

PAISLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION JULY/AUGUST 2024 BULLETIN



Welcome to our July and August Bulletin

In recent weeks, we have been saddened to say goodbye to our long serving Chief Executive, Kathleen McCutcheon, who retired on 26th July 2024. However, we were pleased to welcome our new Chief Executive, Fiona McTaggart, on 6th August.

It is hard to believe that the Summer Holidays are nearly over, and we have included some important information for parents later in the bulletin about the help that is available to assist with the costs of the school return.

As always, we hope that the information in the bulletin will be useful and informative. But, if you would like to see anything else let us know.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024 - Deadline extended to 19th August 2024.

We are delighted that over 200 tenants have responded to our Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

In order that as many tenants as possible have a chance to respond to this we have extended the deadline until the 19th August 2024 at 5pm.

Don't miss your chance to have your say and be entered into a prize draw for one of two £50 Amazon Vouchers.

You can complete this survey by clicking on this link: [Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024](#)

Or by scanning the QR code below:

CHANCE TO WIN £50 AMAZON
VOUCHER Paisley HA Tenant
Satisfaction Survey 2024



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Advice Team Update

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Paisley HA Chief Executive Retires

Paisley Housing Association (PHA) chief executive Kathleen McCutcheon retired on 26th July 2024 after 35 years in the social housing sector.

Kathleen started with PHA in 2006 and has led a number of transformational changes including doubling staff numbers to cope with the diverse range of activities undertaken by the Association, several new build and CTI developments and a move to a new office in Paisley town centre.

Kathleen said: “I’ve been fortunate to have been part of the housing sector all my working life. It is both challenging and rewarding in equal measure and I couldn’t have asked for a better career. I will miss all the wonderful people I have met along the way. I’ve met many colleagues who have become friends so I will never be far away from housing.”

Karen McMillan, chairperson of PHA, added: “Kathleen has been an asset to the Association. First as CEO of Paisley South Housing Association and then helping us to oversee our name change in 2016 to Paisley Housing Association to better reflect our work and area of operation. The last few years have been challenging for the Association, not least when we had to deal with Covid.

“Kathleen has helped steer the Association through these times and made the organisation stronger, more efficient and solidly planting it in the heart of the community of Paisley. We will be sorry to see her go but we wish her all the best for the future and look forward to working with her successor Fiona McTaggart.”

Fiona McTaggart has been appointed as the new chief executive of Paisley HA and will take up the post in August.

Fiona said: “I am absolutely delighted to be joining Paisley Housing Association, and looking forward to working with them as we continue the journey and next chapter for Paisley. The Association is in great shape and performing well, thanks to the fantastic work of Kathleen McCutcheon.

“After meeting the board on several occasions throughout the recruitment process, I understand their passion for excellence and look forward to working with the board and the staff team to continue to deliver a first class customer service within a high performing housing association.”



New Contractor Announcement

Paisley Housing Association are pleased to announce the appointment of GD Chalmers as the new contractor for our electrical inspection programme for our properties. GD Chalmers is a Paisley based business, and we look forward to working with them.

GD Chalmers will commence this programme in the next couple of weeks.

We would also like to take this opportunity to remind tenants that the electrical inspection is a legal requirement and the Association require access to your property every 5 years to have this completed.

Don't worry you do not need to set reminders for this, GD Chalmers will be in touch with you to arrange access prior to the expiry of your current certificate.

If you have any question or require further information, please don't hesitate to contact JP Armstrong on 0141 583 4128 or email jp.armstrong@paisleyha.org.uk

Garden Maintenance Dog Fouling Issues

Our new garden maintenance contractor M Squared started delivering our service at the beginning of April.

Our Housing Management team monitor the service regularly, completing checks of work carried out and raising any issues that arise directly with the contractor.

One of the main areas of feedback from the contractor is **Dog Fouling**.

For Health and Safety reasons if the contractor notices Dog Fouling on the grass they will be unable to cut this, this has resulted in some gardens, particularly in common areas not being cut.

As such, if there is any Dog Fouling it is important that it is cleared right away by the dog's owner. If there are persistent issues in particular closes we will be communicating directly with the tenants involved, if we cannot identify the tenant we will communicate with the whole close.

Water Safety During the Holiday Period

If you are going on holiday and your water system is not in use, it's important to take precautions to help reduce risks associated with Legionella.

Please read our Water safety guide below, for information relating to legionella and how to flush your whole water system if your house has been empty for a period of time.

How to stay safe at home:

What is legionella?

Legionella bacteria is commonly found in many water sources. Hot and cold water systems in homes can be a potential source.

Legionella bacteria can cause a form of pneumonia called Legionnaires' disease, caused by the inhalation of small droplets of contaminated water. The bacteria doesn't spread in drinking water or person to person, and not everyone who comes into contact with the bacteria will become ill.

Symptoms of Legionnaires' are similar to flu symptoms and include high temperature, fever and chills, cough, muscle pains and headache. If you're worried you might have Legionnaires' disease, you should contact your GP as soon as possible. If your doctor diagnoses Legionnaires' disease, please call us on 0141 889 7105 to let us know immediately so we can check and, if necessary, treat your water system.

What can I do to reduce the risk of legionella in my home?

To reduce the risk, it's really important that:

Hot water in the system remains hot

The water in the system is circulated regularly

To help with this, there are a few simple steps you can take

- Your boiler or hot water system is set to heat water to 60c. Please don't change this setting, as lower temperatures can provide better conditions for the bacteria to live and multiply. Beware of scalding at this temperature though, particularly if there are children in your home. And if you think your hot water isn't heating up correctly, please report a repair: [Report a repair](#)
- Use all your taps at least once a week - if you have taps which are used infrequently, it's important to let them run regularly to keep the water circulating in the system
- Keep shower heads, hoses and taps clean and free from limescale and mould by descaling them every three months
- If your property has been empty for a while, you should flush the whole water system on your return - keep out of the way while this is being done to avoid any droplets: Run all your taps for at least five minutes Flush the toilet with the lid down Run the shower for at least five minutes, using both hot and cold water
- Please see in link for further advice on how to flush your system: [Water Hygiene Information Link](#)



XL BULLY DOGS - NEW RULES FROM 1ST AUGUST 2024

The rules have changed if you own an XL Bully dog in Scotland.

It was already an offence to:

- have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle
- breed, or breed from, an XL Bully
- sell, give away or rehome an XL Bully
- abandon an XL Bully or let it stray

However, more rules were brought in on 1st August 2024.

Before 31st July 2024 you could apply for a Certificate of Exemption to keep an XL Bully dog. However, applications have now closed and can only now be granted by a court order. If you don't have an exemption you will be committing a criminal offense.

Paisley Housing Association will be following the safeguards set out by the Scottish Government and will take legal action against any tenant who is not following the new laws.

Please see the Scottish Government Website for more information.

Report a stray, abandoned or out of control dog.

If you find a stray, abandoned or out of control dog of any breed, report it to Renfrewshire Council Wardens by calling **0300 300 0380**

Annual Garden Competition 2024

We are delighted to welcome back our Annual Garden and Balcony Competition for the second year after the pandemic. Last year we were really impressed by the quality of the gardens and the way that tenants had stamped their own personalities onto the gardens.

This year there are three categories:

Individual Garden Tenement Gardens Balcony and Window

This year the competition will be judged by an independent adjudicator and Alan Graham (Advice and Projects Manager).

Our Housing Management staff have been identifying gardens for the competition when they have been out in our communities and highlighting these for judging.

However, if you want to ensure that your garden is entered you can contact Alan Graham on 0141 583 4103 or email alan.graham@paisleyha.org.uk

There will be 3 prizes in each category.

We have included below some of the gardens from last year to give some inspiration.

1st place: £100 B&Q voucher

2nd place: £50 B&Q voucher

3rd place: £25 B&Q voucher



ADVICE TEAM UPDATE

As the Summer Holidays draw to a close we would like all our tenants to make sure that they are getting everything that they are entitled to. In particular there is a lot of support available for families and pensioners that goes unclaimed every year.

SCOTTISH CHILD PAYMENT

If you are the main carer for a child under 16 and receive one of the benefits outlined below, you should be eligible for the Scottish Child Payment.

The Scottish Child Payment is worth £26.70 per week, per child under the age of 16. Unlike DWP benefits this is not limited to two children.

You can apply for this here, [Scottish Child Payment Application](#)

Eligible Benefits

- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

BEST START GRANT

If you receive one of the qualifying benefits for the Scottish Child Payment and you also have a younger child, you may be eligible for a Best Start Grant at three stages in your child's life.

This should be paid automatically to you if you already receive the Scottish Child Payment, but if you don't you might have to apply for this using the same form.

The Best Start Grant will pay:

- If you apply before your child is 24 weeks old: £754.65 for your first child, or £377.35 for your second or subsequent children.
- When your child is aged between 2 and 3 years and 6 months old, a payment of £314.45
- When your child starts school a payment of £313.45.

Unlike DWP benefits this is not limited to two children.

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

If your child is aged 16 to 19 and is continuing in education at school or college (doing a non-advanced course), they may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance.

If your household income (before tax) is £24,421 per year or less if you have one dependent child; or £26,884 or less if you have two or more dependent children. Then your child may be eligible.

The child will receive £30 per week, paid fortnightly in arrears.

Details of how and where to apply can be found here [EMA Details](#)

PENSIONER

BENEFITS

PENSION CREDIT

The DWP estimates that £1.7 billion of Pension Credit goes unclaimed each year.

Pension Credit tops up the income of households over pension age up to £218.75 if you are single and £332.95 per week for a couple. This amount can be higher if you are a Carer or receive Disability Benefits.

You can apply for this online at [Pension Credit Claim Form](#) or by calling 0800 99 1234.

ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE

If you have any disabilities or long term health conditions that affect your day to day living, you may be eligible for Attendance Allowance.

This can be awarded at one of two rates:

£72.65 per week if you have difficulty through the day **OR** night.

£108.55 per week if you have difficulty through the day **AND** night

If you already receive DLA, PIP or Adult Disability payment we would always encourage tenants to seek advice before applying for Attendance Allowance.

Attendance Allowance is not means tested, so an award of this will not reduce any other benefits that you receive. But it could mean that you are entitled to extra £££.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT MANAGED MIGRATION UPDATE

from June 2024, tenants that receive Housing Benefit have started to receive letters from DWP telling them that their existing benefits, including Housing Benefit will stop, and the date this will happen by. Tenants should have a 3 month period from receiving this letter to make a claim for Universal Credit.

**YOU WILL NOT
AUTOMATICALLY BE
TRANSFERRED TO
UNIVERSAL CREDIT, SO IT
IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU
CLAIM WHEN YOU RECEIVE
THE LETTER.**

We are receiving some information from Renfrewshire Council about who will be transferring and our Advice Team staff will also contact them to help you with the transfer.

We also recommend contacting our advice team before submitting your UC claim so we can help you make the most of your application, such as identifying the elements to claim and the best payment date.

School Clothing Grant and Free School Meals

Applications are now open for the School Clothing Grant and Free School Meals from Renfrewshire Council. You may be eligible for this if you receive certain benefits. We advise all tenants that have a child in school to check if they are eligible, if you are unsure if you may be eligible for any of the appropriate benefits you can contact our Advice Team on 0141 583 4123 or adviceteam@paisleyha.org.uk.

Free School Meals

All children in Primary 1 to Primary 5 are eligible for Free School Meals but if you have children older than this you need to apply for Free School Meals. Also, even if your child is in P1 to P5 there are sometimes payments made to eligible families, so it is important to still apply

School Clothing Grant

If you are eligible you will receive £120 per eligible primary school pupil and £150 per eligible secondary school pupil. You will also receive a one off payment of £50 for every eligible child in Winter to assist with winter clothing.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the School Clothing Grant or Free School Meals you must meet the eligibility criteria below:

- your child, or the child you care for, goes to a Renfrewshire primary, secondary or ASN school.
- you receive specific benefits, see the table below.

Benefit received	Free school meals	Clothing grant
Income Support	Yes	Yes
Income Based JSA or ESA	Yes	Yes
Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, and your income is less than £19,995	Yes	Yes
Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit and have an annual income of up to £9,552	Yes	Yes
Universal Credit with a monthly earned income of not more than £796	Yes	Yes
Housing Benefit OR Council Tax Reduction	No	Yes

You can apply for on the council's website at [School Meals and Clothing Grant Form](#), you will need to provide evidence of eligibility for the qualifying benefits