

2021 - 2022

 With head  
& heart



# Annual Return On Charter TENANT REPORT 2021-2022



Ark<sup>®</sup> People Housing Care

[arkha.org.uk](http://arkha.org.uk)

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**Keys and Symbols** this year's report shows performance by the traffic light colouring system:



**GREEN** - Indicates there has been an improvement in performance from the previous year.



**ORANGE** - Indicates that our performance has remained the same the previous year.



**RED** - Indicates that our performance was not as good as it was compared to the previous year.

# Background



The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords like Ark should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities.

We are accountable to our tenants and other customers for how well we meet these standards and outcomes. We produce an annual report to detail our performance.

This year we have compared Arks' performance to a number of landlords who provide specialist social housing and some mainstream housing (called our peer's). The peer organisations we have compared ourselves against are **Bield Housing & Care, Viewpoint Housing Association, Key Housing Association and Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association.**

In September this year we sent a survey to consult tenants: we emailed all tenants that we have email addresses for, put a link on our social media channels and website. The purpose of this was to find out what tenants wanted included in the annual Tenant Report. We received feedback from 11 tenants but we listened to this feedback and have included information that tenants said was important to them. The report has been broken down into sections:

## Customer Service

- ▶ Tenant Participation and Engagement
- ▶ Tenancy Sustainment
- ▶ Anti-Social Behaviour
- ▶ Complaints and Feedback

## Ark's homes

- ▶ Quality of Housing
- ▶ Repairs and maintenance Investment
- ▶ Grant Funded Medical Adaptations

## Finance

- ▶ How we spend tenants' money
- ▶ Rent and Service Charges
- ▶ Value for money



**Scottish Housing  
Regulator**

# Customer Service

## Tenant Participation and Engagement

**Tenant participation gives tenants an opportunity to influence decisions about the services they receive and it allows landlords to better understand the needs of our customers. Ark is committed to developing and supporting participation and engagement.**

### What has Ark done in 2021-22 to engage with tenants?

#### Re-launched the Tenant Scrutiny Group

**The Tenant Scrutiny Group was re-launched in the summer of 2021.**

This group scrutinizes Ark's services and makes recommendations about what Ark could improve. Six tenants from across Ark's properties in the Moray, Angus, Aberdeenshire, Falkirk and Edinburgh areas, volunteered to be part of the group. The Tenants Information Service (TIS) supports and facilitates the group, and provided members with initial training.

The group took part in introduction sessions and training in the summer of 2021. This was followed by 2 meetings, held over Zoom, in 2021-22. **The first Scrutiny activity was to look at the landscaping and grounds maintenance contract.** Their activities were not completed by March 2022 so a more detailed report will be provided to all tenants once they have completed their first scrutiny activity.

#### Tenant Consultations

We consulted tenants on the provision of new cycle storage facilities, our annual rent increase and improvements to our neighbourhoods.

#### Cycle Storage

In 2019 we consulted with all Ark tenants to identify who would benefit from cycling storage. The greatest feedback came from tenants at Hoseason Gardens in Edinburgh and Back Hilton Road in Aberdeen. More detailed consultation then took place with the tenants living in these developments.



(Hoseason Gardens, Edinburgh)



Once the units were installed all tenants in these developments were given the option to ask to use one of them. If any tenants in either of these areas would be interested in using the Cycle Storage, please contact a member of the housing team.

### Annual Return on Charter Tenant Report Consultation (ARC)

In September 2021, we carried out a tenant consultation on last year's report. We wanted to understand how useful tenants find the report and how we can improve it. As part of this consultation, we also welcomed volunteers to help shape the final version of this year's ARC report.

### Rent Increase Consultation

In December 2021 we consulted tenants on the proposed rent increase for 2022/2023 of 2.5% or 3.0%. We received 29 responses and listening to the feedback.

ARK INCREASED ITS WEEKLY RENT ON AVERAGE BY

 **2.5%**

from the previous year

Even though our costs had increased significantly, with increases in costs of materials/labour, we did everything we could to keep rents as low as possible.

The process of setting rent charges is a complex one with many variables influencing the final decision, such as:

- ▶ Comparing rent charges of peer organisations
- ▶ Affordability to tenants, considering rises in other costs such as energy/food
- ▶ Income generated to cover costs
- ▶ Inflation – Ark applied a rent uplift significantly lower than inflation

### Annual House Visits

We carry out annual house visits to all of our tenants. These visits allow us to gather the views and needs of our tenants, which will help inform how we improved the services we deliver in the future.

DURING 2021-22, WE MET

 **225**

(46%) tenants

This was lower than we would have liked due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Table 1: Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Tenant Participation and Engagement

	TREND	2021-2022	2020-2021	PEER AVERAGE
Percentage of tenants who feel Ark is good at keeping them informed about services and decisions		73%	73%	80%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities given to participate in decision making		54%	54%	62%

Results for tenant satisfaction and engagement are based on tenant satisfaction surveys, which are carried out every three years. Our last survey was carried out in 2020. Therefore, there has been no change to our 2021-22 performance.

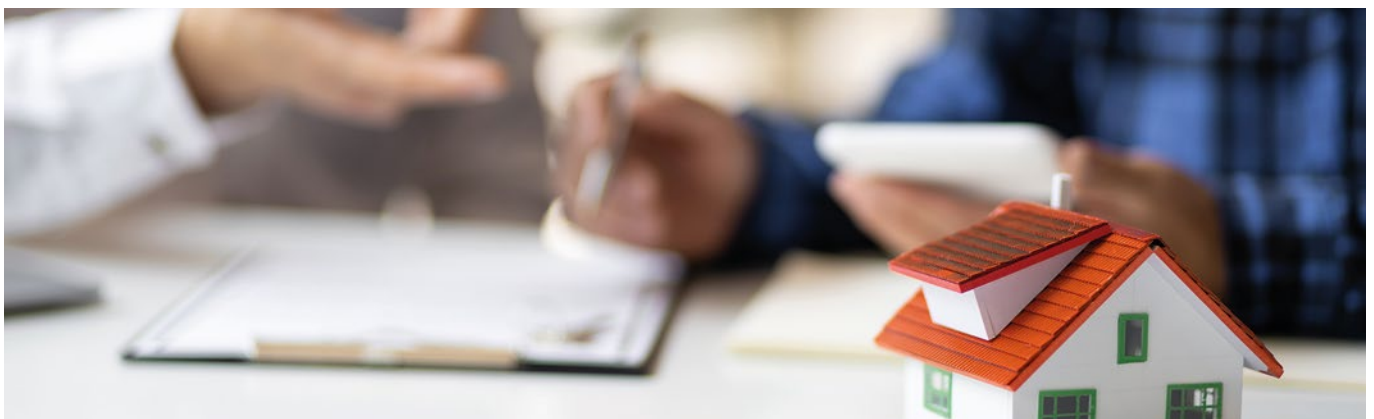
Your views about the services you receive from Ark are important and we are always looking to get more of our tenants to engage with us.

We are currently reviewing the ways we engage with tenants and will tell you more about this soon.

OUR NEXT SATISFACTION SURVEY IS DUE TO BE CARRIED OUT IN

 **2023**

If you would like to participate in decision-making, or have ideas about how we might be able to provide more opportunities for tenant participation please contact a member of the housing team.



# Customer Service

## Tenancy Sustainment



**Tenancy sustainment is achieved through the provision of relevant and timely information, advice and support to tenants allowing them to keep to the terms of their tenancy agreements and remain in their homes.**

The housing team work to ensure that allocations are made appropriately, rent accounts are kept up to date and anti-social behaviour and estate

management issues are dealt with as efficiently as possible to help tenants to undertake their responsibilities as tenants.

Table 2: KPI – Tenancy Sustainment

	TREND	2021-2022	2020-2021	PEER AVERAGE
Percentage of tenancies begun in the previous year that remained more than a year	↓	93%	94%	93%

### What is Ark doing to help tenancy sustainment?

#### Allocating Ark Properties Legally

Before we allocate a property we carry out a number of checks and hold discussions with prospective tenants to make sure the property is suitable for them.

Where tenants receive care & support, we work closely with the Care & Support provider to ensure that the property is suitable for that individual.

IN 2021-22 WE RE-HOUSED

 **27**

new tenants

#### Sign up and settling in Visits

In addition to the pre-allocation checks, we provide new tenants with a comprehensive sign up pack and carry out face-to-face sign up meetings where we explain the terms and conditions of Ark’s tenancy agreement that they are expected to sign. We will carry out a visit within 8 weeks of the new tenant moving into the property. This allows us to check whether they have moved into the property, settled in, are paying their rent on time or claimed any housing costs that they may be entitled to.

**In 2021-22 we carried out 31 Settling in Visits. 4 of these were for tenants who moved in late in 2020-21.**

# Customer Service

## Anti-Social Behaviour



**We want you to be happy and safe in your home. We work to ensure that any issues of anti-social behaviour are dealt with as quickly as possible and in accordance with our procedures and policies.**

Table 3: KPI – Anti-social behaviour cases

	TREND	2021-2022	2020-2021	PEER AVERAGE
Anti-social behaviour cases reported		13 Cases	11 Cases	25 Cases
Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases which were resolved		100%	100%	93%

### What is Ark doing to help tackle Anti-Social Behaviour?

#### The Noise App

In 2021-22 Ark introduced the Noise App. This is a very efficient means of taking good quality recordings of noise nuisances such as a dog barking, loud music, parties, anti-social behaviour, machinery, vehicles, construction or industrial noise. This empowers tenants to gather evidence for use by their housing officer. This can be used when taking any action against tenants in cases of anti-social behaviour.



#### Converting tenancies to Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST)

Tenants usually get given a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (SST). The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 allows us to convert this to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy where there is evidence of anti-social behaviour. When a tenant is issued with a SSST, it means that if they continue to act in an anti-social manner Ark can apply to a court to repossess their property more quickly.

WE EVICTED





# Customer Service

## Complaints and Feedback



**Your complaints and feedback provide us with valuable information, which we use to improve how we deliver services to customers.**

At Ark we are committed to providing the highest standard of service to our tenants. However we accept that, despite our best efforts, there may be occasions where our customers are not fully satisfied with the service that we have provided.

### Complaints – 2021-22

Our complaints handling process reflects Ark's commitment to valuing customer complaints, and has been designed to resolve dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of where our services are being delivered.

**Our approach, where we aim to 'get it right first time' follows that set out by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.**

Complaints give us valuable information which we can use to improve our service

provision. By analysing complaints this will help us prevent the same problem from happening again. For our staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of our customers' views and experience, and can highlight problems or offer better ways of doing things which we may otherwise miss.

The complaints procedure has two stages. These are Frontline or Stage 1 complaints which are deemed to be relatively straightforward and can be responded to within five working days or less. Investigations or Stage 2 complaints are considered to be more complex and these will usually be responded to within twenty working days.

The tables below shows our performance for complaints handling for 2021-22.

**Table 4: KPI – Complaints Performance – 2021-22**

	1st Stage	2nd Stage	Total
Housing and Asset Management Complaints received in 2021-22	10	5	15
Complaints carried forward from 2020-21	1	0	1
All complaints received and carried forward	11	5	16
Number of complaints responded to in full by Ark in 2021-22	10*	5	15
Time taken in working days to provide a full response	36	115	151

\* A complaint was received at the very end of our reporting year, and was responded to in full after the end of the reporting period

## Customer feedback – 2021-22



**New Ark Tenant:** *“I found the property to be clean and freshly decorated, which took a lot of stress off me so that I could just move in and get settled. The application and sign up process was all very friendly and very helpful. Nothing seemed to be too much of a problem.”*

Table 5: KPI – Complaints

	Trend	2021-2022	2020-2021	Peer Average
Percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 1		91%	87.5%	98%
Percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 2		100%	100%	92.7%
The average time in working days for a full response at Stage 2		4	4	3.82
The average time in working days for a full response at Stage 2		23	28	18.84

## Learning from Complaints – You Said We Did

Here are a couple of examples of how we have used complaints to improve our service delivery.

### THE ISSUE

A number of tenants gave us feedback and a number of complaints were about problems with communication and sharing information.

### What We Did

The Asset Team undertook a joint piece of work with colleagues in Housing, and produced a Who We Are and What We Do guide. We also issued an apology to each of the tenants, along with a commitment to review and monitor the effectiveness of our communications going forward.

### THE ISSUE

One of our tenants was finding it difficult to access the list of Ark’s current contractors on our website.

### What We Did

We now ensure that our approved contractor list, including subcontractors can easily be found within the Property section of Ark’s new website.

# Ark's Homes

## Quality of Housing



### The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)

This is the main way the Scottish Government measure housing quality. In order for our properties to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), they must:

- ▶ be compliant with the Tolerable Standard;
- ▶ be free from serious disrepair;
- ▶ be energy efficient (this has been superseded by the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH));
- ▶ have modern facilities and services; and
- ▶ be healthy, safe and secure.

Many of Ark's repair and planned contracts were delayed due to the pandemic related restrictions which prevented tradesmen from entering properties, except from in an emergency. This is reflected in our statistics below in 2021-22.

In the previous year, our Maintenance Officers completed a full stock condition survey of our properties. This information, along with feedback from tenants, is enabling us to identify what our key investment priorities should be over the next five years.

Table 6: KPI – SHQS

	Trend	2021-2022	2020-2021	Peer Average
Ark properties which meet SHQS		69.1%	74%	85.1%
Tenants who are satisfied with the quality of their home		80.11%	80.11%	85.9%

## EESSH Performance statistics

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing or EESSH was introduced in March 2014 by the Scottish Government. The standard sets milestones to encourage landlords to improve on the energy efficiency of social housing. EESSH was reviewed in 2018-2019 and a new EESSH2 milestone was agreed to:

*"All social housing meets, or can be treated as meeting, EPC Band B (Energy Efficiency rating), or is as energy efficient as practically possible, by the end of December 2032 and within the limits of cost, technology and necessary consent."*

The Scottish Government has confirmed that a further review of the updated EESSH2 is to commence this year for completion in 2023.



## ARK CURRENTLY HAVE

 **44**

properties which fail to meet the EESSH milestone requirements

 **233**

properties which meet the requirements, and

 **1**

exemption due to the age of the property

As part of our on-going improvements to properties, Ark has partnered with Warmworks, who will support Ark in their transition to EESSH2 and in meeting the net zero targets. For Ark, this means helping us identify what investment we need to ensure our properties are as energy efficient as possible, keeping energy bills for tenants as low as possible.

# Ark's Homes

## Repairs and Maintenance Investment



### DURING 2021-22 ARK SPENT

 **£639k**

on delivering repairs and routine cyclical maintenance. The Asset team also completed void inspections and investment in **35 self-contained flats**.

### IN 2021-22 ARK COMPLETED

 **99%**

of Gas Safety Checks within the **12 month timescale**, we could not carry out one service due to lack of access to the property.

### WE INVESTED

 **£367k**

into our stock in 2021-22. This included upgrading Ark properties with the interconnected fire and smoke alarms in line with new Scottish Government LD2 legislation.

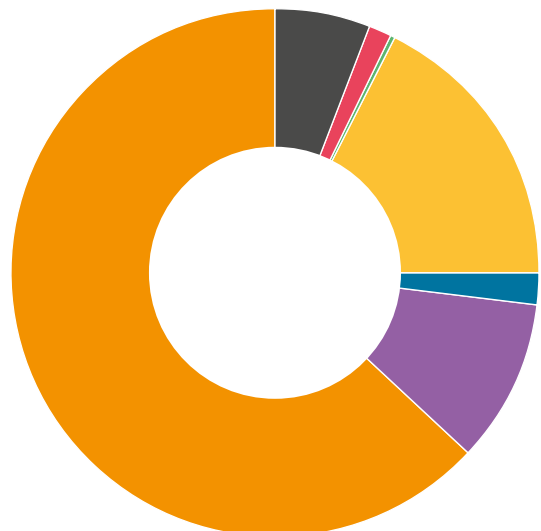
We also completed replacements of:

- ▶ **1** window
- ▶ **20** boilers
- ▶ **5** bathrooms
- ▶ **1** kitchen, and
- ▶ **14** miscellaneous planned jobs

A breakdown of the £367k investment for each type is shown in the pie chart below.

### Breakdown of Capital Investment Existing Stock

- ▶ Non Component **£22,130**
- ▶ Windows **£4,992**
- ▶ Doors **£587**
- ▶ Boilers **£64,995**
- ▶ Kitchen **£7,120**
- ▶ Bathrooms **£36,700**
- ▶ LD2 Smoke Alarms **£230,476**



IN 2021-22 THERE WERE

 **1,336**

non-emergency repairs completed in an average of **9.17days** and

 **333**

emergency repairs completed in an average of **8.38hours**

The repairs and maintenance measures below show an increase in the length of time taken to complete emergency and non-emergency repairs in 2021-22, this is due to contractors failing to gain access





to properties, an increasing demand on contractor time due to social distancing and lower staffing levels, an increase in delivery time for parts and material also being unavailable due to demand and shipping.

THE REPAIRS WHICH WERE ATTENDED TO WERE IN THE MAJORITY COMPLETED RIGHT FIRST TIME AT

**97.16%**

and there was also an increase in tenant satisfaction levels with the repairs and maintenance service in comparison to the previous year as shown in the table below.

Table 7: KPI – Repair Responses

	Trend	2021-2022	2020-2021	Peer Average
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours) (YTD)		<b>8.38</b>	<b>5.42</b>	<b>3.2</b>
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (working days) (YTD)		<b>9.17</b>	<b>5.29</b>	<b>5.5</b>
% reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time (YTD)		<b>97.16%</b>	<b>96.53%</b>	<b>89%</b>
% tenants satisfied with repairs or maintenance service carried out in last 12 months (Annually)		<b>80.11%</b>	<b>74.78%</b>	<b>84.9%</b>

# Ark's Homes

## Grant Funded Medical Adaptations



**Each year Ark receive grant money from the Scottish Government to adapt Ark owned properties to better suit the needs of its tenants. This can be a ramp, level access shower, grab rails, bannisters, electric opening doors and a variety of other alterations.**

IN 2021-22 ARK SPENT

 **£40k**

adapting properties for medical needs

This money was sourced from a grant fund of £63k allocated by the Scottish Government and City of Edinburgh Council. The full grant allocation was not spent due to Covid restrictions creating access issues, limited decant

options and the limited availability of contractors and Occupational Therapists. Ark hope to maximise the use of the funding allocated this financial year to make alterations which will greatly benefit tenants.

Although in 2021-2022 the grant allocation was not fully utilised Ark doubled the number of medical adaptations from the previous year as shown below and also completed the adaptations in a shorter timeframe.

**Table 8: KPI – Medical Adaptations**

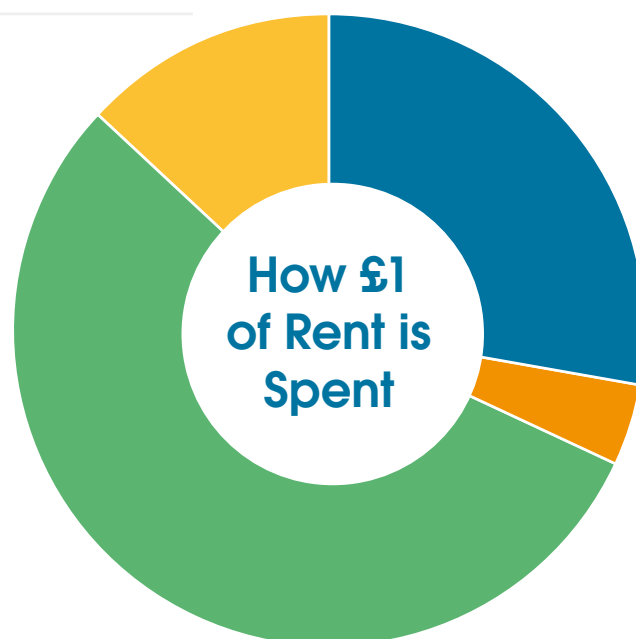
	2021-2022	2020-2021
Measure of approved applications for medical adaptations completed (Annually)	22	11
Total cost of adaptations undertaken in the reporting year (£)	£39,764	£19,976
Average time to complete adaptations (calendar days) (YTD)	71.91	116.73

# Finance

## How we spend tenants' money



How £1 of rent is spent in 2021-22	£	%
Staff Costs	622,230	28
Loan Costs	96,529	4
Property Repairs & Improvements	1,122,422	55
Other Running Costs	284,761	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,125,942</b>	<b>100</b>



The pie chart above shows how each £1 of rent received from tenants is spent.

The majority of spend is on the upkeep of the properties, these include major, reactive, cyclical and void repairs. Currently this stands at £1,122,422 which equates to 55% of each £1 spent.

Staffing costs are 28% of the spend (£622,230). Other running costs are 13% (£284,761) and relate to items like insurance and administration. Loan repayments are 4% (£96,529).





# Finance

## Rent and Service Charges



Table 9: KPI's – Void Properties & Rent Collection

	TREND	2021-2022	2020-2021	PEER AVERAGE
Average time to re-let properties	↑	26 days	32 days	78 days
Percentage of rent lost due to empty homes	↑	0.4%	0.54%	3%
Percentage collected of rent due	↑	100%	100%	99%
Current arrears percentage of rent due	↓	1.11%	1.06%	1.66%

**For the last two years, Ark has not had to take any actions, which resulted in eviction, due to non-payment of rent.**

Although the current arrears percentage of rent due has increased slightly by 0.05% this is still 0.55% lower than the peer average. The housing team have been working closely with tenants to

intervene early to prevent arrears from accumulating and signposting tenants for welfare benefit advice and financial support from a number of external agencies.



# Finance

## Value for money



**The Scottish Housing Charter Outcome 13, Value for Money sets out:**  
***“Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.”***

As part of the tenant satisfaction survey that we carried out in between months of October – December 2020 tenants were asked if they thought that

the accommodation and services we provide represent value for money. The chart below provides the responses of the 169 tenants that took part in the survey.

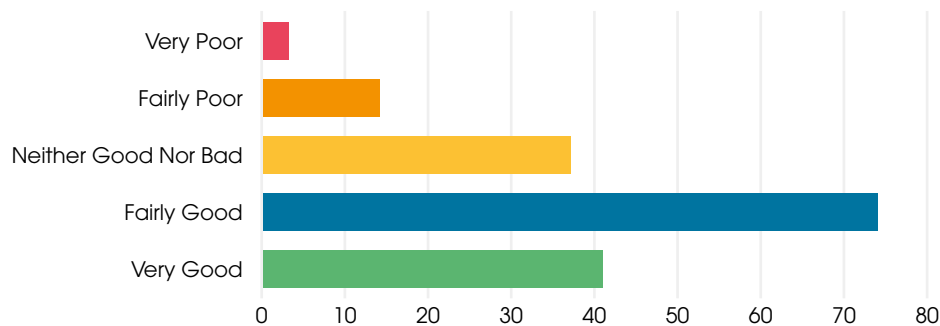


Table 10: KPI – Value for Money

	TREND	2021-2022	2020-2021	PEER AVERAGE
Percentage tenants who feel rent for property represents good value for money	➔	68%	68%	77%

Table 11: KPI – How Ark’s rents compare with our peers

Size of home	Number of homes owned	Arks Weekly Charge	Peer Average	Trend
Studio apartment	5	£91.74	£121.50	Less than Peer Average
1 bedroom apartment	123	£101.11	£126.92	Less than Peer Average
2 bedroom apartment	96	£114.04	£121.82	Less than Peer Average
3 bedroom apartment	45	£107.44	£121.41	Less than Peer Average
4 bedroom apartment	6	£111.20	£141.43	Less than Peer Average

# Tenant Feedback



We hope that you enjoyed reading our 2021-22 Annual Report. Please let us know what you thought about this year's report by emailing feedback to [housing@arkha.org.uk](mailto:housing@arkha.org.uk)

If you would like to be involved in producing next year's annual report please contact the Housing Team on **0131 478 8146** or email us on the above email address.





**Housing Services Team Contacts**

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**Property Services Team Contacts**

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**Don't miss out on important updates...**

Our housing team are sending regular updates via email to tenants and we want to ensure that we reach as many of you as possible. If you do not already receive emails from Ark please send us an email and we will add your updated contact details onto our system.



**housing@arkha.org.uk**