



Forgewood
Housing Co-operative Ltd

Welcome to your Summer Newsletter

JULY 2021

Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival

Page 10



*"Normality is a paved road:
it's comfortable to walk but no flowers grow."*

ALSO INSIDE:

Service
Update **Page 2**

Allpay New
Number **Page 3**

Community
Updates
Pages 8 – 10

Performance –
How are we doing
Pages 14 – 15

Staffing – Modern
Apprentices
Page 16

SERVICE UPDATE

Phased Re-Opening: What this Means for our Services

Over the last few months Covid-19 restrictions have begun to ease.

Scottish Government have announced it is their intention that Scotland will move to level 0 on 19th July 2021 with certain measures in place.

These changes bring welcome freedoms and see the return of hospitality venues and other aspects of normality, however even when we progress to level 0 government guidance still states that working from home should be the default option where possible.

However some of our office based staff have returned and are working from the office and others are continuing to work from home. Our offices still remain closed to the public and will review this in line with Government easing of restrictions.

We are as usual contactable to deal with any issue you may have about any aspect of our services on 01698 263311 between 9am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday or by email on enquiries@forgewoodcoop.org.uk or visit www.forgewoodcoop.org.uk.

Any update on the eventual re-opening of the office and the new ways of working will be provided on our website.

Housing Applications & Letting Properties

The housing staff are responding to requests for housing applications made and are being processed in the normal manner. Please contact the Co-operative on **01698 263311** should you require an application form for re-housing or housing options advice. All properties which become vacant are being let.



Community Centre - Community Activities

As restrictions are easing we are phasing the return of community activities within the Centre when we are allowed and it is safe to do so. Please refer to our "Community Team Update" section of the newsletter for more information and regular updates will be made on the Community Centre Facebook page.

Repairs and Maintenance

In line with government easing of restrictions from Monday 26 April the Co-operative recommenced routine and non-essential repairs and inspections.

During the national lockdown we carried out essential/emergency repairs only and in addition some non-essential works for example safety checks to gas and electricity, fire protection tests and upgrades, outdoor landscaping, close cleaning, void repairs, litter picks, gutter cleaning or any repair deemed to be a matter of safety.

Our contractors will be continuing to carry out repairs using the safety systems we have currently in place as a result of Covid-19. They will use the appropriate protective equipment to keep you as safe as possible in accordance with Scottish Government guidance.



Are you having difficulty paying your rent?

If your income has been affected by Covid-19 or for any other reason it is essential that you get in touch with your Housing Officer, Susan Kane as soon as possible to discuss this further.

For information, help and support please contact Susan by email susan@forgewoodcoop.org.uk or phone on **077769 90405**.

You have a legal and contractual obligation to pay your rent. Please do not put your home at risk by refusing to pay or by failing to engage with us.

Rent Increase from 1 April 2021...

Have you increased your payments to reflect this?

If you pay by standing order you must contact your bank to increase your payments as this will not be done automatically.

If you have not amended your rent payments from 1 April you may owe rent. Please contact your Housing Officer to discuss.



Important Notice

From 1 July 2021
Allpay's automated
phone payment
service number has
changed from
0844 557 8321 to
0330 041 6497.

Benefit and Money Advice (UPDATE)

AFTAR SERVICE.....Please remember our Advice For Tenants and Residents (AFTAR) project is still up and running. They can provide support and advice on financial inclusion/money advice. Please call **01698 263311** to arrange an appointment.

Due to the pandemic these appointments have been carried out by phone but we are currently in discussions with Citizens Advice Bureau to consider offering the service from our centres again. We will do this when everyone feels it is safe to do so. Any changes to this service will be updated on our website.

Complaints/Compliments

We are here for all our tenants and aim to get things right the first time. If we don't we want to know. By taking the time to tell us we can help resolve the issue for you and use that experience to improve our service delivery going forward.

You can tell us when things go wrong by making a complaint. Complaints are a useful way for us to learn what's needed to deliver better services.

We will try to deal with your complaint promptly and listen to your point of view.

We also want to know when you are happy with our service.

Your complaints/compliments really matter to us so don't hesitate to get in touch if you are dissatisfied or wish to make a compliment.

A copy of our Complaints Handling Procedure has recently been updated in line with requirements and can be found on our website or requested by telephone.

The complaints performance within the year is highlighted within our Performance Section on Page 14 & 15.

Has your household changed?

We need to know the details of everyone who lives in your home.

You must tell us if you want a partner, friend or family member to move in with you or if you have a new addition to your family. You should also let us know when someone moves out.

It is very important to ensure that you notify us of any changes to your household to ensure your tenancy rights are protected.

If we have not been formally notified of an occupant in a household, they will not have the right to succeed to, or be assigned the tenancy if circumstances changed in the future.

An occupant must have been registered with us as living in the property for at least 12 months prior to a change in circumstances, to be considered for tenancy succession or assignment. **The start date is from when you inform us, not the date that they moved in.**

For further information, please contact your Housing Officer who can provide a Permission to Reside form for you to complete and return to the office.

...Please don't leave it until it is too late to protect your household!



Estate Walkabouts

All going well with the easing of Covid-19 restrictions we are hoping to carry out a social distancing Estate Management walkabout in the Summer (hopefully August). These walkabouts enable residents to come along and join staff in a walk around our estates.

Any areas of concern can be identified along with ways they could be improved.

If you are interested in attending an estate walkabout please contact your Housing Officer, Susan Kane.

Staff go Litter Picking...

Staff took some time out of their busy workload to volunteer in June to carry out a litter pick of the estates...

It is hoped when Covid-19 restrictions ease we will arrange a Community Litter Pick to try and encourage residents to take pride in their communities.



**Attention all those
With Green Fingers**



Entries to Garden Competition Summer 2021

As Spring is in the air we are pleased to announce that our annual Summer Garden Competition will take place again this year.

We are changing the way in which the competition will be run. You can either enter your own garden into the competition or you can nominate a neighbour. All entries must be submitted to the Co-operative by 30 July 2021.

The competition is open to all tenants and you can enter the garden competition by emailing enquiries@forgewoodcoop.org.uk providing your name, address and contact number.

No entries will be accepted after the closing date.

In addition to this we will also be carrying out a walk round of all our estates within July to identify any gardens we will enter into the garden competition.

In August we will arrange for all entries to be independently judged. Winners will be notified by the end of August 2021 who will receive a prize.

All winners' photos will be printed in the Autumn edition of our newsletter.....Happy Gardening!

Garden Upkeep

Should you have a private garden area or driveway we would remind you that it is your responsibility to keep this area maintained to a satisfactory standard at all times.

Regular inspections will be carried out by Co-operative staff to ensure this is done.

Communal Back Courts

As we all welcome the summer months and better weather, we would remind residents of our flats that the communal back courts are for everyone's enjoyment and use, please be considerate to your neighbours when using the communal spaces.

COMMON AREAS IN BLOCKS AND CLOSES – KEEP THEM CLEAR

We all have a responsibility to help keep communal areas clear, clean and well maintained. This is especially important as items stored or dumped in communal areas can present a serious fire hazard and can also prevent escape in the event of a fire breaking out.

As fire safety remains our top priority we

are asking that all communal areas in blocks and closes are kept completely free from any items which may cause a hazard.

We will aim to inspect all closes to ensure that all communal areas are kept completely clear.

Please work with us on this matter as it is for your own and other residents' safety.

Dog Fouling

The majority of dog owners are respectful of other people and pick up after their pets. However we have received numerous complaints as some dog owners are allowing their dog to foul in the back court and common areas within the estates. We would ask all dog owners to ensure they are picking up their dog foul and disposing of this in the allocated bins.

If you require bags please contact the office and we can provide these for you.

Grab It - Always keep a supply of bags near your dog's lead so you don't forget to

take them with you on every walk.

Bag It - Carefully turn the bag inside out and 'bag' your dog's mess.

Bin It - Dispose of the bag in a bin. Dog waste can be put in a public litter bin if a specific dog waste bin is not provided.

Leaving dog foul can be unsanitary and dangerous for our landscapers and they will not cut areas where there is extensive dog fouling.

We urge you, if you have a dog, to clean up after it – it is the law.

Should you have any concerns about dog owners persistently allowing their dog to foul without picking it up, please contact us.

Remember Grab it, Bag it, Bin it.



Bulk-Uplifts

We cleared the estate of bulk rubbish on a number of occasions throughout 2020-21. The total cost for this service was £10,900.

As our only form of income is our rental income, this equates to £4.22 of your rent charge going towards this service every month.

We are finding a number of tenants are not using this service in the spirit it was set up. During the year we have had a number of tenants who have left out:

- Excessive black bags of house refuse.
- Full kitchens and bathrooms
- Fridge freezers

- Excessive items of furniture
- Prohibited items

We also have a number of tenants within our common closes who continue to dump items of furniture and rubbish outside our bin stores on a weekly basis.

This is a vital service for tenants due to the withdrawal of North Lanarkshire Council free bulk uplift service.

We are currently reviewing this service due to the ongoing issues and rising costs.

Below are examples of the unacceptable condition that items were left within the estate -



Lorne Drive/ Fife Drive

We have recently received reports of rats/vermin within the area which we have reported to the Environmental Health. It is essential that everyone disposes of household rubbish within the correct bins and ensures that they are put out for collection every week.

If you are unsure of what bins to go out you can check the information at NLC website <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/bin-collection-dates> this will also provide information on the dates different refuse is collected.

In addition we ask residents to work alongside the Co-operative and remove any large household items that are lying/dumped within their rear court area or derelict sheds as this can attract vermin to live within these items.

You can report concerns of vermin direct to North Lanarkshire Council by either calling **0345 143 0015** or reporting online <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/form/pest-control-request>. They are providing a pest control service free of charge for rats and mice until 30/6/22.

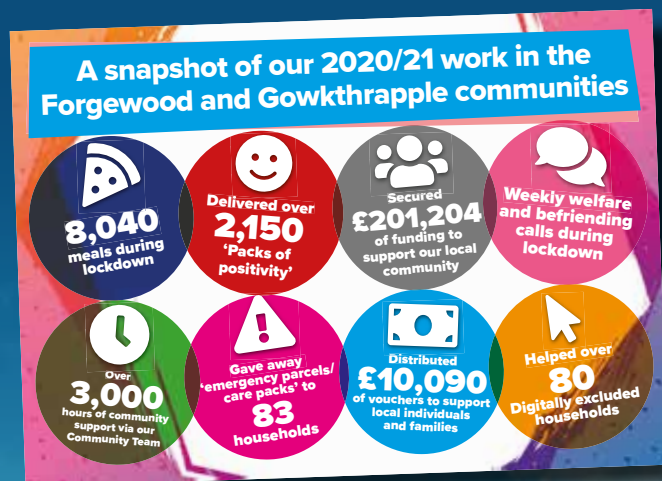


COMMUNITIES TEAM UPDATE

As we write this the Community Centre is starting to gradually reopen for groups and activities after a year that has been heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and associated lockdowns.

While the coronavirus pandemic resulted in the community centre being closed for most of the past year, Forgewood Housing Co-operative worked throughout that time to lessen the impact on the Forgewood community.

Like you, we have really missed seeing the centre busy and vibrant, full of people, groups, activities and events. We are very much looking forward to welcoming you back to the centre as and when the Covid-19 restrictions allow.



Developing the Young Workforce

We were delighted that Braidhurst High School, Developing the Young Work Force programme took place again at Forgewood Community Centre this June, after this having to be cancelled in April 2020 due to coronavirus lockdown.

Over the week S4 pupils undertook a programme of training course and problem solving challenges to gain a series of new qualification including First Aid, Health & Safety ASDAN Awards, Employability Award (SCQF Level 4) etc. Working with Skills Development Scotland, CV's were updated



and the week ended with pizza and a graduation event.

Thanks to Forgewood Holdings who provided funding to help support this project. We are looking forward to building on the success of the programme next year.



Secure Bike Storage

We are in the early stages of looking funding to for secure bike storage and want your views. To help us give us a phone, text or email.



Yarn Bombing

'The Chain Gang knitting' group held a 'Yarn Bombing' event to celebrate their return to Forgewood Community Centre. During the lockdowns they knitted these wonderful creations which are displayed outside Forgewood Community Centre. I'm sure you agree they are a very talented group.



DIGITAL

The world is moving more and more online – especially after the last year. We know for some it can be a little bit scary and can take up too much time trying to get online on your own, so we are here to help you adapt to the online world where we can.

Over the past year we were successful in 2 rounds of the Connecting Scotland Scheme and will continue to seek funding to

help and support people in our local community with equipment and devices. We are developing a small digital lending library for our tenants who are looking to borrow a device for a short time to practice with.

Everyone has different needs and requirements so please contact Isla our Community Development Assistant, to see how we can help you. I.e. training, problem solving, equipment or data.

COMMUNITIES TEAM UPDATE

Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival

We were pleased to be part of this year's Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival. The theme of this year's festival was 'Normality' and the inspiration for the event was a quote by Vincent Van Gogh: "Normality is a paved road: it's comfortable to walk but no flowers grow."

Volunteers from the local community planted more than 40 pots of flowers. This colour collection of flowers were displayed on the pavers outside Forgewood Community Centre. Over the course of these events, pots of flowers were given away to people passing by, spreading hope that things are starting to return to some 'Normality' along the way.

As our Community Centre gradually starts to reopen we are looking forward to welcoming people back and returning to some sense of 'Normality'.



What's on at Forgewood Community Centre

We are supporting and working with all the groups, organisations and individuals who delivered activities prior to lockdown and of course with new ones to ensure the centre is a busy and vibrant centre with a wide range of activities and support services for our local community.

At the time of writing this, it is impossible to give an accurate programme on what's on or when. This is due to the various and ever changing Covid-19 restrictions and rules. Some activities have already returned and some new ones are about to start.

Over the next few months we expect more activities and events to restart, we will keep Forgewood Community Centre Facebook Page updated with restart dates for the various group or telephone us on **01698 263311**.

Community Team Contacts

For more information please contact the community team:

Richard Bolton
Community Development Officer
richard@forgewoodcoop.org.uk
07495 549 065
01698 263311

Isla Dundas
Community Development Assistant
isla@forgewoodcoop.org.uk
07733 919 332
01698 263311



Landscaping Contract

In February 2021 our Management Committee took the decision not to renew id Verde's landscaping contract for 2021-22.

They made the decision to appoint GCF FM Ground Care Maintenance to take over the landscaping contract for the next year. Due to a contractual issue, the new contractor was not appointed until the 3 May 2021.

Please be assured we are monitoring the contract very closely at the moment to ensure the agreed specification is being adhered to. We are aware of some teething problems as the new contractor becomes familiar with the area.

We hope tenants will begin to see improvements to the common areas over the next few months.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the tenants who have contacted us over the past few weeks with their comments. Your feedback is always very important to us.

Please continue to contact our office if you have any concerns or compliments to make regarding this service.



Engagement Plan

We previously published information to our tenants on the new regulatory framework for social housing in Scotland. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has published our engagement plan.

The SHR do not require any further assurance from Forgewood Housing Co-operative at this point in time other than the annual regulatory returns required from all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

We will submit our Annual Assurance Statement over the coming months and the SHR will review our status in October.

routes to work

**Attention people of
North
Lanarkshire**

YOU are important to us!

***We strive to reduce
poverty, improve health and wellbeing and transform the
lives of those in
North Lanarkshire's
communities.***

What RTW offers clients:

Routes to Work offers a comprehensive service that takes into consideration the whole person. Your future development and wellbeing are very important to us. We would like to promote and support you through a personalised, tailored service comprising of:

- ✓ Individual and confidential 1-2-1 support
- ✓ Access to Training and Upskilling
- ✓ Access to Childcare assistance
- ✓ Personal development
- ✓ Health and wellbeing
- ✓ Homelessness Support
- ✓ Justice Services support
- ✓ Confidence building and empowerment
- ✓ Jobs

Don't take our word for it... Read our success on our website www.routeswork.co.uk and on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/routeswork)

CALL US ON 0800 783 4731 MEDIA@ROUTESTOWORK.CO.UK

North Lanarkshire's Working



The aim of PROSPECTS for parents is to help families in North Lanarkshire become better off, by supporting them to get into work and to support those in low paid work, to increase their wages. We will offer a range of support including money, debt and childcare advice, access to funds such as the childcare development fund and the discretionary fund, as well as health interventions and training.

To be eligible for *PROSPECTS* for parents you must meet one of the following criteria:

- Lone parent
- Disabled parent, or the parent of a disabled child
- Parent with more than three children
- Parent with youngest child under 1
- Parent under the age of 25
- From an ethnic minority

To find out more, or to sign-up: Tel: **0800 0730 226**
or Email: **griersonle@northlan.gov.uk**

If you work with parents and there is someone you would like to refer please email:

Leea Grierson: **griersonle@northlan.gov.uk** or Adele Muir: **muirad@northlan.gov.uk**

Are you or someone you know looking for social contact and feeling disconnected from the world?



The Digital Friends project can help!

We're pairing tech-savvy volunteer befrienders with community members who need support to develop their digital skills. We can help even if you/they don't have a digital device.

To learn more about Digital Friends contact 01236 748011 or info@vanl.co.uk



Are you or someone you know aged between 16-24?

Are you currently not working and not in education?

Consider gaining volunteering experience through Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL) as part of North Lanarkshire Council's Scottish Youth Guarantee Programme. This programme aims to help identify and match up young people with volunteering roles that they are interested in for up to 6-months. This will allow them to gain skills, contacts and experience in a field they have an interest in, which should help them to transition into paid work, education or training.

The time spent volunteering on this programme will additionally be used to accredit saltire award certificates which can be claimed based on the number of volunteering hours achieved and which are recognised by employers and places of education.

If you would like to find out more, please contact VANL at:



info@vanl.co.uk



+44 7874 886309



01236 748011

Central (Registered) Office: 35 Wellwynd, Airdrie, Lanarkshire, ML6 0BN
VANL (SCIO) is registered as Scottish Charity no. SC041224





Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

What benefits they can deliver...

Young people urged to check out Job Start Payment

Young people returning to work are being urged to check if they are eligible for Job Start Payment.

Job Start Payment is now £252.50, or £404 if the applicant has children and is available to young people who have been on certain benefits for 6 months or more. This payment could help with travel costs or could be used

for clothing, lunches and other expenses that need to be met before someone receives their first salary.

You can apply for Job Start Payment for up to 3 months after your start date. You can find out more and apply through mygov.scot or by calling **0800 182 2222**.

New Family Benefits



Find help to balance your budget
If you're on tax credits or certain benefits, you could be entitled to five family payments.

Scottish Child Payment
A payment of £40 every 4 weeks for each eligible child under the age of 6.

Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment
A £606 payment for a first child and £303 for other children. Plus an extra £303 if you have a multiple birth. You can apply from 24 weeks of pregnancy until your baby is 6 months old.

Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment
A £252.50 payment when a child is between the ages of 2 and 3.5 years. You can still apply if your child is not taking up a place at nursery.

Best Start Grant School Age Payment
A £252.50 payment to help eligible families with the costs of starting school. Visit mygov.scot/beststart for application dates and guidance on when to apply even if you are deferring.

Best Start Foods
Money every 4 weeks on a pre-paid card from pregnancy until your child is 3 years old.

Check if you are eligible and apply now at mygov.scot/benefits or by calling 0800 182 2222.

You may also be eligible for other benefits. Make sure you're not missing out by speaking to the Citizen's Advice Scotland Money Talk Team on 0800 085 7145.

mygov.scot

0800 182 2222

 **HAPPY TO TRANSLATE**

This information can be provided in alternative languages or formats by calling 0800 182 2222.

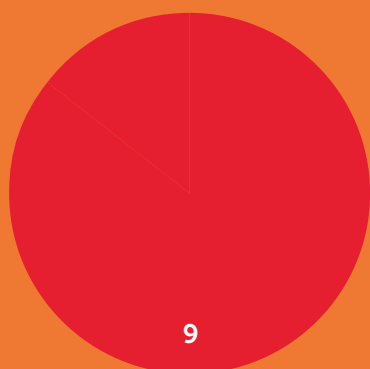
We submitted our Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter at the end of May and these are some of the highlights on the performance...

Scottish Housing Charter

01/04/20 – 31/03/21

Allocations Indicator 30

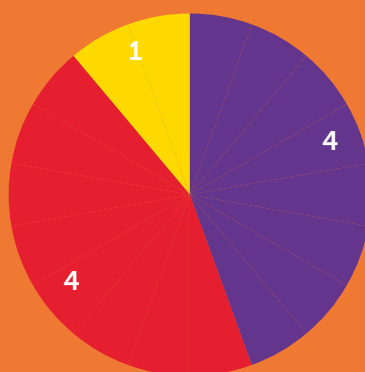
Contextual Indicator 3
Types of Let



General Needs

Lets this year so far: 9
(plus 1 mutual exchange)

Contextual Indicator 2
Source of Let



Existing Tenants

Waiting List

Other

Average Void Days Lost: 7

Indicator 14
Offers Refused



Total Offers

Offers Refused

Indicator 16

Tenancies Sustained more than a year – **93.33%**

Indicator C4

Abandoned Properties – **0**

We have created a snap shot of information related to performance. Each piece of information relates to the Scottish Housing Charter indicators which the Co-operative reports on.

You can find more information by visiting:
<https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot>

Maintenance

Indicators 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12

Repairs Completed

Emergency Repairs	284	Average 3.15 hours
Non-emergency Repairs	367	Average 2.39 days

- **97.00%** of jobs completed Right First Time
- **96.08%** Customer Satisfaction

Gas Servicing

Forgewood Housing Co-operative carries out annual gas servicing to comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations

This is a legal requirement it is imperative that we gain access for the gas service within 12 months of the previous service being carried out.



100%
184 services

Disabled Adaptations

Indicators 19, 20 & 21

Total Number Approved 6

Total properties adapted 6

Total number of adaptations carried out 6

Average number of days to complete all adaptations 24.5 days

Cost of all Adaptations £9,768

Cost of Landlord Funded £0

Cost of Grant Funded £9,768

er - How we are doing...

Anti-Social Behaviour

Indicator 15

The Co-operative has received 9 serious/very serious anti-social complaints and these are handled in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

If you experience any anti-social incidents contact the office on 01698 263311.

Complaints Resolved

100%
Resolved

Timescales Met

Yes: 9

Complaints

Indicators 3 and 4 Complaints Resolved

	1st stage	2nd stage
Complaints received in the reporting year.	11	0
Number of complaints responded to in full by the landlord in the reporting year.	11	0
The average time in working days for a full response.	4.64 days	N/A

Any dissatisfaction you may have with any of our services then we would encourage you to let us know.

We treat any dissatisfaction very seriously and use the information to adapt and shape the services we provide.

Rents

Indicator 26

Rent Collected – £860,281

Our arrears are 2.07%

The Co-operative treats non-payment of rent very seriously and takes all necessary action to recover moneys owed. There were no court actions initiated during this reporting period.

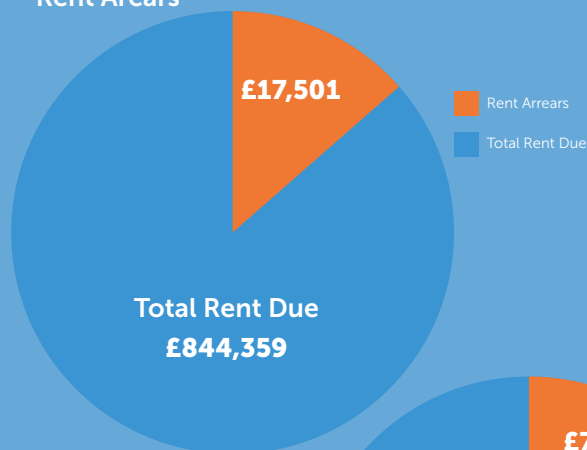
We operate a Benefits and Money Advice service via our AFTAR service. You can obtain support and advice on financial inclusion/money advice by phoning 01698 263311 to arrange an appointment.

Indicator 17

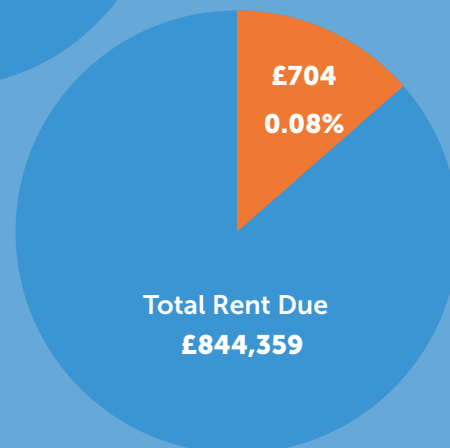
Number of properties which became vacant - 10

Indicator 27

Rent Areas



Total Void Loss
Total Rent Due



Useful Numbers

(Including Emergency Contacts)

- » **Saltire Facilities Management Ltd**
Emergency Repair Number **0845 606 1555** (all gas central heating faults 24 hours)
- » **Saltire Facilities Management Ltd**
Servicing Number **01698 743647**
- » **Rodgers and Johnston** (all other out of hour EMERGENCY REPAIRS) **0844 247 2120** (Freephone number **0800 9992520**)
- » **North Lanarkshire Council** (housing benefits and council tax) **01698 403210**
- » **North Line** – North Lanarkshire's **0345 143 0015** contact centre dealing with Bulk uplift, bins, roads and lighting, abandoned vehicles, Dog fouling, dog nuisance, gritting
- » **TRANSCO (National Grid)** (smell of gas) **0800 111 999**
- » **POLICE SCOTLAND 101** (999 EMERGENCY)
- » **FIRE BRIGADE** (999 EMERGENCY) or text "FIRE" to **80800** from your mobile phone
- » **SCOTTISH WATER 0800 077 8778**
- » **ELECTRICAL DAMAGE** to electrical supply or network equipment Call **105** or your own electrical supplier
- » **CRIMESTOPPERS 0800 555 111**

ALLPAY From 1 July 2021 Allpay's automated phone payment service number has changed from **0844 557 8321** to **0330 041 6497**

Modern Apprentices

LAURA SNEDDON

Laura started with the Co-operative in September 2020 and due to the pandemic we had to carry out her induction by zoom. She later met some of her colleagues for the first time at a team meeting on zoomthey certainly were very challenging and strange times which we are still working through.



Laura has embraced these challenges and with the great support from her colleagues and the Co-operative she is enjoying and thriving in her role.

She has almost completed her CIH qualifications in Housing which she is continuing to carry out by zoom.

Laura is now working from CentrePoint and is gaining more office based knowledge of the job.

ZARAH BANO

Only 2 weeks into lockdown last year and Zarah had to adjust to working from home carrying out her administration duties, answering the phones, studying and overcoming many distractions including her mum Hoovering their home!



Despite this Zarah has achieved her CIH qualification in Housing and she is now working from the Forgewood office. She is supporting reception, admin duties and currently gaining experience on the repairs and maintenance service.

Both Laura and Zarah have shown great commitment and enthusiasm and are a testament to what can be achieved as we had to work through new ways of working....well done girls!

We are delighted to have both their Modern Apprenticeships extended until 31 March 2022.

We are sure you have spoken to Laura or Zarah on the phone and hopefully when restrictions ease and we can re-open you can eventually meet Laura or Zarah face to face.

CONTACT US



FORGEWOOD HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD

Forgewood Community Centre, 49 Dinmont Crescent,
Motherwell, ML1 3TT



01698 263311



enquiries@forgewoodcoop.org.uk



www.forgewoodcoop.org.uk

