

Tenantmatters

'OUR HOUSES, YOUR HOMES'



MANORESTATES
Housing Association

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Please note that the office will be closed from **1.00 p.m. on Friday 23 December 2022** and will re-open at **9.00 a.m. on Thursday 5 January 2023**.

While the office is closed, you can still access our emergency repairs service by contacting the following numbers:

For all gas and central heating repairs, contact **Lothian Gas** on **0131 440 4666**
For all other repairs, contact **Novus** on **01506 242 120** or **0800 093 8823**

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FOR INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

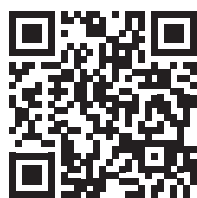


www.manorestates.org.uk

COST OF LIVING



The price of energy, food and bills are all rising and many of us are feeling worried about our finances. You may find yourself in a position you have never been in before.



There are services and advice that can help – visit <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/costofliving> for more information.

Or scan the QR code

BOARD NEWS

At its meeting on 26 October 2022, members welcomed new member **Ainan Groat** to the Board.



- Ainan has many years' experience in the housing sector and we look forward to working with her in the coming year.

The October meeting also dealt with election of office bearers. **Rachel Hutton** remains as Chair and **Ian Crawford** was elected Vice Chair.

RENT INCREASE CONSULTATION



We wrote to you earlier in December to explain what is happening with the consultation on proposed rent increases this year.



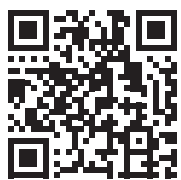
Due to the Scottish Government's announcements earlier in the year regarding this issue, we will not know until mid-January 2023 what we can do regarding an increase. As explained in the letter, the Government and the Scottish Housing Regulator expect us to continue with consulting you on this matter.

- If you have not already responded to the consultation outlined in the letter, please contact us with any views or comments you have by **Wednesday 21 December 2022**.

STAY SAFE THIS CHRISTMAS

Every year many house fires are caused by faulty Christmas tree lights, follow our simple fire safety tips to keep everyone safe during the festivities:

- ✓ Check your lights conform to British Standards, they should be marked "CE" or have a kite mark.
- ✓ Check for cracks or damaged cabling or plugs, replace any suspect or damaged cables.
- ✓ Don't overload wall sockets.
- ✓ Always switch off lights and any other appliances when not in use, when you are going out or before you go to bed.



**FOR FURTHER ADVICE REGARDING
FIRE SAFETY IN YOUR HOME SEE
www.firescotland.gov.uk**

Or scan the QR code



TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Thank you to all who took part in our recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey, carried out on our behalf by Research Resource Limited.

We have now received the consultant's report and will be developing an action plan to address those areas where satisfaction levels with our services are lower than expected or where they have decreased from the previous survey in 2019.

We would very much appreciate tenant input to development and monitoring of the action plan – if you would like to be involved, please contact **Carolyn Hughes** on **0131 510 8540** by **Friday 6 January 2023**.

● The results of the Survey will be published on our website by the end of February 2023, together with information about the action we are taking based on these results. Summary information will also be included in our Spring newsletter.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING TO PAY YOUR ENERGY BILLS

With bills on the increase we are finding many residents are struggling to pay the increased costs. If you find yourself in this position we have some useful advice below.

- Talk to your energy supplier – let them know you are struggling. They could review your repayment plans, look at debt repayments or payment reductions or provide you more time to pay.
- Are you on a prepayment meter – again, contact your supplier as they can look at emergency credit. There is additional support available for those on low income or vulnerable tenants and your supplier may be able to help.

Please see below for information on Changeworks who may be able to help you contact your supplier

- If you are still struggling there are various supplier hardship funds available. Get in touch with our office on **0131 510 8540** or check out the links below. We may be able to refer you on or have our Welfare Rights Advisor contact you.

Changeworks' Affordable Warmth Service



Manor Estates Housing Association has been working in partnership with



Changeworks, who can provide practical support to individuals and help them to live in an affordably warm home. Their advice is impartial and delivered by experts. Their Affordable Warmth Advisors can support you via telephone, email, post or a home visit. They also support tenants at risk of disconnection due to limited funds.

They can support you to:

- Keep your home affordably warm and dry, even if you are on a low income
- Understand your electricity, heating and/or gas bills and manage energy debt
- Assist with communicating with your fuel suppliers
- Know how to save energy in the home, including how to use your heating system
- Read your meters, including getting to grips with pre-payment meters
- Switch to a cheaper supplier or tariff

Contact Changeworks Affordable Warmth Services for help with heating and electricity bill payment or supply issues:

- Call free on **0800 870 8800** Our opening hours are 9am-5pm Monday to Friday
- **Request a callback** for support
- Email warmth@changeworks.org.uk and a friendly advisor will get in touch.



Scan Me

GOOD NEIGHBOUR AWARD 2023



We are aware that with the cost of living crisis many people have been showing extreme kindness to their neighbours and communities.

GOOD
NEIGHBOUR
AWARD

We would like to express our thanks to all our tenants who take the time to help others – and give you the opportunity to show your gratitude to anyone who has helped you.

We are now launching our **Good Neighbour Award** for 2023. We want to hear from you if your neighbour has helped you in recent months or has done something to help the wider community.

THE WINNING ENTRY WILL RECEIVE

A GIFT VOUCHER FOR £100



There will also be
2 runner up prizes
of £50 each

If you would like to nominate someone, please submit the details outlined below either by post to **Manor Estates Housing Association, Suite 4, 5 New Mart Place, Edinburgh, EH14 1RW** or by email to info@manorestates.org.uk

What we need to know:

- Your name, address and contact details
- The name, address and contact details of the person you are nominating (please let them know beforehand that you are giving us this information)
- A short description (no more than 100 words) of what they have done to help either you, someone you know or the wider community

CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS IS

TUESDAY 31 JANUARY 2023

WELFARE RIGHTS SERVICE

- ? Are you having a problem with your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit claim?
- ? Are you in receipt of all benefits that you are entitled to?
- ? Have you seen a reduction in your income due to benefit changes?

We have a Welfare Rights Service that is available for our tenants. **Anna Riva** can offer advice and assistance on a wide range of social security benefits. Anna is with us 2 days per week with access to the service by referral. If you feel you could benefit from this service, please speak to your **Housing Officer** by calling **0131 510 8540** in the first instance.



COLD WEATHER ADVICE



As the temperature at this time of year can drop, we should make sure we can do what we can to prevent burst pipes and flooding.

Here are some tips which may help avoid a disaster happening to you:

We appreciate that you will be concerned about energy bills this year, more than ever. Please keep an eye on the temperatures outside – and if it does get exceptionally cold, think about leaving your central heating on, even at the lowest setting as this can help to stop pipes freezing.

If you are going away during the winter, we would normally advise you to leave your central heating on, at a low setting. This year, however, you may prefer to turn the heating off. If you do this, please ensure you turn the water mains supply off at the stopcock (normally found under your kitchen sink) and turn your taps on until the water stops running.

If you do get a burst pipe or leak

- ✓ Don't panic, turn off the water supply at the stopcock.
- ✓ Turn your central heating or electric immersion heater off.
- ✓ Turn on all taps and drain the water system. Keep some water in your bath, this can be used for washing and flushing the toilet during an emergency.
- ✓ Call Novus Ltd to report the repair on **0131 510 8540**

If you are going away during the winter, where possible leave a key with a neighbour, relative or friend - and let us know. Remember, your home could be affected by flooding from another property and it is easier for us to deal with any problems if we are able to gain access quickly.

BE PREPARED THIS WINTER!

FURTHER ADVICE CAN BE FOUND AT

www.scottishwater.co.uk

PAYING YOUR RENT

We know this time of year can put a strain on your budget, but we would encourage you to think twice about delaying your rent or arrears payments.



Every year, some people opt to miss their regular payments and then struggle to catch up when the festive season is over.

We also appreciate that the current economic situation will be affecting you – please see our article on Cost of Living Increase, which gives you more information about sources of help.

- If you are experiencing difficulties paying your rent, please contact your Housing Officer immediately on **0131 510 8540**. We will try to help you reach a reasonable arrangement to pay any debt by instalment and we can also refer you to our Welfare Rights Advisor for support and financial advice.

REACTIVE MAINTENANCE AND VOID CONTRACT

We are currently re-tendering our Reactive Maintenance and Voids contract having been in contract with Novus Solutions for 10 years (to 31 March 2023).



The adverts go to the press in December and tenders will be assessed in January 2023. Novus Solutions, who are still in the maintenance market, and others will be competing on both price and quality to win our contract.

We will take on board comments on the repairs service submitted with the recent tenants satisfaction survey, when writing the tender documents. Also, watch out for an electronic survey in which you can submit your views on the Reactive Maintenance contract terms.

We will update you in the new Year 2023 meantime keep referring your repairs to **Novus Solutions**, by calling **0131 510 8540 option 1** or email us at **Repairs@manorestates.org.uk**

TENANT PARTICIPATION - ARMCHAIR PANEL

You may recall we advised tenants some time ago that we set up an Armchair Panel where we could get in touch with tenants either online or in person to discuss any policy reviews or updates on our services.



This allowed tenants to be involved in the work of the Association. Unfortunately take up for the Panel has been low however we are still keen to continue this service on and make use of video technology to meet with tenants.

We will be looking at the work of the Armchair Panel and identifying how we can get regular meetings set up. We will also look at using other contact methods such as emails and surveys.

If this is something you would be interested in knowing more about and you would like to be added to our Panel list please get in touch with your Housing Officer on **0131 510 8540** or by emailing **housingofficers@manorestates.org.uk**.

● We have various methods for contacting our tenants including letters, emails, surveys and online or in person meetings. If you would like to know more and get more involved please get in touch.

CONTACT MANOR ESTATES HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD.

Suite 4
5 New Mart Place
Edinburgh
EH14 1RW

Tel: 0131 510 8540
Email: info@manorestates.org.uk
Web: www.manorestates.org.uk



  You can follow us on **Facebook** and **Twitter** - **@ManorEstatesHA**

LATE OFFICE OPENING - THE LAST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

We are currently carrying out a trial, opening our phone lines to 7pm on the last Wednesday of the month.



Our next dates will be 25 January 2023 then 22 February 2023 as our office will be closed 28 December 2022. Staff can contact tenants – or you can phone us directly if there is anything we can help you with.

The trial will continue to the end of April 23 when we will review how this additional service has been used and decide if it should continue. During this time our office will also be open for appointment only visits. If you would like to make an appointment, please contact our office.

● Staff from both our Housing and Property Services team will be available so please do get in touch on **0131 510 8540** if you have any queries.

YOU SAID, WE DID

The Association aims to provide the best possible service to all our customers at all times; however, we recognise that sometimes we get things wrong.

For us to improve, we really do want you to let us know when things don't meet your expectations or something goes wrong. If you want to make a complaint about any aspect of our service, you can do so by:

- Using our online complaints form (www.manorestates.org.uk);
- Telephoning any member of staff at the office (**0131 510 8450**); or
- Writing to us at the office (**Suite 4, 5 New Mart Place, Edinburgh, EH14 1RW**)

If you choose to contact us, it is easier for us to deal with your complaint if you tell us why you are unhappy and what you would like us to do to put things right.


If you feel that any aspect of the services we provide is not as good as you would expect, please let us know and we will do our best to address your concerns. We need you to tell us so that we can improve how we do things.

We recently investigated a complaint about issues with repairs to one of our properties. These took longer than they should have and fell short of the level of service we aim to provide. It was clear that poor communication internally and with our external contractor was the main issue that resulted in the concerns raised by the tenant. We are now carrying out a formal review of why this happened and putting procedures in place to ensure that it does not happen again.

FOR UP TO DATE NEWS AND INFORMATION FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER OR INSTAGRAM

 **Do you regularly use Social Media? Have you followed Manor Estates?**

We are on **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **Instagram @ManorEstatesHA**

 Follow us to keep updated on office closures, any urgent issues or to contact us if you have a query. However, you should be aware that if you have an emergency, you should call our office on **0131 510 8540** as we do not monitor social media 24/7.

