

## Housing News

2017

Welcome to the latest newsletter which is intended to keep you up to date and to provide important information in relation to your tenancy.

### Willaston Sheltered Complex



Plans for a new Sheltered Housing Complex for Willaston are well advanced with a potential start on site in 2018. This presents an opportunity for existing tenants who wish to downsize to make the move to a new modern facility.

We are now accepting applications for the Complex and would appreciate your early notification so that we can plan for your move. **Please contact the Housing Office on 696435 as soon as possible.**

### Investing in better homes

Douglas is the largest social housing provider on the Island with a housing stock of 2,386 properties – over a third of the Island's total provision. The Council continues to invest heavily in its properties including:-

- **Pulrose** - completion of £46m redevelopment
- **Hazel Court** - completion of £5m Sheltered Complex
- **Kitchen refurbishment and door replacements** - continuing programme
- **Spring Valley** - essential external refurbishment commencing 2017
- **Lord Street flats** - re-roofing planned for 2017/18
- **Willaston Sheltered Complex** - development progressing
- **Willaston External Refurbishment** – continuing £34m project



Refurbished kitchen – Hillside Avenue – a choice of finishes is available for cabinets, worktops and floor surfaces

FOR ALL HOUSING ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL 696435 DURING OFFICE HOURS 8:45-5:15 WEEKDAYS

We're on the web [www.douglas.gov.im](http://www.douglas.gov.im)



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Housing Office, PO Box 2, The Town Hall, Ridgeway Street, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM99 1AD

## Closure of Housing Service's 'Red Door'

The Housing Service's 'Red Door' in John Street has closed permanently and a new combined Housing Service/Finance Department counter is now in operation in Ridgeway Street.

Customers will find this new, larger space offers greater convenience and improved disabled and buggy access.

The Housing Service counter is open Monday to Friday from 8.45am to 5.15pm. The phone number remains unchanged, **696435**.

## Willaston External Refurbishment



Willaston property following external refurbishment

Over 90 properties have now been externally refurbished to eliminate damp problems which had been reported across Willaston. Due to the extent of the works, tenants need to be temporarily moved for the 12-16 week period of the works, and whilst it is recognised that this is an upheaval for families, your co-operation is appreciated. Should you have any queries as to when your property is likely to be refurbished or what this might involve, please contact Jade McElroy, our Tenant Liaison Officer on **696318**.

A Residents Forum has been arranged for Wednesday 15th February 2017 at the Willaston Methodist Church Hall between 6:30pm and 8:00pm. This will provide an opportunity to view progress on the Willaston External Refurbishment Project and to answer any queries.

## Making alterations to your home

Please contact us if you wish to undertake any alterations to your property, always bearing in mind that even minor works can affect the building: for example, some of the more recent external rendering should not be painted, or your property may be scheduled for a new kitchen or bathroom. Please check with the Housing Service in the first instance.

## Upkeep of your home

Please remember you are responsible for the upkeep of your home. Details of repairs you are responsible for are included in the tenant's handbook and your tenancy agreement.

## Sense of Community

The Housing Committee currently comprises five Councillors - details on the Council's website [www.douglas.gov.im](http://www.douglas.gov.im) - and has recently appointed an Independent Member who is already working closely with fellow Committee Members, providing valuable insight, and giving tenants 'a voice at the table'.

The Housing Committee would welcome any approaches to form tenant groups, or suggestions for community engagement. In the first instance, please contact [sharrison@douglas.gov.im](mailto:sharrison@douglas.gov.im)

## Dogs

You must seek permission to keep a pet – an application form can be obtained on the Council's website or from the Housing Office.

Your co-operation is also requested to:

- Respect the Council's Dogs Byelaws
- Pick up after your dog
- Report any fouling incidents you see
- Keep your dog on a lead when walking on Public Rights of Way e.g. Douglas Golf Course



[www.reportit.im](http://www.reportit.im)

## Gardens

Housing Officers regularly review the condition of the estates, especially taking note of the tidiness, maintenance and presentation of gardens and where necessary, contact the tenant if some attention is required.

## Recycling



Thank you to all those households who participated in the kerbside collection service in 2016.

As a result of your efforts Douglas Borough Council was able to recycle 647 tonnes of materials that would have otherwise ended up in the Energy from Waste plant, specifically:

Newspaper:	292 tonnes
Plastic bottles:	50 tonnes
Cans:	42 tonnes
Glass:	262 tonnes
Total:	647 tonnes

Remember - the more you recycle the more recyclables the Council can sell, which ultimately helps to lessen the financial burden on the rates.

To subscribe to kerbside please contact us on **696445** or email [kerbside@douglas.gov.im](mailto:kerbside@douglas.gov.im)

You can also visit [www.recyclenow.im](http://www.recyclenow.im) to find out more about recycling in your area and to view our recycling videos.

## Maintenance

You can report repairs required to your home by telephoning the Housing Office on 696435 Monday to Friday 8.45am to 5.15pm or by e mail to [housingrepairs@douglas.gov.im](mailto:housingrepairs@douglas.gov.im).

With the current limits on maintenance budgets, we do have to prioritise repairs. We will aim to provide guidance on the timescale for your reported repair which will vary depending on the nature of the repair and availability of resources.

## Central heating Maintenance



'Stewart Clague Services', better known as SCS, continue to service, repair and maintain the central heating systems

For any queries regarding central heating please contact **696498**, including out of hours and emergency central heating calls. You can also contact SCS on [CHboiler@douglas.gov.im](mailto:CHboiler@douglas.gov.im).

The Council, by law, needs to ensure that your gas boiler is serviced annually, and would appreciate your co-operation in responding to requests for access for SCS to carry out the annual service. Unfortunately, we may ultimately disconnect your property if you do not respond to requests (for which there will be a charge made to you).



## Bleeding radiators



If you notice that a radiator is cool at the top, it may indicate that there is air in the system. This is a common issue, particularly in older houses or those which have suffered from low pressure. To release the air, first turn off the heating and allow the system to cool.

Attach the correct radiator key to the bleed valve and turn it anti-clockwise. Open the valve with care – it can come out completely. Open it just enough to hear the hiss of the air escaping. Hold a cloth under the bleed valve to catch the water when the last of the air is released. When water comes out, close the bleed valve. If you do not have a key, they are available from DIY or hardware stores and if the problem persists please contact Housing Office on **696435**.

## Emergency Repairs

An emergency repair is one undertaken in response to serious risk to your health and safety and/or serious damage to the property. If the emergency is reported outside of normal office hours, workmen will usually call within 3 hours and make safe the fault and a full repair will be completed as soon as possible during normal working hours.

You will be charged for the work if you have given misleading information or were not at home when the emergency workmen called. Depending on your circumstances, you may also be charged for damage you have caused yourself or if you have locked yourself out and require assistance to gain access to your property. Storm damage may be considered as requiring an emergency repair only if there is a potentially serious risk to your, or third party health and safety, such as loose and dangerous masonry or loose and falling roof tiles etc.

## Fire safety – Check It Out

You should check the operation of smoke alarms on a weekly basis by pressing the test button. If your home does not have a smoke alarm on each level or the smoke alarm does not sound when pressing the test button or the smoke alarm beeps on a regular basis contact the Housing Office on 696435 immediately.

It is advisable for you to consider how you would escape from your home in the event of a fire. You should consider where any keys necessary for escape are kept and familiarise yourself with the operation of any windows that you might need to use for escape. Your home may be fitted with one or more fire doors. These are heavier than standard internal doors and have a self-closing device. For your own safety, you should not remove or disable these, or leave doors propped open. Always ensure escape routes are kept clear.

**To request a repair please contact the Housing office on 696435 Monday to Friday 8:45am to 5:15pm or by email at: [housingrepairs@douglas.gov.im](mailto:housingrepairs@douglas.gov.im)**  
**For general out-of-hours emergencies, please call 671100 or for central heating emergencies please call 696498.**

## Lodgers

Under the terms of your tenancy agreement you must notify the Council in advance and obtain the Council's written consent should you wish to provide accommodation for lodgers.

For the purposes of the tenancy agreement the Council defines the term 'lodger' as 'any person other than a spouse/partner or dependent child/children who takes up residency at the address over and above any reasonable temporary visit.'

You can download a 'Lodger/Separate Family' application form from the 'Tenant Services' page at [www.douglas.gov.im](http://www.douglas.gov.im).

## Home Stay

Home Stay is permitted during TT and Festival of Motorcycling periods subject to certain conditions. You are not permitted to sub-let your entire property. Please contact the Housing Office for an application form.

## Transfers

We want to ensure that the homes we can offer are suitable for the size of your family and should you require a transfer please contact the Housing Office. However, when properties are allocated, the Housing Committee will take into account the families from the housing waiting list and the circumstances of those in most need (through the housing points system). Any transfer will be subject to your home being in a suitable condition to immediately re-let to a new family.

## Contents insurance: Are you covered?



Under your tenancy agreement you must insure the contents of your home. The Council is responsible solely for insuring the building.

Contents loss or damage caused by events such as fire, flood or theft are not only distressing but also costly. The Council therefore strongly advises tenants to take out home insurance that covers the full replacement value of their personal possessions which should include fencing, sheds and glazing.

## How to pay your rent

The rent collected from you pays for the housing services you receive. It is important that everyone pays their rent regularly and on time so that we can continue to provide high-quality services.

Your rent is due weekly in advance, as detailed in your tenancy agreement. You can pay fortnightly or monthly, but you must pay in advance so that your account does not fall into arrears.

Please contact us on **696435** if you need help with ways to pay your rent or set up a direct debit. You can also pay your rent on line at [www.douglas.gov.im](http://www.douglas.gov.im).

## Mutual Exchange

You can apply for a mutual exchange to swap homes with either another Council tenant, or another Local Authority tenant, subject to conditions. Information on mutual exchange can be viewed via the Council's website or by contacting the Housing Office.

## Smoking

We would request your co-operation in not smoking during visits to your home by Housing Officers and maintenance operatives. Should you not be able to accommodate this request, your visit or repair may need to be rescheduled (or ultimately refused) and a charge made for the call out.

## Douglas – Our Town Our Future

The Council's Corporate Plan 2017-2021 pledges that the Council, through its Housing Committee, is committed to:-

- Investing in quality affordable housing to respond to the economic and community need
- Providing a good quality of life for residents and visitors by effective estate management and community engagement
- Providing, managing and maintaining social and sheltered housing accommodation for tenants and their families and working to ensure that properties meet the Decent Homes Standard.

**Douglas: Our Town, Our Future – Doolish: Nyn Malley, Nyn Draa Ry Heet**

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