

# TENANTS' UPDATE

KEEPING YOU IN TOUCH WITH WEST LOTHIAN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP



## 1.3 MILLION REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL



**BRIGHT FUTURE:** Tracey Taylor, with husband Keith and WLHP housing officers Alex Lamb and Lynsey Fotheringham, is excited at the £1.3 million investment in homes.

### WE'RE KICKING OFF OUR BIGGEST-EVER INVESTMENT IN HOMES

WLHP has revealed plans for its biggest-ever investment in homes - with £1.3million worth of improvements getting under way.

More than 290 homes across our communities will receive energy

efficient boilers, while 230 customers will benefit from modern kitchens.

As part of the five-year programme of work, we'll also make general environmental improvements, and enhance entrances and common areas

to help tenants feel safer.

The work will be carried out in Boghall, Blackburn, Craigshill, West Calder, Bathgate, Broxburn and Stoneyburn.

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FIND US ON FACEBOOK AT [www.facebook.com/wlhousingpartnership](http://www.facebook.com/wlhousingpartnership)

# HAVE YOUR SAY ON REPAIRS

WE have plans to improve our repair service - and we want to know what you think.

Wheatley Group - WLHP's parent company - is consulting on proposals for a new repairs and maintenance service.

Now, we want to hear what the most important people in this - our tenants - think about the plans for a new repairs service.

Area Housing Manager Alan Glasgow said: "Our tenants deserve the best - and we want our new repairs service to be flexible and to give tenants the choice of booking a repair by phone, online or in person, and repairs carried out at a time that suits.

"We also want our repairs teams to be based locally and to be an efficient, responsive service which gets it right first time.

"Through our recent conference and surveys we know tenants want to see local, dedicated repairs teams. That's one of the things we would expect to deliver as part of our ambitions for a truly outstanding service.

"But we really want to hear what tenants think about the plans. I'd urge as many tenants as possible to take the time to give us their views so our new repairs service reflects what tenants want."



We'll be sending you a leaflet on our proposals for the repairs service. It will also be online.

There are lots of ways you can give us your feedback, including:

- **Face-to-face meetings**
- **Filling in a questionnaire**
- **Phoning us on 0800 011 3816**
- **Visiting [www.wlhp.org](http://www.wlhp.org)**
- **Visiting [www.facebook.com/wlhousingpartnership](https://www.facebook.com/wlhousingpartnership)**
- **Emailing [consultation@wheatley-group.com](mailto:consultation@wheatley-group.com)**
- **Talking to your housing officer.**

The consultation runs until Sunday 31 July 2016.



## DO YOU NEED ADVICE WHEN YOUR WELFARE BENEFITS ARE STOPPED?

OUR welfare benefits advisors can help you appeal if you've had your benefits stopped.

If any of your benefits have been stopped, you should ask for a 'mandatory reconsideration'.

This is a review and often it is carried out over the phone.

You can also do this in writing. Either way, you should receive written notification of the mandatory reconsideration.

After this you have a right to appeal to an independent tribunal.

But you'll need the written 'Mandatory Reconsideration Notice' in order to appeal.

If your Employment Support

Allowance has stopped, you can claim Jobseekers Allowance before you have made an appeal.

After that, you should receive Employment Support Allowance until your appeal is heard.

If you don't appeal you may have to claim Universal Credit.

Remember, help is available from WLHP's welfare benefit advisors.

If you're affected by any of the changes the UK Government is making to the benefits system, get in touch.

To make an appointment, talk to your housing officer or phone us on **01506 416 438**.

# 1.3 MILLION REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

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By the time the programme is completed, every WLHP customer will have an affordable heating system to help reduce fuel bills.

Tracey Taylor who lives in Boghall, Bathgate, said: "I've been a WLHP for seven years now and I'm really excited about the investment being put into the houses.

"The planned work is exactly what we need. I'll be getting a new kitchen and can't wait for it to be installed. It'll make a huge difference to me and the rest of the family."

Area Housing Manager Alan Glasgow said: "This investment will ensure all our tenants feel more comfortable in their homes and safer in their neighbourhood.

"Our focus on energy efficiency will also help tenants save money on fuel bills.

"Our plans have been made following close consultation with our customers. We know they want to live in great places, no matter which community they're part of – and it's our aim to make West Lothian Housing Partnership communities just that.

"I'm proud to step into the role of director at West Lothian Housing Partnership at such an exciting time."

We're arranging a series of pop-up events across our communities where tenants will be able to choose the style of work tops, cupboards and other elements of their new kitchens.

## FROM MEET AND GREET – TO INVESTMENT IN YOUR STREET...

WE'RE going back out to meet and greet - and invest - in your street.

Our pop-up events across West Lothian have been great opportunities for us to talk face-to-face with tenants.

A series of events last year saw WLHP staff out and about in every community finding out what tenants want.

And they proved so successful we'll be holding more roadshows throughout the summer.

That means you'll have a chance to find out about the improvements planned for your area.

You'll also find out about how our new online services make it easier and more convenient for you to pay your rent, check your account, book an appointment and do lots more online.

And you can also get information about the ways tenants can get involved in WLHP, make their voices heard and influence decision-making.

Area Housing Manager Alan Glasgow said: "Tenants are at the heart of everything we do - and our roadshows are a great way for tenants to tell us what they want.

"They were also a great way for tenants to meet their neighbours.

"Last year, tenants told us they wanted more investment in their homes - and we're delivering on that.

"Tenants also told us they wanted new kitchens, and we've delivered on that too.

"The pop-up events will also be a good chance for us to tell tenants about the services we offer."

More roadshows start in June.

We'll keep you updated.



**ALL SMILES:** Housing Manager Alan Glasgow and Housing Officer Jane Purves at an event last year

# WHY IT PAYS TO G



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## INTERNET IS A REAL GODSEND

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SURVEY figures have revealed that being online can save you up to £200 a year and help you find a job.

That's the results from a two-year study in Knightswood in Glasgow with tenants at WLHP's sister organisation, GHA.

Tenant Peter Bevan used the internet to find work – and now he's landed a job as a bus driver.

Peter said: "I used the internet to study for the theory test. It was a

godsend. Without the internet it would have been very difficult."

Tenants who took part in the study saved on average £187.

Tenants cut their bills by comparing prices online and using internet shopping discounts.

Also, 79% of people taking part said the wifi helped them with their studies, household duties, college forms and looking for homes.

# GET ONLINE

## NEW SERVICES ARE SO EASY

DON'T wait in another queue or go out doors to pay your rent.

Our free online services gives you access to West Lothian Housing Partnership 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

You can make payments, book a repair appointment, see your account, check your balance, and

access all of your recent payments and charges online.

And you can also keep track of appointments you've arranged, and request and keep tabs on services such as welfare advice.

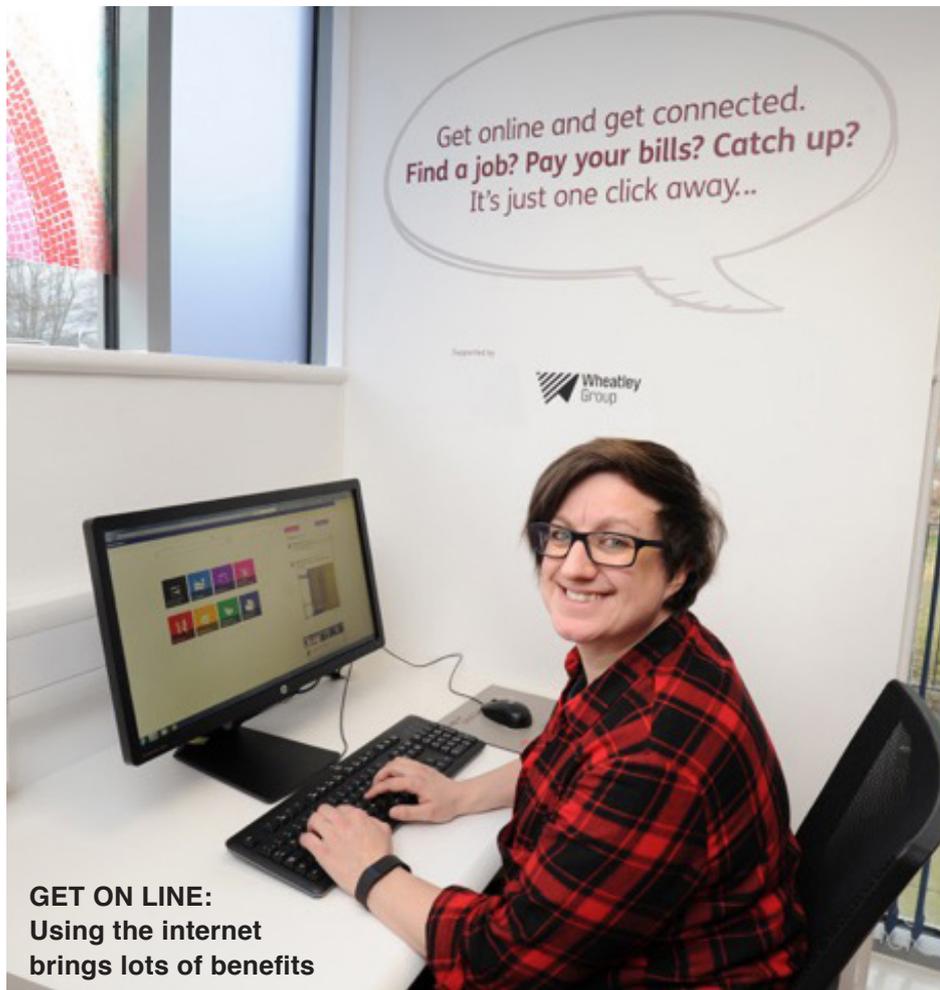
The great news is that it's quick, easy and free to register.

Tenant Robert Majury recently signed up for online services.

He said: "I use the online services to pay my rent. It's much more convenient and more straightforward. You don't need to wait on the phone."

Area Housing Manager Alan Glasgow said: "Going online is a great way to access our services. It's the fastest, most convenient way to pay your rent and book repairs."

To sign up, go to [www.wlhp.org](http://www.wlhp.org) and click on 'log in or register now'.



**GET ON LINE:**  
Using the internet brings lots of benefits

## COMPLAINTS HELP US MAKE SURE WE LEARN FROM MISTAKES

ACROSS WLHP during 2015/16, 21 complaints were resolved.

Of these 18 (86%) were upheld and 21 (100%) were resolved within the agreed timescale.

The most common type of complaint received across WLHP during 2015/16 related to repairs.

The most common reason was communication around appointments.

This matter has been highlighted to the senior management team and our contractors.

We want to hear about your experience so that we can learn and respond to the things we don't do so well.

We aim to resolve all complaints within five working days. You'll know the name of the member of staff dealing with your complaint, and they'll keep you informed of progress.

You can make a complaint by:

- **Calling us 24/7 on 01506 416438**
- **Writing to us at Freepost, RTKU-ZHKZ-HRAU, West Lothian Housing Partnership, 62 North Bridge Street, Bathgate, EH48 4PP**
- **Visiting [www.wlhp.org](http://www.wlhp.org)**
- **Emailing [housing@wlhp.org](mailto:housing@wlhp.org)**
- **Visiting [www.facebook.com/wlhousingpartnership](http://www.facebook.com/wlhousingpartnership)**

## DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES AWARD FOR WLHP STAFF

THE team at WLHP has been officially awarded dementia-friendly status by Alzheimer Scotland.

Working with the charity, our staff have been fully trained to identify the early signs of dementia and Alzheimer's and have learned how to fully support customers with either condition.

As well as pledging to treat customers with dementia with patience, dignity and respect the office has also undergone improvements to make it more welcoming.

Better signage has been installed and doorframes have been repainted to make it easier for customers with dementia to find their way around.

Alzheimer Scotland's Dementia Advisor for Bathgate, Cherie Raby, presented the team with their official Dementia Friendly Communities badge.

That means WLHP is part



**AWARD WINNERS:** Cherie Raby of Alzheimer Scotland presents Area Housing Manager Alan Glasgow with the Dementia Friendly Communities badge as the rest of the WLHP team looks on.

of a community where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported and can find their way around and feel safe.

Area Housing Manager, Alan Glasgow, said: "I am proud of the team for achieving this status. It means we can support our customers with dementia living independently in their own communities for as long as possible.

"Most importantly, we appreciate how to communicate with customers who might be struggling

to make themselves understood."

Natasha MacKinnon, Corporate Fundraiser at Alzheimer Scotland, said: "We are absolutely thrilled that WLHP is the first of Wheatley Group's housing associations to become dementia-friendly in support of people across central Scotland.

"The Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative aims to make everyday life better for people with the condition and to change the way the nation thinks, talks and acts when it comes dementia."

## POLICE CAN HELP STOP THE CYCLE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

**INSPECTOR Mark Nicol explains how the police are clamping down on domestic abuse.**

PEOPLE in Scotland can find out if their partner has a history of domestic abuse or violence.

The scheme, called The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS), allows people who suspect their partner may have been abusive in the past to ask Police Scotland for information.

It can help people make a decision whether to carry

on with the relationship. It offers help and support when making that choice. A worried relative, friend or neighbour can also make an application to the police on their behalf.

Officers from Police Scotland will get in touch with a person if they are thought to be at risk.

DSDAS was introduced in October following a trial in Aberdeen and Ayrshire which saw 22 people warned that their partners had a history of domestic abuse.

Figures show the number of domestic abuse incidents reported in Scotland from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 increased by 1,076 to 59,471 compared to the same period the year before.

**To get a DSDAS form, go to [www.scotland.police.co.uk](http://www.scotland.police.co.uk); visit a police office; phone 101, the non-emergency number for the police; or speak to a member of the police on the street. In an emergency, call 999.**



# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP - WomenN2Work

WEST Lothian Housing Partnership is working with West Lothian Council's Access2 employment team to help women into work.

It offers a FREE seven-week course for women who have been long-term unemployed, are lone parents, living with health problems, or have had life-changing issues.

The course is designed to help women improve:

- self-esteem
- confidence
- motivation
- personal and career goals
- skills to access education, training and employment

People who complete the course achieve Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 4 Employability Award.



West Lothian Council can provide support with travel costs.

#### Where and when:

The course will be held at the WLHP Academy, 62 North Bridge Street, Bathgate EH48 4PP on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:30am till 2:30pm, for seven weeks

**For further information and to secure your FREE place on our next course call Alex Lamb on 0141 274 7329 or email [Alex@wlhp.org](mailto:Alex@wlhp.org) or Jane Purves on 0141 274 7332 or email [Jane@wlhp.org](mailto:Jane@wlhp.org)**

## CAN YOU HIT THE RIGHT NOTE?

IF you're a young up-and-coming musician, why not take part in a musical project with a difference?

WLHP's sister organisation, Loretto Care, is looking for young, musical people to take part in a new project called 'The Ensemble'.

The project, funded by mental health charity SeeMe Scotland, is for young people aged 16 to 25 who love music and who have experience of mental health issues like depression or anxiety.

The young people will be invited to take part in song writing blocks with a view to writing and performing their own music at concerts across central Scotland.

The goal of The Ensemble is to help young, musical people develop their talent, grow their confidence and challenge the stigma surrounding mental health issues.

The first free song writing session will take place at The Academy in Lipton House on Crown Street, Glasgow on June 29 and will run from 5pm to 8pm.

More song writing blocks are planned for July and August.

**For more information, phone 0141 274 7622 or email [michaelt1@lorettoha.co.uk](mailto:michaelt1@lorettoha.co.uk)**



TOP TUNES: Maimie Rodgers, a tenant of Loretto Care, WLHP's sister organisation, who is taking part in The Ensemble.

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NOMINATIONS



THE Partnership's Annual General Meeting (AGM) is to be held in the **Kaim Park Hotel in Bathgate on Wednesday 21 September** at 7pm. Please come along and join us to hear how the Partnership has been performing. All tenants are invited but if you wish to vote on an item you need to be member. Speak to your housing officer on **01506 416 438** to find out more.

# TENANTS CAN GET INVOLVED

WE would like to tell you more about how the Partnership works and how you could become involved, either on the Board and/or in your own community. Training, support and travel expenses would be provided.

Tenants are at the heart of everything we do and we want as many of you as possible to influence what WLHP does.

**If you think you would be interested and want to find out more please contact Angela Watson on 0141 274 7331**

## THE NEW HomeSwapper APP HAS ARRIVED!

NOW available to download for iOS and Android mobile devices from the App Store FOR FREE!

The app will give you instant access to your HomeSwapper account for quicker matches and messaging. You will only be asked to log in once by either

your HomeSwapper or Facebook credentials.

If you are not already registered for this FREE service and want to find out more go to

**www.homeswapper.co.uk** or speak to your Housing Officer on **01506 416 438**.

## HOLIDAY - OFFICE CLOSURE

OUR office will be closed for a public holiday on Monday 27 June.

You should continue to pay your rent in the normal way. The office closure will not affect making payment and keeping your account up to date.

If you also need to report a repair or another enquiry, please also call us 24hrs a day on **01506 416 438**.



## CONTACTING THE PARTNERSHIP

West Lothian Housing Partnership  
62 North Bridge Street  
Bathgate  
EH48 7PP

Office opening hours:  
Monday to Friday, 9.30am-4pm  
Tel: **01506 416 438**  
Email: **housing@wlhp.org**  
Web: **www.wlhp.org**  
Facebook: **www.facebook.com/wlhousingpartnership**

