



ORKNEY
Housing
Association

ROOFTOPS

December 2025

Building **homes**, building **communities**



Celebrating 40 years with a fresh new look

As part of our 40th anniversary celebrations, we undertook a rebranding exercise across Orkney Housing Association, Orkney Care & Repair (for whom we act as managing agents), and our subsidiary, Orkney Housing Enterprises.

We were delighted with our new family of logos, which were introduced on our vans, office signage, documentation and staff uniforms. With a more modern look and feel, the new logos quickly became clear, consistent and easily recognisable, and we hope you agree they reflect each part of our organisation well.



Issue 75

Housing Bonds	P2
40th Celebrations	P3
Grounds Maintenance	P4
Upstream Tenancy Sustainment Fund	P5
New Supply Shared Equity	P6
Stock Condition Survey	P9
Energy Saving Tips	P10
Smoke Alarms	P14
Pension Credit	P16
Complaints & Compliments	P19
Are you happy with our service?	P20
Sources of Help	P21



ORKNEY
Care & Repair

Improving **homes**, improving **lives**



ORKNEY
Housing
Association

Building **homes**, building **communities**



ORKNEY
Housing
Enterprises

Leasing **homes**, managing **properties**

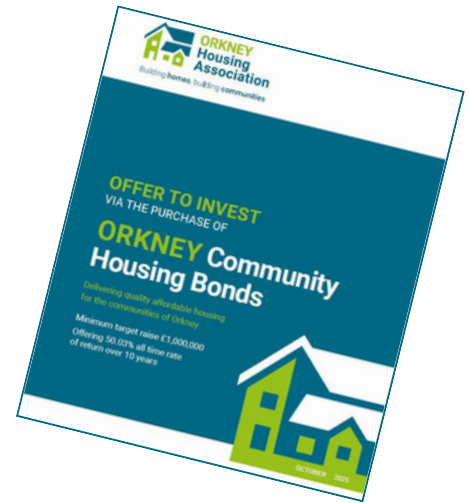
ORKNEY Community Housing Bonds



In November we launched an exciting new initiative - **Orkney Community Housing Bonds**. We, like many people in our community, are aware of pressures on demand for housing, which resulted in this new partnership opportunity.

The Bond is the first of its kind in Scotland and offers local people, businesses and organisations the opportunity to invest with us to achieve three things:

- More affordable housing built in Orkney
- These homes built sooner
- The benefits, investment and interest payments all staying in the community



We had a tremendous response. The interest, engagement, and overwhelming supportive response and investment from individuals, businesses and organisations across Orkney has been amazing. As set out in our prospectus, the funds will be invested in completing our first Bond-funded project - 8 new low-cost homes for first-time buyers at our Walliwall development which are due for completion in Spring 2026.

We raised the significant majority of our initial target. However, there are still a very small number of bonds available and if anyone is interested, please contact us via enquiries@ohal.org.uk or download the prospectus and application form from our website.

Christmas Closure and Rent Payments

The Association's office will be closed from 5pm on Tuesday 23 December 2025 until 9am on Monday 05 January 2026.

You can still pay your rent during this period by logging onto our website at www.ohal.org.uk and making your payment online.

Allpay payment cards, Direct Debits and Internet Banking will continue as normal during this time. Anyone using an Allpay payment card will need to be aware of the following payment limits:

- **Paypoint outlet** - £200 limit per transaction
- **Post Office** - £999 limit per transaction

If, for any reason, you are unable to make a payment either over the Christmas/New Year break or at any time in the future, please contact your Housing Officer to discuss your options. We can offer advice and support to help you during this time.

A year of celebrations...

In June 1985 a group of dedicated locally-based individuals came together in Kirkwall Town Hall to set up a new organisation, with an aim *"to meet the varied housing needs in Orkney through new buildings and rehabilitation"*.



We celebrated the success of this organisation, Orkney Housing Association, in June 2025. 40 years later those bold innovators, and everyone else who has been involved over the last 4 decades, should be proud of their achievements - which include the completion of 1,149 homes across 18 parishes and islands, investing £115 million into Orkney.

Our mission goes beyond housing - we help build strong communities by working with tenants and local partners. Rental income is reinvested locally to maintain and develop homes, supporting Orkney's economy.

We have recently completed the successful Orkney Community Housing Bonds, a first for Scotland, and announced plans for Orkney Housing Enterprises to manage private rentals in 2026.

We celebrated with founding members May Armour, Pam Kemp, and John Foulis, alongside one of our first tenants, Kenny Hume. Together, they cut the anniversary cake and received a specially-commissioned print of our first project, Parkhead House in Finstown.

Thank you to our staff, members, and community for 40 years of collaboration and progress!



AGM

Our 40th AGM provided an opportunity to display our Anniversary Timeline again. We were delighted that so many from within our community came to join us.



Grounds Maintenance Consultation

We carried out a consultation on our communal grounds maintenance service back in the summertime. The consultation was targeted at tenants who currently pay a service charge for the ongoing maintenance of communal grass and/or shrub beds.

We received a total of 159 responses to the consultation. Overall, the responses demonstrate the majority are satisfied with the service, but do highlight some areas for improvement. There were a lot of comments about the weeding and trees, and whilst we have reintroduced a weeding contract in 2025, there are a lot of our areas that are shared responsibility with the Local Authority. We continue to work with our partners and contractors to address all areas that require attention.

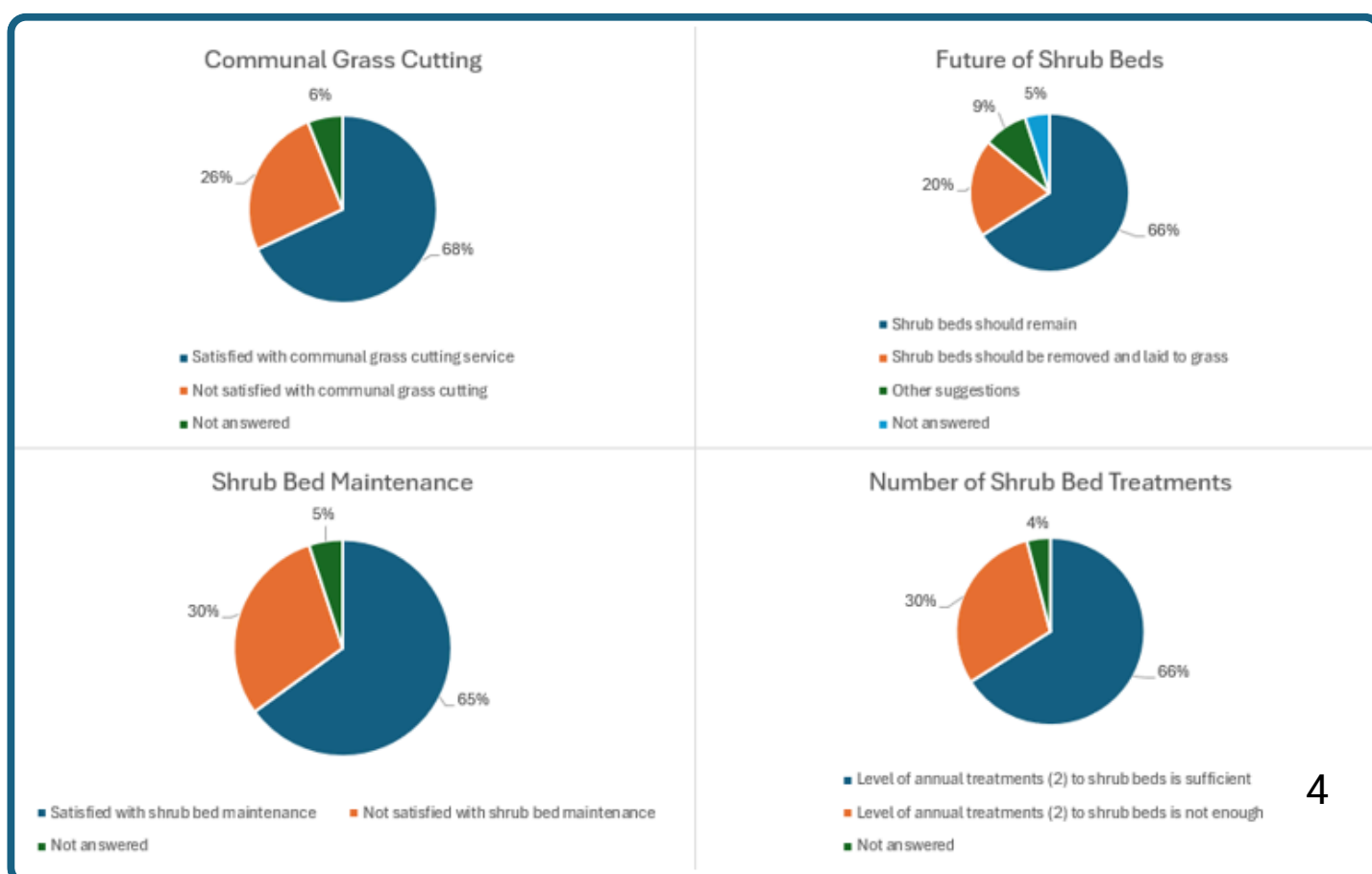
The results of the consultation have helped inform us about how our grounds maintenance contracts are performing and will feed into a re-tender process for the 2026, 2027 and 2028 seasons.

The main changes we have made because of this feedback is:

- Incorporating the shrub bed maintenance into the individual grounds maintenance contracts, with the same contractor taking responsibility for the grass cutting and the shrub beds in each area.
- We have also reviewed the specifications for shrub beds and whilst we are keeping the number of treatments per year at 2, we are extending the first treatment to May-June and the second treatment October-November, and also including pruning along with weed removal and cutting back overhang from public footpaths and roads.

The tender process is now underway, and the new contracts will be awarded early January. Residents who pay for grounds maintenance will be notified of new charges for next year by beginning of March 2026.

Details of the consultation results are shown below.



Upstream Tenancy Sustainment Fund

Orkney Housing Association was one of seven projects to be awarded a share of £1million in grant funding from the Scottish Government. The Association was awarded £198,500 to deliver the following projects within Orkney:

In Partnership with Orkney Blide Trust, “Housing First for Youth” has been developed to provide additional, high intensity support for young people leaving care to ensure that they are fully supported whilst they move towards independent living. The funding was used to employ a Housing First Practitioner to deliver this support.



In Partnership with Women's Aid Orkney, “Housing First for Victims/Survivors of Domestic Abuse” is being provided via Women's Aid Orkney with a specialist support worker delivering high intensity support to the most vulnerable victims/survivors. This project has achieved significant positive outcomes for those that require higher levels of support to begin their recovery from their traumatic experiences.

A new **“Here to Help Fund”** provides financial assistance to social tenants across Orkney and can be accessed by engaging with your Housing Officer, who can help you to explore what we can do to help you to sustain your tenancy.

Direct Support is also available via specially trained Contractors to deliver effective de-cluttering services.

Rented Allocations Policy Consultation



We carried out a consultation on how we allocate our rented properties during November and December.

The feedback from the consultation will now be reviewed and proposals for adopting changes will be presented to our Management Committee at the end of January.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to our consultation.

New Supply Shared Equity

Would you be interested in owning your own home, but didn't think that would be possible? The Association can help make homes available to purchase from a starting price as low as £105,000.

Through the Scottish Government's New Supply Shared Equity Scheme (NSSE) the Association is able to offer the unique opportunity to purchase a New Build Home.

Applicants purchase between 60-80% of the value of a newly built home, with the Scottish Government providing an interest-free grant for the remaining percentage. This grant is only repayable if you decide to sell the property in the future.

These properties are ideal for that starter home or forever home you are looking for. We currently have 2 and 3 bedroom properties at our Walliwall development in Kirkwall that will be available early next year. If this is something that you would be interested in please contact the Association on 01856 875253, ext 511 or email allocations@ohal.org.uk to discuss further.



Condensation Packs

To prevent condensation in your home which can lead to damp and mould it is important to:

- Ventilate your home by opening windows and using extractor fans
- Maintain a constant temperature
- Reduce moisture levels

We have a limited number of condensation packs available for tenants who are experiencing condensation in their home. Please contact us for more information.

If you are experiencing issues with damp and mould, please contact us to arrange an inspection.

There is also **A Guide to Managing Condensation, Damp and Mould** available on our website which is full of useful tips and information.



ESCAPE OF WATER

Escape of water is the leading case of home insurance claims in the UK.

Common Causes

- Burst pipes or joints
- Leaks from appliances, bathrooms or kitchens
- Poor maintenance of sealants and grout
- Freezing pipes
- Improper disposal of waste (e.g. wipes, fats)



Prevention Tips

Do:



- Know where your stopcock is and how to turn it off. Test it works twice a year.
- Ensure you prevent excessive quantities of water from spilling onto bathroom floors from washing, bathing or showering where the floor is not designed for such purposes.
- Report any issues to our Properties Team.

Don't



- Ignore that dripping tap!
- Leave water supply on during long holidays.
- Discard nappies, wet wipes or cotton buds down the toilet.
- Discard cooking fat down the sink.

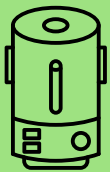


Planned Maintenance

The Association is committed to providing high-quality homes and well-maintained environments for our tenants. Each year, we invest in a range of planned maintenance projects, replacing and upgrading key parts of properties as they get to the end of their life such as doors and windows.

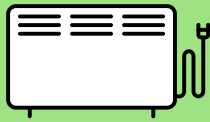
Our planned maintenance programme is a vital part of the services we deliver. It ensures that our properties remain comfortable, safe, and upgraded to meet the increasing standards set by the Scottish Government.

Wherever possible, we incorporate innovation and enhancements into our programmes - particularly those that offer long-term benefits such as reduced running costs, improved energy efficiency and a better quality of life for our tenants. These forward-thinking investments also support our broader environmental and sustainability goals.



12

homes had new ground source heat pumps installed



7

homes had their storage heating upgraded and fuse boards replaced



33

homes were fitted with new windows



19

homes were fitted with new kitchens



2

estates had loft insulation topped up

You could get £150 off your electricity bill for winter 2025 to 2026 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

The money is not paid to you – it's a one-off discount applied to your electricity bill between early October 2025 and 31 March 2026.

You only need to apply if you're on a low income in Scotland – contact your energy supplier to apply. If you might be eligible, you'll get a letter by early January 2026. If you do not get a letter and you think you're eligible, you must contact the Warm Home Discount Scheme before 28 February 2026. Contact your supplier to find out.

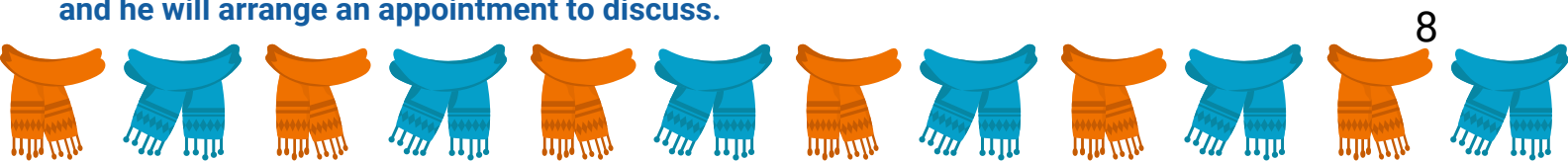
You qualify if you either:

- get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit
- are on a low income in Scotland and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme

Pre-pay or pay-as-you-go meters

You can still qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter. Your electricity supplier can tell you how you'll get the discount if you're eligible, for example a voucher you can use to top up your meter. **If you require assistance with applying for Warm Home Discount or want to check if you're eligible, please call us on 01856 875253 ext. 404 or email robert.leslie@ohal.org.uk and he will arrange an appointment to discuss.**

Are you eligible for the Warm Home Discount?



Stock Condition Survey

Chris Park joined us at the start of December as a Building Services Officer and will be leading on a stock condition survey across our properties.

Our surveys will start in January 2026 and you will receive details of when this work is being undertaken in your home. Stock Condition Surveys allow us to assess the condition of the main internal and external component parts of your home, including the kitchen, windows, roof covers etc. which in turn is used for determining when the components are likely to need replacing. As part of the survey, we are also gathering information on energy efficiency within your home (such as wall and loft insulation).

The result of the survey will be used to inform our long-term capital investment plan that enables us to forward plan more effectively and make adequate financial provision to ensure that our homes meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standards.

Orkney Housing Association has a legal duty as your landlord to maintain your home in a safe and good condition, and to ensure compliance with Scottish Government housing standards. To help fulfil this duty and in order to assess the standard of repair, we are statutorily obliged to have regard to the age and character of each dwelling. In order to ensure our compliance with this, we are carrying out a Stock Condition Survey across all properties. Your tenancy agreement states that you must provide access for visits in accordance with the Association's landlord function, that function allows us to inspect your property's condition and state of repair. Chris or his colleagues will need access to all rooms in your home, including the loft if you have one and outside areas. The visit will normally take up to two hours to complete. We will be in direct contact to advise you about our visit to your home and we greatly appreciate your co-operation in this important matter.



Chris is a fully qualified Chartered Surveyor and member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and an Elmhurst qualified domestic energy assessor. Originally from Leicestershire, Chris has a range of surveying experience, including agency, management, and valuation, having spent time working in the Midlands and London before moving to Orkney in 2017.



Energy Advice and Support

We all use energy to keep our homes warm, lit, and for a variety of other purposes to make our homes as healthy and comfortable to live in as possible.

None of us wants to spend more on our energy than we need to. However, with electricity prices around 44% higher than before the 2021-22 energy crisis going into this winter – and the price cap pushing electricity up 5% on 1st January 2026 – we are all paying high prices for the energy we use in our homes.

Orkney Housing Association can provide advice and support around energy issues experienced by tenants. We can also signpost to other agencies for specialist support or advice. The Association also has a limited number of electric fleece overblankets for tenants that are struggling to keep their homes warm.

Achieving affordable warmth in a property is perhaps best seen as a partnership between the association and tenants, with shared responsibilities.

Fabric

Association role	Tenant role
Ensure that the building insulation is intact, that insulation qualities are up to standard, and meet at a minimum the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. Verify by visual checks and inspect regularly.	Respect the insulation layers in loft spaces and avoid compromising its value through disturbance or compression (don't put things in the loft on top of insulation). Quickly report any breach or damage in the building fabric and report to your landlord any concerns about cold spots or dampness.

Ventilation

Association role	Tenant role
Ensure floors, doors and windows are draught-free, eaves are well insulated, and that ventilation provided is appropriate to local conditions. Ensure mechanical ventilation systems, where present, are working.	<p>Close all doors and windows correctly, ensuring they are fully locked tight within the building frame. Use mechanical ventilation devices such as extractor fans to clear condensation, rather than opening windows for prolonged periods.</p> <p>Do not turn off ventilation systems as this could cause dampness, condensation, poor air quality and damage the systems.</p> <p>Do not dry clothes on radiators or other heaters.</p>

Heating

Association role	Tenant role
Ensure that a functional and responsive heating system is provided – capable of heating the property to meet standard target temperatures. Ensure that adequate documentation and guidance has been provided to help the tenant to select settings and heat outputs. The tenant must have sufficient guidance to operate heating systems, including most cost-effective operation.	Heat the property to match desired comfort levels, in line with your household budget. Consciously try to avoid overheating or underheating.

Households

Association role	Tenant role
Support the household to make the best decisions on heating and ventilation by providing accurate and clear information and advice.	The overall way that a household uses its energy is the choice and responsibility of tenants. It is key to make good informed choices when choosing how to use energy in your home, whether for heating, using appliances, or lighting.

Tariff

Association role	Tenant role
While tariff switching in the current energy market situation is limited, any choice of energy supplier and tariff is down to tenants. However, the association can, where possible, support tenants to find any suitable alternative tariffs.	Be aware of seasonal patterns of higher or lower usage, and the pros and cons of prepayment and credit meter choices.

ENERGY SAVING TIPS

Help to keep costs down



While we recognise that many tenants may already be maximising their energy savings to cut costs, hopefully some tenants may find these tips useful:

Optimise use of your heating system

Your home's heating system has various controls that can be used to reduce your energy usage. On storage heaters these are on the heaters themselves. For room thermostats, these can be turned down to 19°C, or for radiators turn down the thermostatic radiator valves in individual rooms to further cut back on heat usage.

Do full laundry loads

Half-load settings save very little energy, so a full load is much more energy efficient. Do fewer (but fuller) wash loads instead.

Use the 'eco' setting

On your dishwasher or boiler, the 'eco' setting heats water more slowly, using less energy. You get the same results; it just takes a little longer.

Don't use standby mode

Unless switched off at the wall, appliances like your TV continue to use energy, costing the average UK home £35 per year. Switch off at the wall to put a stop to this wasted spend.

Careful with that kettle

When making tea or coffee, many of us fill the kettle right up. This means as a country we're wasting around £68 million worth of energy a year. By filling your kettle just to the level you need, it could save you up to a third of the energy you have been using.

Switch to LED bulbs

Traditional bulbs are extremely inefficient. Modern LEDs are the opposite, and also last longer so are less wasteful too.



Use your microwave more

You'll save energy because it's quicker than using the main oven or hob. It's worth considering a slow cooker too, as they're one of the most energy-efficient kitchen appliances. Air fryers are also good for cooking using less energy.

Unplug all your chargers

Folk tend to unnecessarily over-charge their mobile phones, tablets and laptops. Instead, as soon as your device is fully charged, try to get into the habit of unplugging it. Not only will this save energy, it also prolongs battery life and removes a potential fire safety hazard. It could also save you about £60 a year on your electricity bills.

Close your curtains at night

During the day it's important to try to use as much natural - and free - heat (in the form of sunlight) as possible. But when night comes, closing your curtains will help your home retain that heat. This helps keep warmth in the room - but try not to let them cover radiators or heaters.

Turn down the temperature of your washing machine

With today's effective washing machine detergents, there's often no need to run your washing machine any higher than 30°C - clean clothes and energy saved.



Dress for the weather

An obvious tip is to ensure you are dressed accordingly in respect of the weather. A cosy jumper or fleece in winter keeps you warmer and reduces the need to rely on your heating system to stay warm.

Not using it? Turn it off!

Get into the habit of turning energy using devices off when not using them - TVs, lights, games consoles, etc are easily left on when not in use.

Heating guides

You should have been given a guide to operating your heating system when you moved into your property. If you require a replacement then your Housing Officer will be able to help with this.

For further energy advice and support contact Robert Leslie, Energy Officer, on 01856 875253 ext 404 or email robert.leslie@ohal.org.uk

Condensation Advice

This is the most common cause of dampness.

Condensation is caused by water moisture from inside the home coming into contact with a colder surface, such as a window or wall. The water drops (or condensation) may then soak into the wallpaper or paintwork or even plasterwork and attract black mould to grow on its surface. You can wipe the black mould away using a special fungicidal solution or a solution of water and bleach. Please remember to be careful when using bleach and take appropriate safety precautions as guided by the manufacturer.



Condensation mainly occurs during the colder months and is usually found in corners and north facing walls, on or near windows, areas with little air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds - especially when they are pushed up against external walls. Black mould is frequently seen on this type of dampness.

It is very important to strike a balance between warmth and ventilation. It may appear that by opening windows you are losing heat, but what this allows is warm moisture-laden air to escape and permits cool dry air to enter your home. Dry cool air is actually cheaper to heat than warm moist air! So this actually saves you money as well as resulting in a healthier living environment.

Taking preventative action - if you feel the dampness and/or mould growth is caused by condensation.

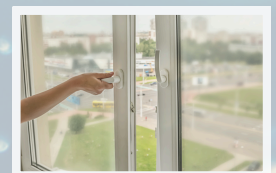
Produce less moisture

- Cover pans when cooking.
- Dry clothes outdoors in warm weather.
- Ventilate tumble driers to the outside.
- Do not use paraffin or liquid petroleum (bottled) gas heaters they produce masses of water vapour and are very expensive to run.



Ventilate to remove moisture

Always ventilate, or open a window when the kitchen/bathroom are in use and close other internal doors so as to prevent moisture-laden air from spreading to other parts of your home.



Wipe away excess moisture

Always wipe the windows (and window sills if required) of your home every morning to remove condensation. This is especially important in the bedroom, just opening the window is not good enough.

Keep your home adequately heated

If possible, keep low background heat on all day, even in the bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom.



Above all remember, dealing with condensation is not easy and automatically assuming it has come inside from outside; it hasn't!

Only carrying out one or two of the above steps will not help your problem. You must do as many as possible every day so that it becomes part of your routine.

If you still feel, having read this article, that your dampness is due to rising damp, penetrating damp or from defective plumbing then you should contact us.

Smoke Alarms

Testing your smoke alarm - Smoke alarms are an easy and affordable way to protect yourself and your family from fire, but it's important to test them regularly to ensure they're working properly. Locate the button labelled 'test' on your detector, push it in and hold. If the smoke detector is working, the alarm will sound, along with any other linked smoke detectors in your property.

Smoke Alarm Maintenance

DO - Clean dust away from the smoke detector with a vacuum cleaner or clean cloth each time you test it, as they get clogged up with dust and dirt over time.

DON'T - Use cleaning sprays on or around your smoke detector, as they could stop it from working properly.

If you have any issues with your smoke alarms, please contact us on 01856 875253.

Specialised Smoke Alarms - Audio interlinked smoke alarms are installed in all our properties. However, there are specialised alarms available for customers with disabilities or other medical needs, such as mains-powered smoke alarms with back-up batteries, and even vibrating pads and flashing lights for those who cannot hear well. If you feel that an audio smoke alarm does not fit your needs, please contact us to discuss alternative smoke alarms.



Rent Increase 2026/27

The rent consultation for 2025/26 included an option for a 1 year rent increase or an agreed rent increase proposal covering 3 years. The majority response from tenants was for the 3 years option and this was ratified by the Association's Management Committee; therefore, there will be no rent consultation exercise this year.

The rent increase for 2026/27, as set out in the 3 year option, is 4% and all tenants will be notified in writing of their new rent charge at least one month before it is applied.



Service charges are currently under review and as the Association does not make any profit from these, they will be charged at cost price. However, some of these services are undergoing a tendering process therefore we cannot advise what these will be at this stage. Tenants will be notified of these costs with their rent increase letter.

Fire Safety

Internal Fire Safety

Smoke Alarms: Orkney Housing Association ensures that all tenanted properties are equipped with the correct fire safety equipment, such as smoke alarms. Tenants should test their smoke alarms monthly to ensure they are in working condition, providing the best early detection for fires within your home.

Kitchen: Never leave cooking equipment unattended, especially when using stove tops or open flames. Always keep an eye on your cooker or air fryer when it is on and clear combustibles away from heat sources.

Electrical Safety: Avoid overloading electrical outlets and regularly inspect cords and plugs for damage. If you need to use an extension cord, make sure it is surge protected. Keep electrical appliances away from water sources and turn them off when not in use.

Candles: Always extinguish all candles before going to bed or leaving the room. Burning candles in the bedroom unattended is a major source of house fires. Ensure candles are kept out of reach of children and pets, and placed on heat-proof surfaces or holders. Tea lights can become hot enough to melt plastic or set fire to decorations, so place candles smartly, away from other objects and combustible items.

Christmas Decorations: During the festive season, be mindful of fire safety when decorating. Ensure that all Christmas lights are in good working order and have no frayed wires or broken bulbs. Use lights that are certified for safety and avoid overloading electrical outlets. Keep decorations, especially those made of paper or other flammable materials, away from heat sources such as candles, fireplaces, and heaters. Always turn off Christmas lights when leaving the house or going to bed.



Are you eligible for Pension Credit?

Understanding Pension Credit - Pension Credit is a means-tested benefit designed to support people over State Pension age who are living on a low income. It is separate from the State Pension and consists of two parts: Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit.

Guarantee Credit ensures that pensioners receive a minimum income. The current levels are:

- £227.10 per week for single individuals
- £346.60 per week for couples

Savings Credit offers additional financial support to those who have some savings or a higher income than the basic State Pension. It is only available to individuals who reached State Pension age before 6 April 2016.

Eligible pensioners could receive:

- Up to £17.30 extra per week if single
- Up to £19.36 extra per week if part of a couple

Eligibility for Pension Credit

To qualify for **Guarantee Credit**, you must have reached State Pension age, currently set at 66 for both men and women. You may be eligible if your weekly income is below the thresholds of £218.15 (single) or £332.95 (couple). However, even those with higher incomes may still qualify if they meet specific criteria, such as being a carer, having a severe disability, or incurring certain housing costs.

Savings Credit is available to those who reached State Pension age before 6 April 2016, or couples where both partners meet this requirement. There is no savings limit for Pension Credit, but savings over £10,000 will affect the amount received.

Additional support through Pension Credit
Claiming Pension Credit can also open the door to other vital benefits, including:

- Housing Benefit for renters
- Support for Mortgage Interest for homeowners
- Council Tax discounts
- Free TV licence for those aged 75 and over
- Assistance with NHS dental treatment, glasses and transport costs for hospital appointments
- Help with heating costs through the Warm Home Discount Scheme or Winter Fuel Payments
- Discounts on Royal Mail redirection services for those moving house

You can check if you are eligible to claim Pension Credit by visiting Pension Credit calculator - GOV.UK.



ORKNEY CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau is independent and impartial; we provide free and confidential advice and information on a wide range of subjects. Our services are available to anyone who lives or works in Orkney and are delivered by trained staff and volunteers supported by the professional advice, information provision and consultancy services of Citizens Advice Scotland.

Orkney CAB operates an appointment only service. You can make an appointment to see an Adviser by contacting the Bureau's reception either in person,
email: bureau@orkneycab.casonline.org.uk or by telephone: **01856 875266**

Reception Opening Times

Monday	10.00am - 2.00pm
Tuesday	10.00am - 2.00pm
Wednesday	10.00am - 2.00pm
Thursday	10.00am - 2.00pm
Friday	10.00am - 2.00pm

If calling out with these hours, please leave a message on their answer phone, or make an enquiry online and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.



ANCHOR BUILDINGS - 6 BRIDGE STREET - KIRKWALL - KW15 1HR



Greener Orkney's Community Fridge Project offers surplus food to individuals, free of charge. One of the primary aims of the Project is to limit the amount of food waste going to landfill.

OPENING TIMES		
	Kirkwall – 26 Bridge Street	Stromness - 116 Victoria Street
Monday	8:30pm - 9:00pm	8:30pm - 9:00pm
Tuesday	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm	8:30pm - 9:00pm
Wednesday	8:30pm - 9:00pm	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm
Thursday	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm
Friday	8:30pm - 9:00pm	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm
Saturday	12:00pm - 2pm	12:00pm - 2:00pm 8:30pm - 9:00pm
Sunday	Closed	8:30pm - 9:00pm

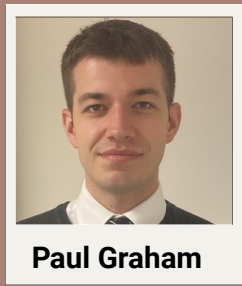
There are 2 Community Fridges, located in Stromness and Kirkwall, which receive donations of surplus food from many local organisations on a regular basis. Anyone can pop along to the Community Fridge, although please be aware that the supply is sometimes limited and opening times may change over the festive period.

Regular updates are posted on their Facebook page with information on the food that is available – www.facebook.com/greenerorkneycommunityfridge

Have you met our new members of staff?



Charlotte Foy



Paul Graham



Sarah Kennedy

Customer Services Team



John Parr



Erik Sinclair

Trades Team

You may already have met with or spoken to some of our new permanent team members, but we would like to take this opportunity to introduce them. From left to right:

- **Charlotte Foy** is our 7th Modern Apprentice. She is currently working towards an SVQ Level 6 in Business & Administration, whilst gaining on-the-job experience within the Customer Services Team.
- **Paul Graham** joined us in September as Trainee Housing Assistant and has begun working towards a Level 4 Certificate in Housing, with the Chartered Institute of Housing.
- **Sarah Kennedy** recently joined us at the beginning of December as our new Customer Services Assistant.
- **John Parr** joined the Trades Team as an additional Estates & Trades Team Assistant in August.
- Finally, **Erik Sinclair** filled a Tradesman vacancy which arose due to internal succession in October.

We are delighted to have all these talented people join our team and help deliver Great Customer Service

General Membership & Management Committee

Did you know you can become a general member of the Association by completing a simple application form and purchasing a £1 share? Becoming a member gives you a real voice in how the Association is run. You'll be able to vote at General Meetings, including our Annual General Meeting (AGM), and you can also nominate others - or put yourself forward - for a place on the Management Committee.



Our Management Committee is made up of dedicated volunteers who help shape the future of the Association, guiding its direction and key decisions. While the committee sets the vision, staff are employed to take care of day-to-day operations. Committee members are usually elected at the AGM, with additional members sometimes co-opted between AGMs.

Getting involved is a great way to support the Association and help influence what we do next.

Would you like to support the Association by becoming a General Member and/or find out more about the work of our Management Committee? For further information or an informal chat, please contact Mhairi Hughes: e-mail: mhairi.hughes@ohal.org.uk or phone: 07739 326922

Complaints and Compliments

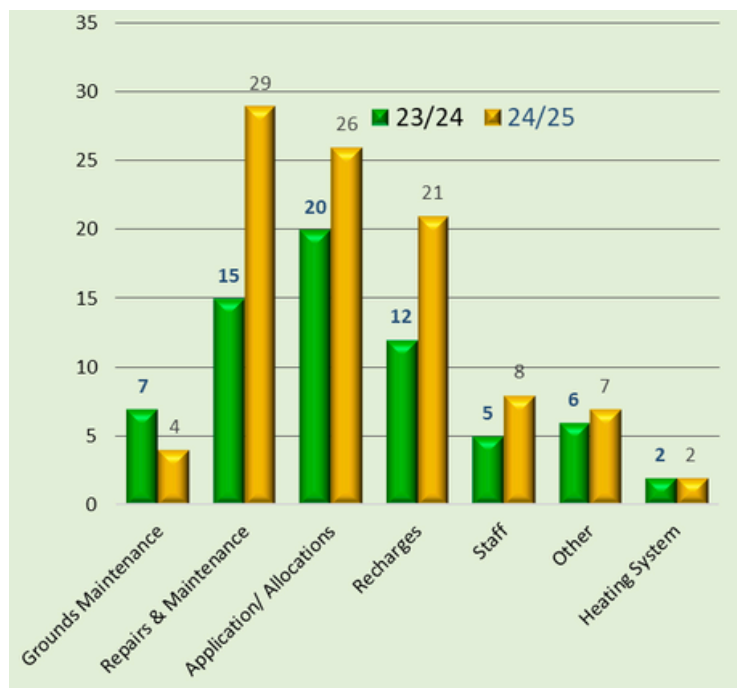
During the year to 31 March 2025, we recorded 97 complaints:

60 Stage 1 and 7 Stage 2.

This is an increase of 30 since last year. The majority of complaints (29) were regarding repairs and maintenance.

How did we respond to the complaints?

- 94% of complaints were completed on time (96% last year).
- We upheld 43 (44%) complaints (33% last year).



Compliments

It is always nice to receive compliments and during the year to 31 March 2025, we received 231 compliments (last year 184). These have been broken down as follows:

OHA Tradesman Team	63
Repairs & Maintenance	58
Care & Repair	61
Repairs Team	26
Services (general)	23

Handyperson called in on same day as fault reported to have a look & then called the following day to carry out repairs. Great service. Friendly, explained fault, left tidy.

The work done by Care and Repair means I can stay in my own home and I have someone to give me the right advice.

Thank you very much indeed for helping my home stay a bit warmer with the new windows. In particular, I would like to thank you for sending such excellent workmen for each stage of the job. If you must let somebody into your home, it very fortunate that they be of such good character. All these gentlemen are obviously trustworthy.

I just wanted to express mine and my family's thanks to OHAL and all of their staff for providing clean, warm, affordable housing at a reasonable price, not to mention a friendly repairs service which always gets the job done in a reasonable time!

The contractor arrived within an hour of me reporting the repair. He explained everything that needed done and kept me up to date with what was happening re obtaining the parts required. Plus he came past the following morning on his way to work to check it was all working properly.

Are you happy with our service?

We aim to provide an excellent service at all times but recognise that there may be occasions when people are not happy with something we have done or failed to do. If you are unhappy with the level of service we have provided please let us know so that we can consider your comments and resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

If you wish to make a complaint about a service you have received there are 2 stages involved:

Frontline Resolution (Stage 1): Contact the person with whom you were dealing and see if it can be sorted out informally;

Investigation (Stage 2): This is for complaints that have not been solved at Stage 1 or are complex and require further investigation.

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO can be contacted at www.spsso.org.uk or 0800 377 7330

Our Complaints Handling Procedure is available on the website or from the office on request.

SPSO



The Scottish Housing Regulator is an independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and local authority housing services in Scotland. They were established on 01 April 2011 under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, and have one statutory objective, to:

"safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities".

They regulate social landlords to protect the interests of people who receive services from them. They do this by assessing and reporting on:

- how social landlords are performing their housing services;
- RSLs financial well-being;
- RSLs standards of governance.

Further information on the Regulator can be found on their website:
www.housingregulator.gov.scot/



Other Sources of Help and Information

Energy Domestic Consumer Advice for Autumn/Winter

A specific guide for domestic customers has been published, although please check the main web page to ensure the latest version is being accessed.

Visit Website www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/domestic-energy-consumer-advice

Energy Advice Scotland



Free, practical advice and information on energy-related matters for the citizens of Scotland can be found on their website.

Visit Website www.energyadvice.scot

Energy Saving Trust

The Energy Saving Trust has produced some quick tips on how to save money on your energy bills.



Visit Website www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Scottish Welfare Fund

The Scottish Welfare Fund is aimed at providing assistance for people on benefits, or considered to be on a low income. The Council administers the fund on behalf of the Scottish Government and provides two types of grant:

Crisis Grants - Providing a safety net in the event of a disaster or emergency.

Community Care Grants - Providing help to leave care and live on your own, or to continue living in your own home.



Visit Website www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/council-tax-and-benefits/scottish-welfare-fund

Scottish Social Security



Responsible for managing Scottish benefits - click link below.

Visit Website <https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/benefits>

Orkney Charitable Trust



The Orkney Charitable Trust provide financial help for people under 25 living in Orkney during times of ill health, disability, hardship or disadvantage. Financial support is available to these people and their families in the form of grants, loans or other support. Visit their website to find out more about what they're doing.

Visit Website <http://www.octrust.org.uk/>

Free School Meals and Clothing Allowances

Information on how to apply for free school meals and clothing allowances can be found on OIC's website:



Visit Website <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/grants-emas-and-bursaries/school-meals-and-clothing-allowances/>

*Wishing all our
residents a
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!*