



Gardeen Housing Association Ltd
Building a Better Future



Tenant Handbook

Gardeen Housing Association Limited

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info@gardeen.org.uk



www.gardeen.org.uk



Gardeen Housing Association



@gardeenh

Updated 2023

Emergency Repairs

0141 771 9590 : (Out of hours)

If you have any emergency repairs during a holiday period, or at a time when the office is closed, please telephone our office and choose the relevant option from our phone menu.

Any resident who suspects a gas leak should contact:

Scotland Gas Networks (formerly TRANSCO)

0800 111 999 or 0845 070 1432

If you need to report a routine repair (non emergency repair) when our office is closed leave us a message on the answerphone and we will call you back.

Office Opening Hours

Monday	9.30 am to 12.30pm • 1.30pm to 4.30pm
Tuesday	9.30 am to 12.30pm • 1.30pm to 4.30pm
Wednesday	9.30 am to 12.30pm • 1.30pm to 4.30pm
Thursday	Closed am • 1.30pm to 4.30pm
Friday	9.30 am to 12.30pm • 1.30pm to 4.30pm

We offer appointments on a flexible basis. Contact us and we can arrange a date and time that suits you.

Welcome...



...to your Tenant Handbook!

This handbook tells you about the services we provide and aims to help you get the most out of living in your home. We hope that you find it useful! If you have any ideas on how to improve this handbook, please let us know!

Contents

About Gardeen Housing Association	page 2
The Management Committee	page 2
Who regulates us?	page 2
Governance	page 2
The staff	page 3
Contacting us and making appointments to see staff	page 3
Information and newsletters	page 3
Equal opportunities	page 3
Data protection & Freedom of Information	page 2
Your tenancy	page 4
Being a tenant	page 6
Changes to your household	page 9
Rent and payments	page 11
Repairs and maintenance (incl Right to Repair)	page 13
Complaints	page 16
Home safety and security	page 17
Getting involved	page 19

About us...



About Gardeen Housing Association

Where did we come from?

Gardeen Housing Association Ltd was founded as Gardeen Housing Co-operative Ltd in 1990 to improve and build houses in the Barlanark area.

Gardeen Housing Association is a registered charity (SC037681). The Association is also a registered Factor (PF000194) and factors 17 properties.

Gardeen Housing Association has a membership of local tenants and residents. All tenants are encouraged to become members. Each tenant must pay £1.00 to become a member and take out a share.

The Management Committee

The Association is controlled by a Management Committee made up of committee members who are elected by members every year at the Annual General Meeting.

The Committee has overall responsibility for the Association's work. All members are encouraged to become involved in the Committee.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Committee and how it operates, we would love to hear from you, please contact the Association's office.

"If you are interested in finding out more about the Committee, and how it operates, we would love to hear from you..."

Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator monitors the performance of the Association and produces information and reports.

You can find these at: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Governance

Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management



Details of the regulatory standards of governance and financial management set by the Scottish Housing Regulator can be found using the link below:

<https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-landlords/regulatory-framework>

The Management Committee submits an Assurance Statement to the Regulator annually which is signed off by the Chairperson. The Assurance Statement provides assurance that the Association complies with the regulatory standards listed in the link above.

The Regulator will then use the Assurance Statement, amongst others factors, to determine the level of engagement it will have with each Registered Social Landlord.

The Staff

The Management Committee employs staff to carry out the work of the Association. At present, the Management Committee employs the following staff:

Roslyn Crawford (Director), Lyndsay Moffat (Senior Housing Officer), John Seggie (Property Services Assistant), Anna Morton (Customer Services Officer) and Louise Hosie (Customer Services Assistant).

FMD Financial Services Ltd provides the Association with financial services. Atkinson Partnership provides maintenance services and assists with procurement of contractors and contracts.

Elaine McIntyre from Connect Community Trust provides a welfare rights service for one day a week.

Chiene and Tait are the Association's appointed Accountant Auditors. Wylie & Bisset carry out the internal audit function.

Making an appointment to see a member of staff

We offer a flexible appointments system.

We can also arrange evening appointments on request. Call **0141 771 9590** or you can email us with your query **info@gardeen.org.uk**.

How we send you information

The Association produces a quarterly newsletter which provides you with information on our policies, the work of the Management Committee, changes in the law that affect tenants, as well as more general advice and information. If you have any ideas about articles that you would find useful, we always welcome input from tenants.

Information is available on our website at: **www.gardeen.org.uk**

You can find out about us on Facebook and Twitter.

We also provide a combined annual and performance report.

Gardeen App

You can download the Gardeen App and use it to pay your rent; report a repair; complete a repairs satisfaction survey or learn about local events taking place. Please contact a member of staff if you need assistance to download the App.

Equal Opportunities

Gardeen Housing Association is committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all.

The Association is a member of **Happy to Translate** and can arrange telephone or face-to-face interpreting and translation services.



“...ensure that all individuals or groups are given equality of opportunity and equal treatment...”

Data Protection

As a tenant, you are entitled, under the General Data Protection Regulation, to inspect personal information held on you in the housing files. We will provide copies of this information upon request. You are entitled to check information you have provided in connection with your housing application free of charge.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 gives everyone a right of access to information held by Scottish public authorities. Since November 2019, Registered Social Landlords have been classed as public authorities.

Gardeen Housing Association proactively publishes a significant amount of information about the Association. We provide information to organisations like the Scottish Housing Regulator, The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and the Financial Conduct Authority which is accessible to the public.

We also publish information about the Association such as our policies and procedures, annual reports and financial information on our website.

Your Tenancy...

Tenancy Agreement

The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (SST) signed by you and the Association at the start of your tenancy is a legal document that sets out the terms and conditions of your tenancy.

In a very small number of cases, your tenancy could be a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement which gives less security of tenure – if this applies to you, the reasons for this and the implications for your security of tenure will have been made clear to you before the tenancy started.

Security of Tenure

As a secure tenant you have the legal right to stay in your home. The Association cannot force you to leave without firstly receiving the permission of the Court to do so. We would only seek this permission if there was a serious breach of the tenancy agreement. This may result in the repossession of your home. We would also charge you for any damage to the property and the court may award a decree for expenses.

Tenancy Sustainment

We aim to minimise tenancy breakdown, prevent homelessness and promote stable and sustainable communities through:

Prevention - ensuring that before and after a tenancy is started, steps are taken to identify issues which could affect tenancy sustainment;

Tenancy Support - liaising with and signposting to appropriate agencies to ensure that individually tailored support is provided where required throughout a tenancy, catering for changing needs of household members; and Partnership Working - establishing partnership arrangements with agencies who are able to assist in sustaining tenancies where appropriate.

Please contact a member of staff if you are experiencing issues which are making it difficult to sustain your tenancy or you require any advice or support.



Assignment, Lodgers and Sub-letting

You may only assign your tenancy, take in a lodger or sublet all or part of your home with the prior written permission of the Association. Please contact us if you are considering any of these and we can advise how to request permission.





Succession

In the event of the death of a tenant, if the property was in joint names then the tenancy continues in the sole name of the surviving tenant. However, if there is no surviving tenant then the tenancy can pass by succession. More details about this can be found in your Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.

Please contact our offices if you would like further details on this or any other tenancy matter.

Abandonment

If we believe that you are no longer occupying your property, there are set procedures which the Association can follow to allow us to repossess the property.

It is therefore very important that you let us know if you are going away for a while, confirming that you intend to return. If you do not intend to occupy the property as your principal home, then you should contact a member of staff to end your tenancy in the correct manner.

Running a business from home

Generally, you should not run a business from your home. However, under some circumstances this may be permitted. If you wish to run a business from home, you should contact a member of staff to discuss.

Rights and Responsibilities

Being a tenant of the Association gives you a number of rights while at the same time placing a number of responsibilities on you and your family. These rights and responsibilities are there to try and help you and all other tenants enjoy living in your home.

Starting your Tenancy

Please ensure that you look after your keys as the Association does not keep any spare sets and you will be recharged for any replacements required.

Approximately six weeks after you sign up to your property, the Association will carry out a settling in visit to check you are happy in your new home. Please ensure that you provide access for this visit as it helps resolve any issues at an early stage.

Being a tenant...



Contents Insurance

The Association pays the buildings insurance for your property however we strongly recommend that you also take out contents insurance. The Association has details of a scheme for contents insurance that we believe offers value for money. Please contact us for more information.

Neighbour Relations

Good neighbours can usually work out differences without falling out or involving the Association. Showing some tolerance and applying common sense can help neighbours live together in harmony.

If you are experiencing problems with a neighbour please discuss the matter with your neighbour first – they may not realise that they are causing a problem. Remember to approach neighbours in a calm and open way and be willing to compromise. If matters do not improve or you are worried about approaching a neighbour, speak to a member of staff who will deal with your concerns in confidence.

Resolving Problems With Neighbours

The Association can make a referral for mediation via Glasgow City Council, if both parties agree to being referred. Mediation is a way of bringing people together to talk things through and can prevent disputes escalating into major conflict.

If the Association determines that your case is suitable, we will refer you to an independent mediator who will arrange a joint meeting in a neutral venue, where both parties will have their views heard without interruption. The mediator will assist you and your neighbour to come to an agreement.

Mediation is:

Independent and impartial

Confidential

Voluntary and free

If mediation is unsuitable for your case then there are other strategies which the Association can adopt to help resolve problems with neighbours.

Anti-Social Behaviour Complaints

The Association takes all complaints seriously and will act promptly to resolve them at an early stage, contacting relevant agencies whenever necessary.

Any complaint made to the Association regarding another tenant will be treated confidentially. The Association will carry out investigations and we ask that tenants are patient during this time. Anti-social behaviour cases take time and effort to resolve by both Association staff and other tenants.

Staff may ask tenant to record dates, times, details of incidents, the effect of the incidents and other relevant information e.g. witnesses, Police involvement.

Glasgow City Council Noise Team

If you are experiencing excessive noise you should telephone the Anti-Social Behaviour Noise Team on **0141 287 6688**. The unit operates 7 days a week from 5pm to 3am. The Out of Hours Unit can also pre-arrange appointments with those who experience noise disturbance between 3am and 9am but do require sufficient notice to do this.

The Noise Team can issue a verbal warning, a warning notice or a Fixed Penalty Notice. They work closely with other services to provide resolution and support. Please advise the Association if you call out the Noise Team.

If all other measures fail to provide a satisfactory solution then the Association will commence legal action against the perpetrators. This may include Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs); Unacceptable Behaviour Notices (UBNs) or Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

If you require assistance communicating a complaint to the Association then we can request an interpreting service.

Third party reports are also accepted under these circumstances if the tenant has signed a Mandate confirming they agree that the third party e.g. a support organisation can make the complaint on their behalf.



Being a Good Neighbour

Following a few simple dos and don'ts can help reduce difficulties and make life more enjoyable for all residents:

Do:

- ✓ Take your turn at cleaning any common areas, such as stairs and bin areas;
- ✓ Lock gates and doors behind you;
- ✓ Keep pets under control at all times;
- ✓ Keep an eye on your children and visitors and make sure they are not causing nuisance to other neighbours;
- ✓ Try and keep noise at a reasonable level and avoid loud noises at night;
- ✓ Expect to hear noise from other properties at times and be tolerant of this;
- ✓ Make sure that people visiting come and leave quietly, especially at night;
- ✓ Put rubbish in bins provided and put your rubbish out for collection;
- ✓ Maintain your garden;
- ✓ Report repairs as they occur.



Don't:

- ✗ Play music, TV etc. at loud volumes, especially late at night;
- ✗ Carry out DIY late at night;
- ✗ Use noisy household appliances like vacuum cleaners/washing machines late at night;
- ✗ Leave rubbish lying around;
- ✗ Leave bikes, prams etc. lying in common areas;
- ✗ Let anyone into the close or your home if they are not coming to visit you;
- ✗ Make alterations to your home without written permission from the Association;
- ✗ Allow pets to foul in common areas or gardens. Dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs are breaking the law and can be fined;
- ✗ Allow your dog to bark continuously;
- ✗ Allow any member of your household, or visitors to cause any harassment to others.



Stair and Bin Cleaning

The Association operates a rota system for stair and bin cleaning. Please contact the Association if you lose your copy of the cleaning rota. Do not leave bulk in the communal close, please put this out on the pavement for collection on a Friday morning.

Garden Maintenance

If you have a garden for your own use then you are responsible for keeping it well maintained. The Association wants to encourage tenants in this respect and each year runs a garden competition. The Association maintains the communal areas which are also de-littered twice a week. If you are struggling to maintain your garden please contact a member of staff at the office.



Changes in circumstances...

Changes in your household composition

You have an obligation to inform the Association of any changes to who is living in your home as soon as the change occurs. You are entitled to have members of your family live with you as long as this does not cause overcrowding.

If you have a partner or other household member who wishes to become a joint tenant please contact a member of staff to see if the qualifying criteria has been met. The Association will not unreasonably refuse consent for such a request.

Who is living with you can affect your entitlement to Housing Benefit/Universal Credit and other benefits. It can also affect changes to succession of your tenancy. It is essential that you advise the Association, the Department of Work and Pensions, Council Tax Office etc. of any changes. Notification should be in writing immediately.

Relationship breakdown

If you have a joint tenancy, or have occupied the home as your only or principal home with a spouse or partner, and your relationship breaks down, please contact our offices right away for advice on the implications for your tenancy.

If you are experiencing or feel threatened with, verbal or physical abuse or other conduct that is damaging or unacceptable, please contact the Association, Women's Aid or similar agencies immediately.

Need for support or adaptations

If you are finding it difficult to manage in your home due to changes in your physical or mental well-being, you should seek advice from a member of our staff. We work closely with a number of agencies that may be able to provide support

The Association can assist you to submit a referral request for adaptations. Funding is provided through Glasgow City Council and adaptations are carried out in priority, not date, order as decided by the Occupational Therapist.



Moving Home

You can apply to transfer internally or to another housing provider. For an internal transfer, your application will be prioritised according to your need for a move. If you feel that your current home is not suitable to your needs, please contact our office, where a member of staff will be happy to discuss your needs with you.

Greater Easterhouse Common Housing Register (GECHR) housing application forms can be obtained from our office. The housing associations covered by the GECHR scheme are:

Gardeen

Calvay

Easthall Park Co-op

Lochfield Park

The four landlords listed above have developed a Common Allocations Policy. If you complete a housing application online or on paper and you will receive the same points for re-housing with each landlord.

The other landlords in the Greater Easterhouse area (Provanhall Housing Association, Wellhouse Housing Association and Blairtummock Housing Association) can also be contacted for a housing application form.

Mutual Exchanges

You can also exchange your tenancy with another Scottish Secure or assured tenant as long as the move is approved by both landlords in writing and neither party has a tenancy breach.

Ending your Tenancy

If you want to end your tenancy, you need to give the Association 28 days written notice of your intention. We have a standard form for this purpose. Please contact our office as soon as you start thinking about ending your tenancy. If you have a joint tenancy you must both sign the standard form to confirm both tenants are in agreement.



Rent and Payments...

How rents are set

The Association is responsible for setting the rents for all our properties to ensure that we can meet the costs of managing and maintaining all our tenants' homes and surroundings, while trying to ensure that our rents remain affordable.

The rent for each property is set according to the features that it has, for example, whether the property is an improved property or a new build, how many rooms it has, how many toilets it has, whether or not it has a garden.

Rent Increases

The Association reviews its rent levels each year. Between October and February, we work on setting rent levels for the following year.

Tenants are consulted on any proposed rent increase and a rent increase consultation newsletter is issued advising tenants of our intentions and asking for tenants to become involved in the rent setting process. You can get involved in person or online.

Tenants must be given at least 4 weeks' notice of any change in the rent charged. As your rent is increased each year on 28th March, you will be given notice of your new rent level before the end of February.

When you should pay your rent

Your rent is due to be paid on or before the 28th of each month in advance. For example, your rent for April should be paid on or before the 28th March. If you find it easier to pay weekly or fortnightly then you can do this provided that you are still a month in advance.

How you can pay

You can pay your rent in any of the following ways:

- Direct Debit or standing order – contact the office for details;
- Debit card at the Association's office;
- Using your Allpay card;
- Using your bank debit card by contacting **0330 041 6497** and quoting your Allpay card reference number;
- Logging onto **www.allpay.net**;
- Agreeing that your Housing Benefit/Universal Credit is paid direct to the Association by Glasgow City Council/DWP;

The Allpay system provides all tenants with a payment swipe card and allows payments to be made at any Allpay or Pay Point terminal. This system also allows tenants the option to pay by direct debit via internet.

We would welcome all tenant views on rent payment and how you would prefer to pay your rent. Please contact a member of staff at our offices to discuss these options further.

If you wish to nominate a family member or friend to act as a Financial Contact Person with regard to your rent, please advise the Association in writing. You can also nominate a Power of Attorney to deal with all your affairs on your behalf.



Council Tax

Please note that payment of Council Tax is your responsibility. You are entitled to a 25% discount if you live on your own and potentially a 100% discount if you are a student. Please contact Glasgow City Council for further information.

Housing Benefit

Existing tenants may have claimed Housing Benefit to meet the cost of their rent if they are on a low income and/or are of pensionable age. Glasgow City Council administers the Housing Benefit scheme for tenants in Glasgow. To contact an adviser telephone: 0141 287 5050.

Any claim for Housing Benefit is your responsibility. It is important that you reply to all correspondence from Housing Benefit and inform Housing Benefit of any changes in your circumstances, or you may risk losing your benefit.

Discretionary Housing Payment

If you are entitled to partial Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, you may also be entitled to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment. If you are underoccupying your home in particular, please contact a member of staff for more information.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment for people in or out of work, which merges together some of the benefits and tax credits that you might be getting now. If you are a new claimant you will now claim Universal Credit in most circumstances, instead of Housing Benefit.

If you are worried or have any queries about Universal Credit, please contact a member of staff at the office who can signpost you to relevant advice services.



Difficulties Paying Your Rent

If you are experiencing difficulties you should contact a member of staff at the Association's offices right away. Staff will advise you on any assistance you may be entitled to and will make a sensible arrangement with you, based on your income, to stop the arrears rising and to pay the debt back over a period of time.

When an arrangement is made it is very important that you keep to it. We take your circumstances into account to make sure that the agreed payments are realistic and reasonable so you should be able to keep to the payments. If there is ever a problem with your arrangement you should contact our offices immediately to discuss the matter. Discussions will be strictly confidential.

However, if we cannot work with you to resolve matters in this way we may need to raise legal action against you. This action can be to recover the debt and/or repossess your home from you - that is eviction.

Legal Action to recover unpaid rent

Should attempts to recover unpaid rent fail, the Association will serve legal notices on you and any other qualifying occupier of your home to advise of our intention to raise Court action.

We will still try and work with you to resolve the arrears problem, but if this fails we will apply for a Court date. After a Court date is set we will still try and work with you to resolve matters. You will be advised of the Court date and should seek your own legal advice.

Welfare Rights Service

The Association contributes funding towards an in-house Welfare Rights Officer. Elaine McIntyre provides an independent welfare rights service to tenants on a Tuesday. Elaine will help tenants with budgeting advice and your possible entitlement to housing and other welfare benefits. This is a free and confidential service. Appointments take place via telephone or face-to-face. Please contact the office to arrange an appointment.

Repairs and Maintenance...

Reporting Repairs

Response times

Responsive repairs are defined as 'day to day' repairs which are carried out on an ad hoc basis, as the need arises. We divide responsive repairs into 3 priority categories:

Emergency • To be made safe within 4 hours

An emergency repair is defined as something which could not have been foreseen and which threatens the safety of residents and/or property. Emergency call out contractors will normally make safe the problem to enable full and proper repairs to be undertaken during normal working hours.

Examples of emergency repairs are: blocked flue to open boiler; unsafe power fitting; significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks and cisterns.

Urgent - Complete within 3 working days

These are repairs which materially affect the comfort or convenience of the tenant. These repairs include: discriminatory graffiti; door entry phone not working.

Routine - Complete within 7 working days

These are less urgent repairs that can wait a short time before being dealt with. These repairs include: non-security problems with windows; plaster and brickwork repairs; minor problems with toilets, baths or sinks.

Please note that all response times are subject to parts being ordered.

Who does what?

The Association will meet all legal requirements relating to maintenance. Tenant and Landlord responsibilities in relation to repairs are clearly defined in the Association's Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement and Maintenance Policy.

Tenants are responsible for various repairs or renewals in order to keep their home in a reasonable condition. Again, these are detailed in the Association's Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement and Maintenance Policy.

If you are unsure whether a repair would be your responsibility or would like a copy of our Maintenance Policy, please contact our office.

Chargeable Repairs

When an item is usually considered Gardeen Housing Association's responsibility, but there has been damage by the tenant or a member of their household/visitor, the tenant will be held responsible and recharged the cost involved.



Reporting Repairs

Urgent and routine repairs should be reported to the Association during office hours. A member of staff may pre-inspect the repair before reporting it to our contractors to carry out the work required. Staff may also inspect work that has been carried out.

Please be flexible when advising the Association or contractor regarding suitable access times. The more flexible you are with regard to access, the quicker the repair is likely to be completed.

If you have an out of hours emergency repair i.e. a repair which could cause danger to health, resident's safety or serious damage to property, please telephone our office and choose the relevant option from our phone menu – call **0141 771 9590**.

Any resident who suspects a gas leak should contact:

Scotland Gas Networks (formerly TRANSCO) on: **0800 111 999**.

If a contractor attends your property out of hours for a non-emergency repair then you may be recharged for the cost of the call out.

Tenants can also report repairs online via our interactive repairs reporting service by logging onto our website at: **www.gardeen.org.uk**

Repairs can also be reported through the tenant portal via our website. If you would like to use the tenant portal, please contact the Association for a demonstration (if required) and we will send you the web link.

Right to Compensation for Improvements

Written permission from the Association is required for alterations to your property. Compensation can only be claimed by submitting a written request between 28 days before the end of tenancy date and up to 21 days after.

Please note that **under no circumstances** should tenants install their own gas fire at their property to ensure the safety of all residents.

Planned Maintenance

The Association sets aside money from our rental income to carry out planned maintenance. This involves replacing parts of the property when they have come to the end of their lifespan e.g. kitchen replacements.

When organising these works we will consult fully with you and provide information about the works. We will arrange access with you and consult you where possible e.g. colour choices for kitchen worktops/units.

Precautions against Legionella

The risk of contracting legionella in the domestic home is minimal. There are however some simple steps that you should take to avoid this happening, such as cleaning the showerhead at your property (if applicable) on a regular basis.

Precautions against Asbestos

We undertake a rolling programme of asbestos testing. We will instruct surveys across a percentage of our stock annually and before planned maintenance works.



Electrical and Fire Safety

We will undertake regular electrical checks on your home and you should allow access. We will also carry out repairs to ensure your home is safe from the risk of fire.

Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Maintenance

Due to a change in legislation, the Association has completed a program to fit heat detectors at all properties and fit an additional smoke alarm in the living room. These will be maintained by the Association. Some existing smoke alarms were also upgraded to ensure that all alarms are radio linked.

Your smoke alarm is a life saving device. However, smoke and heat alarms will only help if they are working properly. If any your alarms are not working please telephone the Association to report this and we will arrange for them to be repaired or replaced. Please do not attempt to open the inside of the alarm as this will invalidate its guarantee.

Your alarms will be checked annually at your gas service.

Boilers

If there is a problem with your boiler please contact Gardeen during office hours for a member of staff to visit. A heating engineer will be called if necessary. The pressure on your boiler frequently dropping can be a symptom of a larger problem within your boiler and continuously topping it up can lead to further damage being caused which you may be recharged the cost of.

If you have no heating or hot water at all out of office hours please telephone **0141 771 9590** and choose the relevant option from our phone menu.

If your boiler is not working and you have a pre payment gas meter, please check if the meter says 'OFF' or is showing an error message. If this is the case, please advise the Association and we will try to assist you. If we are unable to assist, we will help you to contact your gas supplier.

Each property is fitted with a carbon monoxide detector which is maintained by the Association. If your carbon monoxide alarm is activated please contact Scotland Gas Networks (formerly TRANSCO) immediately on **0800 111 999** or **0845 070 1432**. Please request a reference number.

Framework of Contractors

The Association uses local tradesmen and companies to carry out repair work. All of these firms have been assessed against the criteria for admission to our Framework of Contractors and all have to operate to a Code of Conduct when working in tenant's homes. Their performance is regularly monitored.

A tenant satisfaction survey form is issued to tenants for every repair that is instructed to monitor satisfaction levels. Each satisfaction form that is returned is entered into the monthly prize draw to win £10.00.

You can also provide feedback about contractor performance via the Gardeen App; by text if you receive a repairs satisfaction survey text or to a member of staff via telephone, office visit, home visit or email.

Right to Repair

Certain repairs that you report to the Association may be 'qualifying repairs' that fall under the Right to Repair Scheme.

For certain types of repair, up to the value of £350, you have the right to have the work complete within a given timescale. If you report a qualifying repair, we will tell you the time allowed, explain your rights, give you details of an alternative contractor and make arrangements for access to your home.

If the work is not done on time, you can instruct another contractor and claim £15 compensation plus £3 for every extra day not complete. If you have failed to give access you are not entitled to compensation.

To view a full list of qualifying repairs please visit the Scottish Government website below:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/right-repair/>

Complaints...

If you have a complaint about our services, we want to hear from you!

About our Complaints Procedure

The Association aims to provide an effective service to the people we deal with. If you are unhappy about something then we would like to know about it.

Our Complaints Procedure lets you know what to do if you are dissatisfied. It also lets us monitor the service we provide and make changes if there are problems.

Anyone who receives or requests a service from Gardeen can use the Complaints Procedure.

This includes tenants, people applying for housing, owners or sharing owners and people living in neighbouring properties.

We would however, encourage everyone to try to resolve a problem informally first - this can often be a quicker and more effective way of dealing with a problem.

How do I make a Complaint?

If you have a complaint you should discuss the matter with a member of staff. If you have a complaint against a member of staff you should write to the Director. If you have a complaint against the Director you should write to the Chairperson of the Management Committee.

If you have made a complaint by telephone or in person, the member of staff will check with you that they have taken an accurate record.

We operate a two stage Complaints Policy. We will give you our decision at stage 1 in five 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. We will acknowledge receipt of Stage 2 complaints within three working days and give a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

Significant Performance Failures

If you are a tenant of a registered social landlord (RSL), you can report a Significant Performance Failure (SPF) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

A group of tenants or an individual acting on behalf of tenants, such as a representative of a registered tenants' organisation, can also report an SPF to the SHR. For more information please visit the complaints section of our website.

What if I'm still unhappy?

If you are unhappy with the decision then you can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman looks at complaints against public service organisations in Scotland.

Normally, you should go through Gardeen's own Complaints Procedure before the Ombudsman can deal with your complaint.

Contact the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman:

Tel: **0800 377 7330**

Website: **www.spso.org.uk**

Write to them FREE using this 'one line' address: **FREEPOST SP50**.

Independent advice can also be obtained from organisations such as: the Legal Services Agency; the Housing Advice Centre; Citizens Advice Bureau; the Commission for Racial Equality; the Disability Rights Commission or the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Home Safety & Security...

Gas Safety

The Association will service any gas fires or boilers provided by us, in your home every year. We are legally obliged to do this, therefore it is essential that you allow access for this work to protect the life of you, your family and neighbours.

If you have any gas appliance of your own, e.g. a cooker, you should have it installed, repaired and serviced by a registered Gas Safe engineer. If you fail to provide access for the annual gas service within 1 year of the last service, the Association will force entry into your home and may also commence legal action against you.

If you smell gas in your home, you should:

- Put out all cigarettes and other naked flames;
- Switch off all gas appliances;
- Turn the gas off at the mains – the tap is usually beside your gas meter;
- Make sure you do not turn on any electrical switches, including lights;
- Phone Scottish Gas Networks Gas Emergency Service (previously TRANSCO) **0800 111 999** to report the matter.

Fire Safety

An independent consultant has carried out a fire safety risk assessment on all of the Association's stock. The Association has actioned all of the recommendations made. Please help us by following the tips below:

- Smoking is prohibited in the communal areas of Association properties.
- Please ensure that you do not leave any items in the communal areas such as prams, bags of rubbish etc. as these can be a fire hazard and moving them out of the way can take up valuable time when trying to escape in the event of a fire.

Frozen & Burst Pipes

Make sure you keep your home warm in winter to avoid the misery of burst pipes. If your pipes freeze or burst contact the Association immediately for advice.

Burst pipes can cause a lot of damage to your home. The Association will repair your pipes but we are not responsible for damage to decoration, furniture, carpets or other belongings. You are responsible for removing floor coverings to allow access to repair pipes. You are also responsible for any damage caused.

Make sure you have home contents insurance. You can get details of how to do this from the Association. If you do not already know, please familiarise yourself with where the stop-cock for your water supply is in your property, in case you need to shut the water supply off in an emergency. If you are not sure where this is, please contact our office for advice.



Condensation

Condensation occurs when moist air comes into contact with a cool surface and water droplets form. When this happens on a wall, the walls soak up the moisture and become damp. Mould then sometimes grows on the damp areas.

Areas with poor ventilation are prone to condensation e.g. behind furniture, particularly wardrobes and beds if they are placed against an outside wall.

There are ways in which you can prevent condensation such as:

- ✓ Adequately heat and ventilate rooms at risk;
- ✓ Close the bathroom door when bathing to contain the moisture;
- ✓ Use the extractor fans in your kitchen and bathroom;
- ✓ Don't dry clothes over warm radiators;
- ✓ Don't overfill cupboards – ensure that air can circulate.

Energy Saving Advice

For independent and impartial energy advice please visit the website below:

www.glasgow.gov.uk



Getting involved...

Customer Engagement Strategy

The Association is committed to encouraging tenants to get involved in their community, so that they can have a real say in the services they receive and the community in which they live.

The Association's strategy provides for a range of ways for tenants to be involved:

Information

We provide tenants with as much information as possible about our services, policies and plans.

This information is provided in the form of general letters, information leaflets and regular newsletters. Information is displayed in our reception area and leaflets are available for tenants to take away.

Consultation

We will consult with tenants on any plans that affect them, and their home. For example, there is consultation each year on the rent increase. The Association operates a Consultation Register.

Policies under review are sent to tenants who have requested to join the Register for feedback.

Satisfaction Surveys

We will carry out our regular satisfaction surveys of our tenants, including repair satisfaction surveys and general service surveys.

Charter & Focus Groups

We organise focus groups as required e.g. a joint meeting with Police Scotland and Glasgow City Council about car parking.

Annual General Meeting

We provide an update on our work and ask for views at this meeting

Close/Street Meetings

We will support any request for a close/street meeting between residents. We may also organise these from time to time to discuss matters of common interest or concern.

In addition, a member of staff is always available during office hours to discuss any areas of concern.

Funding for Tenant Participation

The Association sets aside a budget each year for tenant participation. This budget is used to develop and support methods of tenant participation.

It is your home and your community and we wish to work with residents to make it an enjoyable place to live.

Social Media



www.gardeen.org.uk



Gardeen Housing Association



@gardeenh

We also provide information on our website, Twitter and Facebook pages.

Partnership Working

The Association works in partnership with other housing associations to secure funding. The Association also works closely with Barlanark Community Centre.

There are a wide variety of clubs and services that operate from the Community Centre. Why not pop in and see if there is anything of interest to you!



Joining the Association

Any tenant can apply to become a member of Gardeen Housing Association.

We are keen to encourage as many tenants as possible to become members. Membership costs £1 per person. This £1 will give you a share membership of the Association.

Being a member entitles you to attend the Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and to receive a copy of our audited accounts and annual report.

As a member of the Association you are entitled to stand for election to the Association's Management Committee.

Please note that if you fail to attend five annual general meetings in a row and you did not submit apologies then your membership of the Association will automatically be terminated.

Joining the Association allows you to contribute to ensuring that tenants' views are included in the decisions that the Committee takes.

Once your application is approved by the Management Committee, you will receive a Share Certificate confirming your membership of the Association.

National Panel of Service Users

The National Panel was established as a way for the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to engage with tenants and other users of social landlords' services. The SHR uses the National Panel to gauge priorities and experiences, and help to shape its focus in its role as regulator of social landlords.

To find out more about the Panel's work or to join the Panel, please contact Engage Scotland by telephoning **0800 433 7212** or emailing **natpan@engagescotland.co.uk**

For more information visit **www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-tenants/how-we-include-tenants-and-service-users**

Being a Committee Member

Management Committee members are local residents (mainly tenants), just like you, who have an interest in the area in which they live. Management Committee members get involved in monitoring performance, planned maintenance, setting budgets, policy reviews and a whole range of activities. It only takes a couple of hours each month and you will receive all the help and support you need. As a Committee member you will receive free training and support with child care/carer expenses.

Why not get involved in your community. For an informal chat about membership and/or becoming a Committee Member, please contact the Association's Director Roslyn Crawford at our offices.

Code of Conduct

Each staff and Committee member signs a code of conduct and the Association maintains a register of interests to ensure accountability and manage conflicts arising between their personal interests and duties to the Association.

EHRA

(Easterhouse Housing and Regeneration Alliance)

EHRA is an umbrella organisation that represents 7 housing associations and cooperatives that operate in Greater Easterhouse.

- Blairtummock Housing Association
- Calvary Housing Association
- Gardeen Housing Association
- Easthall Park Housing Co-operative
- Lochfield Housing Association
- Provanhall Housing Association
- Wellhouse Housing Association



Gardeen works in partnership to provide value for money.

Equalities

The Scottish Government have requested an update on the equalities information that the Association currently gathers to monitor the impact of our service delivery and if necessary introduce or change legislation.

If you do not wish to provide this information please advise a member of staff who will update your records accordingly. We store all equalities data securely. If you would like a copy of our Data Protection Policy or our Equalities Policy please visit our website or alternatively we can post a copy out to you.

Review

The Senior Housing Officer will ensure that this Handbook is reviewed by the Management Committee at least every three years, or earlier if required. If you would like to include any information in the handbook, then please email us at info@gardeen.org.uk and we will consider your suggestions.



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Building a Better Future

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