



## Gas Safety in the home

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## Growing Together

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*Hello all...* from our new **CEO**

*... find out more on page 2*





## A message from John...

*Hello all and welcome to my first update which will be a regular feature in forthcoming newsletters. Having commenced in post in September 2020 I have been spending lots of time getting to know the organisation and the team here at Almond.*



*Whilst this has been more challenging given the pandemic and home working, I am pleased to say that I have found an organisation with a staff team who are very focussed on providing great services to you, our customers. It is unfortunate that I have been unable to meet with many of our customers given the restrictions however hopefully, with the roll out of the vaccine, we will start to see things improving over the coming year.*

*I hope that you are all staying safe and that you are managing to look after both your physical and mental health during such challenging times. We are very aware of the wider impact of the pandemic on many of our tenants. Please remember that we are here to help you as much as possible and you can contact us with any concerns regarding your home or financial position.*

*While restrictions are in place we are, of course, continuing to provide a repairs service for emergency and urgent repairs. We are also in the process of implementing several improvement plans across the Association. Touching on just a few of these areas, we will be reviewing how we can improve the service you receive when you contact us, and we will be looking at what we need to do to create an investment programme which will ensure that our homes meet an agreed standard. We will be progressing with these exercises over the coming months and we are keen to hear your thoughts on what the standard of homes should be, so look out for further information on how to give your views soon.*

*I hope that overall, you are happy with the services we currently provide. Our aim, of course, is to improve these further and we are determined that our service offer, if not now, is one which in future you rate highly and have confidence in.*

John Davidson, Chief Executive



## Gas Safety in the home

Gas boilers must be inspected and serviced annually to ensure they are working efficiently and safely and do not pose a risk to the health and safety of your family and home. Carbon Monoxide is a real danger to anyone with a fuel burning appliance, it is a toxic gas that is odourless, colourless and tasteless. Regularly servicing your boiler ensures it is combusting fuel safely and efficiently and minimises the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Almond HA have a legal duty under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all our gas appliances and gas installations have been inspected for safety within 12 months of the last inspection or new boiler installation.

The Scottish Government have issued guidance regarding gas safety in the home during this pandemic. They have advised that this legal duty cannot be relaxed and Landlord's Gas Safety Inspections must continue.

We fully appreciate that you may have concerns with regards to allowing workers into your home at this time, but we also have a duty to ensure that the gas appliances in your home do not pose a risk to you, or your family.

We have therefore developed safe methods of works using Scottish Government issued guidance and the experience of our gas contractor, City Technical Services. Engineers will:

- Only need access to your boiler, gas meter and boiler flue.
- Only carry out the basic health and safety aspects of the Landlord's Gas Safety Inspection.
- Use hand sanitizer prior to entering your home.
- Wear full PPE whilst in your home and clean down areas they have touched.
- Ask you to socially distance, preferably in another room.
- Not require a signature from you.
- Maintain minimum contact with you.

Engineers are as much at risk of contracting the virus as you are and will take reasonable steps to protect you and themselves from the virus. All we ask is that you allow access, follow the guidance issued by the Scottish Government and advise us immediately if you have contracted Covid-19 or need to self-isolate.

Please help us to protect you and your family, from both Coronavirus and Carbon Monoxide by allowing access to carry out this essential safety inspection.



# Heating your home

We know that there has been some exceptionally challenging weather recently and we wanted to give some advice of what to do if your heating fails. We hope that this won't happen, but in case it does, here's what to do:

If you experience a total loss of heating in your property, you should call the office on **01506 439291** to notify us of the problem.

When we receive your call, a repair will be logged against your home address on our system. This type of repair will be classed as an emergency, meaning our response time will be a maximum of 5 hours. You will be advised to stay in your home until the contractor arrives to carry out the required work.

If the contractor who attends your property is unable to complete the repair within the same working day, they will offer you two temporary electric fan heaters to use. You can keep these heaters until a full repair is carried out. We understand that you may find these heaters expensive to run and it is entirely up to you whether you accept them. However, you will be compensated for the cost of using them as per our Temporary Heating Procedure.



Should you experience a total loss of heating in your property out with our opening hours, you should still call the office and select option 3 to be redirected to our out of hours emergency service that is provided by SPS.

The staff at SPS will ask the appropriate questions to confirm that the repair is an emergency and if so, they will arrange for a contractor to carry out the work. The contractor will then email us with details of the repair and we will log it on our system the next working day. Any follow up work that is required will be passed to the repairs team and a new works order will be raised.



**GROWING TOGETHER**, developed in partnership with West Lothian Youth Action Project, supports residents of Craigshill to access to healthy, fresh produce. We are delighted to have joined forces with various groups to provide online gardening and cooking workshops.

## READY, SET, GARDEN

We have arranged a series of virtual gardening workshops with an Educational Gardener from *Royal Horticultural Society*. The workshops are perfect for anyone looking to take the first step in their gardening journey.

The sessions will be delivered online, beginning on Tuesday 9th March 2021.

## FROM GARDEN TO PLATE

We have also arranged a series of virtual cooking workshops with a top chef from *V for Life Cookery School* who will introduce a range of meat free recipes that you can cook from home.

These workshops will be delivered online and will run every Wednesday at 2pm, beginning on 3rd March 2021.

Tenants are welcome to join our gardening and cooking sessions. To book, please email Barbara at [enquiries@almondha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@almondha.org.uk) or call 01506 439291.



# We have a winner!

Congratulations to Miss Lindsay McLaren, who has won our Almond Award for this quarter! Lindsay was delighted to be presented with **£250 worth of vouchers** for Almondvale Shopping Centre and Asda.



This draw is our way of thanking customers for keeping on top of their rent payments, taking care of their home and generally being a good tenant.

Our next **Almond Award** will be run in **Summer 2021**. To be entered for the draw to win **£250 worth of vouchers**, simply:

- 1** Maintain a clear rent account for a minimum period of three months immediately prior to the draw.
- 2** Don't be involved in any anti-social behaviour in your area.
- 3** Maintain your tenancy and any garden area to a satisfactory standard.
- 4** Allow our contractors to gain access to your home where appropriate.

*Well done to Miss Lindsay McLaren and a big thanks to all our tenants!*

## FREE Online Workshops

Want to learn how you can save money through menu planning, shopping smartly and using up leftovers? We have arranged two Love Food Hate Waste online workshops open to anyone in the local community. These will be delivered on our behalf by **Changeworks**.

These fun and interactive sessions will help you to cut your food waste, save up to £437 a year and you will get the chance to enter a prize draw to win a £100 voucher.

The online event will run on **Thursday 18th March at 10.30am** and **Tuesday 23rd March at 6pm**. Choose which date suits you best and email Barbara at [enquiries@almondha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@almondha.org.uk) to book.



## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**EMERGENCY "OUT OF HOURS" REPAIRS: 0845 038 0040** (Calls cost up to 7p per minute, plus your phone company's access charge. Alternatively, you can call our office on 01506 439 291 and select option 3 to be redirected at your local rate).

Almond Housing Association	01506 439 291	Homeless Persons	0800 032 3450	Scottish Power (General)	0845 270 0700
Gas Leaks	0800 111 999	Howden Health Centre	01506 423 800	(Emergency)	0845 272 7999
Citizens Advice Bureau	01506 432 977	Litter Hotline	0800 616 446	St John's Hospital	01506 523 000
Craigshill Health Centre	01506 432 621	Police	101	Street Lighting	01506 280 000
Energy Advice	0808 808 2282	Refuse Collection	01506 280 000	West Lothian Council	01506 280 000

**OUR PHONE LINES ARE OPEN AS USUAL DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.**