



Queens
Cross
Housing
Association

qcha.org.uk

focus

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF QUEENS CROSS HOUSING ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2020



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Looking to the future

As we move towards the end of a year like no other, we take stock of 2020 in this edition and look towards the future.

Planning for the next five years

While the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a big shift in how we deliver services, all of our ambitions for the area and the people who live and work here remain unchanged.

We've been working hard to prioritise what is most important to tenants, staff and the community as a whole, and on **pages 4-5** you can read our five key objectives for 2020-2025.

Virtual AGM

We held our very first virtual AGM in September, as we move towards

a more online world due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Although we missed chatting to members over a cup of tea, it still gave us a chance to catch up about the Association's performance over 2019/20 and the different ways we're addressing the challenges of today as a result of the pandemic.

You can read all the updates from the Board on **page 12-13**.

Online Christmas panto

Christmas won't be the same this year and we're so disappointed that we can't have our annual pantomimes around the four areas.

But we still wanted to bring something to you! We'll be hosting an online pantomime with Fizzgig Theatre that you can enjoy from the comfort of your home.

Keep an eye on our social media for more details to come over the



next couple of weeks. Find out more on **page 9**.

We hope everyone continues to stay safe during this difficult time.

Shoua Stephen

Chief Executive

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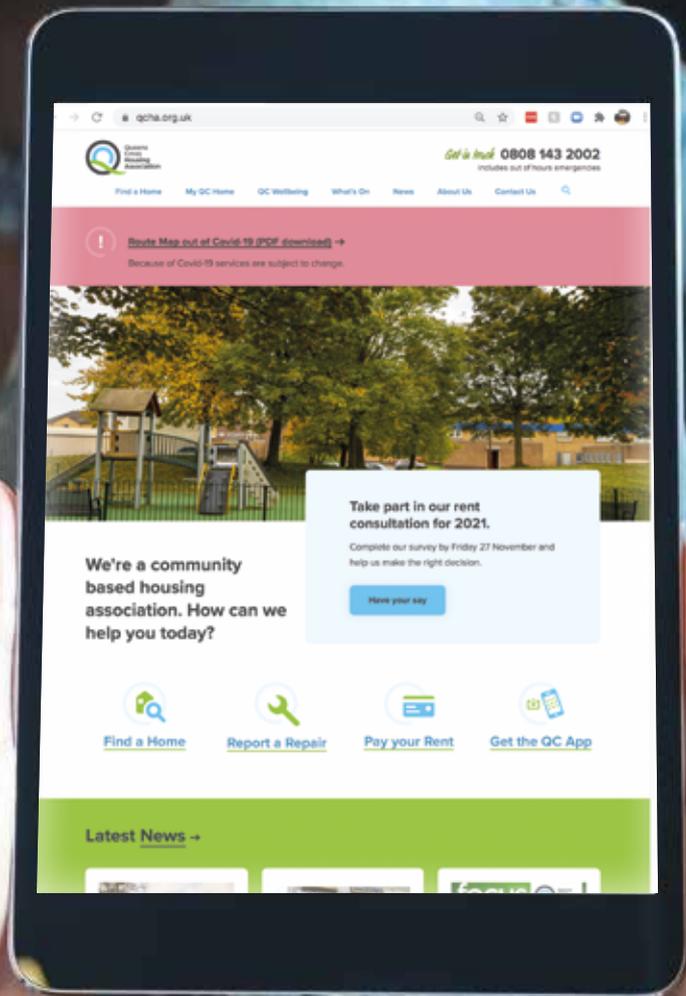
Our new website is here

Redesigned and refreshed, the Association's new website is live – offering improved access to services online.

The new site is easier to navigate and user friendly, allowing you to find the services and information you want with fewer clicks.

You'll find a sleeker, cleaner look, with icons that go straight to what you're looking for and news, events and jobs on the home page.

Have a look and see for yourself – qcha.org.uk.



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CHOOSE TO LIVE HERE, CHOOSE TO WORK HERE

Five year business plan to lay out ambitions for 2020-25

At the time of *this issue of Focus magazine* going to print the final touches were being put to the association's new five year business plan.

While the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a big shift in how we deliver services, all of our ambitions for the area and the people who live and work here remain unchanged.

In brief, here are our five big objectives for 2020-25:

Building and sustaining popular neighbourhoods

We aim to provide safe, attractive neighbourhoods with well-designed and well-managed homes, committing to the highest standards in maintaining and investing in homes.

By 2025 we'll have built nearly 400 homes in Hamiltonhill, invested £38m in existing homes, developed community caretaking teams and transformed the Woodside neighbourhood through the green environmental project, Making Places.

Creating and supporting greater life opportunities for all

Working alongside residents, the Association has always played a role in building and keeping communities together. We'll continue in that role, recognising that tackling poverty and improving residents' life chances is important, especially for future generations.

We are committed to making sure our rents are affordable, to offering free and independent money and benefits advice, giving Community Chest grants to children



and young people, creating training and employment opportunities and to addressing digital exclusion for people of all ages.

Developing greener spaces and community wellbeing

A healthy life is a longer and better quality of life. We will do everything we can to help people take full advantage of leisure, social, employment and educational opportunities.

We'll create outdoor environments and new parks where people want to spend time. Our Wellbeing services will continue to work with those who are most vulnerable to live independent, connected and active lives. We'll tackle social isolation by connecting people digitally and ensure new and refurbished homes are energy efficient.

Being a dynamic and listening community partner

We aim to take a local democracy approach to work with residents and community partners to agree their priorities. We aim to build more resident involvement and participation, introducing new ways of getting people involved in decision making like participatory budgeting.

We'll create communities where residents are empowered and work with us on an equal basis to find ways to ensure diverse community voices are heard. We'll work as part of the Queens Cross Group of companies and other partner agencies to regenerate and stimulate the local economy and bring investment.

Treating people equally and with respect

Treating people equally and with respect for who they are as an individual is important to us. Our communities are diverse in many different ways. Our aim is to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relationships as an organisation, employer and service provider.

To achieve these aims, we'll deliver a rolling programme of activities and clubs to promote community cohesion. We'll offer a new Sharing Lives Sharing Spaces programme of integration activities, increase the number of ESOL classes and continue to improve the aids and adaptations service in partnership with Glasgow City Council.

THANKS AND WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in either helping us shape the plan or in giving us views on the draft document.

Over the coming weeks the new 2020-25 business plan will be made available on our website. We've also produced several short videos so look out for these too on www.qcha.org.uk



An update on our services during Covid

In summer this year we published our own route map out of Covid-19 on our website qcha.org.uk and sent it to every tenant household.

While we remain broadly in phase 3 of our own route map, our services are subject to change as a result of Scottish Government guidelines and these are for guidance only.

With the recent introduction of a new Tier System by the Scottish Government, our services will be continually reassessed as Glasgow moves in and out of different tiers.

Currently, in Tier 3 our community facilities remain closed with the exception of play areas and growing spaces. We have an extensive choice of online activities and some outdoor activities on offer. All classes and activities are listed on the What's On pages of our website qcha.org.uk under Groups & Clubs or you can find out more by calling the Social Regeneration team on our main telephone number (see below).

If you have any questions about our services, then call us on 0808 143 2002 or email contactus@qcha.org.uk



Queens Cross Service Route Map out of Covid 19



Our annual performance report is out now!

Have a read and find out in full:

How we performed in 2019/2020

87% of tenants were satisfied with our overall service, while 90% were satisfied with our repairs service.

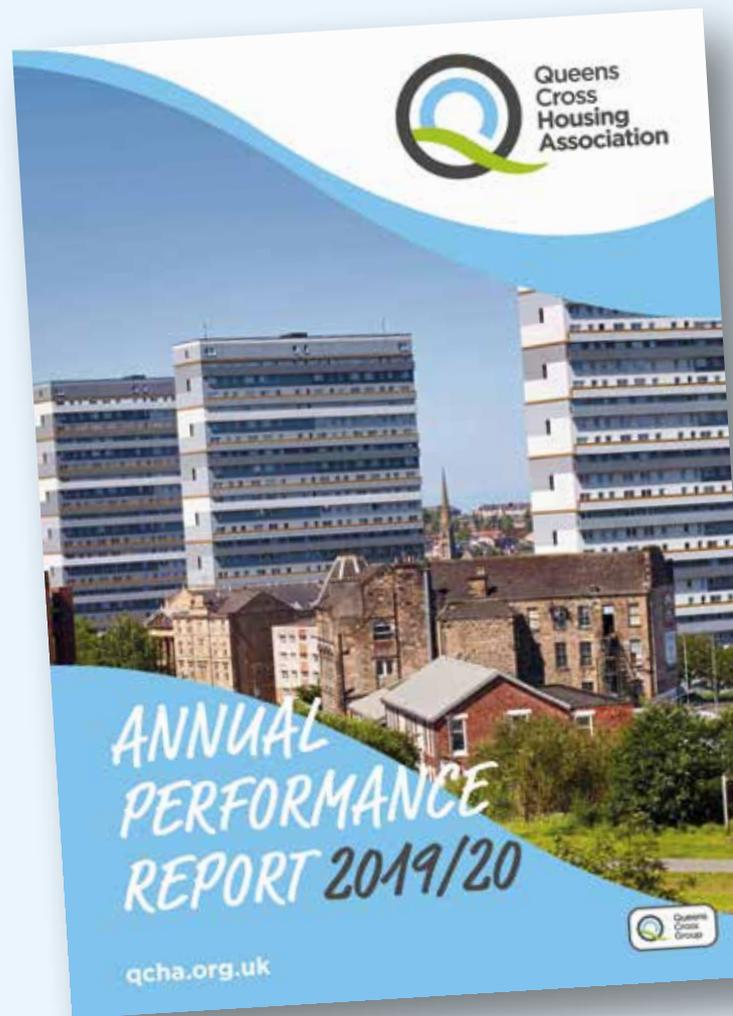
What we're proud of

Receiving an award from Keep Scotland Beautiful was just one of the many things we're proud of from the past year, after being presented with a silver level accolade for environmental excellence.

Projects we're excited about

We're particularly excited about work restarting at Hamiltonhill following delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Plans to start building the first phase of houses are on course to begin in early 2021. You can find out more about our ongoing work at Hamiltonhill in *this Focus magazine* on **page 18**.

To read the association's full results from the past year, read our annual performance report on our website at qcha.org.uk



SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF WOODSIDE

Have you had a chance to look at the proposed designs for Woodside yet?

There's still time to have your say!

We're seeking your views on the initial plans for the area as we push ahead with the £3 million environmental project to transform Woodside.

The areas being targeted for improvement include the ground around the Cedar high-rise flats, Windsor Terrace, Braid Square and along St George's Road.

Environmental work will include new green spaces, tree planting, streetscaping and new street furniture.

You can view the designs and have your say online at woodsidemakingplaces.org.uk



Helping Queens Cross' oldest tenant get online

101 year old Cathy McRae has been using her Apple iPad to listen to Spotify and watch videos on YouTube.

Funding from Connecting Scotland has helped some of our older tenants get online. Seven tenants registered with our Wellbeing 60 + service have so far benefitted from receiving a free device and internet from the association.

One of those is 101 year old Cathy McRae, Queens Cross' oldest tenant. She received an Apple iPad with 12 months free internet; a package that will help her stay connected to friends and family during these difficult times.

The tablet also allows Cathy to take part in online community activities which she wouldn't otherwise have had access to.

The tenants are being supported by our Health and Wellbeing Coordinator, Donna Maclean, who has helped them download apps such as Spotify, YouTube and News apps. She has also taught them basic skills such as sending emails and using services such as Google.

Thanks to a collaboration with Glasgow's Golden Generation, the association will have another 10 devices to give out to older residents in the coming weeks.



Queens Cross tenant Cathy McRae celebrating her 100th birthday

GET ONLINE WITH OUR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

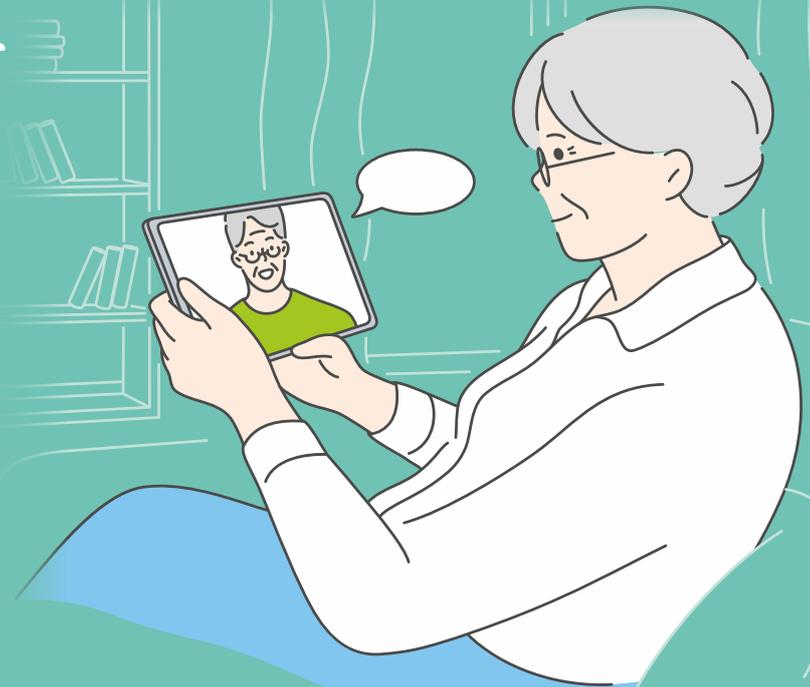
Sign up now! All ages welcome.

Fancy giving yoga a go? Or is reminiscing about the glory games of old with football memories more up your street?

We have a range of online activities for all ages, including mindfulness and art therapy.

Have a look on our Facebook page and our website to find out what's on.

If you'd like to sign up for any classes, get in touch with our Social Regeneration team on **0808 143 2002** or email at **socialregeneration@qcha.org.uk**



STAY SAFE THIS WINTER

Winter can catch us off guard and take even the most prepared weather watchers by surprise. Here are some essential tips and important numbers to have this winter.

Queens Cross emergency festive service – 0808 143 2002

Our offices will close at **4pm on Monday 24 December this year** and re-open at **9am on Tuesday 5 January 2021**.

But if you have a fire, flood, electrical, security, heating or hot water emergency, you can call us on **0808 143 2002**.

Prevent freezing pipes

During a cold snap, keep your heating on at a low temperature. It could help prevent pipes freezing.

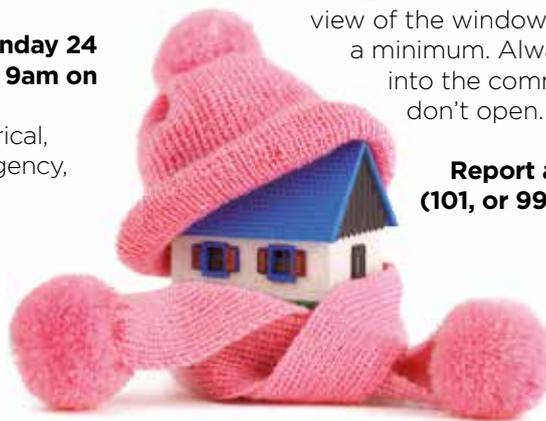
Save money

Energy efficient homes are cheaper and quicker to heat. Call Home Energy Scotland on **0808 808 2282** for advice.

Keep your home secure

Thieves and bogus callers could be operating in the area. Lock all windows and doors, don't leave gifts in view of the windows and keep cash in your home to a minimum. Always make sure who you are letting into the common close via intercom. If in doubt, don't open.

Report any suspicion activities to police (101, or 999 in emergency).



Other important numbers

Take a look at our list on **page 31** for all the important numbers of local services.

Hosting our very own online panto

Our Christmas panto is back for another year! Normally we hold four pantomimes across the Queens Cross areas for the young and not-so-young in the run up to the holidays, but unfortunately we cannot do them the normal way this year.

So, we have been working in conjunction with Fizzgig Theatre since September to come up with an online version! On the evening of 4 December we will broadcast Beauty and the Beast for the residents of Queens Cross.

We are also working with local schools to ensure that students that cannot view it on that date will have



a broadcast of it in their classrooms.

Covid said "Oh no you can't!" and we said "oh yes we can!"

So grab some popcorn and get ready for Queens Cross' production of Beauty and the Beast.

We'll be revealing more details soon through our social media and website so keep your eyes peeled!

Queens Cross tree lightings

Your festive trees are back this year!

Unfortunately, we cannot do tree lighting ceremonies due to Covid-19 restrictions, but we will have trees up at the Clock Tower, Westercommon and Dundasvale at the end of November for all to see. Feel free to grab a cuppa and have a look at the trees from your very own window. Make sure to sing a carol so Santa can hear you!

LANGUAGE FOR ALL

launched to tenants

A new project aimed to help tenants where English isn't their first language has been launched by the association.

Language for All is a new initiative run by Queens Cross' Financial Inclusion team to aid non-native English speakers by offering them translated documents and housing appointments with an interpreter present.

The six month project has been launched thanks to funding from Advice UK and the Scottish Government.

Mark Soanes, Queens Cross Financial Inclusion Manager, said: "The aim of the project is to ensure that not speaking English as your first language does not act as a barrier to accessing support through our Financial Inclusion team.

"Over the next six months we will be offering dedicated three way appointments for our tenants, which will include a member of our Financial Inclusion team and an interpreter to ensure that anything that is discussed is fully understood by all.

"We will also make you aware of any additional support that you may be able to access, and all documents such as appointment letters and summary documents will be translated into your preferred language where necessary."

If you would like to find out more about the project, get in touch with us on **0808 143 2002** or email at **contactus@qcha.org.uk**

The image shows four overlapping leaflets for the 'LANGUAGE FOR ALL' project. Each leaflet features the Queens Cross Housing Association logo and the title 'LANGUAGE FOR ALL'. The leaflets contain text in three languages: English, Urdu, and Polish. The English leaflet asks if the tenant has questions about their benefits and offers help. The Urdu leaflet asks if the tenant has questions about their benefits and offers help. The Polish leaflet asks if the tenant has questions about their benefits and offers help.



Queens Cross is NO PLACE FOR HATE

Taking place last month, Glasgow's Hate Crime Awareness Week aims to raise awareness of the issues surrounding hate crime and inform people of how they can report a hate crime safely.

In Scotland, the law recognizes hate crime as a crime motivated by malice towards a social group because of race, sexual orientation, religion, disability or gender identity.

ANTI-ASIAN HATE CRIMES

Hate crimes against Chinese people has soared in the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the Home Office reporting a 21% increase in anti-Asian hate crimes.

Since the outbreak started, there have been multiple incidents of racism against Chinese people. There have been reports of Chinese people being verbally and physically abused, including victims being spat at, punched and shouted at in the street.

"MY DAUGHTER WAS CRYING"

The actual number of hate crimes against Chinese people across the Woodside area is likely to be higher than has been reported. Between January and March this year, there were multiple instances of hate crimes directed at members of our communities.

"One day my daughter and I walked to do the shopping and met these two girls on the road. The two girls were so rude to point at my daughter and speak some bad words to curse her, my daughter was crying.



Hate crime awareness banners were put up in October around our four neighbourhoods

"When I was trying to help my daughter, the two girls pulled my daughter's hair strongly and dragged her away."

WHAT QUEENS CROSS HAVE DONE TO HELP

As a Third Party Reporting Centre, the association has worked with Police Scotland to report instances of hate crimes.

We have also taken action against tenants in line with our anti-social behavior policy.

The Association has supported Chinese residents in various ways; from offering free online English language classes to improved signage around the area to highlight our stance against all forms of hate crime.

SPEAK TO US

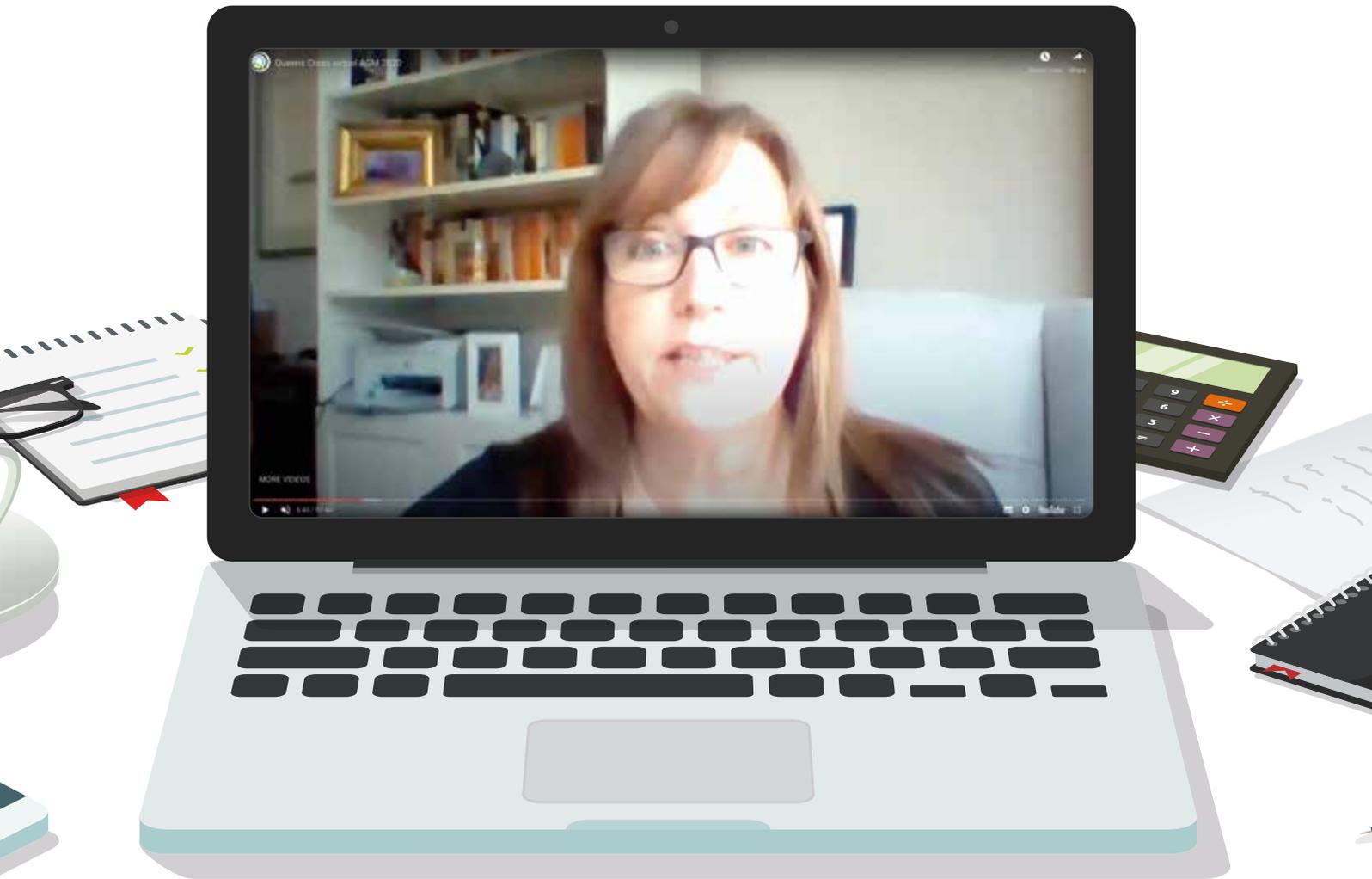
If you have been the victim of a hate crime or you've witnessed a hate crime, come and speak to us.

As a Third Party Reporting Centre, we can help with the process of reporting a hate crime without you having to contact Police Scotland.

Get in touch with us on **0808 143 2002** or email at **contactus@qcha.org.uk** to report a hate crime in confidence.



A virtual AGM



Association members meet on Zoom for the first time

The Association's first virtual AGM took place on Monday 7 September on Zoom.

Although we missed chatting to members over a cup of tea, everyone who joined us heard from Board Chair, Marilyn Clewes, and our Chief Executive, Shona Stephen, about the Association's performance over 2019/20 and the different ways we're addressing the challenges of today as a result of Covid-19.

Business plan progress

As we prepare to launch a new business plan for 2020-2025 (see **pages 4 & 5**), Shona set out the progress that's been made over the last three year plan 2017-20, highlighting some of our key ambitions and objectives for next five years.

Finance assurance

Neil Manley, Director of Finance and Corporate Support presented the 2019/20 Annual Accounts, providing members with assurance on the financial position of the Association. He appointed current external auditors, Wylie & Bisset LLP, for another year.

Welcome to three new Community Involvement Group members

Fiona Smith, Executive Office Manager, confirmed the appointment of our Governing Body members for 2020/21 and welcomed three new Community Involvement Group (CIG) members:

- Elizabeth Aitchison - Dundasvale CIG
- Lyn Ward - Dundasvale CIG
- Patrick Ryan - Queens Cross CIG.

Board changes

To support the Association in succession planning, David Horner made the decision to stand down as Vice Chair. However we're delighted that David is not leaving us and will continue to serve on the Board as an Independent member.

Andrew Burns was appointed as our new Vice Chair. Andrew's been an excellent Board member and we have every confidence he has the skills and knowledge to ensure we can deliver on our key aims for 2020-25. We're also delighted that Robert Takenzire, who was co-opted to the Board in September 2019, has been formally elected (read an interview with Robert on [page 19](#)).

A rewarding role

The Association's always looking for enthusiastic, committed individuals with a passion for making a difference to local communities to join our Board of Management and Community Involvement Groups (CIGs).

So if you are aware of any local residents who are interested in joining, pass their details to Governance Officer, Adele Drennan, and she will be happy to discuss vacancies with them. Adele can be contacted by email on adrennan@qcha.org.uk or by calling 0808 143 2002.

Latest news

Board welcomes new tenant member, Matt Millar

At their meeting on 27 October, Association Board members approved the co-option of tenant member, Matthew (Matt) Millar.

Matt said: "Having grown up and spent most of my life living in a Queens Cross Housing Association property, I understand the value of what a safe, secure and affordable home can offer both individuals and families.

"I also appreciate the wider role that housing associations can and should play in supporting flourishing and sustainable neighbourhoods."

Matt hopes to couple his professional and lived experiences for the benefit of tenants, the Board and the wider community.

We are delighted to have Matt on board and hope that you will have the opportunity to meet him in the not too distant future.



Watch full AGM on our website

You can watch the Association's first virtual Annual General Meeting, held on Zoom on 7 September, by clicking on the 'About us' then 'Our Team' pages of our website: www.qcha.org.uk/about-us/our-team

TAKE PART IN OUR RENT CONSULTATION FOR 2021

Complete our survey by Friday 27 November 2020 and help us make the right decision. Your views will make a difference.

Every tenant will have received a rent consultation leaflet and survey form from us by post. Read the leaflet, fill out the form and return it to us or complete our online survey to have your say.

Each year we look at how much rent is needed to continue to provide great services and improve our properties. We want to keep your rent affordable so it is important that we hear your views so we get the balance between rent levels and services right.

2020 will always be remembered for Covid-19 and the change it brought to all our lives. We know this has been a difficult year for many of our tenants. Some people have lost their job and many are struggling financially. So we want to make the rent increase in April as low as possible.

Our starting point is to look at the September rate of inflation as this is used when changes are made to benefits and pensions. In September 2020 inflation was 0.7%. We have worked out that this is the lowest amount of rent increase needed so we can continue with the same services as last year and carry out the improvements we have planned to our properties over the next 5 years.

The Board will make a decision on the rent increase in January 2021 after they have considered all the feedback from tenants on this issue.

FREE PRIZE DRAW

All returned forms will be entered into our free prize draw, with prizes of £100, £50 and £25 shopping vouchers up for grabs. Winners will be announced by Friday, 11 December 2020.

New community café close to completion

A project to convert an old office space into a new community café is close to completion.

The renovation of the café, sitting at 846 Garscube Road, is due to be finished by mid-November.

On the menu will be a range of healthy lunch options including soup, freshly made sandwiches, hot rolls and paninis, as well as home-made cakes and speciality teas and coffees.

The project is being developed by Queens Cross Workspace, who secured funding from Glasgow City Council's Town Centre Grant Fund to complete the transformation.

The Association hired Contract Building Services (CBS) to complete the refurbishment work. This included some internal re-modelling, improvements to the shop frontage, servery, kitchen and a new ventilation system.

Rona Anderson, Queens Cross' Director of Property, Enterprise & Regeneration, said:

"The community café is a great initiative by Queens Cross Workspace, combining our aims to create more community businesses and to provide training opportunities for local people."

Work on the café was originally meant to begin in spring, before lockdown restrictions imposed due to



The new café on 846 Garscube Road is close to completion

Covid-19 changed the outlook of the project.

Once the renovation is complete, the Association will be able to provide more details of when the café will open for business.



Help keep your home safe from Fire

Queens Cross are working on a new campaign with Scottish Fire and Rescue on fire safety. The **Clean and Clear** campaign will involve the promotion of fire safety in the common areas of your building, and will be running in spring 2021.

At Queens Cross, we want to keep a focus on fire safety and we are working with residents to promote a key safety message – keep fire escape routes clean and clear.

It's important to keep common areas – stairs, landings, decks – clear at all times, because in the event of a fire, residents use these routes to escape the building, and fire fighters need clear access to quickly find and tackle the fire. If you store anything in these common areas, even for a short period, you could be risking the lives of residents if fire breaks out.

In the lead up to the campaign launch in the spring, our estate management visits will have an emphasis on the safety of common areas, with guidance provided to individual buildings.

Queens Cross Director of

In the event of a fire, items stored in landing, deck or stairwell areas could stop you from getting out – or prevent the Fire Service from getting in to extinguish the fire.

Keeping common areas and stairways clear saves lives, so it is vitally important that all potentially hazardous items are kept in appropriate storage areas.

This includes:

- X Prams**
- X Wheelchairs or mobility scooters**
- X Bikes**
- X Rubbish bags**
- X Old furniture**

Property, Rona Anderson, will be heading up the new campaign.

She said: "It's very exciting to be developing the Clean and Clear campaign for the safety of our residents and their homes. We had a serious fire in a tenement building in the Queens Cross area

in October, which highlighted the need for a local fire safety campaign.

"Early in 2021, we'll launch the campaign and work with residents to ensure their common areas are clean and clear."



If a fire does start:

- Dial 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service, giving as much information as you can
- Close doors behind you as you escape, to prevent fire and smoke spreading
- Don't return to investigate or fight the fire
- If smoke is present, keep low and crawl to get below the smoke level
- Never use lifts, always take the stairs to exit the building

Find out more about fire safety by contacting us



Queens Cross Housing Association

Queens Cross Housing Association
45 Firhill Road, Glasgow G20 7BE

Call: **0808 143 2002**

Email: contactus@qcha.org.uk

Or visit: qcha.org.uk



Or to book a free home safety visit, contact Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on:



SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

Call: **0800 0731 999**

Text: **'FIRE' to 80800**

Or visit: www.firescotland.gov.uk



Hamiltonhill development progressing well

Plans to start building the first phase of houses at Hamiltonhill are on course to begin in early 2021, following months of positive progress preparing the site for building.

Advanced groundwork required to improve the stability of the land, delayed by lockdown restrictions, was completed in October – allowing the project to progress to the next stage.

A new drainage system connection to the Forth & Clyde Canal, needed before homebuilding can start, is also near completion.

The first phase of housing, over the site surrounded by Bardowie Street, Carbeth Street, Stonyhurst Street and Hobart Street, is expected to start in early 2021

– providing over 200 new homes for social rent and private sale.

The work will take three years to complete in full, with homes becoming available throughout 2023.

The homes for rent will provide a wide mix of homes for all ages; ranging from one and two bedroom and cottage flats, to three, four and five bedroom terraced houses.

We'll be consulting with local residents soon on the proposed designs of three new parks and five open spaces as part of the development.

Keep an eye on our social media channels for more information on how you can take part.

Crossword answers for page 30 - don't look if you haven't done it yet!

Across: 1 Two-master, 6 Brass, 9 Article, 10 Hostile, 11 Spike, 12 Transport, 13 Skeletons, 15 Flame, 16 Icky, 18 Pollutant, 20 Stalermate, 23 Tepid, 25 All Baba, 26 Unicorn, 27 Eject, 28 Ellesmere.
Down: 1 Thaws, 2 Outside, 3 Archenemy, 4 Theft, 5 Rehearsal, 6 Bests, 7 Arizona, 8 Sweetmeat, 13 Shipshape, 14 Orphanage, 15 Fountains, 17 Imagine, 19 Approve, 21 Enact, 22 Equal, 24 Dance.

WHY I JOINED THE BOARD - ROBERT TAKENZIRE

Can you describe a little bit of your background?

I was born in Uganda in 1988 and moved to the UK in 2002. I studied accountancy at the University of West of Scotland where I graduated in 2014. I started working in the banking industry in 2015 at Clydesdale Bank (now Virgin Money) as a banking advisor, helping customers with their personal banking needs. I left in 2020 to join Lloyds Banking Group as a business manager where I support small business with their business banking needs.

Why did you decide to join the Association’s Board?

I responded to a newsletter inviting tenants to come along to an event in late 2018, which was aimed at getting tenants more involved in having a say about the community in which they live. At the event I met Marilyn (Board Chair) and Shona (Chief Executive) who gave a presentation about what Queens Cross does within the community and the different ways tenants can get involved. I was invited to observe a few meetings in spring 2019 and then Co-opted to the board at the AGM in September 2019. This allowed me the opportunity to get a feel of what is required and how big significant decisions are made that impact tenants.

What benefits has Board membership given to you personally?

Board membership has given me an insight into the decision making process and the community planning

aspect through events such as the Business Planning days. Being part of the decision making process has been a source of inspiration knowing that I am involved in the change I want to see for my community.

How challenging is it balancing your work and personal life around your role on the Board?

It can be quite challenging balancing my work and personal life. If I have had a difficult day in my regular work I have to be mindful not to let it carry on to any board meetings I may be involved in later that evening. I’m also mindful of the time I spend reading board reports and attending training sessions or board meetings and I always make sure to maintain a healthy work life balance. My wife is very supportive of me being on the board and trying to be impactful within our community.

Why is it so important for the Board to have local residents within it?

Residents live in the community so naturally they will want to be part of a thriving and vibrant neighbourhood in which everyone looks out for one another. Having residents on the board gives them the ability to be at the table when decisions are made that will impact the communities that they live in.

Can you think of any decision that you’ve been involved in that has made a particularly strong impression on you?

I would say the Hamiltonhill project and the impact it will have on the local community is one that has made a strong impression on me. I’m excited by the project and can’t wait to see what it will look like in the future when it’s completed.



GARSCUBE BRIDGE UNVEILED TO THE COMMUNITY

A new pedestrian bridge at the Forth & Clyde Canal has officially opened to the public.

Scottish Canals unveiled the Garscube Bridge and Panmure Gate Link, connecting both communities at either side of the Canal.

The development provides easier transport links for residents and improved accessibility for visitors of the area.

Boaters will also benefit, as the electronic bridge allows boats to pass through the north of the city along the Canal.

The new link between Garscube and Panmure is the latest chapter in

the £6m Claypits projects which will deliver a local nature reserve in North Glasgow - due to open in spring 2021.

Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity said: "I'm really pleased that the Garscube Bridge has now opened as part of the Claypits project, connecting two communities in north Glasgow and providing easy access to nature within the city.

"Completion of the bridge will reopen the Forth and Clyde Canal to boaters as well as providing travel and leisure options for walkers, runners and cyclists. It's great to see

partnership working encouraging more sustainable travel in our towns and cities through high quality infrastructure."

Councillor Allan Gow, Chair of the Glasgow Canal Regeneration Partnership, said: "On behalf of the partnership, I am delighted to see the opening of the Garscube Bridge today; a project that will reconnect communities in the area. Accessibility and greenspace are two of the key goals of the canal partnership in Glasgow, and the Garscube Bridge and the new bridges and greenspace at Sighthill and Stockingfield will benefit thousands of existing, and future, residents in the area."





Libby's our Garscube charity patron and community force to be reckoned with

LIBBY MCARTHUR

Our columnist and charity patron.

Libby's blog

FEELING THE SEPARATION TOGETHER!

Wishing all you lovely Queens Cross Housing Association chums all kinds of wellbeing. Back in January you would have seen me shouting at the radio: 'No way Jose!' I was listening to a virologist saying that 'Hugs will be a thing of the past'. I know now, it's not that simple but let's be clear - things are not normal when there is so much loneliness and yet the new courtesy is to give each other a wide berth!

If I was talking to you now, and I like to think I am, kinda, I'd say be wary of listening to too much news or losing yourselves down the worm hole that is social media! I hope instead you're out kicking up leaves or trying to catch them as they fall before they land, especially good fun when there's a wee whirly wind up, or better still finding ones with the most vivid of colours and patterns and pressing them in that great new book you've just read that you're passing on to your pal!

I am sure like me, you know folk across the spectrum of reactions to these odd, compromised living times: some who are cavalier, some quite neurotic and then everything in between, but I think it's fair to say the open ended-ness of everything is anxious making for most of us.

For that reason, I think we should let ourselves off the hook for most things and not give ourselves huge agendas to meet in downtime. It's hard enough 'keepin' the heid' right now. That said: I have retrained! I did it during the first lockdown. I am now a celebrant with a group called, 'Celebrate People'. I'm official to officiate

at a funeral and am now applying to be a marriage celebrant too!

My father was a fireman, my mother a nurse and my older siblings teachers, so there has always been a 'service to others' vibe afoot in the family! Before I knew about 'Celebrate People', I used to wonder how on earth me and mine were going to engage in the big ceremonies of life.

My lot had, in the most, left religious life and instead have their own cherished belief systems. Therefore, neither the usual sectarian nor the strictly atheistic humanist society do, would do, for these dos! I am delighted to now be part of something that lets us and our nearest and dearest include our personal sacred journeys as well as our favourite pop songs on these important occasions.

I'm looking forward to this celebrant work. It feels like a natural progression for me, from my own brand of creative storytelling onwards to the restorative power of ceremony, and to the honour of being in service to others. I have already requested folk boogying on down to Donna Summer's 'I Feel Love' the twelve-inch version! Whether it's Elvis blaring away in the crematorium or your wee mammy's favourite hymn, it's got to be whatever folk need to help them feel connected to each other in these days of separation.

Stay well folks, take care and don't let your peace of mind be a casualty.

celebratepeople.co.uk/celebrants

Job hunting during a pandemic

There's no doubt about it: living through the coronavirus pandemic is strange. We're all finding it tough to adjust to the changes and this could be even more so if you find yourself worrying about unemployment.

Were you job hunting before the Covid-19 outbreak or have you recently lost your job as a result?

Thankfully, jobs are out there but the job market is changing. Where some companies are letting people go, others find recruitment booming.

Jobs & Business Glasgow are a local charity who provide free support for unemployed job seekers. We're here to help you find work and ensure your applications are successful.



Identify your skills

We all have skills to offer employers but sometimes we convince ourselves otherwise. We will help you to feel confident in your skills and match these to the current jobs available.

Promote yourself in job applications

CVs and cover letters provide a snapshot of who we are and the type of skills we have to offer. We will help you to use the right key words to attract employers.

Find the jobs that are out there

We know the industries that are hiring and will help you to access these. We work with employers

across Glasgow and bring their vacancies to our clients. Interview support is also available.

Support all the way

We offer advice with money and benefits, managing stress, overcoming isolation, and access to training in a range of areas. You may not be able to access the internet from home. You can trust our advisers to help you with job searching and applications over the phone.

Open Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm, and Friday, 9am to 1pm.

We're just a free call away: 0300 123 2898





HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH ZOOM

Online art and cookery classes have been preventing social isolation and providing new skills to local young people.

Since receiving the Scottish Wellbeing Fund, young people within the Housing First for Young People service have been taking part in arts and crafts activities several times a week organised by Queens Cross.

These activities include clay modelling, acrylic paints, pastels, inks, pencil drawing, badge making and tie dying. Each week a supply of arts and crafts supplies are delivered to participants.

Tom is a care leaver who has been supported by the Housing First for Young People service for the last three years.

“Before lockdown I was in college. When I was no longer able to go attend I felt my mental health crumble. I couldn’t motivate myself to get up for online classes and I found myself drinking more. I tried to stay positive but as time went on it was harder and harder.

“I had never tried art before, but my support worker convinced me to give it a try. I enjoyed it much more than I ever thought I would. It focussed my mind and I felt at peace doing it. I’m still struggling but I look forward to the days when the art activities are on.”

Weekly online cookery classes have also been

delivered through the service, with young people choosing what dishes they’d like to cook. So far they’ve made a variety of meals including beef stroganoff, chicken chow mein and homemade burgers.

Participants were provided with equipment needed for the class, with fresh and simple ingredients dropped off at their door.

After becoming homeless, Susan has been supported by the association for the last five years.

“I’d be the first to admit that I don’t have many skills in the kitchen but I always wanted to learn. I think what has put me off is that I didn’t have everything I would need to do it.

“Money has been tight since I moved into my own flat but with this activity I didn’t need to worry about it as I was given everything I’d need from pots and pans to graters to mixers. I also have the ingredients I need and we learn together how to make different recipes.

“What I most like is being with other people. I live by myself and I have missed people in lockdown. At the cookery class I get to spend time with other people and, although it’s via zoom, we sit together and share a meal and talk about anything. For other people this might not seem a lot but to me it makes my week.”

Focused on Performance

We want to keep you up-to-date with how our services perform. Every three months we produce reports that show how we're doing against our yearly targets. Key Performance Indicators are reported to our Board members and here are some of the results we think you'll be most interested in.

QUARTER 2: 1ST JULY TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020

 **Rent**
Q2 Performance - Jul, Aug, Sept 2020

Unpaid Rent **2.3%**

Average number of days to re-let empty properties **54 days**

 **Repairs**
Q2 Performance - Jul, Aug, Sept 2020

Repairs completed right first time **94.5%**

Routine repairs completed on time (within 5 working days) **99%**

Urgent repairs completed on time (within 2 working days) **100%**

Emergency repairs completed on time (within 4hrs) **100%**

 **Gas**
Q2 Performance - Jul, Aug, Sept 2020

All gas safety checks were completed on or prior to their anniversary date which gives us 100% completion rate once again. **100%**

All tenants have a responsibility to let us access their home so that we can carry out these vital safety checks.

If you think your gas service is overdue, call us today on 0808 143 2002 and schedule an appointment.

 **Customer Satisfaction**
Q2 Performance - Jul, Aug, Sept 2020

Satisfaction with Repairs service* **92%**

Satisfaction with the Customer Contact Centre* **86%**

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic we were unable to collect customer feedback. However, in August, we restarted our survey programme and have been contacting customers to hear their experiences.

Thank you for the feedback you give us. Without it, we wouldn't know how our services are doing.

Your services, **your say**

Complaints

In July, August and September we received **83** complaints. When you complain, we aim to investigate and then reply to you within **5 working days**.

If you're unhappy with the response we give you at this stage, we'll move your complaint on to the second stage (stage 2) and aim to reply within **20 working days**.

We always try to deal with your complaint quickly. However, if it is clear that the matter needs a detailed investigation, we may move to stage 2 in the first instance, but we'll tell you and make sure you're kept up-to-date.

Complaints results

60%



50 complaints upheld

17%



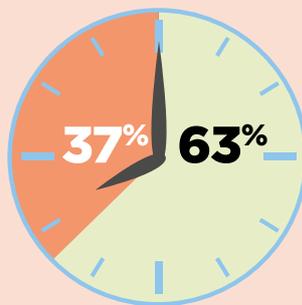
14 complaints partially upheld

23%



19 complaints not upheld

Complaints responded to within timescales



- 52 complaints responded to within timescale
- 31 complaints responded to outwith timescale

Compliments

We received 16 compliments from customers from July- September. Here are some of the things customers said:

Property Services

“Vinny and Liam the handy men went out their way to attend to a repair that I had reported. They by chance were in the close that morning attending to another resident’s repair and when I explained I couldn’t get to my electricity meter because the door was jammed; they were very willing to help. This saved me a lot of stress. They were very helpful and respectful of my home. Great attitude and service from them both.”

Financial Inclusion

“I’ve recently had assistance from the Welfare Rights team. I’d like to pass my thanks and appreciation for their assistance; especially Stephen Craig who helped me enormously and is a credit to the team.”

Tenancy Sustainment

“A support worker from Turning Point Scotland called to pass on his thanks on behalf of a service user. He says that Donna has really helped the service user, as he was quite fearful about getting in touch. Donna was a great help and made the situation better for him.”

Learning from complaints

Here are some improvements we’ve made as a result of the complaints we received:

You said:

Customers have experienced issues with our communication about planned investment works

We did: We have been engaging with customers who have been affected by recent investment works to listen to their concerns and apologise for distress caused. We have held a lessons learned session with staff to explore issues and are working more closely with our contractor, D.B.M Building Contractors to improve our performance.

We are working hard to respond to complaints within timescale and seek resolutions that customers are happy with. If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please let us know what we can do to resolve it.

Don't forget to tell us how we're doing

qcha.org.uk

[queenscrosshousing](https://www.facebook.com/queenscrosshousing) [@queenscrosssha](https://twitter.com/queenscrosssha)

0808 143 2002

contactus@qcha.org.uk

45 Firhill Road, Glasgow, G20 7BE

RESIDENTS GIVEN INTERNET ACCESS FOR FIRST TIME

Dozens of Queens Cross Housing residents have internet access for the very first time thanks to a housing association digital inclusion project.

Funded by BT Openreach, 50 Westercommon Drive tenants have been connected to high-speed broadband for a one year free trial, and have been given an Amazon Fire tablet to improve their digital skills.

Priority was given to households who have never had access to the internet before.

Local tenant Sam Magill was one of the first Westercommon Drive residents to benefit from the new scheme.

He's looking forward to the association's computer classes, currently suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic, starting back so he can learn new skills online.

"I've always wanted to get online, I just didn't know anything about it. With the opportunity to get free access I thought I'd give it a try and see what it's like.

"The tablet's brilliant, I'm enjoying using it. I can listen to music and watch films and I've got access to a lot of programmes that you don't get on television.

"I'm hoping the computer classes start up again so I can learn how to work it properly and start using it for other things.

"In the next 5 or 6 years you'll have to do everything online so I want to try and learn."

Digital Inclusion Coordinator Ross Rankin, who led the project, said: "Digital Inclusion is firmly on our agenda at Queens Cross, and this project helps us take a big step forward in getting more people online.

"Digital access and digital literacy is becoming a basic requirement for everyone just now. It helps to get people out of varying different levels of social isolation and allows them access to jobs, as well as having access to cheaper phones and utilities.

"It also gives them the opportunity to further themselves through training and gaining new skills."



Changes to how we let houses – great response

We recently invited tenants and housing applicants to share their views on proposed changes to the association's allocations policy; the document which sets out how we let our available properties.

We received over 200 responses to the consultation, which took place between June and September. We'd like to thank everyone who took the time to give us their views.

The association proposed moving from the current points based system to organising applicants into 'three priority bands.'

It was also suggested that we change to a choice based lettings system; where the association would advertise our available homes and applicants note their interest in any property they'd like to be considered for.

The property would then be allocated to the interested applicant who has the highest priority through the three bands. Of the people who responded:

- 74% support a move to priority bands
- 75% were in favour of moving to a Choice Based system, recognising that this gives applicants more choice and more control of their housing application as well as making our lettings more transparent.

We also asked whether we should suspend applicants from our housing register for a short period of time if they have not managed a previous tenancy responsibly.

- 74% of those consulted agreed with this, but recognised that

this would have to be managed responsibly so that people were treated fairly.

We considered all of the responses carefully and made some changes to our proposed policy. The feedback from the consultation and the new allocations policy was approved by the Board in October and we are now working on the detail, as well as developing a Choice Based system.

We aim to introduce the new approach to lettings by September 2021 and will give a further update in the spring edition of Focus magazine. We know how important it is to keep everyone informed about the changes and we will write to everyone who is on the list for housing or a transfer to explain the next steps.



Queens Cross appoint new Communities Opportunities Coordinator

Margo Sweeney joined the Association during lockdown as our new Community Opportunities Coordinator. This post been created thanks to Scottish Government funding from the Investing in Communities fund.

This two and a half year project will engage with local communities in Westercommon/Hamiltonhill and Woodside, build relationships with organisations and create opportunities to encourage more people to participate in their communities. This project has particular emphasis on working with families and promoting equalities.

Margo will be linking in with local schools and looking at new ways in which we can assist children and families in our communities. This project will see a new sculpture trail developed in consultation with the local community and will also see new ESOL classes offered in Westercommon, as well as activities that promote dignified food provision.

Margo joins from Alzheimer's Scotland and has considerable experience in community engagement work.

To find out more or to get involved contact Margo on socialregeneration@qcha.org.uk



Community Pantry at the Courtyard

Have your say

The Courtyard Café are considering introducing a new "deli-style" pantry club where people can access high quality groceries at a very low price.

The pantry club would involve a one off membership fee (e.g. £1). Members would then come to the café and choose £10-£15 worth of groceries for a fixed fee of £2.50 per visit. Initial feedback from residents has been extremely positive, and we are still keen to hear your views on the idea.

Please let us know your thoughts by contacting the social regeneration team.



**THE COURTYARD
CAFE**

Cash for Kids

We received some disappointing news from Cash for Kids. Like many charities Cash for Kids relies on fundraising every year to ensure that it can work alongside organisations such as Queens Cross Housing Association to help distribute money to families at Christmas.

With all the restrictions that have been in place due to the Covid-19 outbreak, fundraising in the normal way has become almost impossible.

Cash for Kids has been helping families at Christmas for over 30 years and we have been working in partnership with them for over twenty years so we hope that next year that they will be back, making Christmas just that little bit easier for our families.



cashforkids





Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Scottish Child Payment

We're taking applications now!



COMMS/SCP Poster A4/V1.0/Oct 2020

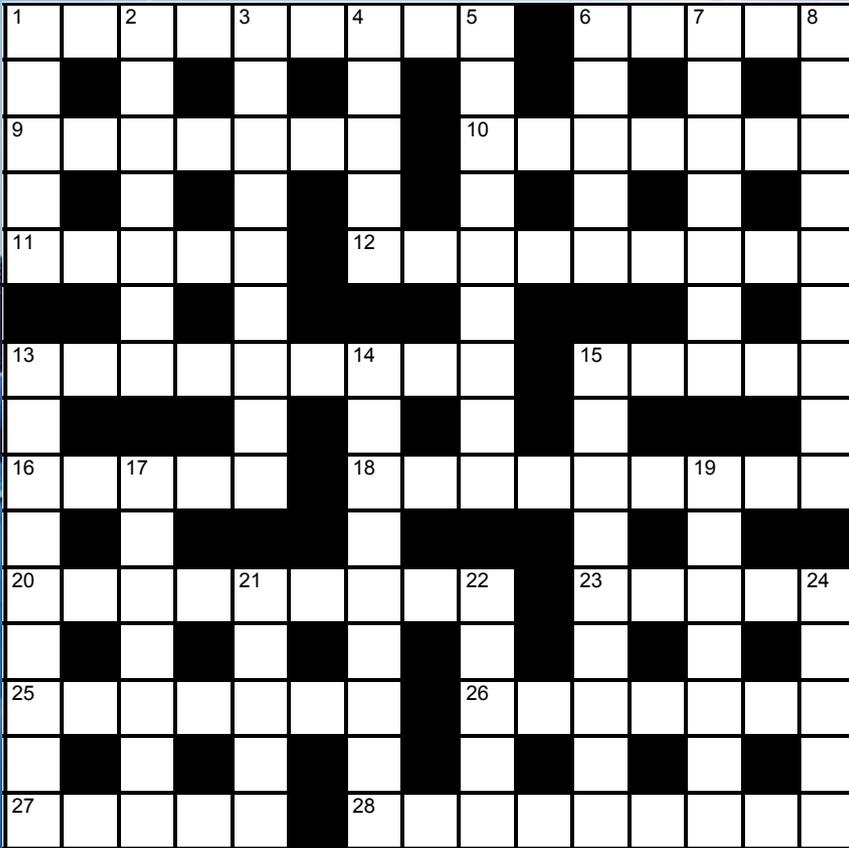
This new benefit will open on Monday 15 February 2021. It's a payment for families on certain benefits or tax credits. Eligible families will get £40 every four weeks for each child under six.

Find out more at mygov.scot/benefits or call us on 0800 182 2222.

mygov.scot

Feeling Puzzled?

Crossword



Sudoku

2		3		7			8	9
8	7				1	5		
5		6				2	3	
			7	9				
9								2
			6	2				
	9	8				7		1
		1	9				2	4
4	2			1		9		3

Spot 12 differences



Across

- 1 E.g. a ketch (3-6)
- 6 Copper and zinc alloy (5)
- 9 Item (7)
- 10 Not friendly (7)
- 11 Nail-like fastener (5)
- 12 Carry (9)
- 13 Bony structures (9)
- 15 Burning gas (5)
- 16 Forbiddingly (5)
- 18 Environmental fouling agent (9)
- 20 Deadlock (9)
- 23 Lukewarm (5)
- 25 Arabian Nights hero (3,4)
- 26 Mythical creature (7)
- 27 Expel (5)
- 28 Northern Canadian island (9)

Down

- 1 Melts (5)
- 2 Exterior (7)
- 3 Satan (9)
- 4 Larceny (5)
- 5 Practice session (9)
- 6 Defeats (5)
- 7 Grand Canyon state (7)
- 8 Confection (9)
- 13 In good order (9)
- 14 Home for abandoned children (9)
- 15 Ornamental water jets (9)
- 17 Conceive (7)
- 19 Sanction (7)
- 21 Make law (5)
- 22 Peer (5)
- 24 Move rhythmically (5)

Useful Contact Numbers

ADVICE

Citizens Advice (Maryhill and Possilpark)
0141 948 0204

CITY COUNCIL

Anti-social behaviour 0800 0273 901
Cleansing and recycling 0141 287 9700
Roads and lighting faults 0800 37 36 35

ENERGY

British Gas 0800 048 0202
Scottish Water 0800 077 8778
Scottish Power: 0800 027 0072

HEALTH

NHS 24: 111
Queen Elizabeth University Hospital: 0141 201 1100
Woodside Health and Care Centre: 0141 201 5500

FOODBANK

Glasgow NW Foodbank: 0141 959 9813

POLICE AND EMERGENCY

Police/Fire/Accident Emergency: 999
Police non-emergency: 101

SCHOOLS

Dunard Primary: 0141 946 1417
Oakgrove Primary: 0141 332 6210
Saracen Primary: 0141 336 8428
St Charles Primary: 0141 946 1391
St Joseph's Primary: 0141 332 7836



GET IN TOUCH

Main Office
45 Firhill Road,
Glasgow, G20 7BE

The Courtyard
2 Westercommon Drive,
Glasgow, G22 5PG

**Dundasvale
Housing Office**
2 Dundasvale Court,
ground floor.
Glasgow G4 0DF

QC Factoring
45 Firhill Road,
Glasgow, G20 7BE
Tel: 0141 561 1105
Email: info@qcggroup.co.uk
Website: www.qcfactoring.co.uk

For all our offices,
call 0808 143 2002

Email:
contactus@qcha.org.uk

Website:
www.qcha.org.uk



Report a repair

Call us on 0808 143 2002*

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

*free from a BT landline - calls from mobile phones and other providers may be charged

Emergencies

We provide an emergency repairs service.

Call us on 0808 143 2002 if you need an emergency repair at weekends or Monday to Friday when our offices are closed.

P&D Scotland

Our repairs service is provided by P&D Scotland Ltd.

All staff carry identity badges so please ask to see their badge when they call at your home.



FESTIVE HOLIDAYS

Our routine services close for the festive break at **4pm on Thursday, 24 December** and start up again at **9am on Tuesday, 5 January**.

For emergencies, call us on **0808 143 2002**.
Have a great time everyone!

YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS

Ward 10: Anderston, Yorkhill, City

- Eva Bolander (SNP)
- Phillip Braat (Labour)
- Christy Mearns (Scottish Green)
- Angus Millar (SNP)

Ward 11: Hillhead

- Ken Andrew (SNP)
- Hanzala Malik (Labour)
- Martha Wardrop (Scottish Green)

Ward 16: Canal

- Allan Gow (SNP)
- Gary Gray (Labour)
- Jacqueline McLaren (SNP)
- Robert Mooney (Labour)

Councillors can be contacted at Glasgow City Council.
Glasgow City Council, City Chambers, George Square, Glasgow, G2 1DU
Tel No: 0141-287-2000 • Website: www.glasgow.gov.uk