

## Wishaw & Shotts Edition

For tenants of North Lanarkshire Council

Issue 37 / March 2024

# Help maximising YOUR income

**We know times are tough right now and many people are struggling to pay bills amidst the cost of living crisis.**

We have a team who can help. Claire Smith, Co-ordinator for the Income Maximiser and Sustainability Team explains how:

“We want to continue to support our tenants during the cost of living crisis and our financial packages can help households who are struggling to pay their rent. We have a Universal Credit Assistance Fund (UCAF) which helps tenants who have fallen into rent arrears due to the five-week waiting time for Universal Credit payments.

We also have the Rent Assistance Fund (RAF) which was introduced to help council tenants who may be on low incomes and those who may be on Universal Credit who don't qualify for any other UK or Scottish Government financial support.

Our team provides a financial assessment as well as practical advice and support. Please don't wait to get in touch, contact us as soon as there is a problem. Early intervention is key and you can talk to us by phone, online or we can even visit your home if you'd prefer.

Our friendly team offers help claiming benefits including housing and council tax as well as community care grants. We can refer you on if you need more help with other issues such as debt advice or appeals.

- So far this year we have helped **1,908** tenants through our UCAF and **1,060** tenants through our RAF
- In 2022/23 this team generated **£15,041,770** in additional income for our tenants
- **4,007** financial assessments completed for benefit checks
- **6,663** additional claims made for benefits



### One family's experience

Family C consisted of husband, wife and two children. Mrs C was off on maternity leave from work and only receiving Statutory Maternity Pay and Mr C was on sick leave and only receiving Statutory Sick Pay. Neither had claimed benefits before and weren't sure how to or who could help. They were struggling financially to feed themselves and heat their home.

Unable to pay their rent and other bills, they had built up rent arrears and their health and wellbeing were being badly affected.

After contacting our team we helped them to:

- **claim Universal Credit and Council Tax benefit**
- **apply for a Scottish Child Payment and free school meals as well as a best start grant and best start foods**
- **make a crisis grant application for immediate assistance with food and utilities**
- **receive an award from our RAF**
- **receive assistance from our UCAF to cover their rent until their first UC payment was received.**

**Our vital assistance transformed their lives and helped them through this financial crisis**

# New build housing benefits

**Our new council house building programme is delivering benefits that boost local employment and skills, provide opportunities for local people and businesses and support community initiatives.**

This year's community benefits, which form part of our new council house building tenders, have delivered 20 new jobs, 23 work experience placements, facilitated 26 careers events, 8 site visits and 2 mentoring opportunities.



**LIVE HERE**

# Housing Convener: Councillor Michael McPake

Becoming Convener of the Housing Committee last year has given me a fantastic opportunity to work more closely with our tenants and residents and the groups who are active in our communities. It has been a great pleasure for me to get involved in this work.



One of my first jobs was to present the awards at the annual NL in Bloom Garden Awards. This was an amazing event and the nominees and winners were thrilled to be recognised for their hard work and dedication to maintaining their beautiful gardens.

I was so impressed that I have asked to go along on the judging tour for this year's nominees and I'd love to see even more tenants take part this year.

This year's awards, launching in April, will be new and improved with even more categories to enter and chances to win.

I also work closely with North Lanarkshire Federation of Tenants' and Residents', attending events whenever I can and hearing directly from them what matters most to our tenants. As chair of the Tenant Participation Steering Group we discuss strategic plans in housing and property and any housing issues or concerns.

I am always so impressed by their commitment, and I will strive to work together with them and our partners to achieve improved housing services for all.

## What your rent pays for

Did you know our average rent is one of the lowest among Scottish local authorities with an average weekly rent of £76.95 for 22/23, £10 a week lower than the Scottish average?

The rent we receive from council properties allows us to maintain and improve the council's housing stock as well as provide you with services as a council tenant. It's vital for services like repairs and maintenance, the housing capital programme, local offices and providing support.

During the last year your rent and other income helped us to:

- provide housing management to over 36,000 houses
- generate £15m in benefits and additional income for residents
- reduce the number of families with children in temporary accommodation
- help support over 1,900 homeless applicants

- complete over 97% of repairs "right first time"
- fit 1,420 council homes with new heating systems
- undertake almost 4,000 energy efficiency measures such as insulation, windows and solar panels
- provide 573 new kitchens and 666 new bathrooms
- successfully house 2,815 applicants from our waiting lists
- invest £1,375,763 completing 1,018 adaptations to our tenants' homes, ensuring those tenants can continue to live independently and more safely in their homes
- carry out repairs at a total cost of £51 million
- deliver an enhanced antisocial behaviour service dealing with over 14,300 calls that resulted in 8,948 requests for service
- bring 113 properties back into use as affordable housing through our empty homes and open market purchase schemes

And there's even more happening in the coming year. We have new housing developments right across North Lanarkshire as part of our plans to deliver 5,000 new homes by 2035.



We are on track to deliver a record number of completions this year, providing more homes for rent. We currently have completed 1,230 homes with 381 on site and 33 scheduled for completion this financial year.

Overall around £334m investment is being carried out between 2021/22 to 2025/26 to our existing housing stock.

This investment so far has seen planned safety works completed including sprinkler systems within five towers in Motherwell and Coatbridge, improvement works, including homes made available for 200 Ukrainian families, enhancements to energy efficiency in homes and an ongoing recurring investment programme including thousands of new kitchens, bathrooms and windows.



# Tenants Survey - the results are in

Our recent tenant satisfaction survey showed that tenant satisfaction levels are on the rise.

Responses from our survey show more tenants are satisfied in key areas, including, their tenancies representing value for money, being kept informed of housing services and decisions and having participation opportunities.

The survey is carried out independently every two years and we use the results to help shape and improve housing services to meet your needs.



# Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2023 Results



## Satisfaction with service

More tenants are satisfied with the overall housing service - increased by **5.4% to 86.6%**.

Scottish average **83.2%**.

## Satisfaction with homes

**87.31%** of our tenants are satisfied with the quality of their homes.

Scottish average **81.8%**.

## Value for money

**89.3%** of tenants tell us our rents offers good value for money. Our rents are on average **£10** a week cheaper when compared with offer Scottish social landlords.

## Tenants priorities

- Day to day repairs service
- Planned improvements within homes
- Managing the common areas around homes

(No change from 2021 survey.)

## Informed and involved

- **95.8%** are happy with how we keep tenants informed of our services and decisions.

Scottish average **81.1%**.

- **96.8%** are satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision making.

**20%** above the Scottish average.

# Tenants' conference best yet



Living local was the theme of our annual Tenants' Conference and it was great to see so many local tenants come together to help make a difference to their housing services and local communities.



Over 100 people gathered at Newmains and St. Brigid's Community Hub to discuss key topics, including the cost-of-living crisis, new council home building, antisocial behaviour and digital progress.

Peter Fanning, Chair of new group, Kirkwood Tenants' & Residents' Association, said: "I'm part of a new tenants and residents group and this was my first conference. I really enjoyed the day and particularly liked the question and answer time as we got the chance to speak to housing staff and discuss issues that matter to us."



There are lots of ways to get involved in housing.

Visit [northlanarkshire.gov.uk/housing/get-involved](http://northlanarkshire.gov.uk/housing/get-involved) to find out more or contact us at [tenantparticipation@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@northlan.gov.uk)

# Save the date

North Lanarkshire Federation of Tenants' and Residents' are holding their annual conference on **SATURDAY 1ST JUNE** in **Doubletree by Hilton, Bellshill.**

Packed with interesting housing news, exciting workshops and opportunities to shape housing decisions there's something for everyone.

**FREE to attend and with lunch and travel provided so why not book your place?**



Contact [tenantparticipation@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@northlan.gov.uk) or call 07890 438431.

**Your area manager:**  
**Susan Fowler**

## How to contact us

### Wishaw Housing Office

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### Shotts Housing Office

162-164 Station Road  
Shotts ML7 4AW

**e:** Shottshousing@northlan.gov.uk  
**t:** 01501 824747

## Get Involved!

**Contact our tenant participation team if you'd like to get more involved in housing services, join a local group or find out more.**

Tenant Participation Officer:  
Julie Gonzalez Bradley

**e:** tenantparticipation@northlan.gov.uk



Tenant Participation Officer  
Julie Gonzalez Bradley

## Wishaw & Shotts facts and figures

- 7,967 homes
- 6 retirement complexes
- 10 tenants groups
- 625 homes allocated - 2,342 on waiting list
- 1,609 housing options interviews carried out
- 820 financial assessments to help provide support and assistance

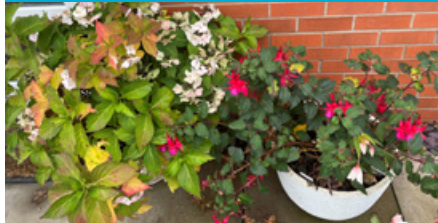
## Local Hero - Tom Muir



As part of the 2023 annual tenants' conference local heroes were recognised for going above and beyond for their local community and commitment to helping others.

Local Hero Tom Muir was recognised for his work creating gardens for the whole community to enjoy and running a local lunch club.

## Garden award winners



Individual winner **John Campbell**



Communal winner **Drummond Drive Retirement Housing**



Individual winner **Jim Leonard**

**Stay up to date with what's happening in your local area by signing up to email alerts and our local town Facebook pages.**

As well as news specific to your local area you can choose more

topics that interest you such as schools, council news, bins and recycling and housing.

**Find out more at northlanarkshire.gov.uk/email-alerts**

**If you need this information in large print, on audio tape, in Braille or in another language, please contact:**

**t:** 01698 274139 **e:** housingservices@northlan.gov.uk

MANDARIN

如果你需要用其他语言或者其他格式表示这些信息，请与我们联系以便讨论你的要求。

POLISH

Jezeli potrzebujesz tą informację w innym języku lub formacie, proszę, skontaktuj się z nami, żeby przedyskutować Twoją potrzebę.

URDU

اگر آپ کو دوسری زبان میں یہ معلومات درکار ہو تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے مندرجہ ذیل پتہ پر رابطہ کریں

ARABIC

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى هذه المعلومات في لغة أخرى أو على شكل آخر، يرجى الاتصال بنا لمناقشة الاحتياجات الخاصة بك