

# Ark<sup>®</sup> NEWSLETTER



## Update from chief executive

**Welcome to the Autumn edition of our newsletter.** There have been lots of positive changes since we last wrote to you, so this newsletter is full of updates.

In July, Ark moved to a new Head Office and we have been busy with events since we moved in.



In August we had visitors from a Danish Housing Association who wanted to learn about Scottish Housing Associations and the work we do at Ark. Thank you to staff from Housing and Care and Support for helping the visit to go well.





In September, we had the first Voices Group meeting in the new office. Speak Out Groups from different services told us what they have been doing and what are their next ideas. You will read about what the Speak Out Groups have been doing in this newsletter.



We had Ark's Annual General Meeting in September as well. This is called Ark's AGM. Some Ark customers spoke at the meeting about the difference Ark has made in their lives.



In all of our Newsletters, we tell you about how to become a member of Ark. It is important that we have a lot of members. Please let us know if you would like to be a member.

4 new members have joined Ark's Board of Management. They are Jane Dunlop, Richard Stark, Kerrie Mitchell and Isla Gray.



We are already planning for the future and I will tell you more about our plans in the next Newsletter.

Thank you to Ark's staff for your hard work and thank you to our customers for choosing Ark.

**Bobby**

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# Organisational Update

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## Ark have moved to a new office



Ark moved to a new head office in July 2024.

The old office at the Priory was not suitable anymore and it is now closed.



The new office is more accessible because it is all on the ground floor.



The new office is easier for people to get to by public transport.



Our new address is:

**Lochside House, Ground Floor, West Suite,  
3 Lochside Way, Edinburgh EH12 9DT**

## Ark's contact details have changed



We have a team of 3 Customer Services Advisors. They will be the first people you speak to if you call about your property.

You can phone the Customer Service Advisors on **0131 447 9027** and pressing **OPTION 1**.



You can also call on **0131 478 8143**.

Please **DO NOT USE 0131 478 8146** because it does not work anymore.



You can also send us an email at **customer.services@arkha.org.uk**

## Would you like to become a member of Ark?



If you are an Ark member you can attend and vote at Ark Annual General Meetings. We would love to have more tenants and supported people as our members!

If you are interested in becoming a member of Ark, please send an email to **admin@arkha.org.uk**

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# Staffing Updates

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Ark now have 3 Customer Services Advisors called **Tessa Sutherland**, **Mark Bower** and **Liam Rennie**.



**David Weddell**, who has been a Customer Services Advisor for the last 5 years is now Ark's Customer Services Officer. David will train and manage Tessa, Mark and Liam.



**David Reynolds** joined Ark as the Housing and Customer Services Manager. David manages the Customer Services Officer and the 2 Housing and Neighbourhood Services Officers, Lyn Davey and Lesley Henderson.



**Claire Young**, the Housing Officer in the North area, was successful in getting a new role as the Neighbourhood and Partnership Manager.



**Jamila Love** started as Ark's new Participation Officer. Keep an eye out for updates from Jamila on social media and Ark's website to see what is happening in Participation.



We have a new Asset Management team. **Victoria Hennessy** is the Asset and Compliance Manager, Colin Young is the Development Manager, Jon Mitchell is the Asset Officer and Lisa Walker is the Compliance and Contracts Officer.



**Lindsay Fallon** is in charge of the Talent and Engagement project. The talent and engagement project is all about getting the right staff and making sure they stay working in Ark. The first year of the talent and engagement project went really well. Lindsay is now joined by **Emma Duff** who is the Talent and Engagement Project Assistant.



We invited all of our staff to the new office to learn about what we are all doing in our teams.

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# Participation section

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## Speak Out Groups



Speak Out groups are for the people Ark support to meet with other people who are part of the same service. The groups get together and talk about issues that are important to them, get involved in their community and make a difference in Ark.



**Forfar's** Speak Out Group met in July to talk about scams. This was an important topic for the group because some members had noticed they were getting scam calls. They spoke about how to spot a scam and what to do about it. Some people told stories about scams they have dealt with before. Everyone shared their ideas for future Speak Out meetings and activities.



**Glenrothes** Speak Out Group met in July and they talked about bullying. They talked about different types of bullying and what people can do if they are being bullied. Everyone enjoyed chatting together, making some art together and playing bingo.





**Blairgowrie's** Speak Out Group have been busy! In April they went on a trip to a farm. They went on another trip to Blair Drummond Safari Park. They have also started a gardening group to plant flowers and plants in their garden.





## The Rainbow Group



The Rainbow Group checks Ark’s housing services and they share their ideas about how things can be better.

They gave a report to Ark’s management team about how they think the repairs service can be better.

If you would like to get involved in the group, please phone **Sharon Donohoe** on **0141 248 1242** or email Sharon at **[sdonohoe@tis.org.uk](mailto:sdonohoe@tis.org.uk)**

## Scrutiny Group



**“I find the work rewarding and do it in hopes that it can make a difference for other Ark tenants, I do enjoy attending the meetings and having input on how things can be improved. I have also enjoyed the opportunity to participate in different meetings and visit Ark’s head office. I have also enjoyed getting to know the tenants from other developments as well.”**

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# Tenant and Resident Safety

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## Legionella



Legionella is something that is usually in streams and lochs. It can be dangerous if it gets into water in your home like in your taps or shower head because you can catch a disease. This doesn't happen very much, and you can do things to try and stop it happening.



- ▶ If you don't use your taps or shower very much, you should run them for 2-3 minutes once a week. When you do this, you should turn the taps on slowly so the water doesn't splash. You should take off the shower head and hold the hose low down near the drain.



- ▶ If you have been away for a while and haven't used your toilet, you should flush it with the lid down so the water doesn't splash out.
- ▶ Keep your shower heads and taps clean.

## Safety checks



It is the law that Ark has to check the electrics in their properties every 5 years. Ark has to check the things that use gas in their properties every year.



One of our contractors will contact you to tell you when they are coming to do these checks.



When someone comes to your door to do the safety check, you should only let them in if you feel sure that they are who they say they are. If you are worried or not sure, do not let the person in and call Ark so we can check who they are.



If you smell gas, you should phone the **Gas Emergency Service** straight away on **0800 111 999**.

## Mould and dampness



Sometimes mould can grow in your home because of dampness. There are some things you can do to stop dampness and mould.

- ▶ Cover pans when you are cooking.
- ▶ Dry your clothes outside when the weather is warm.
- ▶ Do not use heaters that make a lot of water vapour and the water vapour can make your home damp.
- ▶ Do not store your things in your loft or attic because they might get damp.
- ▶ Open a window and close the door when you are using your bathroom or kitchen.
- ▶ Open your bedroom window for a short time when you get up in the morning.
- ▶ Clear your window sills.
- ▶ Wipe down the windows to remove any dampness.
- ▶ Keep the heat on low all day Do as many of these steps as you can to stop dampness and mould.



Do as many of these steps as you can to stop dampness and mould. Please contact Ark about dampness and mould in your home if you need to.

## Reporting repairs



You can report repairs in 2 ways:

- ▶ You can email us at **customer.sevices@arkha.org.uk**
- ▶ You can phone us on **0131 478 8143**

Please tell us as much as you can about what you need fixed.

We will tell you who the Contractor is and they will contact you about when they will come.

## Grounds maintenance



Ark's grounds maintenance service does things like cutting grass, weeding paths and picking up litter. If you have any issues with grounds maintenance, please contact your Housing and Neighbourhood Services Officer or the Customer Services team.



# Ark Services

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## Rent increase



In April 2024 we wrote to all tenants living in the 4 Ark Services in Aberdeen (Balnagask Court, Provost Mitchell Circle, School Drive and Greenfern Lodge) to tell them that the rent would change from 1st August 2024.

If you have questions about this, please contact us.

## Planned investment in 2024 - 2026



Ark Services Board have agreed that £1,381,000 can be spent in the next 2 years on work to improve our properties.

We will write to tenants, guardians and care and support services soon to tell you more about the work that will be done.

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# Ark Housing Association planned investment

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Ark Housing Association's Board of Management agreed that Ark can spend £4.8 million on the properties we already own in the next 5 years.

The money will be spent on replacing things that are in poor condition. The work will start in April 2025.

## New building developments



### **Crusader rise**

Ark finished building 20 new homes in Livingston. Tenants moved in during August.



The ground floor flats are accessible for wheelchairs. They all have wet floor shower rooms with sinks that can be lowered to wheelchair height. The kitchens have sinks, hobs and cupboards that can be moved up or down so they are accessible for different needs.





## Windsor Square

Windsor Square is Ark's housing scheme in Penicuik. It will have 12 flats. The building work will be finished next year.

Ark are using a special type of building called modular construction. This means the flats are built inside a factory and then brought to the building site to be finished. This means the building can be done faster.

Ark celebrated starting on site with a sod cutting ceremony in September. We will give you more information about these new flats when they are finished.





## Adaptations to your home



To help you live in your home, Ark can apply for money to pay for adaptations to your home.

Adaptations are changes to your home to help you in your daily life. They can be things like putting in hoists, grab rails or a wet floor shower.



We need to see a letter from an Occupational Therapist or OT that says what kind of adaptation you need.

After that, we can apply for the money to get the adaptation done. This will go on a waiting list and when the money is available, we can arrange the work to be done.



It has been difficult to do all the adaptations that people asked for in the last few years. This is because the materials for the work are more expensive now. This means that you might need to wait longer for adaptations to be done.

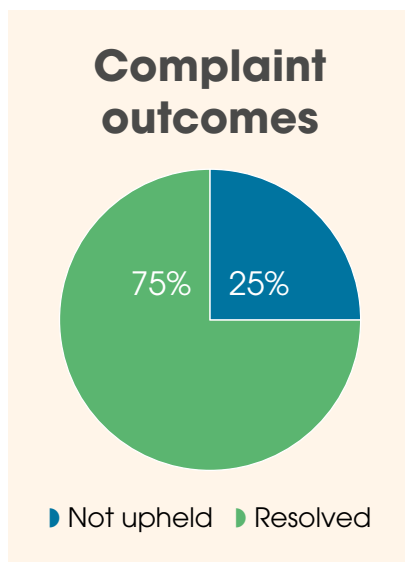
You should still ask for an OT referral if you think you need an adaptation in your home.

# Complaints



In April, May and June 2024, 12 complaints were made about Ark.

This is less complaints than we got in the first 3 months of the the year.



- ▶ 1 was about Agency staff
- ▶ 1 was about Policy and Procedure
- ▶ 1 was about Staff attitude or behaviour
- ▶ 1 was about Estate management
- ▶ 1 was about the condition of a property
- ▶ 5 were about communication
- ▶ 1 was about the staff rota
- ▶ 1 was about work that hadn't been completed yet

# New factsheet from the Scottish Housing Regulator



The Scottish Housing Regulator makes the rules that all social landlords in Scotland must follow.

They have a new factsheet for tenants who want to complain about their landlord.



The factsheet tells you what you should expect from Ark and how to complain if Ark is not doing a good job.

The factsheet tells you how to report a serious problem to the Scottish Housing Regulator if Ark keeps making mistakes or failing to follow the rules.



You can read the factsheet on the website of the Scottish Housing Regulator in the section called For Tenants.

**[www.housingregulator.gov.scot](http://www.housingregulator.gov.scot)**

# Contact Us



Please get in touch if you would like to give us any feedback about the Newsletter.

Here is a reminder of other ways you can keep in touch with us and hear about what we are doing:

- ▶ Website: [www.arkha.org.uk](http://www.arkha.org.uk)
- ▶ Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ArkPeopleHousingCare/](http://www.facebook.com/ArkPeopleHousingCare/)
- ▶ X: [www.twitter.com/Ark\\_PHC](http://www.twitter.com/Ark_PHC) Instagram: [www.instagram.com/arkpeoplehousingcare/](http://www.instagram.com/arkpeoplehousingcare/)
- ▶ LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/company/arkpeoplehousingcare/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/arkpeoplehousingcare/)

