membership policy seeks to ensure that its Membership reflects the communities it serves, that all sections of the community are represented and to establish a wide and active membership by recruiting as members, individuals who have an interest in the work of the organisation and to make effective use of the skills, experience and views of its members.

How to become a member

Membership forms can be obtained by contacting Carol Nicol on 0141 331 6664 or cnicol@glasgowwestha.co.uk

5 Royal Crescent Glasgow G3 7SL Tel: 0141 331 6650 • Fax: 0141 331 6679

EMAIL: admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk WEBSITE: www.gwha.org.uk

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NEWSletter

GLASGOW WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION

BRECHIN STREET

2apt and 3apt Flats For Sale



You could own one of these flats for as little as £76,200 (or £64,770 if you are a GWA tenant)

Contact Jennie Dunk on 0141-331-6658 for more information.

- 95% of residents said their home had improved quality of life
- 100% were satisfied, overall, with their new home
- 95% were satisfied with the design of their home
- 98% were satisfied with the layout of their home

RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE REVIEW 2013/14

Over the next few months our rent review process will begin, with a view to consulting with tenants at the ATC in January 2013.

Affordability Survey

Thank you to the 200+ tenants who have completed this Survey Form. The results of this survey will be reported in our next Newsletter and at the ATC in January.

SUPPORTING GWA GARDENERS

With the support of the ATC, our Management Committee agreed an initiative that aims to help residents who are keen to enhance their garden/back-court areas. This may include networking with other GWA gardeners, or in some cases, a small contribution from GWA towards the cost of a project



Please contact Lauren Connolly at the office for further information.

As this is a new initiative, it will be reviewed by our Management Committee in March 2013, and following consultation with residents.

OFFICE CLOSURE DATES

Our offices (and the Hyndland concierge station) will be closed on the following dates. Refer to the office answer phone or the GWA calendar in the event of an emergency arising out with our normal office hours.

Friday 21/09/12 – Monday 24/09/12
Monday 24/12/12 – Friday 04/01/13

The Blythswood and St Vincent Terrace concierge stations will operate as normal during the above dates.

BULK UPLIFT SERVICE

If you are unable to take bulk items to the local recycling centre, you should contact Glasgow City Council's Customer Care Centre on 0141 287 9700. You can also make an online request at <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/Residents/CleanGlasgow/ReportIt/>

Once reported to GCC, you must leave your bulk items in the backcourt area. Please do not put items in the bin store, as this restricts access to the bins for Cleansing staff.

ANNUAL TENANTS CONFERENCE

26 JANUARY 2013

Please contact Avril Stewart if you have any ideas/suggestions for the Agenda or for encouraging more residents to come along to this very important event.



ATTENTION ALL OWNERS

The Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011

This legislation, effective from 01/10/12, contains 3 main elements which GWHA, as a factor, will be required to comply with. These include compulsory registration; a Code of Conduct and a new Homeowner Housing Panel.

We are in the process of registering, in accordance with the Act, and we will be writing to all owners over the next month or so to confirm how we will comply with the legislation and the associated Orders.

Transfer of GWHA Factoring Services to GWEN

The transfer of factoring services to GWen (a GWHA subsidiary) is progressing as planned, and we are hopeful that this process will be concluded, with your input, by April 2013 at the latest.

We will be inviting all owners to Meetings around October time to provide further information about the transfer, and we would ask that that you take the time to attend, or that you appoint someone to act on your behalf at the Meetings.

COMMUNITY VENUES

Local venues available for hire at competitive rates (and free of charge to GWHA Residents Groups)

- The Meeting Place, GWHA central office
- Avalon Community Centre, Cleveland Street
- St Vincent Terrace Concierge Station

For further information contact Lindsay Howie at GWHA on 0141-331-6650



SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER (SSHC)

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) is now considering the results of the recent consultation on the Annual Report on the Charter (which will be known as the ARC). The ARC, which will be produced from mid-2014, will provide a summary of GWHA's performance in relation to other landlords. We will be required to collate the data for the ARC from April 2013 and we will provide further information about this in future editions of our newsletter.

WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS 2012/13

This is a tax-free sum to help people cover their fuel bills. You don't have to be in receipt of benefits to qualify, however:

Age: You must have been born on or before 05/07/51. If you're aged 80 or over on or before 23/09/12 you will receive an increased payment.

Resident: There are some exceptions, but, in general, you must be ordinarily resident in the UK.

Payment: Payment should be automatic; however, the Department for Work and Pensions may not identify you as being eligible if you're not already in receipt of benefits. In this case, you may need to claim. You'll only need to claim once, and payments will be automatic thereafter unless your circumstances change.

If you haven't been paid by the end of December, contact the Pension Service in January on 08456 060 265 or text phone 0800 731 7339

STATUTORY RIGHT TO REPAIR

This Right was introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. It means that certain repairs reported by you have to be completed within a specific timescale or you are entitled to refer the repair to another contractor nominated by us. You may also be entitled to compensation in some cases. If the repair you report is a statutory repair you will be advised by our staff, who will also notify you of the special conditions that apply. Please contact the Property Services Team on 0141-331 6652 for more information on the statutory right to repair.

ANNUAL GAS SERVICING

We are required by law to carry out an annual servicing of gas appliances in your home (i.e boiler, gas fire). This service is imperative to ensure your safety and that of your neighbours, and we appreciate your co-operation in providing access to heating engineers from our appointed contractor, James Frew Ltd.

Although legal action is always a last resort, because of the importance of this matter we will take steps to force access where there are persistent difficulties in obtaining access. We will also seek to recover the full repair and legal costs of this action.

Inspection Hatches

A number of properties require to have hatches fitted to internal gas flues to enable inspection during the annual service. We will action this work in September 2012, and will be in contact with the tenants of all properties involved to explain the detail and extent of the work prior to starting.

TRANSFERS & MUTUAL EXCHANGES

As an existing GWAHA tenant, you may need to move house as your family circumstances change. If you need an extra room or you have unused rooms in your home you might want to consider either transferring to another GWAHA property or carrying out a mutual exchange (home swap) with either a GWAHA tenant or a tenant of another Housing Association or Local Authority.

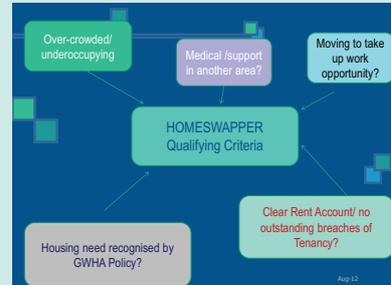
A register containing details of people who have already expressed an interest in a mutual exchange (swap homes) is available to view from the reception desk at our office at 5 Royal Crescent.

You must have our permission prior to exchanging properly.

GLASGOW WEST LAUNCHES HOMESWAPPER

HOMESWAPPER is a national mutual exchange register available at www.homeswapper.co.uk.

There is a fee for registering with HOMESWAPPER, however, in some cases, where you meet specific GWAHA criteria we may be able to assist you with the cost of registering. If you are looking for GWAHA assistance, please make sure you have our agreement, as we are unable to meet costs respectively.



For more information about transfers, exchanges, or the HOMESWAPPER scheme, please contact our Tenancy Sustainment Team on 0141 331 6651.

CASH FOR KIDS



Cash for Kids grants are awarded to help with the cost of a Christmas treat.

Last year, 22 GWAHA children benefitted from a total of £550 grant funding

Recipients must be no greater than 15 years of age on 24th December 2012.

We will be receiving more information from Cash for Kids soon so look for posters in your close from mid-September.

Grants are awarded one per child on an annual basis, and only one application per child should be made. You can apply directly yourself, some schools will assist applications, or alternatively, if you are a Tenant of GWAHA we will be happy to assist you.

FESTIVE GIFTS

We hope to continue the distribution of festive gifts this year with funding from our GWAHA Community Fund, which has been established from the proceeds of our in-house raffles, tuck shop profits etc.



Festive gifts are issued to our residents who are elderly and/or vulnerable. If you missed out last year or if you know of someone else who missed out, please tell your Tenancy Services Officer.

All gifts will be delivered, where possible, before the office closes for the Festive period.

BENEFITS ADVICE SERVICE

Please contact Jamie Simpson on 0141-331 6665 to make an appointment for a benefits assessment or for advice on winter fuel payments or any further information on Cash for Kids.

Alternatively, you may wish to drop-in to the surgeries on the following dates:

Hyndland Concierge Station	Avalon Resource Centre 48 Cleveland Street	Blythwood Concierge Station	St Vincent Terrace Concierge Station	Keith Court Sheltered Housing Office
10:00 - 12:00	09:00 - 12:00	14:00 - 16:00	14:00 - 16:00	10:00 - 12:00
18/10/12	4/10/12	27/09/12	25/09/12	5/10/12
15/11/12	1/11/12	25/10/12	30/10/12	2/11/12
20/12/12	6/12/12	29/11/12	27/11/12	7/12/12