

# Newsletter

Autumn 2024



## Annual General Meeting (AGM)

This year we held our AGM on Tuesday 13th August 2024 at 7:00pm in the Tontine Hotel. Thank you to all our members who attended to enable the meeting to go ahead safely. Members heard an informative Chairperson's Report of the Association's activities for the last year, adopted the 2023/24 Annual Accounts and Audited Report; noted the re-appointment of Auditor; election of Committee Members, followed by the opportunity to take part in a general Question and Answer session.

We were delighted once again to offer our "Live Hub" where staff from the Reactive Repairs; Planned Maintenance; Housing Services; Landscaping and Finance Team, were available to answer any queries members may have and provide real-time information.

Following the AGM formal business matters, members who attended (or submitted a proxy form) were entered into a draw for Tesco vouchers—congratulations to all the winners! A buffet and tea/coffee was then enjoyed by all.

**Thanks again to all who attended.**

### Management Committee Update

The Management Committee is made up of 15 members, elected on a 3 year cycle. Prior to the AGM there were 12 Committee Members. One third of Committee along with any co-optees and casual vacancies are required to stand down in line with our rules and need to seek re-election if they wish to remain on the Management Committee.

This meant there were 8 places to be filled at the 2024 AGM. 5

Members intimated they wished to stand for re-election and there were 7 existing Members. This therefore resulted in the number of members standing for election at the AGM being less than the number of vacant places, the Chairperson declared them elected without a vote in accordance with the Rules.

This now gives us 12 elected Management Committee members for 2024/25 with three spaces available to be filled.

We are actively seeking interested parties to join our Management Committee. If you would like to find out more please feel free to call into the office at West Stewart Street; email [info@oaktreeha.org.uk](mailto:info@oaktreeha.org.uk), phone 01475 807000 or use the contact us form on [www.oaktreeha.org.uk](http://www.oaktreeha.org.uk)

## Stay in Touch



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# Reactive Maintenance and Void Contracts

As you may be aware following a successful tender process Oak Tree have set up a new Framework Agreement for both our Reactive Maintenance and Void contracts with 20 new contractors coming on-board to give the Association a larger contractor base to choose from allowing improvements in timescales and quality for our customers.

We are now almost a year into the new contracts, and we have been delighted to see improvements in both of these areas.

Key performance Targets				
Category	Performance Target		2022/23	2023/24
Repairs	Emergency response times	98.5% to be carried out within 4-hour response time	85.3%	89.5%
	Non-emergency repairs response times	98.5% to be carried out within response times	83.4%	86.8%
	Void repairs (No of Voids completed on Time)	98.5% to be carried out within agreed timescales	42%	61%
ARC Repairs	Repairs completed 'right first time'	90% of reactive repairs to be completed 'right first time'	83.1%	87%
	Average time to complete emergency repairs	To be no more than 2 hours and 30 minutes	2hrs 54mins	2hrs 24mins
	Average time to complete non-emergency repairs	To be no more than 6 days	7.9 days	7 days

The contract period will be for 3 years with the potential for two extensions of 1 year each at Oak Tree's discretion.

We are very hopeful that these improvements in service will continue throughout the duration of the Framework Agreement.

Our repairs reporting process continues as normal and there has been no change to the repair-line or emergency telephone numbers.

Our emergency Re-Active Out of Hours service will be provided by James Frew, for the duration of the contract.

James Frew will also continue to provide cover for our Gas contract, (Annual Servicing and Re-Active gas repairs) there will be no change with this service.

If you have any concerns regarding this or wish to ask any questions, please contact our repairs team on 01475 807001.

# Oak Tree Contractor Framework

## Community Benefits

As part of Oak Tree’s contractor framework, our contractors have signed up to give back an element of their work to the local community. This can be done in various forms ie: employ a local apprentice, some form of work for the benefit of the community or a donation of 1% of the total value of work received through the framework agreement.

2 of our contractors James Frew and Aquila have taken on local apprentices to help carry out the works required for the duration of the contract.

James Frew currently carry out reactive and void repairs under the framework agreement and also carry out our gas servicing and re-active gas repairs under our gas contract.



They have recently employed 3 apprentices to cover both of these contracts.

They are:

Craig Patterson	Heating/Plumbing
Sam Downie	Joiner
Steven Aitchison	Electrician

Aquila carry out reactive and void repairs through the framework agreement, have also employed a local apprentice to help carry out works under the terms of the contract.

Thomas Longburn has joined the company as an apprentice plumber.

We are currently awaiting confirmation from our remaining contractors as to how they intend to fulfill this element of the agreement. It is anticipated that this will take the form of a monetary donation and a decision will be made on how best to use any monies received for the benefit of the communities.

## Landlord Performance 2023/24

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has recently published its National Report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter for 2023/24.

The report shows how social landlords have performed against the Charter. A suite of performance information alongside the National Report including individual landlord reports has also been published along with an online interactive comparison tool and all of the statistical information landlords provided under the Charter.

You can check out Oak Tree’s performance for 2023/24 against the Charter on the Scottish Housing Regulators <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/landlords/oak-tree-housing-association-ltd/>





# Common Causes of Blocked Drains and Prevention

## BABY/WET WIPES AND SANITARY PRODUCTS

Please refrain from flushing baby/wet wipes and all forms of sanitary products down the toilet as they do not break down and cause blockages when there is a build up of wipes and sanitary products at a bend in the sewer pipes. This can cause sewage water to back up to your toilet or bath which would be very unpleasant.

We would recommend disposing of baby/wet wipes and sanitary products in your rubbish bin.

## HAIR

Human or dog hair does not mix well with drains especially when combined with soap, soap scum and soapy residues. Hair doesn't degrade in drains and can build into a full-blown blockage that floods your shower or bath.

We would recommend investing in a quality hair strainer or hair trap that catches hair before it enters the drains. This is crucial to prevent future blockages.

## FOOD

When it comes to the kitchen sink, food is the number 1 culprit for drain blockages. Blocked sinks often flood and regurgitate food.



We would advise investing in a decent kitchen sink strainer to prevent food from entering the drain in the first place.

To avoid blockages in your kitchen sink, don't flush the following foods down the drain:

- Cooking oil and fat
- Burnt food
- Dairy
- Flour or grain
- Eggshells

- Rice
- Potato
- Pasta

Generally, anything tough and starchy shouldn't go down the drain.

How to unblock drain from food?

To unblock your kitchen drain, firstly, try to flush it with hot and boiling water. This might cause the sink to flood, in which case you'll need to remove the standing water before continuing.

If that doesn't work, detach the trap U-bend from under the sink and clean it.

## RECURRING DRAIN BLOCKAGES

We have noticed an increase in blocked drains being reported and the main issue being traced to a build up of baby/wet wipes being discovered further down the sewage line.

Where it is possible to identify the property that the wipes have come from, if for example it is a standalone home, then we will recharge the cost to unblock the drains to that individual property because the blockage could have been prevented and is not a repair such as a broken or collapsed pipe.

If we are unable to trace the source of the blockage as the drain is common then we will have no alternative but to charge everyone in the block or those properties that share the drain. This is because unblocking drains due to wipes being flushed down the toilet is not a repair that the Association is responsible for and cannot continue to bear the cost of these repeated blockages.

We would appreciate if you will help us by not flushing your used baby/wet wipes down the toilet.



# Alterations To Your Home



Like many other tenants, you may wish to improve your home. We are happy to agree to you making changes, but you should always get our permission before making any changes to your home. Carrying out alterations before approval is given is a breach of your tenancy.

Your tenancy agreement gives you the right to make alterations or improvements. If you make a request to us for permission to carry out alterations or improvements to your home this must be done in writing or by completing an alteration request form. We will reply to your written request within one month of receipt of the written application. In that reply we will tell you if we agree to the proposed alterations and if so, whether we attach any conditions. If we do not reply within one month, we are taken to have agreed to your request. If we refuse this kind of permission, we will let you know in writing our reasons for refusal within one month of receipt of your written application.

If you have carried out an alteration without permission and does not meet our approval, you will be asked to remove the alteration. The Association are also entitled to restore the house to its previous condition during, or at the end of, your tenancy with the costs being your responsibility. If you are unhappy about our refusal, you have the right to make application to the Sheriff Court. You can appeal against the refusal or the conditions we have given.



For further information, or if you wish to apply for our permission, you should submit your request in writing or ask your Maintenance/Housing Officer for a copy of our alteration's application form.

# Customer Care

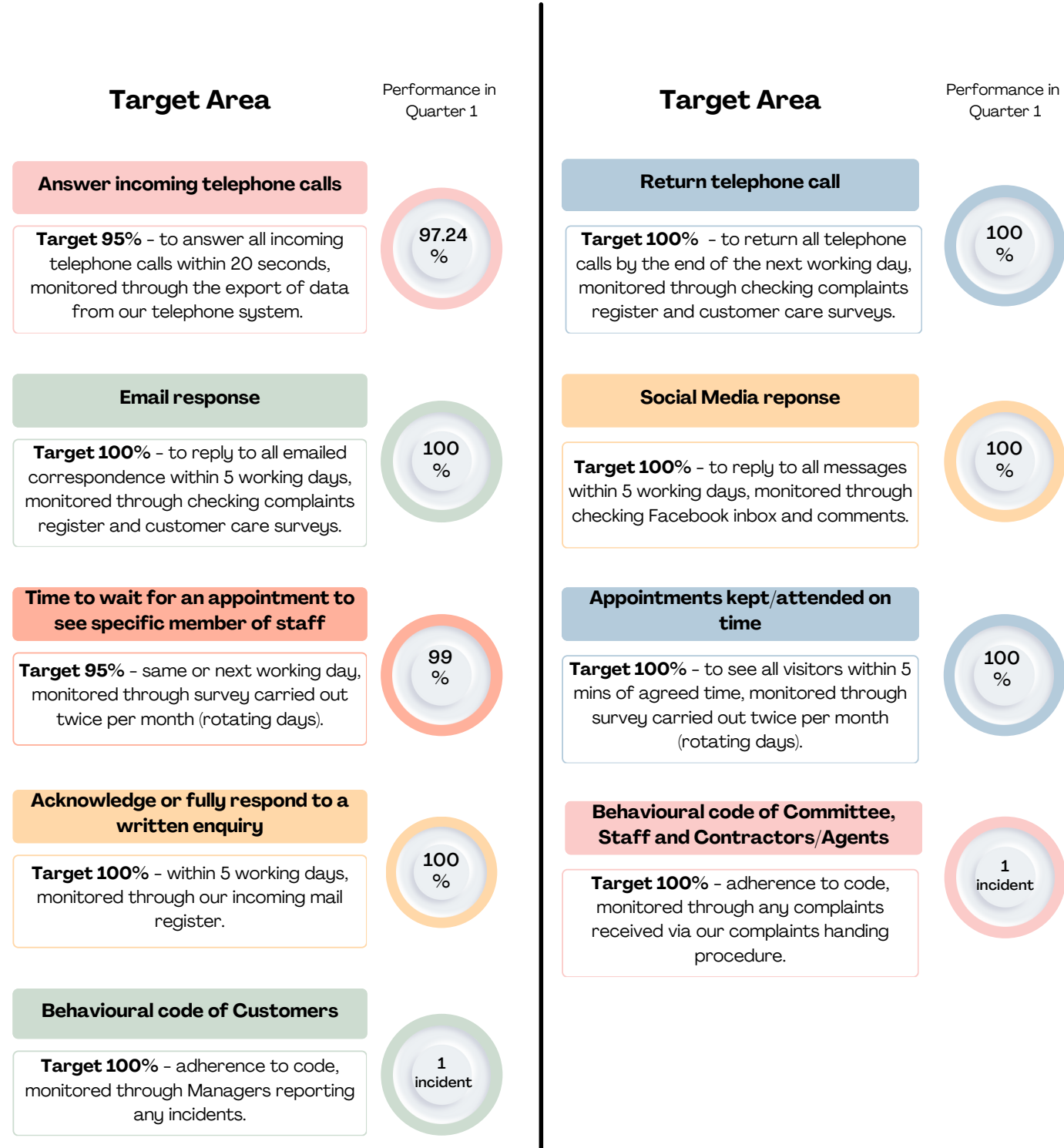
As part of our Customer Care, we run Customer Care Days twice per month. Customers who visit our office on these days will receive a text/email to complete our Customer Care Survey. As a thank you for completing our Survey, you will be entered into a prize draw for that month to win a £10 Tesco Giftcard. Our winners are as follows:

## Customer Care Prize Draw Winners

Date	Name
May 2024	K. Lees
June 2024	Name withheld
July 2024	D. Hardie

## Customer Care Statistics

Performance Within Quarter 1 - 2024/25







# Scottish Housing Regulator

## Complaints and Serious Concerns – Information for tenants and service users of social landlords

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider a serious concern you may have about a registered social landlord. A "serious concern" may be where a social landlord regularly and repeatedly fails to achieve the regulatory requirements for social housing; and this failure affects a group of social landlord tenants. A group of tenants or an individual acting on behalf of a group of the social landlord tenants, such as a representative of a registered tenants' organisation, can also report a serious concern to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

### What is a serious concern?

When your social landlord:

- has acted in a way which puts tenants' interests at risk and this affects, or could affect, a group of tenants or all tenants; or repeatedly fails to achieve outcomes in the Social Housing Charter or outcomes agreed with tenants; or
- has not reported its performance annually to its tenants or has reported it inaccurately; or
- does not meet the SHR standards for how an RSL should govern itself and manage its finances; or
- has not met any targets the SHR have set it.

### Examples of a serious concern

(please note these examples are not exhaustive)

- fails to consult with tenants on a rent increase; or
- regularly fails to do gas safety checks when it should; or
- regularly does not do repairs when it should; or
- does not allow tenants to apply for another house; or
- does not respond formally to complaints.

Further information can be found on the SHR [website](https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-tenants/read-our-factsheets-for-tenants/complaints-and-serious-concerns-information-for-tenants-and-service-users-of-social-landlords/) <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-tenants/read-our-factsheets-for-tenants/complaints-and-serious-concerns-information-for-tenants-and-service-users-of-social-landlords/>

Or in the Related Information Section of the "Make a Complaint" page on our website :

<https://www.oaktreeha.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>



# Customer Engagement Officer

## Meet Ellie our new Customer Engagement Officer

Oak Tree Housing Association is making some changes in the way it engages with its tenants with the appointment of a Customer Engagement Officer.

Ellie Butcher took up the new role in September 2024 and the principle aims of her appointment will be to deliver Oak Tree's community investment strategy, the customer engagement calendar, to be customer focused and to improve overall customer satisfaction with Oak Tree's services. Ellie will also modernise and evolve the way we engage with our customers and to involve customers in co-created solutions.

The way the Association engages with its customers and wider communities is a vital component of Oak Tree's make-up and a key influencing feature of its customers perception of the organisation as a whole.

Ellie will be working to create engagement groups, such as a Customer Forum, wider

community partner engagement and will host some of our conversation cafes. In addition, she will have the opportunity to develop new ways of working and engaging with new audiences.

Ellie said "the way that Oak Tree HA engages with its customers and wider communities is a vital component to how they function, I am keen to explore new opportunities for people to be able to engage with us and for them to get involved in helping to develop, influence and shape our future plans."

Oak Tree Housing Association are delighted to appoint Ellie to this new role within the organisation.



## Staffing Update



### A warm welcome to our newest Repairs Assistant Luan McGuinness

Oak Tree welcomed Luan in July 2024, when she joined our Property Team. We wish Luan every continued success in her role.

## Membership of Oak Tree Housing Association



Lifetime membership of the Association costs just **£1** and you can apply at any time. As a member, you would be invited to attend the Association's AGM where you would be entitled to vote for the Management Committee or stand for election to the Management Committee yourself.

If you would like to find out more about membership of Oak Tree Housing Association, or you would like an application form, please contact our office on 01475 807000 or email us at [info@oaktreeha.org.uk](mailto:info@oaktreeha.org.uk)

### Upcoming Public Holidays

#### September Holiday

- Fri 27th Sep 24
- Mon 30th Sep 24

#### Christmas

- Wed 25th Dec 24
- Thu 26th Dec 24
- Fri 27th Dec 24

#### New Year

- Wed 1st Jan 25
- Thu 2nd Jan 25
- Fri 3rd Jan 25